

GOOD TIDINGS

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

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EDITORIAL

In compiling the October number of "Good Tidings" we have selected articles from among those contributed by the various writers. We believe that those selected for this issue are instructive and worthy of careful reading, as will be noticed that they are supported and richly interspersed with logical Scripture testimony containing well-considered thoughts of the writers, harmonizing beautifully with the sentiment of God's Word. They represent the purpose of this publication in presenting the Gospel Message of peace and love in simple language.

We invite careful examination by our many dear readers, to whom we wish by our humble Church messenger to reach all readers with the best thoughts on right living, that God may be pleased to give us, that His will may be fulfilled in using us in His gracious service.

The Scriptures are richly fraught with excellences to promote the happiness which our Creator has placed within the reach of all. This is attainable by heeding the gentle appeal of our Saviour: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Qualification for this

entreaty is to seek the knowledge and to realize the depravity of the heart—the effects of sin.

The love and peace of God are heaven-born virtues of inestimable value, the volume of which cannot be fathomed or computed by the finite mind.

Natural love is a noble endowment leading us in nearness to one another; Divine love leads us in nearness to God. The Saviour sanctified love as the greatest of all commandments. Our most earnest effort should be to practice it. It is to bring us into communion with God, and into loving fellowship with one another. It banishes fear and harm, and establishes confidence in the lives of the redeemed. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." The fact that this reasonable relation is not general in the world, but to the contrary is evidence of departure from God's law. A knowledge of Divine love reveals to us that from one Source come all our blessings and to that Source all praise is due for temporal and spiritual mercies. We say mercies, for in our unworthiness we "are by the grace of God what we are."

In the temporal kingdom, by the evidence of the manifold blessings of food and raiment, house and home, the provision for all comforts in life, the beneficent government under which we are permitted to live, mankind are moved to give reverence to God—a most worthy and reasonable service. In view of this profound respect, since 1863 the presidents of the United States issued proclamations appointing and setting apart a day each year, known as Thanksgiving Day.

To the redeemed not only Thanksgiving Day, but every day, on account of unworthiness, is devoted to giving praise and thanks to Him who is the Giver of "every good and every perfect gift."

Thanksgiving for the Meditorial ser-

vice will be the theme now and forever of those who have spiritual "peace."

As our work goes to the printer, in looking over the subscription list we find there are a number who have not renewed their subscriptions. We hope most of them will have attended to this before the mailing of this issue. Should any through neglect or otherwise not attend to this matter and who desire to receive their "Good Tidings" regularly may send their subscriptions as soon as possible and we will send back numbers.

OUR MANIFOLD BLESSINGS

The autumn season again reminds us of the approach of another year. The abundance of food and the garnered grain in store attest a bountiful harvest. Thus is shown a Creator's goodness and continued care for His creatures.

About us we behold the changing color of leaf on tree and vine. At this season what beauty we see in nature's richness of colors. Thus autumn comes to crown the passing year.

The sweet-voiced singers are migrating to their winter homes. When we consider the birds wending their distant flight, our thoughts are best expressed in the words of the poet:

"There is a Power whose care
Teaches the way along that pathless coast,
The desert and illimitable air,
Lone, wandering, but not lost."

Our Saviour tells of a Father's care for His creatures in these beautiful words: "Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them."

God's providence daily reveals to us His care and foresight. "Marvelous are Thy works" as seen in the laws of nature. Their regularity is proof of Divine origin. "Great is our Lord and of great

power: His understanding is infinite. * * * Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who preparerth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. He giveth to the beast his food."

We do not understand the secret of life which is found in every blade of grass, and in every creature. Our coming into life and our growth is a great mystery. For its existence our natural life is dependent upon continued sustenance. Thus food and those elements necessary to life are indispensable. "The earth is satisfied with the fruit of Thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle and herb for the service of man, that he may bring forth food out of the earth."

Reviewing the countless blessings bestowed in the year so nearly spent may it not tend to lift our "eyes on high and behold who hath created these things?" We are a favored people to enjoy the blessings of home and loved ones, bodily health to perform natural duties, a sound and reasoning mind and daily food. "Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with benefits."

We may receive these natural blessings and not honor the Giver. Though man fails to live to God's honor, yet God's mercy continues, "for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

Oftimes our Heavenly Father blesses us by withdrawing earthly blessings. The things of earth which are cherished by us are blighted that our hearts may be drawn to things eternal. Sorrows or natural losses may be God's blessings in disguise. These afflictions seem severe and often unkind, yet they may be treasures of mercy. Health may fail us, we may lose the comforts of life, our natural life is uncertain since life is "a

vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." It is not natural for us to thank God for the blighting of our earthly hopes, for the failure of our cherished plans, but in God's time we learn that the loss of earthly hope is often the means of leading us to spiritual blessings which are enduring.

An aged and dear friend, who lost her natural sight in youth, was free to tell that her loss had helped her to see of what little significance are earthly allurements and pastimes compared with the richest of blessings, life eternal. She opened her heart to God's grace and spiritual sight revealed to her the value of the gift of salvation. The value of earthly possessions were paltry compared to the "pearl of great price" for which she had sold all to possess it. She "received manifold more in this present time" and had the blessed promise "in the world to come, life everlasting." She ever thanked her Heavenly Father for the "unsearchable riches of Christ."

"With loving kindness have I drawn thee." Christ seeks entrance to every heart, "If any man hear my voice and open the door I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with Me." Spiritual sight, which reveals the "unsearchable riches of Christ," will be given to all who heed His call. Light brings knowledge of our sinfulness, our frailty, our dependence, our need of Christ's atonement. Love, which prompts true obedience to His word, will be enthroned in our hearts. If Christ dwells with us, the fruits of His Spirit, simplicity, peace and humility will be seen in our daily lives.

There is ever a similarity in natural and spiritual blessings. If God so clothes the grass of the field and provides food for the fowls of the air, shall

he not much more clothe with the robe of righteousness those who daily "sup with Him?" For his earnest toil the laborer receives God's gift and reward in the fruits of the natural harvest. Spiritually, at the close of life's brief day, the Father crowns the efforts of His faithful laborers with "the blessing, even life forevermore."

Hagerstown, Md.

E. S. L.

THE SUMMER IS OVER

The summer is over and autumn's at hand,
 And the birds which we love have flown from
 our land,
 We miss their sweet notes which were heard all
 the day,
 They were lovely companions to brighten the
 way.
 And the beautiful flowers, with fragrance so
 rare,
 Have faded away and their place is now bare.
 The summer is past and the harvest is o'er,
 And days of October remind us once more
 That soon our departure from life we must
 take,
 Like leaves which are falling to earth in their
 wake;
 They are brightly arrayed all in crimson and
 gold,
 But down they must fall—they no longer can
 hold.

The harvest is ended, the summer is past,
 The great reaper Time has been working so
 fast;
 Who's next we know not, for it's not been
 revealed,
 But down we must go, like the grass of the
 field,
 And wait the great harvest—the ingathering of
 souls,
 When the last trump shall sound and time no
 more rolls.

Fayetteville, Pa.

C. J. M.

THANKSGIVING

"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name." Psalm 100: 4.

In line with the above admonition of the Psalmist, when we come into the presence of the Lord, our primary thought should be one of thanksgiving for the many blessings we daily enjoy.

Our first entrance into His presence is when we wake from sleep. The apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, * * * and be ye thankful." If this is the case, there will be many times during the day when we will desire to give thanks. In the morning we will praise Him that our lives have been spared and that we are accounted worthy to have another day of grace in which to serve the Lord.

There are a number of instances recorded in the Gospel and Epistles in which our Saviour and His apostles, by their example, taught that we should give thanks to God before partaking of any food. In the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses taught the Israelites that God would bring them into a land of plenty, and he exhorted them in the following language, "When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee."

At this season of the year when we see the heavy laden fruit trees and the harvested grain fields, we are impressed with the bounty of our God. We are taught not to worry about the future, as Paul writes to the Philippians, "Be careful for nothing: but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

We can be thankful that we enjoy the privilege of worshipping God according to our conscience in this age, and should always take advantage of it. The apostle Paul was impressed with this when he wrote to the Hebrews, "Let us not forsake 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." Therefore we should not forget the counsel of Paul to Timothy, "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men: for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

We should never cease to be grateful to God that unity of the Spirit exists among the redeemed, that they have a care one for the other, and that they may praise Him who "is able to keep you from falling." Regardless of age, whether they be strangers or not, when believers meet, there exists a spiritual communion among them. Paul counseled the Colossians, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."

There are times when we are especially grateful for certain experiences which enable us to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us. A sense of dependence on the strength of the Lord should always characterize us, for our Saviour admonished His disciples, "But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." Our experience teaches us that we cannot fully confess our Saviour before the world unless we do rely wholly on His aid, for it is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us."

It is impossible for us to fathom the love and mercy of God, as Paul exclaimed, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

At the close of each day we should thank the Lord that we were favored in having our lives preserved to show forth His praise. The Levites were commanded, "To stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at even." And the Psalmist writes, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O most High: to shew forth thy loving kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night." But must we not all conclude, as did David after he had "blessed the Lord before all the congregation" just previous to his giving up the kingdom to Solomon, "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee."

