

GOOD TIDINGS

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

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EDITORIAL

With the advent of the New Year, naturally the mind is directed to the passing of time, and it is impressive that mankind, too, is passing.

In reviewing the events of the past year, there have been many and varied experiences, some of which may bring pleasant memories, while others may be recalled with regret and sorrow.

Misspent time may be a cause for regret, and the separation from near and dear ones through death has brought much sorrow—sorrow at the loss of those who were recognized with deep regard and respect in the world for the gracious gifts they possessed, and for their ability to give valuable counsel in both natural and spiritual matters. These and many other events are recorded on the annals of time.

From a knowledge of past years it is reasonable to believe that the events of the coming year in general will not be so very different from that which has occurred in the past, while the future is concealed from view, time in its flight is marked by much similarity. The words of the Psalmist are fitting—"We spend our years as a tale that is told;" but with this truth and in the same Psalm (90th) David also gave the wise

counsel, "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

Those who are directly interested in the publishing of GOOD TIDINGS have met with a grievous loss in the recent death of Bishop Elias H. Hershey. The loss of his support and earnest interest and effort for the continuance and success of this publication will be keenly felt, not only by the publishers but by all who are interested in reading the messages.

Early in the year of 1922 Bishop Hershey conceived the thought that a periodical published by the church would be encouraging to the believers, especially isolated members, and that it would be interesting and instructive to all seekers after "Truth."

In July, 1922, the first issue of the paper appeared, copies of which were sent to all the churches located at various places in the United States and Canada. It met with general approval and with urgent requests to have it continued. May God's blessing attend all further effort in the publication of GOOD TIDINGS.

Letters from subscribers are constantly being received, showing appreciation and encouragement.

We believe it would be interesting to publish a few of the many sentiments expressed relative to the publication—a few recent ones are as follows:

"If you could fully realize the benefit GOOD TIDINGS confers spiritually, and the comfort and cheer it brings to many hearts, you would feel amply repaid for your labor."

"May God grant grace and courage to continue the good work you are engaged in," etc.

"The messages are so full of good tidings—we need them and hope God sees fit to bless us with them."

"We hope we can always have our little church paper."

"How we do enjoy its many messages; they are food for the spiritual mind and a great encouragement to the fellow believers. We hope, too, it may be the agency through which many may be led to reflect upon the great purpose of life."

These are a few of the expressions of appreciation from patrons, and should be an incentive to contributors to continue writing. Should contributors notice that their writings are not published, they will please remember that these writings are not always rejected, or considered unsuitable for publication, but in compiling articles for each number, order in the selection of subjects is recognized. However, if for any reason it may seem best not to publish an article, the writer should view his effort in the light of a helpful experience both in meditation and in the expression of thought.

Read and observe the spirit contained in ~~Rev~~ ^{mark} 12: 41, 42, 43, 44.

REFLECTIONS ON LIFE AND DEATH

Our beloved brother in faith, Elias H. Hershey, of Lancaster, Pa., who after many years of labor in the vineyard of the Lord, has recently passed over into the great beyond. We mourn his departure. We also mourn the loss of our beloved brethren, Christian A. Herr and Abraham Sowers, of Ohio, who departed this life during the past year. Death always brings sorrow to the heart when those whom we love and cherish are removed from this mortal life. They were faithful shepherds, having been active and zealous in their spiritual vocation. They have now left us; we will miss their words of consolation and their loving appeals to faithfulness, watchfulness and obedience. We hope that the word of life which they have faithfully ex-

pounded will not return void, but may prove unto many, a "Savor of life unto life." May the good seed which they have so diligently sown bring forth fruit plentifully unto eternal life. They gave evidence that their heart work was the salvation of souls. Truly we may say of them: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Rev. 14: 13. Should we then sorrow for our beloved brethren?

They, like all of us, had many conflicts, many disappointments, many sorrows and bereavements in this mortal life, but by the grace of God we believe they overcame, and won the victory, and are now at rest. We do not mean to eulogize them in these reflections, for to God belongs all glory and praise, but only to refer to their life's work, that it may be an inspiration to us who remain—that we may endeavor to follow their worthy example and remember the blessed doctrine which they so earnestly taught, and thus be faithful "witnesses of the truth upon the earth." They were never fully satisfied with their work, but confessed infirmity and imperfection. They gave God the praise for what they in weakness accomplished; so may we give praise and gratitude to God for having qualified them to serve us in the capacity of ambassadors of Christ Jesus. May they rest in peace, and we bear the loss with fortitude, believing our loss is their gain.

We, too, have a glorious prospect for the world to come, for the apostle Paul says, the crown of righteousness is not promised to me only, "but unto all them also that love His appearing." 2 Tim. 4: 8. This is the day of opportunity, and if we fail to embrace it *today*, we may have to lament our folly through all eternity. The finite mind cannot grasp

the meaning of eternity, or the extremely great contrast between the destiny of a soul that is saved and one that is lost! On the one hand, ages of ecstatic bliss and glory with the angelic throng, "where there will be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Rev. 21: 4. On the other hand, O fearful doom! eternal night! where there shall be "wailing and gnashing of teeth." Matt. 13: 42. We can all be saved, but we must believe in the Lord Jesus who is the Savior, and we must "work while it is day."

CHRISTMAS DAY

This day commemorates the birth
When Christ our Lord was born on earth,
God's own dear Son, a gift from heaven,
His birth fulfilled the promise given.