Thus our days pass, during which we have various experiences, and no two days are alike. We have our daily duties to perform but we should "let patience have her perfect work." The apostle James admonishes us against making plans for the future, for "ye know not what shall be on the morrow." The present alone is ours, and how well we have kept our stewardship over it will be revealed at the last day, and it will prove whether we have "glorified God in our body, and in our spirit, which are God's."

MORALITY IS NOT SPIRITUALITY

An illustration of how it is possible to be near the kingdom and yet not be in it. "And one of the scribes came and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asks him, which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, the first of all the commandments is: Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; there is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribes said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: For there is one God: and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding and with all the soul and with all the strength and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly he said unto him, *Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.* And no man after that durst ask him any question." Mark 12: 28, 34.

The scribe's attention was attracted by the questioning of Christ by the Pharisees and Sadducees through which they sought to entangle Him in His answers. The interrogators of Christ were mostly Sanhedrists, the institution famed for its knowledge of the Law and the Prophets. They were leaders in legal learning. Anyone speaking in public in the Temple was expected to be privileged by them. Hence their question: "By what authority doest thou these things?" The scribe of our text gave evidence of honesty of purpose in the question he asked.

The answer of Jesus was so convincing and enlightening that the scribe was convicted and felt the force of it to a great degree, saying: "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God and there is none other than he, and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly he said unto him, *Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.*"

The scribe, at least in part, perceived the strictness, spirituality and holiness of the Law, and if he followed out that conviction he would attain the conviction which Paul expressed: "For I through the law am dead to the law that I might live unto God." Paul expected no help from the law in the matter of justification. As a covenant of works, the union between him and the law is dissolved, as the marriage relation is dissolved by death. Every intelligent person reflecting upon the purity and holiness of the law as expounded by Christ, Matt. 5: 28, will say with Paul, "For we know the law is spiritual, it is holy and good." Paul experienced his inability to measure up to the spirit of the Law. His comfort, with all true believers, was that Jesus, being perfect, by perfect obedience fulfilled the Law for all who accept him by faith, and thus is the righteousness an end of the Law for all Christians. The spirit of the moral law is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The law serves as a chastening rod, and as a schoolmaster to bring souls to Christ. "Thou art not

far from the kingdom of God." He was on the border of the Promised Land. Moses represented the Law figuratively. He could only lead the people to the border of Canaan. Canaan was a type of our rest of soul by faith in Christ. Of all who left Egypt only Joshua and Caleb entered the Promised Land. So under the Gospel only those whose old Adamic nature perishes, and who are born anew, will enter Canaan under the leadership of Joshua and Caleb, faith and love.

A knowledge of the Law brings conviction of sin and brings the penitent near the kingdom, for it is by the Law that the knowledge of sin is attained. Whether the scribe of our text was adopted and became a citizen of the kingdom, the Scriptures do not inform us; we hope so, but he could not be unless he became willing to confess Christ before the world and bear His reproaches.

In another instance a young ruler came to Jesus, asked what he must do to inherit eternal life. He had a very good moral record, so that when Jesus called his attention to the precepts of the Law, he replied, "Master, all these have I kept from my youth." Jesus, beholding him, loved him, and said: "Yet lackest thou one thing, sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come follow me." Jesus saw what was in the young man's way, and as he justified himself by obedience to the letter of the moral law, he took him on his own ground. Under the Law every seventh year was a release year, when all debts were released, and every seven times seven years, on the following year being the fiftieth year, which was the year of jubilee, when a re-distribution of all the estates of the Jews occurred; therefore He said to him, "Sell all that

thou hast and divide with your poor brethren." The young ruler failed to measure up to this legal requirement, and, being unwilling to do so, he went away sorrowful. The young ruler represents a class of persons who are satisfied with themselves on the ground of faithfulness in the discharge (to them) of every known duty, as they suppose, yet lacking the true inwardness of humility of mind, purity of heart, self abnegation, and a willingness to bear the reproaches of Christ. The young ruler is especially illustrative of a person whose hope of heaven is founded on church service and the doing of good works; whereas the true ground of a well-founded hope of eternal life is to accept Christ by faith, and thus attain his Spirit and mind, from which come obedience to his commands.

"Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." It is of serious consideration to know that one may be not far from the kingdom of God and yet not be in it. All our future happiness depends upon our relation to the kingdom of God, the foundation of which can never be moved, and the throne of which will endure forever. By the kingdom of God our Lord meant a spiritual state of heart and mind consisting in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. This kingdom was lost to mankind in Eden, and restored on Pentecost. With its restoration came spiritual fellowship, love, peace, unity and purity of life. With its restoration came the Church, and on earth peace and good will to men. The Church is God's habitation and all saved persons will seek membership in the Church. It is the purchase of Christ, the fruit of his love. On Pentecost the Lord added those to the Church daily who should be saved. A saved state is attained by adoption. Regeneration is essential to the adoption. Faith in

Christ, attended by the Holy Spirit, regenerates and adopts. Being adopted secures the heirship to the everlasting inheritance. It is possible to have much knowledge of the Scriptures, and of ourselves, and yet not be in the kingdom. It is necessary not only to have knowledge, but we must also have self-denial and obedience to obtain eternal life.

Chambersburg, Pa.

J. S. L.

GOD'S VINEYARD

God bids us labor in His vineyard here,
Proclaim His truths with reverential fear.
But oft those serve Him best who wait and
pray,

With patience doing well the task each day.

He tells us in His vineyard work to-day,
And all He asks is simply we obey.
As faithful servants in our Lord confide,
Believing He will every good provide.

With faith unwavering may we then be blest,
To trust in God, who knoweth what is best.
Our works and aims oft seem like withered
leaves,
But God can bless and make them garnered
sheaves.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

OPPORTUNITY

“To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” Heb. 3: 15.

These words were originally written by David as a warning to the Israelites not to provoke God, lest they should be excluded from that rest which He had promised them, and quoted in Hebrews by the apostle Paul to persuade us to hold fast the grace which we have received lest we should come short of that rest in Christ and that state of future glory prepared for us.

To-day is the time for hearing and heeding the voice of the Lord, which is particularly emphasized in the text, reminding us that we should not delay when called.

God in love continues time. He offers to all, who to-day hear His voice, the

opportunity for getting into harmony with Him, that we may rejoice at His presence and not be ashamed on the great day of final reckoning.

A certain writer says, “Time is precious because it offers an opportunity for growth in the graces and virtues of the beautiful Christ-life that qualifies for the heavenly association wherein is the fullness of joy evermore.”

Time, according to our text, is precious. Pertaining to our natural well-being and success, we appreciate the importance of rightly employing time and of being in a state of readiness to take advantage of opportunities when offered. Solomon says, “A wise man’s heart discerneth both time and judgment.” The tiller of the soil can entertain no hope of reaping a harvest if he delays planting and sowing until the season which offers the opportunity for performing this work has passed. It is a recognized fact and proclaimed everywhere by teachers and instructors that success in all vocations of life is largely attributive, not only in seeing but in promptly taking action when opportunities are offered. Failure is attributed to inaction and indifference.

Pertaining to our spiritual progress the words of our text are a safe and sure guide. “To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.”

We frequently hear it said that procrastination is the thief of time. If those gone over into the great beyond, who failed to embrace the offer of grace in this precious time of opportunity, could communicate with the living, they would most assuredly plead with us in the language of our text, “To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.”

Have we considered that to-day may be the end of time for us? The apostle Paul counsels us to redeem the time because the days are evil.—Eph. 5: 16.

When is time redeemed? Time may be redeemed to-day if we forsake sin and embrace the blessed opportunity offered by Christ's atonement. How abominable and loathsome sin must be in the sight of God, that such deep abasement in His son Jesus Christ was required to atone for it. He "being in the form of God—equal with God—made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant—and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Consider one possessed of the glory of God assuming the most lowly character—a servant, not of one nor of a limited number, but a servant of all, finally suffering not only death, but the lowest and most ignominious kind of death.

"To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." God always has a way of revealing Himself to mankind. All hear His voice. Some of God's people of old heard His audible voice, but the still small voice that spake to the prophet Elijah speaks to us, and in no uncertain language. You have heard this voice, I have heard it, all have heard it silently pleading that we harden not our hearts. God speaks to us in various and mysterious ways. Beholding the order and beauty of the visible creation, is it not like a great voice inviting us to believe and obey God the maker of it all? "There is no language nor speech where their voice is not heard, their line is gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world."—19th Psalm.

The light and life-giving power of the sun, broadcast daily over the earth, may represent the spiritual light and life-giving power, which by the Sun of Righteousness is daily broadcast to a sin-stricken world.