The Shepherds were the first to see
And hear the angel's symphony,
So wondrous was the heavenly sight
That shone with such resplendent light.

And while they gazed with dread and fear
They heard these blessed words of cheer:
"Fear not: good tidings now I bring,
The Christ is born of whom we sing."

The heavenly host then joined in praise
Sang of His birth in sweetest lays.
Great joy to all on earth is given,
The Christ is born, the Lord from heaven.

O may our hearts with rapture swell
Whene'er the birth of Christ we tell.
He came to ransom us from sin
That life eternal we may win.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

JOYFUL TIDINGS

Time in its ceaseless roll has again brought us to the season when the birth of our blessed Savior is commemorated. May the whole human family call to remembrance God's love and mercy in

sending to earth His only begotten Son. Should not the transcending theme of men and angels be the redemption of man from the bondage of sin? It is a theme that is old yet ever new.

We read that the angel of the Lord announced the good tidings of the Savior's birth to shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. The angel appeared unto them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. The angel said, "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior which is Christ, the Lord." The angel was joined by a multitude of the heavenly host who sang the sweetest song ever heard upon earth. No wonder the angels rejoiced and joined the rapturous refrain, "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men," since man's redemption was nigh. The Savior of the world had come, the new-born King of whose government and peace there should be no end.

When the angels were gone the shepherds went in haste to Bethlehem and found the Babe lying in a manger. The place of our Savior's birth and its attendant circumstances were significant of His later life and teaching. He sought no earthly honor or fame. Lowliness or humility are characteristic of the Christ life.

Then came the wise men from the East seeking the new-born King, saying "we have seen His star in the East and are come to worship Him." The star went before them and led them to Bethlehem where with great joy they found the young child and they fell down and worshipped Him, offering their gifts.

The star that led the Wise Men may fittingly symbolize "the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh

into the world." Our Savior in His ministry testified, "I am come a light into the world that whosoever believeth on me shall not abide in darkness." The Savior's appeal to all is, "Come, O come."

Our guiding star, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men." Every awakened soul who with purpose of heart will follow His revealed light will be led as were the Wise Men by the star to the feet of Jesus. The Wise Men opened their treasures and presented unto Him rich gifts. Unlike the Wise Men the soul, poor and contrite, has no earthly gifts to offer, but with humble prayerful hearts will worship Him. But our Savior in compassionate love receives the offering of an humble and contrite heart. The soul that is poor and undone receives such a measure of His love that with the Prophet he rejoices, saying, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord. . . . For He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation. He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

Another year of the time our Creator has allotted us is past. So swift is the flight of time that to many souls the day of grace may soon be past. Would that all souls who have not already heeded the Savior's call would realize that "here we have no continuing city" and would seek one to come.

On the eve of the New Year may all awakened hearts heed the grace of God, our guiding Star, and follow the light which leads to the feet of Jesus. The gift of salvation is placed within the reach of every soul but it is not imposed upon us. It is improbable that any one would refuse rest of soul. But if we neglect to open our hearts to the light and are not led to the feet of Jesus to offer our gifts of love and obedience, we

do not receive the benefit of "the good tidings of joy."

Hagerstown, Md.

E. S. L.

CHRISTMAS

About two thousand years ago, while the shepherds of Bethlehem were keeping watch over their flocks by night, they were visited by an angel who spake to them in these comforting words, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Luke 2: 10, 11. We can scarcely imagine how these shepherds felt by the presence of such a visitor, in the quiet hours of the night; but their fear was turned to awe and admiration when "suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." Luke 2: 13, 14.

What a wonderful demonstration of God's power and love this must have been to these humble shepherds, but how soon they were left quite alone to ponder over and discuss with one another this great wonder that had appeared to them. The shepherds at once proved by faith and obedience that they believed the words spoken to them by the angel. They did not conclude in their reasoning that surely the Savior would not be born at Bethlehem, or that the Son of God would not be found lying in a manger, as the angel had told them, but they said one to another, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger." Luke 2: 15, 16.

How mysterious are the ways of God; we may, like these shepherds, be engaged in a very humble calling, perhaps meditating upon the goodness of God, or we may be so occupied by our daily duties that apparently we have no interest in heavenly things. No matter what our calling is we can rest assured that the angel of the Lord will at some time appear unto us. According to promise, God's grace appears to all. This grace, like the angel that appeared to the shepherds, directs us to the lowly Savior. If we recognize this to be the grace of God, it will cause us to fear, knowing that we cannot stand before a holy God. "Fear not" will be the message of the spirit to all the penitent. I will guide you into all truth if you will obey my voice.

The shepherds confessed to one another implicit faith in what had been told them. To-day God speaks to us through His written Word and by His holy Spirit. We might compare the angel to the Word which teaches us to accept it by faith, and through obedience to its teachings we will find the lowly Savior. When we are convinced that there is a Christ and that He is our only means of salvation, we should, like the shepherds, come with haste to find Him. When we find Jesus we should at once confess Him by making known abroad the things which were told us by the Word and Spirit concerning Him.

As we celebrate this Christmas day we should reflect on the lowly manner in which our Savior was born and consider whether or not we have become one of the lowly ones, who are willing to follow the example of Him who was laid in the manger, because there was no room for Him in the Inn. If we follow our proud nature and seek the praise of men, the Word and Spirit of the Lord will not be a comfort to us. In order to

possess the true Christmas spirit we must live at peace with all men, "as far as in us lieth." May we by example convey to our fellowmen that our spirit is in harmony with the sentiment voiced by the heavenly host: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men."

Lancaster, Pa.

J. L. K.

THE OLD AND NEW YEAR

The Old Year has gone, the New Year has come, impressing us that time is fleeting and that the "days of the years of our pilgrimage" are fast drawing to a close. In the silent march of the years, in the eternity of the past, what changes have been wrought!

One generation follows another to the grave. Their names have been blotted out of memory and the "places that knew them shall know them no more." This, however, applies to us only naturally, the soul has a destiny which reaches beyond this life, beyond this world, beyond this death which casts a gloom over all flesh—the soul is immortal. And if by patient continuance in well-doing, they that are gone sought for glory, honor, immortality and eternal life, their names are enrolled in the Lamb's book of life and they shall come forth to a joyous resurrection.

We who are yet on the stage of this life are in the day of opportunity, the day of grace. We have enjoyed this blessing through all the days of the Old Year, and in endeavoring to live a Godly life in Christ Jesus, we have had many evidences of our weakness. We would fain erase from memory's page many exercises, many thoughts and emotions that were more carnal than spiritual. Though we may have repented of all these sins of infirmity, yet the memory of them lingers, and they leave many regrets and lead to deep abasement.

This, however, may be a blessing in disguise, for it tends to humility of heart and is a rebuke to our human nature, which is proud and deplores failure.

In entering the New Year let not the experience of the past discourage us, but let us profit by our failures and with new zeal and fervor let us "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3: 14. "My grace is sufficient for thee" was not intended only for the apostle Paul, but it will be extended to all believers to the end of time. Our Savior, Redeemer and Mediator will not fail in His ministration of love, mercy and forgiveness, through all the days of this year, for "He is the same yesterday, to-day and forever." He will never leave nor forsake us, but has promised to be with us "always even unto the end of the world."

This promise, however, is conditional, for we must obey His commands. We must in this New Year not fail to live in self-denial and non-conformity to the world. We are not to mind high things but condescend to men of low estate, to live in unity, fellowship and peace. We should not worry and anticipate trouble by being anxious concerning our ability to keep the faith during the coming year, but we should live in Godly fear for this day—to-morrow may never come to us. The Savior said, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Matt. 6: 34.

This year may be the last one for many of us—we know not. Our prayer should be, "Lord make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee." Psalm 39: 4, 5. Truly, what is our short life compared with

eternity? Eternity, how fraught with meaning to the soul! How precious is this time! It is allotted unto us by God to glorify Him here and to prepare the soul for an eternity of glory and happiness. Let us embrace the opportunity, and "work while it is day before the night (of death) cometh, when no man can work."

It is sorrowful that many apparently are heedless of the rapid passing of time, and the nearing of eternity. They may have passed through the Old Year living in vain by frustrating the grace of God, and they may enter the New Year by making resolutions to live a better life; but if they purpose to accomplish this by their own power, they will continue to live in vain.

To fulfill the object and purpose of our creation we must be reconciled with God—we must repent—for we all are sinners by nature. We must accept and believe in Jesus. He will delegate power unto us to overcome the Devil, the world and our fleshly lusts. He will make of us "new creatures," hence we will no more put our trust in good works nor will we try in vain to fulfill good resolutions.

What a blessing is the New Year to the children of men! Though destruction is impending over the world, and death is inevitable, yet God in His mercy and love delays the time. To Him "a thousand years is as one day and one day as a thousand years," and He is long-suffering toward us, not willing that one soul should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

In bidding adieu to the Old Year let us welcome the New Year as a multiplied blessing from God, and not waste its precious days. Let us say with the Psalmist, "But as for me, my prayer is unto Thee, O Lord, in an acceptable time; O God, in the multitude of Thy

mercy hear me in the truth of thy salvation."

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

REFLECTIONS ON TIME

Another year has passed, the record is written, before us are the unknown days of another year. We expect there will be seed time and harvest in this new year as in the past; we expect this, because we regard what the Lord said in His heart, after Noah had offered burnt offerings upon the altar he had built unto the Lord: "While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." Gen. 8: 22.

Many of us have made plans and resolutions which we expect to carry into effect this year. A great many are seeking "a good time," with little regard to its cost or consequences, a few are striving to heed the counsel of the Lord and to follow after the example of His only begotten and well-beloved Son, the Lord and Savior, of Whom we read in Isaiah 61: 1, 2, 3, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty unto the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified."

This promise which God made to them of old, and fulfilled in the fullness of

time, should interest every soul which has come to years of understanding, for His Son has proclaimed the acceptable year of the Father, the Lord. The apostle Paul wrote to the Hebrews, "While it is said, To-day if ye harden not your hearts, as in the provocation;" and also, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him."

This new year then is one of golden opportunity to those to whom the Lord Jesus brings good tidings of great joy. To the broken-hearted, the promise is He will bind them up with the oil of gladness, if allowed to do so. To those who are captive and in prison, under the penalty of eternal death, liberty is proclaimed and the opening of the prison doors, that they be made free in this the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, for the Lord Jesus has taken all the armour from the strong man armed; and if we mourn because of our sinful condition He will comfort us, and give us the garment of praise, that we be called trees of righteousness the planting of the Lord, of which we read in Jer. 17: 7, 8, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when the heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drouth, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

This fruit shall be faithfulness and glory unto the Lord, for the unspeakable gift of His love, in this His acceptable year unto us, if we will hear His voice and hearken unto it, this will be a year of jubilee, a year wherein we will glorify God. Whether we have one day or three hundred and sixty-five will make but little difference if we can truly say with

the Apostle, "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain." Phil. 1: 21.