God is love. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." The heathen, though they may

not know of a personal Christ, hear that still small voice. John, the forerunner of Christ, testified that Christ was "that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Before I read the Scriptures, I recall many instances when I heard a voice, as it were, calling to forsake sin. If we would respond to that call we would all find Christ. All hear that voice. Do we heed it? If the heathen responds to the light that is revealed to him, though he may have no knowledge of the written word, he has equal opportunity with us of attaining to the heavenly rest; otherwise God could not judge the whole world. God is love, and will not hold us accountable according to our lack of knowledge, but according to our unfaithfulness in obeying the knowledge which we have. "He that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." James 4: 17. Since the fall of Adam, when souls began to forsake God, this voice has been calling. Solomon refers to it in the following language under the name—wisdom: "Doth not wisdom cry and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way, in the places of the paths; She crieth at the gates of the city, at the coming in at the doors; unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man. Understand wisdom, be ye of an understanding heart; hear; for I will speak of excellent things."

Are we responding to the call? Have we truly come to ourselves and like the prodigal are we on the way homeward to enjoy that happy relation with the Father? Consider how the domestic animals at the approach of night are instinctively called homeward for food, rest and protection. A certain writer said, "It would appear that everything which swims or goes on wing or foot has a hidden compass that guides it unerringly to its home, and that this homing

instinct would seem to be as reliable as the law of gravitation, and as universal and mysterious." Does not every soul hear that still small voice calling, and does not everyone experience a drawing by the grace of God to that Heavenly home? How we should rejoice in the thought that all who "To-day hear His voice and harden not their hearts" can find entrance.

"Hardness of heart" darkened the understanding of many of the Israelites so that they apparently lost sight of their fallen state. The prophet Isaiah warned them against calling evil good, and good evil, putting darkness for light and light for darkness.

The prophet Jeremiah lamented over the sins of His people Israel. He told them that while they honored God with their lips, their hearts were far from Him. We read of the many lying prophets who prophesied falsely in the name of the Lord, and who mocked the true prophets of God.

When Christ came he found many who esteemed themselves to be God's people, who were not His people. It is written that many of the Jews who under the law were called the chosen of God, had, through "hardness of heart" become so confused in their understanding that they called darkness light and light darkness. He said to the Scribes and Pharisees who regarded themselves the most Godly of all people, "Ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." He spared no effort to impress us that all who follow tradition and the letter, rather than the spirit of the Word, are under "hardness of heart."

Referring to this class of persons, the apostle Paul writes thus: "Professing themselves to be wise they became fools—who changed the truth of God into a

lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." Romans 1: 22, 25. Also in the 10th chapter, 1st Corinthians, "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant how, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the Sea, and all did eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink—but with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now all these things are written for ensamples and for our admonition—wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

The Scriptures to which we have referred and quoted clearly convey to us that the tendency ever has been and ever will be with the converted and unconverted, to turn a deaf ear to that still small voice which speaks from heaven, and to harden our hearts against the dictates of divine love. The words of our text are therefore appropriate now as then. All should search the Scriptures prayerfully and diligently, which is given us as a witness to prove our honesty and sincerity.

When reading the Scriptures we might ask, why has God directed His inspired writers to record the failings and transgressions of the fathers, thus exposing their "hardness of heart?" Why have they drawn such a gloomy picture of the race? To read only of their good deeds we might reasonably conclude that there is no hope of salvation for us. But the fairness of the Scriptures, in recording the evils with the good, serves to impress us with the dangers to which we are exposed. Had not the authors of the Scriptures been divinely inspired, much that exposes their "hardness of heart" would doubtlessly have been omitted.

The disfavor in which their sins

placed them in the sight of God, and the severe penalties inflicted upon them, should also impress us with the importance of heeding the words of our text.

“To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.”

Lancaster, Pa.

F. E. E.

REMEMBER THY CREATOR

We are under obligation to God by reason of the relation we hold to Him. All that we have and all that we are, we owe to Him, for He created, and endowed us, and made man in His own image. He is our Creator, Preserver and our Saviour.

The heavens and the earth are silent witnesses to all men of His everlasting power and divinity, and that which may be known of Him is manifested in us, for He hath showed it unto us. One God, unseen, yet revealed; infinitely exalted, yet “not far from every one of us.” We owe Him reverence and we should glorify Him as God.

The things we hold most dear—our intelligence, placing us above all things in this world; our free will, giving us the power to choose our actions; the freedom of movement and the adaptation of the different parts of our bodies to each other and to the work we have to do, cause us to know that we are the work of His hands, fearfully and wonderfully made, that we might work for Him and with Him, and glorify Him in our bodies and in our spirits, which are God’s. Capable of being renewed and brought into union with Him, we were made for Him, and that we might become partakers of His glory.

We owe Him gratitude for the provision He has made for our daily needs, sun and rain and fruitful seasons, house and home, family ties, and friendly associations; and, above all, for providing for the wants of the soul. We cannot fail to see the riches of His goodness, for

bearance and long-suffering; and to know that His goodness leads us to repentance.

We are told that man fell from his first estate, and we are indeed conscious of the fact that by nature we are alienated from God and are not in harmony with His will. We do not love Him as we ought. We love ourselves too much, and want to have our own way. We love the things of the world, the honor and praise of men and the friendship of the world. Yet, though we have sinned, God loves us. He sent His Son, “who gave Himself for us,” “suffered for sin once, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.”

The more than mortal suffering of our Lord, the cost of redemption, reveals a love unsearchable and past finding out, but it also shows us the deadly nature of sin, and what it was to Him who bore its burden; and it shows the barrier sin causes between us and God which we are not able to remove. No depth of remorse or repentance, nor works of penance can take away our guilt; no good deed can atone for sin. To think, seriously, on Gethsemane and Calvary is to be convinced that we need a Saviour. He gave Himself for us, even unto death; there is not anything that we should withhold from Him.

As we have the evidence of His love, we have also the manifestation, in our thoughts and feelings, of His judgments. We cannot deny God and His revelation, and we know that “God is not mocked.” We cannot deny our spiritual existence—that we are conscious, rational, self-determining beings who map out our course in life. Therefore “whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” Jesus plead with the people. He pleads with us all. He

wailed in pity for Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate."

We, who, by taking thought, cannot add one cubit to our stature, who know not what will be on the morrow, who are powerless against death, who appear for a little season here and then vanish away—why should we oppose our own will to God's will, or despise His long-suffering and forbearance, and reject His offers of mercy?

"To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Knowledge and opportunity create our responsibilities. These are increased by the light of the Gospel, and our privileges of reading and hearing it; it teaches clearly our duty. Our conscience binds us to that duty. We cannot hide from our convictions. There is no escape from personal responsibility. We are accountable to God, and, not knowing what a day may bring forth, we face, every day of our lives, the certainty of death, and of the judgment to come.

Conscious of guilt, remembering our faults—the sins of our youth and our daily transgressions, troubled, weary and in fear, we need a Saviour now that we may find rest for our souls. In the close of life, when we must leave our friends, and go alone into the valley of the shadow of death, we shall need Him. We shall need to be clothed with His righteousness in that day, when, as it is written, "Every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him."

It will be well with us if we heed the counsel: "Remember now thy Creator," for then it can be said, "I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee. Be-

hold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

Lancaster, Pa. R. D. 4. M. H. M.

THE STRAIT GATE

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Luke 13: 24.

The strait gate signifies the only true entrance to the way of salvation, or to eternal life. It is strait, which implies that to enter requires certain restraint and since the Saviour used the word strive it necessitates an effort on our part—a preparatory work is necessary. Since our human nature is corrupt, crooked and sinful, a radical change must take place; we must repent and be regenerated. Our hearts naturally are barren and unfruitful, compared to a desolation, a wilderness, a desert. We must hear "The voice of Him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain." Isa. 40: 3, 4. The crooked ways of our nature must be made straight, the valleys of degradation must be filled up, our uncouth, rough ways made smooth, and our selfish, revengeful nature changed to love and good-will, and the high hills of pride brought low. Then the "glory of the Lord shall be revealed" unto us, we can rejoice in hope and enter the strait gate. Having entered, however, we need not flatter ourselves that we are entirely secure—that we cannot sin, for our unconverted flesh goes with us, and as the Gibeonites troubled the Israelites in the land of Canaan, so our flesh assails and troubles us. Since the Saviour taught His disciples to strive to enter in at the strait gate, it may be inferred that we must keep on striving. The

devil through our flesh tempts us in many ways. The Apostle says, "We are not ignorant of Satan's devices." We are in the world, intimately associated with all its influences, and if we compromise too much with the worldly spirit, and again indulge in the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life," we are not striving lawfully to enter the strait gate, but we are bordering on the entrance to the "wide gate and the broadway which leadeth to destruction."