If we are alive through the blood of Jesus, this will be a year of gain and if we die, and die in the Lord, it will be great gain. This should be our chief concern in the year before us and all the days of our lives; then can we say with the Psalmist, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Glen Elder, Kansas.

E. F. S.

NEW YEAR THOUGHTS

In the year that has past and gone,
Has the best that is in us, been done,
Have we made every effort from morning till
night,
Whatever our duty, to do it right?

If in fault then may we reflect,
Has our conduct shown any defect?
Have we to our neighbor been kindly disposed,
Or have we through envy his welfare opposed?

Have sorrows, nigh brought us to grief,
From pain have we found no relief?
Ah, could we be patient though sad be our lot,
For sighing and fretting will ne'er bring us
aught.

As the past year now we review,
May we earnestly enter the new,
With a resolute will, more ardently strive
To show day by day the best that we have.

Fayetteville, Pa.

C. J. M.

GOD'S WORKS GLORIFY HIM

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard." Psalm 19: 1, 2, 3.

When we view the canopy stretched over us with its planets in their orbits coursing their airy tracks, always at their fixed places at the same moment, and see the glistening stars studding space too distant for our instruments to

measure, and consider that the Creator "brings out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might," we stand in awe before His majesty, and are overwhelmed by a sense of our littleness. The little wisdom we have is like rays streaming from the Great Center of all intelligence.

Some of God's attributes are given us, but "we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." These earthen vessels will perish and the glory which they reflect will cease here, but our imperishable part is to remain; and that, we are taught to give chief attention—the command being supremely reasonable as involving a purpose of high order in our being!

God draws our admiration to Him in the marvelous wisdom He displays in the field of nature, and teaches frailty in the short life He gives to the most beautiful of His works. But the Holy Ghost forbids us to draw honor to ourselves, since the thing made should not desire the honor belonging to him who made it. Therefore the Saviour, by "whom came grace and truth," is unsparing in His condemnation of all self-glory. "Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Regardless of the reproof, people feed the spirit of vanity, at an early age, in their children by flattery and giving them prominence; and they gratify themselves by all manner of display, serving "the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever." The sin which enticed our first parents was aspiration above that which God had appointed for them.

The counsel of the Teacher of truth is largely directed against this snare by which He found many entangled, and He laid bare the errors of worshipers

who seek human praise rather than the approval of Him who has created all, and to whom we are indebted for every endowment. The Savior's reproof opened a breach so wide between those whom He wanted to help and himself that nothing less than their cruel demand for His death would satisfy their bitter hatred. The hatred of darkness against light manifested itself for centuries against the disciples of the Master for upholding the doctrine of reproof which He gave, by them inflicting the most cruel tortures, not only by Pagans, but equally so by the strong sects of worshipers who claimed to be the Master's disciples, foretelling the prophecy spoken in Eden: "I will put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent." God is glorified in the sacrifice made by His Son, and in every sacrifice made by the followers of His Son when they subdue sin in the flesh under the rule of the Spirit.

The rule which Satan has placed in our flesh is an eternal barrier between us and holiness until we become willing to place ourselves under Divine rule, when "a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted." In this short saying the Savior illustrates His triumph over Satan, that in His fulfillment of the Holy Law He ended the power of its condemnation, which Satan had used, as an armor to shield himself, by saying before the atonement to the race, You are under the same condemnation as I am. As a victor in ancient warfare divided the spoils with his soldiers so our spiritual Victor shares His benefits to us who are willing to strive under Him by granting us pardon, peace and the promise of endless glory. "The accuser of our brethren is cast down which accused them before our God day and

night." Inspiration made Paul say: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."

Our Chief says: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." As true worship must show the fruits of the Spirit it follows that all worship not agreeing with God's word is false. His word is to judge us in the last day, and those that obey it are said to be "free indeed," while those who do not obey are servants to sin to receive its woeful wages!

Conscious that there is a Supreme Being, witnessed by His impressive works, all intelligent beings give Him homage, making worship common, even among heathens, it is utterly unpardonable that much worship is more in form than in agreement with the principles of God's word.

Knowing our dependence in all things the spirit of meekness is present in all true worshipers, and pride is detested. God deserves all glory, and none is due us who are the recipients of His blessings. Hence a true worshiper does not seek prominence or praise, nor is he sensitive to wrongs inflicted. He pities the wrong-doer for the fate awaiting him, seeking to rescue rather than to avenge.

The Son who glorified the Father gives evidence of true meekness in His patient suffering, in praying for His enemies, in all His doctrines. His doctrines are interpreted by His apostles to forbid us all outward show. Our native vanity is to be curbed. Our sense of frailty should teach us that God "remembereth that we are dust." We are subject to diseases, temptations, failings, and unexpected death. Then why should we glory, except in the Lord?

When God had created all else He created mankind, who need all that is

made for them. The responsibility rests upon the trustee to meet the wants of all that is in our keeping. Are we minded to use our trust faithfully that when the time of giving account comes we may have the praise of "having been faithful over a few things?" Do we endeavor to have a pure conscience under the light given us? Are we fighting valiantly as good soldiers for Him who "hath chosen us to be soldiers for Him," that we may honor the cause sanctified by greater sacrifices than we can make? Opposition in endless ways is experienced by the striver under the Great Captain, and vigilance for our safety is needed, but aid is promised to prevent the gates of hell from overcoming the redeemed. "If he be for us who can be against us?" The promises are unfailing—we may always be confident. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

DUTIES OF MINISTERS AND TEACHERS

"Then said He unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." Matt. 13: 52.

Jesus spake seven parables previous to the one of our text. A parable is a representation of something real, within the range of human experience, by the use of objects or images well known and applicable to the subject, the meaning of which is clear and definite. A parable may also very properly be considered an allegorical representation, by the use of some familiar being, plant or object, of that which is spiritual and abiding.

Jesus spoke about thirty parables, designed to illustrate His life, death, resurrection, and the restored spiritual life

and kingdom to the souls of men. In confirmation of which is the following: "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."

The scribes were teachers among the Jews at the time Jesus sojourned upon earth. Under the gospel dispensation the apostles and their successors became the authorized teachers. In the illustration of the qualification of gospel teachers Jesus uses the parable of our text—that of a householder, supposedly having a large family to provide for, and who provides for their present and future needs by continued additions to his store, so as to have a reserve to meet the requirements of his household. So also should the minister of the gospel, who is instructed by the indwelling spirit of Christ, unto the kingdom of heaven, have both an experimental and intellectual knowledge of the plan of salvation. He should be able to tell of conviction of sin, of repentance toward God, of faith in Jesus, of having tasted of the good word of God, of the powers of the world to come, and of being born again. This attainment may be classed among the things new. They are acquired under the new dispensation and are possessed by the individual believer, and notably by the teacher.

The scribe or teacher under the gospel not only gives evidence of his spiritual treasure by teaching, but also in the practice of self-denial, of prayerfulness and walking in the light, which is to obey the precepts of the gospel, and as a faithful shepherd go before the flock and lead them upon the green pastures of the gospel of Christ.

The heavenly treasure is love, which never fails. The scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, bringing out of his treasure things new; has a care of every one of his flock; he knows no one

after the flesh; he is no respecter of persons; the rich and the poor are alike precious to him, for he has the spirit of the Master.

If a minister confesses there are members in the church who do not live Christian lives and he does not do his duty of reproofing them, and of separating them from the church when they continue in disobedience, then he convicts himself—that he either has not the unfailing treasure of love in his heart or does not bring it out. According to these Scriptures: "Rebuke those that sin that others may fear. Withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly. Put away from yourselves that wicked person." If the treasure is love and is brought out and made available it cannot fail of accomplishing that for which it is designed, just as little as wisdom can fail of being justified of her children. The effect of the things new will be a united people, a people who love peace and who desire to keep their hearts pure; who are the same in their thoughts as in their actions; who are the same in the dark as in the light of day, and the same at home as abroad. They do not live double lives.

The things old may be considered the promises, the figures and types of the old or Bible dispensation. We read of the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Evidently in the divine purpose "unto Adam also and unto his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them." This is a sample of things called old. These coats were a manifest type of the effect of Christ crucified and Christ glorified. They are a type of the robe of righteousness and of the garment of salvation, the same as the best robe put upon the prodigal. Christ testified that all things written of Him by Moses and in the Psalms, and in the Prophets, must be fulfilled. There are numerous figures

foreshadowing Christ's death and resurrection, as well as prophecies foretelling the same; also the effects of the same upon those who will accept Him.

In Jeremiah it is written: "After those days saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts." The moral law was written in tables of stone and in the book of the law, and given to the Israelites. While this law is the embodiment of righteousness it could not save those to whom it was given because of their want of regeneration not yet come. But a promise was given that after those days the laws will be written in the heart, evidently to be understood after the days of that dispensation. The Lord Jesus testified of the truth of this prophecy, saying: "It is written they shall all be taught of God." These are, comparatively speaking, old things, but admittedly are very significant since the word of God cannot be broken. The above prophecy found its accomplishment on Pentecost and during all the time intervening since, and must do so until the end of this dispensation. The scribe or teacher instructed unto the kingdom of heaven will surely bring out from his treasure these things, since they are fundamental and everlasting.

In Isaiah it is written: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." Here again are things old, testimonies uttered about 2,600 years ago, and since the word of our God standeth forever these prophecies must find their fulfillment. Naturally the above transformation will not occur. The fixed law of nature will continue operative. These predictions are figurative. The lion, the leopard and

the wolf represent the nature of man, as do also the asp and the cockatrice. The antitype was revealed in Christ to perfection and is found in all the redeemed of the Lord, as demonstrated in the experience of Saul of Tarsus. The antitype in regenerated souls is perfect in principle, but imperfect in act on account of the disability sin has entailed upon mankind. The same prophet, while predicting the high-way the way of holiness opened by Christ for all the redeemed, testified: "No lion shall be there, nor ravenous beast shall go up thereon."