The narrow way which leadeth to life and the broad way which leadeth to death, run parallel—they never meet; they are separated by the eternal word of God, they are directly opposite in character—one is radiant with spiritual light, the other is enveloped in spiritual darkness and gloom. The apostle Paul says, "What communion hath light with darkness?" The wide gate and broad way are very inviting to our flesh, and the Saviour said, "Many go in thereat." We must make "sure paths for our feet" and enter into judgment with all our thoughts, motives and actions, and weigh them in the balance of God's word lest we be enticed to "go in thereat." We are the "light of the world," and we should endeavor to reflect this light. If we take doubtful liberties in our walk and conversation, ignoring simplicity and plainness in our manner of life, and do not "condescend to men of low estate," whether it be in our mode of dress, in furnishing our houses, in choosing our conveyances, are we reflecting that light? Are we striving to enter the strait gate? Although we may not feel condemned and may support our actions by plausible reasoning, yet we may offend our weak brother. "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak; * * * shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died?

But when ye sin so against the brethren and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ." 1 Cor. 8: 9, 11, 12. We would not be endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. The light would be dimmed by the reflection of darkness from the broad way.

"Many shall seek to enter in but shall not be able." This is an impressive consideration. Why not able to enter if they seek, for the Saviour said, "Seek and ye shall find," but they evidently do not seek and strive lawfully. Paul says, "Yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully." May it not be that many seek in their own way; by their own efforts they want to enter, by their own righteousness; but like the Pharisees they "omit the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith." In short, they want to enter without Christ, but "He is the way, the truth and the life," and no one can enter the strait gate unless by true repentance they accept Him, and by His Spirit become qualified. Consequently many are deceived who are seeking to enter the strait gate, and they deceive themselves by taking their own way instead of God's way. They fail to obey His grace which has appeared unto all and which is a safe guide. It is a sorrowful reflection that multitudes are thus seeking in vain for salvation. The Saviour declared, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it; and wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." Matt. 7: 13, 14.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

THE AVENUE TO GRACE

"What must I do to be saved?" Acts 16: 30.

The inquiry of the jailor came after he had witnessed the power of God in

the miracle releasing Paul and Silas, who were not imprisoned for violation of the law, but for the effect of their preaching. The damsel, who brought her masters much gain by soothsaying, being possessed with a spirit of divination, was converted. She, like all upright persons, followed Paul and Silas many days, recognizing them as the servants of the most high God. Her faithful pleadings moved Paul to command the unclean spirit to come out of her, and when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone they caught Paul and Silas, and by false accusations brought them before the magistrates, who cast them into prison. Here is quite a coincidence: the damsel may represent repentance and the jailor conversion; both are essential to salvation, which is obtained through the avenue of God's grace. The jailor realized the effect of the supernatural power.

We have no record of any delay or hesitancy on the part of the jailor in making this appeal: "What must I do to be saved?" He knew his position as a military servant and in violating his trust would have to suffer punishment which as a rule was death. When he awoke from sleep and found that Paul and Silas were free to go, but did not go, he was convinced that their teaching was Divine, which moved him with an honest heart to say: "What must I do to be saved?" In this instance we have a fitting example of the only means that can qualify us to be saved.

God's word allows no reservations. We must realize that there is no alternative; all earthly affiliations, with our vain aspirations, must cease if they interfere with the plan of salvation.

The inquiry of the jailor: "What must I do to be saved?" implies, here I am, dependent upon God's mercy, helpless; there is no other remedy for me; purge me from my innate sins,

grant me grace that nothing may hinder my walking with Thee, Thou Holy One of Zion!

If we with purpose of heart pursue the avenue of God's grace, which God's word declares has appeared unto all men, then surely the effect will be salvation to us for our willingness. All our opinions are to be subjected to the Spirit. Every thought, Paul declares, must be taken captive to the obedience of Christ, who will, according to His wise plan, work in us "to will and to do of His good pleasure."

No doubt there are many persons who are convicted of their sinful lives and in their extremity feel like the jailor, but when the Divine appeal comes to them, "search the Scriptures," which promise eternal life only upon obedience, they are not willing to make the sacrifice; which implies that without the cross there is no crown. Here the enemy of God asserts himself and takes advantage of those halting between two opinions, and dictates a way with assurance of future bliss. This latter influence is gratifying to our flesh, and if entertained, will divide our affections to evade the appealing voice of God, "If ye love me keep my commandments."

How impressive is the fact that God knows our hearts, and the motives prompting us! If they are not as those were of the jailor then all our efforts in leading an honest, moral life, with every sacrifice the human mind can conceive, will leave our righteousness, as Paul declares, as "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

The possibility of being deceived, even in asking God, "what must I do to be saved?" is apparent, when the foe of the eternal truth can transform himself into an angel of Light, and thus infuse the deadly poison of the asp into the speech of those who profess to be the ministers of righteousness, and who ac-

ording to God's word "have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof."

What authority have we to take God's covenant in our mouths and ask, what must we do to be saved, if by our actions we plainly refuse to receive God's instructions, and want none of His reproof?

If we are without chastisement then are we bastards and not sons, and if not sons then we are not heirs of the eternal inheritance.

It is evident that our salvation is not merited by what we can do of ourselves, but by what we allow the Spirit of God to do through us. Our Saviour said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again." Nothing short of the inspiration that led to the jailor's appeal will avail before God. Our Saviour could truthfully say, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Lancaster, Pa.

B. F. M.

TRUE ENJOYMENT AND HAPPINESS

In analyzing the situation in the world we are impressed that the energies of mankind are chiefly devoted to securing enjoyment and happiness. Also that the longing and desire for it is such as to require that in its attainment it shall be perfect and enduring.

With endowments above the brute creation mankind center their affections on any object they choose; and they realize such satisfaction as the objects of their affections can yield them. We are also witnesses to the fact that if our love and affections are misdirected, disappointment and unhappiness result.

The common experience is that we fail to attain the measure of enjoyment and happiness for which we long. It must therefore be, that we are looking for happiness outside of the happy

sphere in which it is found; as in all the visible creation there is perfect accord between desire and gratification, cause and effect.

Our disposition is to center affections on things which gratify selfish desires or promote worldly interests; and yet, in the highest attainment of these desires we may indulge in every manner of worldly pleasure and amusements, may acquire empire and inordinate wealth, and reach pinnacles of fame and honor, yet that desire remains unsatisfied. We may conclude then, that enjoyment and happiness can be perfect and satisfying only when the object of our love is perfect.

Should not our often, bitter disappointments, heartaches and sorrows, which we experience while we seek to satisfy that longing, in the uncertain and unsatisfying things of life, impress on us the fact that it is only in God and His attributes that we can find permanence and perfection in love, wisdom and power, and every adorable quality which we would desire to possess? This is surely the object then, on which our affections should be centered; and our regard for and devotion to this worthy object should find expression in love and service to our God, as it is written: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might."

Thus alone can the fullest measure of happiness be attained in this life. Its happy culmination will be in unalloyed felicity in heaven. It is said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." This happy condition has its beginning with all who render devoted love and service to God in the present life, though its fullness may only be realized by the faithful when earthly trials and tribulations are ended,

and when, having "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," they will be numbered among the happy angelic throng.

Should we not in justice to our highest interests then, turn from the "weak and beggarly elements," and become participants of the happiness of paradise, which accords with our desire and longing? In the language of Revelation the entreaty is to all, that "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

The declaration also is, "Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." The door which opens the avenue to satisfy our desire and longing for happiness, can be closed only by ourselves in yielding to the deceptive influence which leads us to misdirect our love and affections wholly to the things that are transient and imperfect, and to indulge and gratify "the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life," which never can yield us the true enjoyment and happiness which satisfies our yearning and desire.

We read that this evil influence, "called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world," whose promptings we so readily obey, "was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him," and "neither was their place found anymore in heaven." Likewise can there be no place found for us there, if we choose to follow the promptings of this deceptive influence.

If we do not glorify God by love and service to Him, which alone can bring to us the fullest measure of enjoyment and happiness here, we can never reach our highest conception of happiness. in homage with the angels, "before the throne and before the Lamb."

If love and devoted service to God,

then, are the only means of our attaining perfect happiness, the question properly is, what do love and service to God require of us, or in what way do they find expression in our lives, and what are the manifest results in our own lives, and what our attitude toward others?

As we look about us we are impressed that many conflicting theories are advanced in regard to our present and future state. Philosophers and theologians are advancing a confusing array of theories, in lectures, sermons, books, magazines and the public press. In most of these Christ's teachings are merely admired for their influence toward improving our condition in the social and business relations of life.

We believe that Christ's teachings were for a higher purpose,—that in practice we must possess the Spirit which prompted these teachings. When that is the case we will voluntarily do what accords with His teachings, which will result in Christian fellowship among all who are actuated by that Spirit, and that the organization of His church is for the purpose of maintaining that fellowship and preserving it. We believe that this association and fellowship is necessary here; it is necessary to fit and qualify us for heaven hereafter, as a place where every cause of unhappiness is removed.

(What love and service to God require of us in our every day lives, and their relation to Christian fellowship, properly a continuation of this subject, will appear in another article.)

Doylestown, Ohio.

C. W.

THE CONDITIONS OF ETERNAL LIFE

"And behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good things shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God. But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Matt. 19: 16, 17.