These things, brought out of the treasure of love, are so plain, demonstrating clearly what manner of spirit Christians possess. In Daniel it is written: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people." The prophet has reference to the kingdom of Christ, established on Pentecost, in the hearts of 3,000 persons. In these Christ was enthroned in spirit. He was the Ruler and they His subjects. This kingdom has been perpetuated in the hearts of all who hear and obey Christ. It will not be destroyed, as were the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian and Roman powers, because its foundation is love, while those were founded upon the power of the sword. "In the days of these kings," or during the prevalence of the Roman authority, is testimony that the prophecy has reference to the New Testament kingdom and church founded on Pentecost, a kingdom of peace, eternal in duration, consisting of redeemed souls, and will never go to any other people. These eternal truths, both new and old, should not fail of impressing us all.

Chambersburg, Pa.

J. S. L.

UNHEEDED CALLINGS

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, or the years draw nigh when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them.” Ecl. 12: 1.

The purity and preciousness of youth with the wealth of noble possibilities, and the golden opportunity to accept a free salvation that await the coming of its footstep appeal more and more strongly to us who year after year are receding further and further from that fair threshold. The past with its follies and mistakes, its neglected opportunities and its misused privileges is gone from us forever; to recall it is as impossible as to change the orbit of the world. The Poet fittingly puts it.

“E’re my steps retracing
 Could I life’s mistakes undo,
 I am walking through a pathway
 I can never more pursue.”

But if the past lies behind us, before us stretches the future, should life be spared. God very wisely provided a way by which mankind can again be born (John 3: 5) and arise to a new life.

“Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light.” Eph. 5: 14.

The scriptures point out to us two resurrections, first a spiritual resurrection from sin and death to a new life and change of heart, and a second or bodily resurrection from the dead at the last day. That a man should die spiritually unto sin, be spiritually buried and rise again to a life of righteousness in God, is plainly taught in various parts of the scriptures.

Paul also exhorted to the same effect, put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, that ye put on the new man, which after God,

is created in righteousness and true holiness. Eph. 4: 22, 24. Put off the old man with his deeds; and put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him. Col. 3: 9, 10.

Before a resurrection from the dead, the death of the body takes place, and before death, sickness, pain and tribulation which have a tendency to make death bitter to the flesh. Likewise spiritually, there can be no resurrection from sin and death until this body of sin first suffers death and is buried; before death we must endure pain, sorrowfulness of heart, remorse and a sincere repentance on account of sin, as is clearly shown in the scriptures.

Stevensville, Ont.

R. S. B.

OUR THOUGHTS

The trend of our thoughts has a great influence upon our lives, either for good or evil. Solomon said, “As a man thinketh in his heart so is he.” “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God; God is not in all his thoughts.” Anything contrary to that mind which was also in Christ Jesus should be suppressed; hatred, variance, emulation, wrath and uncleanness and even the harboring of foolish thoughts, which the Psalmist declares, is sin. We know from whence such thoughts proceed and if they are encouraged we will drift in the way of destruction.

To “them that feared the Lord and thought often upon His name” special blessing was promised. God is a searcher of all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. 1 Chron. 28: 9. It has been said that thoughts are the very apparel of the mind; that they are ever forming our character and in whatsoever our

thoughts are most absorbed, that will tinge our lives.

We are richly admonished as to the way we should spend our time in thought. In Paul's letter to the Philippians which is called the epistle of love and joy, he often admonishes them to rejoice, emphasizing the importance of rejoicing by frequent repetition. In one place he wrote, "Rejoice always in the Lord, and again I say rejoice." And for further meditation he wrote, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things."

In the Bible we find many comforting and instructive passages, promises of blessings and promptings of love with which to occupy our minds. If we cultivate the habit of thinking of these things instead of our hardships and trials, which engender self-pity, the spirit of contentment and happiness will find a dwelling place in our hearts and we will experience the "great gain" to which the apostle Paul referred. 1 Tim. 6: 6.

Do we sometimes pause to be thankful for this gift of thought—this power to exercise our minds? It is a great blessing bestowed upon mankind by a merciful Father and is it not more consistent for us to use it to His honor and praise than for our own fleshly gratification? There is no man who has left all for Christ's sake, who shall not receive in this life, blessings a hundred-fold greater than the sacrifice he is called to make, and in the world to come, life eternal. How blest above others is that happy soul who can say, "I have chosen thy precepts, I have longed for thy sal-

vation, O Lord; and thy law is my delight."

He has promised if we delight in the law of the Lord, He will cause us "to ride upon the high places of the earth." Surely, when our attention is directed heavenward, and we appreciate the many blessings of God as far as our limited ability permits, we are lifted up to high places as it were, on wings of gratitude, above the irksome cares of life.

Let us then pray for grateful hearts, that the emotion might be felt within, when we thank and praise Him with our lips. To know that "Thou art near, oh Lord," should create in us a feeling of love and reverence, and we may pray to a Father rather than to a Supreme Being far removed from us for He knows the cares which we have here. "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." Heb. 2: 18.

May we endeavor to so live and regulate our lives, thoughts and actions that we need not fear to pray with the Psalmist, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me; and lead me in the way everlasting."

Chambersburg, Pa.

C. L. R.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Phil. 4: 8.

It seems as though St. Paul could not bring to a close his grateful letter to the beloved Philippians whose generosity to him while he was a prisoner had touched

his lonely heart. Several times he seems to be on the point of ending it, but cannot resist the desire to give one more solemn and hopeful message. He has already told them to rejoice in the Lord; to let their gentleness be known unto all men; to lay aside all anxiety about their future, secure in faith and prayer; and that the peace of God shall stand sentry over their hearts.