The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good no not one. Psalms 14: 2, 3. Sin entered into the world through the transgression of our first parents; as a consequence there is none righteous. The grace of God appears unto us and teaches all to repent. As an evidence the jailor realized his condition and was moved to say, "what must I do to be saved?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16: 30, 31. Certain ones who followed the Savior, inquired, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? * * * Believe on him whom he hath sent." John 6: 28, 29. Christ came to reconcile the world to God; to open a way to everlasting life; to establish His kingdom in the hearts of those who are willing to receive Him.

Love will encourage every one to keep Christ's commandments. We cannot receive any comfort through the Holy Spirit, except we forsake all for Christ's sake; we cannot be His disciples, or receive everlasting life unless we comply with the conditions set forth in the New Testament. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John 17: 3. To know Christ and Him crucified, is revealed only to those who have laid aside the old life, which is corrupt and at variance with Christ's teachings. Therefore we must become a new creature to bring forth spiritual fruits. The Savior endeavored to impress Nicodemus with this fact by saying "ye must be born again." Thus we must enter into that life, which is hid with Christ in God, with new desires, willing to make every sacrifice. The Christ-life teaches humility and non-conformity to the world. Those

who are in possession of the Christ-life are willing to suffer wrong, should it be imposed upon them. "It is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing than for evil doing." The Savior said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6: 33. We shall seek the good things which will endure, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, and the result will be unity of spirit, living no more unto ourselves, but for one another. We will no more serve two masters. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Luke 16: 13. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6: 23. What lack I yet? Jesus said unto the young man: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." Matt. 19: 21, 22.

But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions. The danger consists not in possessing, but in trusting in our possessions. We may forsake God, loving this present world. All may have a conviction to obey God but the sacrifice may seem too much, then we depart sorrowful, perhaps trembling. We must sell or get rid of the old life, which is very near to us. For Christ's sake it may be required of us to give up our earthly possessions which in reality are not ours, for we only have the use of them. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain, we can carry nothing out. We may enjoy church fellowship, receive water baptism, wash the saints' feet, and give all our goods to feed the poor, and yet may not have charity or the love of God abiding in us. It behooves us to examine ourselves in these matters.

for the Lord has put us on trial. May we not be found wanting, should be our prayer.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. J. T.

THE PROPER USE OF THE BIBLE

If the Bible is not used legitimately there is danger of confusion which may lead to doubt and subversion of faith. Its teachings do not appeal to the natural mind, and from want of a proper understanding of its truths wrong conclusions may be drawn. Confirmation of the sciences may be sought in its pages. That is not embraced in its purpose. Its record has in view our spiritual welfare, giving reward for obedience to Divine counsel and chastisement for transgression. The policy of the Old Testament was to establish a sound form of government in the nation which God had chosen by which to exemplify a pure moral life as a foundation on which to build the spiritual life, "when the fulness of the time was come." Gal. 4: 4.

The scope of New Testament teaching is to interpret God's later covenant that the creature may praise the Creator by a sanctified will given in obedience to Him whom we should allow to control us. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

Secular teaching impresses the child that life is progressive, like the tree is developed from the seed, and that the creation has developed by growth from chaos. As school training is given on the basis that life is a continuous progress, can we think it strange that the child is inclined to regard the statement of the Bible with doubt that all things were created in six literal days, and that

a shadow of doubt obscures other statements? The mature thinker solves the obscurity by remembering that one day is sometimes used to symbolize a thousand years, and that Moses does not say in his accounts that what he mentions in periods of days to have all occurred in twenty-four hours each. He indefinitely says: "The evening and the morning were the first day," giving expression to the fact that days were created in the beginning as well as other conditions. The testimonies and experiences noted in the Bible witness to the way which we are prone to follow, and foretell events that occurred long after the prophecies were written. It is the privilege of all to draw their own conclusions, but there is a hazard in setting up our opinion against what has withstood the test of time, and in contrast to the "cloud of Witnesses."

The intent of the written Scriptures seems to be to teach us the correct knowledge of God's will that by stimulating inspiration, drawn from a deeper source, we now may have close fellowship with our Maker to fit us for joys which language has failed to bring within the reach of the human mind!

To have a share in these Godly blessings, planned from the foundation of the world and dwelt upon by patriarchs and prophets, we must hunger and thirst after righteousness through the help offered by the Spirit of Christ—the life-giving power. Praying for this power always brings needful help to the penitent sinner. Gratitude binds us to love the counsel found in the Bible, and we search its pages for the jewels of wisdom they reveal. We do not need to know what the Bible withholds from us, for it is said: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but things which are revealed belong unto us." Jesus said, "The word which ye hear is not

mine, but the Father's which sent me." Above all else our concern should be, are we ready for final judgment? Eternal things should be of the greater interest to those who see uncertainty, disappointment, decay, reflected by all things from which death will remove us.

The Bible teaches the difference between temporal and eternal things, and since its purpose is spiritual it is reasonable that it should reveal what is essential for our salvation, and leave in the background interests to which by nature we are unduly inclined.

The infinitely wise Creator, knowing our wants, has provided for our insufficiency and is open to the call of all who with pure hearts draw near unto Him.

Lancaster, Pa.

M. H. B.

THE CITY OF GOD

I have read of a beautiful City,
Whose streets are paved with pure gold;
'Twas sought by the holy prophets
And the patriarchs of old.
And to-day we're moving onward
In the path our fathers have trod,
In search of that wonderful City
Whose builder and maker is God.

How many have journeyed before us
To that City where never is night;
No need for the sun nor the moon there,
The Glory of God is the light.
The path to the City is narrow,
But there's room for the weary to plod;
And all who are striving to reach it
Find the City whose builder is God.

May we search for this wonderful treasure
To be found in that City above,
Where joys far exceed earthly pleasure,
And saints shall rest in His love.
Let us strive to reach that fair City,
And our feet with the gospel be shod;
For there's only one way we can enter
The gates of that City of God.
Fayetteville, Pa.

C. J. M.

For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. Rom. 2: 13.

OUR TRIBUTE

Jesus, while here on earth, showed himself the greatest of teachers. By precept and parable He taught the crowds that thronged to hear Him, and it is not strange that the Pharisees and leaders of the Jews were envious and indignant. The idea that this young man, coming from Nazareth, a carpenter, and to their minds wholly uneducated, could teach the people was more than they could bear. They set themselves against Him, and any opportunity they may have had to learn Divine wisdom was lost to them.

They sought to entangle Him in His talk whenever they had opportunity. Once it was by asking if it was lawful to pay tribute unto Caesar. This was a sore subject and a political issue with them. Living under Roman rule was a galling yoke to the Jews. Christ knew their motive and asked to see a piece of their money. Having inquired about the image and superscription thereon He wisely replied: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." Matt. 22: 21.

As then, so now, we all must pay tribute and is counsel as wise for us as when Christ spoke it to the Jews. We too must give our portion toward the support of government, and when we in this land consider the good government under which we live we are indeed willing to pay what is required of us. We are highly blessed compared to Christians in earlier ages.

There are many duties which we owe to others that may be compared to the tribute to Caesar. Every natural relation calls for assistance and good-will. We need each other in this life, and we might say here that "Love is the fulfilling of the law." The apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, 13: 7, 8, "Render

therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. Owe no man anything but to love one another." These may not always be difficult requirements, and are more or less easy to understand, but to "Render unto God the things that are God's" is a different matter for us poor fallen beings. We owe so much to Him that the heart fails to comprehend, and words fail to express the duty even in part. We have to leave the realm of the natural for the spiritual, the seen for the unseen, when we want to consider the tribute we owe to our God. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." The apostle Paul writes about presenting our bodies as living sacrifices, which is a reasonable service, and one that is acceptable to God. This means death to self and all its attendant sinfulness.

To do this service we must desire the gift of faith to believe that God is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. This begets reverence and fear, a fear that leads more to worship than to dread such as the Psalmist refers to as being the beginning of wisdom. This exercise necessarily develops love for One so great and yet so gracious!

Obedience is a fruit of love and faith. If we believe and love God we want to do His will. Hope gives us a personal benefit and yet we undoubtedly please God when we cultivate it. It is a long list of virtues that are a part of true worship, and these every sincere, God-fearing soul desires. Devotion, zeal for truth, patience, brotherly kindness, charity, thankfulness, cheerfulness, contentment, humility, self-knowledge, and the denial of the lusts of the flesh, the eye and the pride of life are all a part of the acceptable worship we owe our God.

We are reminded of Christ's parable of the servant who came from plowing in the field, before refreshing himself, served his master without expecting thanks, because he was merely doing his duty. So we, too, can give our hearts, and the best efforts of our lives as a tribute to our God. We deserve no credit, as we are merely doing our duty. Any reward we may receive here or hereafter is a part of His gracious service to us. All that we do is so mixed with human weakness that we gladly turn to Christ, our Saviour, for He is our salvation. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." Belief in Him and a humble heart willing to follow sincerely every conviction of duty should be our highest purpose in life, is the highest tribute we can bring to God, the noblest adornment to intelligent beings!

Chambersburg, Pa.

M. C. S.

WHAT ARE WE?

In our last we considered the house we live in. Let us now consider ourselves, the tenants of this earthly house or tabernacle. What are we? How came we here?

For our answer we turn to the Bible, God's word, of which He says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." We believe in God and we believe His word.

The account of the creation is given in very few words in the first and second chapters of Genesis. Whether the days of creation there referred to were days of 24 hours each as we now reckon them, or whether they were as they may well have been, long periods of time does not (now) concern us, for with God "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." 2 Peter 3:8.

After God had made all things visible and material, and all vegetable and ani-

mal life, He saw that His work was good, and that a fit place was prepared for man who was to be His last and crowning work.

Then God said, Genesis 1: 26, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." As God is a spirit, He has no visible form or features, so the expression, "in our image," does not apply to man's outward form or material body, which is of the earth, and returns again to the earth as it was; it applies to man's intellectual, moral and spiritual nature, which is after the pattern of God's, but infinitely below it in capacity, and to the soul, which like God, lives forever.

We read in Genesis 2: 7, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." This living soul makes man superior to all other forms of life and could have come only from God himself.

Our idea of God, gathered from His word, is that He is infinite in all His attributes, being all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving and everywhere present. We can scarcely comprehend this. God is Father, Son and Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit united in creating mankind, and when He said, "Let us make man," we may infer that *us* means all three of His attributes or constituents, in other words—all the powers of the God-head united to create man who was the highest and best of all created things, and who was to have dominion or power over all the rest of creation.

Man was made perfect—body, soul and spirit—and, but for the transgression of Adam and Eve, would have remained perfect—at least until some one else transgressed.

The enemy of all good was permitted to be in the world—and to come into communication with God's perfect crea-

tures, to test their love for Him and their appreciation of what He had done for them. We may not blame our first parents too severely for their fall. It is quite probable that had we been in their place, we would have done no better than they did. Be that as it may, in consequence of their transgression, the spiritual part of man left him—he did die as to his spiritual life—which was what God meant when He said, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This spiritual death or incapacity has been, and for all time will be transmitted to mankind. So that we now find ourselves, immortal souls, without spiritual life, and unable of ourselves to return to that communion with God which was enjoyed by Adam and Eve before their fall. But God, who is just, is also merciful. As soon as the transgression occurred and brought its punishment, He promised and provided a way by which man might again receive the Holy Spirit. As we all know, this was by the coming to earth of His dear Son, Jesus Christ—who lived—God-man—amongst us, suffered with us, and finally offered his perfect body as a sacrifice of blood to atone for all the sins of the whole human family—past, present and future. He taught mankind of the love of God, explained God's plan of salvation, and lived a perfect life which has been and is and ever will be a pattern and an inspiration to all souls who accept Him.

"God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. 1 John 1: 5. We, who are finite, cannot comprehend the glory, the brilliancy, the illuminating power of His Light. We, in this life, can bear only a little of it. But He loves His creatures so dearly that He wants each one of us to have as much light as we can bear. Christ, the Son of God, is the great spiri-

tual Sun—the source of all spiritual life, just as the natural sun in the sky is the center by means of which all natural warmth and life here on earth are preserved. We may imagine that from God—the great light center of the spiritual universe—millions of rays of spiritual light extend to the human family. A slender ray of this wonderful light glowing with God's love and accompanied by a still small voice, extends to the soul of each human being—there is no respect of persons—the voice says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to Him and will sup with him and he with me." Rev. 3: 20. In other words, He will dwell with the soul that opens the door to Him. This opening of the door by man to the ray of light, and the entering of the Holy Spirit into his dark soul, is the new birth. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5: 17. Man, through the regenerating influence of God's marvelous light, becomes a spiritually minded person, accepts Christ as his Savior—the propitiation for his sins—and tries to keep His commandments.

Christ, the Light, cannot enter the soul of man unless man opens the door to Him—but all souls have an equal chance. Man being a free agent, himself decides whether or not he will live under the influence of the Holy Spirit. As we live so is our record made in the book of life. This record decides our fate for eternity. So we see that living is almost as serious a matter as dying.

Those who reject their beam of light, and turn a deaf ear to the still small voice which invited them to God, and who say in their hearts, "we will not have this man to rule over us," do not receive the Spirit. They choose to live without God, to die without Him and to be separate from Him in eternity.

We are not compelled to honor God—but it is our duty and should be our pleasure to honor Him. If we do not, we neglect our duty, we dishonor our Maker and deserve the punishment we will surely receive.

Lancaster, Pa.

L. L. F.

BRIEF NOTES

The promptings of Divine love possessing the heart, will not only be to forgive and forget, when we are wronged, but it will likewise prompt us to be considerate toward others, and to "speak evil of no man."

* * * *

Our comprehension of the distinct character of Christ's kingdom, and its separation from the worldly kingdom, as also a comprehension of the difference between the Law and the Gospel, indicate to what extent we have come under the enlightening influence of God's grace, under which, alone, we can comprehend what Christian living means and requires.

* * * *

We may comfort ourselves with the thought that, having wronged another, by confessing our fault and receiving forgiveness, the wrong is undone or again righted; but it is not always so. We can easily commit wrongs that can never be undone. God and man may forgive us, but a wrong done in some unguarded moment may be beyond our recall and the harmful effects continue on and on.

* * * *

The obedience which true believers render to gospel teaching can never be given as a compulsory service. It can only be given as a voluntary expression of gratitude and love welling up in our hearts, for the service which the Lord has rendered for us and continues to

render. Obedience so rendered is the fullest and most effective expression of gratitude and love that mortal beings can give in an earthly life.

* * * *

“Blessed are the poor in spirit; for their’s is the kingdom of heaven.” That was the Savior’s first utterance in His Sermon on the Mount. When we see that persons of high intellectual attainments, who have entered deep into studies of theology, are confused and grope blindly, evidently lacking gospel light, is it not because they have not become spiritually poor, self-abased, humble, unselfish and non-worldly, all of which are necessary qualifications for spiritual enlightenment and Christian living?

* * * *

The Apostle’s reminder was that “Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God’s.” Our service, humbly rendered in love, by which God is glorified, is not only in outward acts, but also in secret thoughts, motives and desires which we cherish in our hearts. We likewise feel that our failings, daily, if not hourly deplored, and for which we constantly need the Savior’s intercession, are not only acts committed or omitted, but the defilement is likewise within, in idle if not evil thoughts, while we would desire that our expression of love to God would be with all our powers of body, mind and spirit.

* * * *

No matter what manner of life may have been lived, many are still comforted with the scriptural promise of “rest.” But the promise is, “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” Our natural appreciation of rest is greatest when our tasks and labor are

hardest. In Christian living there is an incessant spiritual conflict and labor, and the promise of future blessedness is only to “the dead which die in the Lord.” “Yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.”

When there is no self-denial practiced there is no conflict; and when we have not become spiritually awake we can perform no spiritual labor, and can have no conception of the rest that remaineth to the people of God.

To the people of God, when the conflict is greatest, within and without, many times bringing them into great tribulations, there are many comforting thoughts in the scripture promises of rest, which afford a sure anchor, as it were, upon troubled waters; and under the greatest tribulations it may bring to us thrills of joy that can never be told, and which none others than those who have the experience may ever know.

What a sublime thought is presented in the multitude before the throne and before the Lamb, as shown to St. John, Rev. 7: 9, 17. “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” And they shall be led “unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

* * * *

A certain writer, who devoted several hours daily to systematic thinking, when asked what impressed him most in his meditations, replied: “The moral law within, and the starry heavens without.” These are alike objects in a great design, in which our subservience and dependence should elicit from us gratitude, reverence and homage to the Great Designer. The starry heavens have had this effect upon man from the early dawn of civilization; but the full measure of

expressed gratitude, reverence and homage can never be given without a knowledge and comprehension of the purpose and design of the moral law within, which, to its intents and purposes is the same as that given through Moses, requiring righteousness and holiness. This should be to us a worthy theme for meditation; for it is a part of God's design, so sublime and awe-inspiring that no other theme for meditation and contemplation can surpass it in importance.

Its primary purpose is to impress upon us the fact that we cannot fulfil or meet the requirements of righteousness and holiness to fit us for association and fellowship with our God. By this knowledge only, can we be led on through self-abasement and humility, and through the offering on Calvary to Christian living as an expression of gratitude and love, because of the Savior's intercession, and redemption. The happy culmination, at the close of this earthly life, will be such expressions of reverence and homage as to constitute the high songs of eternity! What a sublime and inspiring thought to finally be among the number of those who, "having the harps of God," and "sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works Lord God Almighty!" Rev. 15: 3.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Where did the name "Mennonite" originate?