Then follows the verse enumerating a number of things upon which they may dwell in thought. He tells them what to value and make of great account, what to practice in their lives, and the God of Peace will certainly be with them. These things, he tells them, should be their absorbing meditation, their life-long care to think habitually of all that is real; to dwell on the substance, not on the shadow; on the eternal, not on the transitory; on God, not on the world. His meaning is the same as that of our Lord when He said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt and thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."

David's prayer was: "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity"—from dwelling on what is hollow and empty—"but quicken thou me in Thy law." O the vanity of human wishes, wishes that disappoint equally in their frustration and in their accomplishment! They are often more bitter in their fulfillment than in their failing, as they proved to be to Solomon the enchanted king and to the heathen satirist; as well as to many in the humbler walks of life.

What is the world, and what the things of the world? Scripture and experience teach us that they are like a mirage in the wilderness—bright, enchanting, full of promise, but ending only in scorching drought and glaring

sand. In the words of St. Paul, "The fashion of this world passeth away."

Hagerstown, Md.

A. K. H.

THE HEAVENLY VISION

Could we with heavenly vision see
What lies beyond our sight,
God's goodness then to us would be
A flood of wondrous light.

As through a glass we darkly see
Like toilers in the night;
So finite in God's sight are we
As babes who cry for light.

O could we look from earth away
With heavenly vision blest!
These light afflictions of to-day
Prelude a glorious rest.

What heavenly hosts would then appear
With messages of love,
They would our drooping spirits cheer,
Our angels from above.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

REQUISITIONS OF THE LAW

"For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Matt. 7: 29.

There was a manifest difference between the Savior's teachings and the teachings of the scribes. The Savior instructs us in those things that are eternal; the scribes by the very nature of their employment became students of the law, and taught it. As the language in which the law was written ceased to be spoken about 500 B. C., the scribes could transcribe all records and were efficient in interpreting the law.

The Jews believed that on Mt. Sinai Moses received, in addition to the series of laws which he wrote down, a second series, known as the Oral law, which he gave first to Aaron, then to the sons of Aaron, and lastly to all of Israel. This Oral law comprising a mass of ceremonial requirements was handed down

from father to son, and from generation to generation in the course of the ages. After the captivity, piety was made to consist in the strictest conformity to the many precepts of both the oral and written law.

Among the scribes in Christ's time were jurists, judges and public instructors. They discussed legal questions, but it was required that their decisions be confirmed by the Sanhedrin, which was designated as the "Great Court of Justice." This great court, comprised of scribes, elders and the high priest, numbered seventy-one. In this body was vested legal authority, but a Higher authority was recognized in the Sermon on the Mount. It penetrates deeper than the legal law and ceremonies, for it deals with the motives of the heart, whereas the law takes cognizance of the act only.

While the Savior spoke with great power and authority, His words were not comprehended. The ceremonies and prophecies pointing to Him and His kingdom were not understood while He was here in person. They who heard Him speak had a privilege above those who did not, but all mankind have now an equal opportunity, as God saw fit that His Word should be recorded. Hence we have the advantage of the written word.

All that the scribes taught and practiced could not satisfy the justice of a broken law, but obedience to these rites gave evidence of faith. Christ, in referring to the law, said: "One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." God knowing from eternity that Christ would be able to meet the just requirements of a broken law, gave Him power to speak with authority. The law given by Moses was intended to serve unconverted souls, and while it demands perfect obedience, which no one can perform, it serves as

a Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, "For by the law is the knowledge of sin," and since Christ fulfilled every jot and tittle of the law, "He is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." The New Law given by Christ is intended to serve as a guide to His followers. Obedience to His commands is the evidence which proves their sincerity and is a fruit of their faith. Disobedience or rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. The Savior's promise of discipleship rests on obedience to His commands.

The tendency of man ever was to disobey God's plain commands, and though we have the assurance that every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, yet there seems to be less regard for Christ's word as time goes on. He ever spake the truth. Pilate asked, "What is truth?" Truth is plain and simple. Mankind prefers display and sacrifice to obedience. Naaman, the leper, who was told to wash in the Jordan seven times, was angry because the remedy seemed too simple, but obedience proved effectual. God, by the prophet, commanded Naaman. God, by Christ, declares what mankind must do to be saved.

Many Bible readers acknowledge that the law demanded strict obedience, and they confess that the scriptures are not obeyed by the vast majority of those who profess the religion of Christ. Would God be just and the justifier of those who believe in Jesus, if He demanded such strict obedience in the dark ages of the world, and in this age of light would permit us to use our own judgment as to duty, regardless of what He has so plainly commanded?

Obedience to Gospel commands will bring obedience to the civil law, insofar as it does not conflict with the Gospel. To the Christian, the civil law must

yield to the spiritual law in every instance. When Peter and John, after healing the lame man, were commanded to cease speaking and teaching in the name of Christ, they answered, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."

When professors of religion acknowledge that the scriptures teach thus or so, and at the same time acknowledge that they do not practice what is taught, are they not placing themselves in the same position as the man who had received the one talent? After confessing "I knew that thou art a hard man," the talent was taken from him. He evidently knew what was required of him, and probably reasoned that as he had received only the one talent, God would be merciful and forgive him for hiding it. In no age was man permitted to use his own judgment relative to the service that God required of him, and how can anyone rest, when he acknowledges that he does not obey the scriptures? "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant," was said to the one who had received the one talent.