A. Menno Simon, who lived from 1496 to 1559, became a priest of the Roman Catholic Church in 1524. He became disturbed, first regarding infant baptism, read the Scriptures and discovered his error. The beheading of a Godfearing man named Sikke Snyder because he was re-baptized led him to reflect,

and seek for the truth. He says, "I examined the Scriptures with diligence and earnest application, but could find nothing concerning infant baptism." He became convinced of many other errors in the doctrine he professed, but was not willing to humble himself and take up the cross of Christ until 1536 when he says the gracious Lord granted him His Holy Spirit. About one year later, at the earnest solicitation of a small body of brethren with whom he was of one heart and soul, he became a minister. He fearlessly declared God's will and had many followers. It is from this worthy man that the name "Mennonite" sprung. Menno Simon's Complete Works fully set forth the doctrine of Christ, as it was taught by Christ, the Apostles, and the little persecuted flock that appeared during the centuries before Menno Simon lived, and which is today upheld by every one entitled to the name "Mennonite."

Q. Why were Christians persecuted in centuries gone by?

A. Because they testified against, by separation from, all false worship. As the dominant church was under the protection of the state, this testimony was considered a direct affront to the government.

Q. How are we to discern the line between the Church and the world?

A. All faithful members of God's Church on earth earnestly desire to show forth in their lives the fruits of love, joy, peace, humility, condescension and obedience, the effect being fellowship. In the world we find division, confusion, pride, jealousy and an unwillingness to yield obedience to the whole Word of God. The line of separation should not be hard to see.

Q. If salvation is a free gift, what advantage is there in church membership?

A. While salvation is the gift of God, all who accept this gift assume, through love, certain responsibilities. They have a care one for the other that the spiritual life may be preserved; reminding one another of their duties, if necessary, that the gift may not be lost through indifference. The Church is by Divine appointment and serves as a home for the redeemed on earth and is a refuge for all penitent souls who accept the gift of salvation.

Q. Are all members of the church required to walk by the same rule?

A. It could not be otherwise since there is but one Head.

Q. Is the counsel given by the apostle Paul in his Epistles to the first Church to be applied to the present-day Church?

A. Yes. Inasmuch as no one ever lived, vested with power to change the plan of salvation then in force.

Q. What is the perfect law of liberty?

A. The Gospel of Christ is the perfect law of liberty. It frees us from the Jewish law, from sin and guilt and wrath and death. The ceremonial law was a yoke of bondage.

Q. What is the strongest testimony Christians can give against the unbelieving world?

A. Walking in full obedience to all gospel teachings, and giving unmistakable evidence of contentment in the humble walk prescribed by the Master, no matter how great the cross may appear or how narrow the way.

Q. What are we to understand by Christians being nonresistant?

A. The principle of nonresistance arises from a desire to purge from the heart all thoughts and promptings of enmity, hatred, violence, envy and ill will. A true nonresistant, therefore, will not be a party to strife either in the family circle or in civil and political affairs. He will not aggress by suit at

law, nor will he be associated in business with those that do aggress by law to enforce their rights.

Q. What is meant by the third heaven, 2 Cor. 12: 2?

A. This expression is not found elsewhere in the Scriptures, and as it is not of a doctrinal nature, many have different interpretations without doing violence to the spirit of the Gospel. According to history, the Jews believed in three heavens. The first—the air in which the birds fly, the second—the firmament in which the stars are fixed, the third—the region of glory in which God dwells. As Paul was a Jew he may have meant by the third heaven the place of glory revealed to him in his vision.

Spiritually it might represent, first—the new birth, changing our earthly desires to heavenly ones which is the first step toward perfect happiness in this life. Second might represent death (a sleep). We read, that they “should rest for a little season. . . . Yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors.” Rev. 6: 11, 14: 13. And the third—the final state of glory. If we accept this interpretation, we must suppose that Paul was caught up into the third heaven only in a vision, and the unspeakable words that he heard were for his encouragement but were not lawful to utter lest he, Paul, might glory in that which had been revealed to him.

SUPPLICATION

Dear Lord, be with us now we pray
While bowed with grief we stand;
The night is dark, be Thou our stay
Gethsemane at hand.

Be with us when our path is drear
No human helper nigh,
No voice to whisper words of cheer
O! then to Thee we fly.

The turbulence of the sect was alarming to constituted authorities, its bestiality disgraceful to the cause of religious reformation. The evil spirit, driven out of Luther, seemed, in orthodox eyes, to have taken possession of a herd of swine. The Germans, Monzer and Hoffman, had been succeeded, as chief prophets, by a dutch baker, named Matthiaszoon, of Haarlem, who announced himself as Enoek. Chief of this man's disciples was the notorious John Bockhold, of Leyden. Under the government of this prophet, the anabaptists mastered the city of Monster. Here they confiscated property, plundered churches, violated females, murdered men who refused to join the gang, and in brief, practiced all the enormities which humanity alone can conceive or perpetrate. "Historians' History of the World," Vol. 13, page 378. Is it any wonder that the true believers of that day despised the name anabaptist?

Menno Simon, both orally and in his writings, entirely disowned any connection with these lawless people; yet they were often classed with them by many of that day who failed to investigate charges brought against them. As a consequence innocent upright persons often suffered for the deeds of the lawless as is stated by the same historian on page 379, Vol. 13. "Unfortunately the severity of government was not wreaked alone upon the prophet and his mischievous crew. Thousands and ten thousands of virtuous well-disposed men and women, who had as little sympathy with anabaptistical as with Roman depravity, were butchered in cold blood, under sanguinary rule of Charles fifth of the Netherlands. In 1535 an imperial edict was issued at Brussels, condemning all heretics to death." We have quoted these historical facts to show how little recognition was given to the poor de-

fenseless Christians who refused to accept infant baptism as being scriptural. When they baptized converts, who had been baptized in their infancy, they were charged with heresy, no matter how exemplary their lives had been.

The baptism of believers who had received the ordinance in their infancy was then as now falsely called re-baptism. In "Martyrs Mirror" (a most worthy work of Tilman J. Van Bracht) there is much recorded regarding differences between the great Reformers and the defenseless Christians. Comparing that book and the writings of Menno Simon with other historians of that day we are convinced that much of the persecution suffered by the defenseless Christians was due to an imperfect knowledge of their faith by the authorities. Many irregularities and inconsistencies were charged against them of which they never were guilty. They bore it all patiently and firmly adhered to New Testament teachings, and held that Christ had but one church of which He (Christ) is the head. They held that every faithful member of that church followed the example and teaching of its head, and as a consequence could never persecute anyone, but humbly submit to all abuse and slander, and cling together in one united body in obedience to the head. If we, as professed Christians, are not united in doctrine, and do not walk in obedience to the counsel of the head of the church, we deceive ourselves.

Lancaster, Pa.

J. L. K.

AVOIDANCE

"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. 2: 17.

God's word rules all things, and departure from it brings loss to the transgressor. Death means the loss of life. Our first parents by their loss of life

were banned from fellowship with God in Eden. For disobedience Cain became a fugitive. All that disobeyed God's word in Noah's time lost their lives. Two hundred and fifty princes of the Israelites with their families were swallowed up by the earth for rebelling against Moses whom God had appointed for their leader. Three thousand of the Israelites were slain for worshiping the golden calf while Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the Law. Twenty-four thousand of the chosen people perished for committing idolatry with the Moabites. All these sacrifices were a ban for disobedience to God's word. The integrity of God's word is upheld by placing a ban upon all transgressions. The physical calamities happening in the natural realm and our bodily afflictions may be a ban for our transgressions. The commercial distress occurring at times may be caused by a reaction of our extremes. All penalties seem to be the effect of transgressions.

The more strictly we obey the Divine law the more reward we have here, and the stronger our assurance of future reward. The law of conscience is delicate, needing vigilant care to follow its promptings.

In all human organizations the ban of dismissal is needed when members fail in their duty.

When Christ gave the plan for His Church He outlined it as a sheepfold for protection, calling His disciples sheep, and others He termed wolves. He calls himself the shepherd. A shepherd expels wolves from the sheepfold. The doctrine of the Shepherd requires a regenerated life to fit one for a place in the Fold. The nature of fellowship in the sheep is used as a type of the love among the redeemed, which unites them to labor for the happiness of every member of the Church. Fellowship

rests on the confidence which members have in one another. When disloyalty to the profession is shown by a member it is a trespass and every devoted member is concerned to have the Church cleansed from the dishonor by the means appointed by the Head of the Church. If repentance is not shown the trespasser has lost the spirit of membership and is to be dismissed until repentance makes him worthy of membership. A wolf in the sheepfold is dangerous; so sinners in the Church cause confusion. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." The Savior taught a dismissal, which includes more than avoidance in church ordinances, for He said of an impenitent brother, "Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." This command was given to His disciples; Peter, according to the narrative, being one of them, and when he afterward came by Divine guidance to the Gentile (heathen) family of Cornelius he expressed what he knew of the custom of the Jews by saying: "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should call no man common or unclean." Acts 10: 28. The visit to Cornelius was about nine years after the Savior had given the command, "Let him be unto thee as an heathen man"; which is evidence that the disciples understood that a fallen member's company is to be entirely avoided, as they avoided the heathens socially. True, this circumstance convinced Peter that he may associate with a believing Gentile, but it did not prove to him that unbelieving heathens may be companied with, nor would the other disciples be impressed that they may disregard the social ban against the heathens because of this single instance. As the Savior mentioned an example

relating to "heathens and publicans," with which His disciples were familiar, they would accept it as a rule in the Church to avoid socially impenitent members. Even the Samaritan woman who met the Savior at Jacob's well, knew the Jewish ban observed towards those who had false worship, for when the Savior with a purpose in view, asked water of her she knew that it was an unusual thing for a Jew to ask such a courtesy of a Samaritan, who was neither a heathen nor a publican, only their worship was not sound, for which cause the Jews had no company with them. John 4: 9. The Gentiles, called heathens, were not barbarians, but on account of their idolatry the Jews were to avoid them. They had learned men, as we find evidence in their orators, their works of art and their strong cities.

The publicans were the collectors of the taxes for the Roman government who were odious to the Jews because they felt that God's people should not pay tax to the pagans. They reprovved them by not eating with them the same as they did open sinners. The statutes of Moses forbade marriage with the heathens, and we have no account that the Savior ever ate with them, but there was no divine command against eating with publicans and sinners. It was a human prohibition not to do so, which the Savior did not regard, but nevertheless made it a rule in the Church against apostates, as His disciples in few words could understand the rule.

Paul, the founder of churches, knew methods of reproof. He teaches mild methods and extreme ones. He writes to the Corinthians, Galatians and Thessalonians on reproof. In writing to the Corinthians that they should not have company nor eat with sinners he says he does not mean those "of this world,"

for to avoid them "then must ye needs go out of the world." He allows us to infer that there are so many sinners as to make social avoidance impossible. In this permission to have company and to eat with worldly sinners he cannot mean the Lord's Supper as that is given only to the disciples. The eating therefore is the common meal, which we may eat with worldly sinners, but not with apostates. The purpose of this avoidance is to mortify the apostate, as Paul says: "For the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved." If anyone should question the right to judge in such a case let him note the expression: I "as absent in the body, but present in the spirit, have judged already." He had sure evidence of the fact. 1 Cor. 5: 3. When we have sure evidence of transgression we do not violate a Gospel principle when we judge the transgressor.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

KING SAUL'S REIGN

The children of Israel thought if they had a king as other nations to lead them into battle, they would be delivered from the power of their enemies.

But after Saul had reigned two years, the Philistines grew stronger and robbed the Israelites, keeping them in great fear.

Saul called an army of three thousand men and kept two thousand with him, while his son Jonathan took the remainder with him to Gibeah and the rest of the people returned to their homes. Jonathan attacked and smote the garrison of the Philistines in Geba. With this attack they began to throw off the yoke of the Philistines. The latter were taken by surprise and prepared a large army to go against Israel. King Saul then called on the people to come and

help. The people came but were unarmed as they had not been allowed to have a smith to fit or fashion any weapons, while the Philistines were fully armed. King Saul and his son Jonathan were the only ones who had suits of armor to protect them. The men of Israel came trembling and many hid themselves in caves and thickets.

Samuel sent word to king Saul to remain in Gilgal and in seven days he would come and offer sacrifice and the Lord would tell him what to do.

Saul became impatient and did not wait until the seven days had expired but called for the burnt offering and offered it himself. This was contrary to the Lord's commands as no one but the priest was to offer sacrifice. Samuel came just as Saul had finished. Samuel met him and asked what he had done. Saul excused himself by saying, Samuel's coming was delayed, the Philistines were coming upon them and he feared the people would leave him. No doubt Saul was sincere in what he said, but Samuel told him he had done wrong. The Lord would have kept him safely had he been obedient. He told Saul his kingdom would not continue and that God would choose another king in his stead.

Saul led his small army to Geba. While there, Jonathan said to his armor bearer "Let us go over to the garrison of the Philistines, it may be the Lord will help us for there is no restraint with the Lord to save by many, or by few. . . . If they say unto us, 'tarry until we come,' we will remain here, but if they say, 'Come over' we will go to them." When the Philistine guards saw the two men they said, "Come up to us and we will show you something." Jonathan and his armor bearer went up stealthily and attacked them, some were slain and the rest fled.

The Philistines were terrified and panic stricken, it seemed as if the earth quaked and they became confused and began beating down each other. Saul saw that the army was melting away but did not know that Jonathan attacked the garrison. Saul collected his army and pursued the fleeing Philistines and a great victory was gained.

Saul had issued an order that no man should taste food that day under pain of death. He feared they would lose time in pursuing the Philistines, but he was unwise, as his men grew faint and weary. Jonathan did not know of his father's order, and finding some honey in the wood, he tasted of it and his strength was renewed. For this disobedience Saul would have had him put to death, but the people interfered and saved his life.

After this Saul seemed to prosper and overcome his enemies. Abner, a cousin of Saul, was captain of the army.

The Amalekites were a people who lived in the desert country where the Israelites had wandered for forty years. They had been very cruel and had killed many of the helpless people and the Lord had said, Amalek as a nation, should be utterly destroyed. The time to carry out God's purpose had now come and Samuel told Saul to go and smite Amalek and destroy them utterly, save nothing alive.

Saul went as he was told to do and destroyed their city, but he brought Agag their king captive and a great train of sheep and oxen with them, on their return.

The Lord told Samuel, Saul had disobeyed Him and turned back from following Him and his kingdom should not remain with him. Samuel was grieved and wept and prayed all night unto the Lord. He went early the next morning and when Saul saw him, he said, "Blessed be

thou of the Lord, I have performed the Lord's commandment."

Samuel then asked the meaning of the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen which he heard. Saul replied, the people saved the best of the sheep and the oxen to sacrifice unto the Lord.

Samuel then said, "Stay, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night." Saul replied, "Say on." Samuel said, "When thou wast little in thy own sight, thou wast made head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king. The Lord sent thee to destroy the Amalekites until they be consumed. Wherefore didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord?"

Saul said, "The people have taken of the spoil, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord." Samuel then said, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obedience? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king."

Saul said, "I have sinned because I feared and obeyed the voice of the people. Now therefore pardon my sin and turn again with me that I may worship the Lord."

Samuel turned away but Saul took hold of Samuel's garment and it tore in his hands. Samuel then said, "Even so God hath torn the kingdom away from you and hath given it to another. What God hath purposed He will bring to pass."

Saul begged Samuel to go with him and honor him before the people. Samuel went with him and worshipped with him. But Samuel then returned to his home in Ramah and came no more to see

Saul, but he mourned continually over Saul's misfortune and his fall.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

A CHILD'S STORY

THE STORY OF STEPHEN

My dear little Children:

I know you like to hear about great men and heroes. You will learn from history about many great men who lived in the past. Columbus, Washington, Franklin, Lincoln and some others, who were all great men and examples for us to follow.

Stephen was the first man who gave his life for the faith he had in Jesus. He was a wonderful man and we think of him and the many others, who also died in defending their faith in Jesus, as being the greatest of all heroes.

When the Apostles began to preach and tell the people what Jesus had said, there were some who complained that the poor and the widows among them were not cared for. The twelve Apostles called the great number of disciples together and told them of this. They said that as they were busy with their work of preaching, and could not attend to it, they should "Look out among them seven men of honest report, men of wisdom and appoint them over this business." And this advice pleased them all very much, and among the seven appointed or selected the first named was Stephen, a good man who had great faith. This is the first we read of Stephen. These seven men were "Set before the Apostles and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them."

We read that Stephen was full of faith and power, and that he did great wonders and miracles among the people and they had to say that he told them the

truth. But there were among them wicked men, who stirred up the people and asked them to tell untruths about Stephen. They caught him and brought him before the men who sat as Judges, and told evil stories of Stephen. Those who listened "Looked steadfastly on him, and saw his face as if it had been the face of an angel." The high priests said, "Are these things so?" Stephen began to answer, "Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken: The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham and told him to leave his country and kindred, and go into a land which He would show him. That his children should live in this strange land and work hard and be badly treated for four hundred years, after that He would bring them out, and punish the wicked rulers and give them, His People, a land that flowed with milk and honey." Stephen here preached a wonderful sermon, it would make this story too long to tell it all as I would like to do, but it was a history of all that had happened in past years. He told them how God even in early history or at that time had given to Abraham the promise of Jesus coming, and of Moses being born and raised up to tell and remind them that Jesus would come and that they should hear Him. It seems as

if Stephen felt that he must close his talk, but he stood up a hero for the faith he had in Jesus. He told them they were doing just as their fathers did. Their fathers had killed the prophets, who told them of Jesus coming, and now they too had become the betrayers and murderers of Jesus. While all this was the truth it made the people very angry.

Stephen here seemed to have a wonderful vision and he looked up and said, "Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." This made them feel still worse and they ran upon him and cast him out of the city and began to stone him. Stephen kneeled down and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Lord lay not this sin to their charge," and when he had said this he fell asleep.

While all this was being done, there was a young man seeing and hearing it all. He even consented to Stephen's death and held the extra clothing of those who stoned Stephen. Afterward this young man had a wonderful history and I would like to tell you of it some-time later, perhaps until then you can find out his name, and something about him.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.