Christ, having all authority, said, "Love your enemies," "Be harmless as doves" and has given many more commands equally as plain. Faithful reader, let us not console ourselves, as many do, that if Christ were here to-day He would teach doctrines that are less cumbersome to the flesh and more in keeping with carnal reason. His word will stand, and will be our judge in the last and coming day.

Camp Hill, Pa.

J. I. M.

PROMISE IN OBEDIENCE

"Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only." Jas. 1: 22.

Our wish is that all who hear the voice of the Lord and sincerely desire to be doers of the word, may be blessed with power and such a measure of divine love that will bring to their souls joy and the peace that passeth understanding. We pray that all who have been delivered from the bondage of sin may remember their Deliverer by adorning the high profession of faith and endeavoring to walk in love and Christian fellowship.

God invites all to come to Jesus, the author of the only system of right living; a system based on a principle that is heaven-born and is comprehended in a few words—love to God and love to man. It is a system that deals not only with our acts but with the motives that prompt our acts. It goes before the act, and condemns the evil when it is conceived in the heart.

All who have received Christ's Spirit and who are truly converted, will endeavor to practice self-denial as the scriptures plainly teach, "If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." The author of the text well knew that the tendency with mankind is to fail in doing, because the Word requires a self-denying life.

The Savior's words in the closing part of the sermon on the mount convey the same idea as those quoted above from James. "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, * * * and every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not shall be likened unto a foolish man." Are you a *doer* of the word and not a hearer only? A proper and timely question which these notable sayings of the

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith. 1 John 5: 4.

Savior and the apostle should bring home to every soul. If we are not prepared to answer in the affirmative we should be alarmed.

There are times when the self-denying doctrines of Christ seem hard to those who would be doers of His word, when the way of a child of God appears to be almost closed; perplexities arise which we ourselves cannot solve. We go to the Lord with prayerful hearts for mercy, grace and wisdom; we say with Job, "That which I see not, teach Thou me." God has promised to give us grace and power to do His will and to perform the various duties which He has assigned us. No power can pluck us out of the Father's hand so long as we cherish a sincere desire to be doers of the word and not hearers only.

The tasks enjoined upon us by the Lord are made easy and the burdens light, in proportion to our faith and our willingness to come under the influence of Divine love. To those who are in possession of the Spirit and mind of Christ, His yoke is easy. He gently leads us and makes sure paths for our feet which are inclined to turn out of the way.

The promise that every true follower of Christ shall receive strength for the day should suffice, for to-morrow may not be ours. How often do we hear the still small voice saying "to thee shall come no harm, in the path we twain shall go." He will never leave nor forsake us, He will be with us even unto the end of the world. His grace sustained the martyrs in their fiery trials of persecution and great bodily suffering.

History records that many of the martyrs of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries endured, so patiently and without resentment, the sufferings inflicted upon them that many who witnessed their torture, and, in some instances, those who inflicted it were moved by the pas-

siveness and faithfulness of those Christians to repent and accept the same faith. The examples of patience and long suffering proved them to be in possession of a supernatural power, which sustains all who come under its influence and helps them to look beyond the things of time and sense "for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."

"O blessed hereafter, we dream of thy calm,
When bruised, is thy spirit and earth hath no
balm:
Some day we shall enter thy gateways of
peace,
And taste of thy pleasures which never
will cease,
No parting up yonder; no bitter farewell,
Earth's griefs all forgotten, with loved ones
to dwell
In happy reunion and fellowship sweet,
O blessed hereafter: thy bliss is com-
plete."

Lancaster, Pa.

A. A. G.

VICTORY

"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Phil. 4: 6.

Great and varied may be our trials, our difficulties, yet we must conclude there should be no anxiety found in the children of God (the Almighty Father). God loves His children and is not only able, but it is His pleasure to help them under all circumstances.

Faith in God is assured to those who would live in communion with Him. We are able to be more carefree and more unselfish when our affections are set on things above and not on temporal things; when we are blessed with the spirit, through faith, we depend upon One who is infallible. We must bring to Him not only our great troubles, but all our trials, trusting Him both to help us

through difficult days and to comfort us in sleepless nights.

“By prayer and supplication” we strive to be obedient to every conviction, thankful that we may receive His Spirit and that we have His Word. “The peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” If we habitually walk in His Spirit, we will more abundantly glorify God and this is victory. When we are forgotten or purposely set at naught; when we are content with any food, any climate, any irregularity and when we bear all trials patiently, this is victory. When we can stand face to face with folly, extravagance, and can be patient; when we can take pleasure in reproaches, in persecutions for Christ’s sake; when we can love those who take advantage of us, and pray to God that they may not be held responsible and that their lives may not be ruled by hate and unhappiness, but by love and good-will, this is victory. When death and life are alike to us, “Death being swallowed up in victory,” then can we say, “O death, where is thy sting; O grave, where is thy victory.” 1 Cor. 15: 55.

God alone knows whether we are journeying on the way of life everlasting or whether we still cling to the selfish life. We might deceive ourselves. There is great danger in not heeding conviction. Procrastination may callous a once tender and receptive conscience. We are living in a prosperous and material age. We take little time for meditation. Our physical strength is needed to cope with each day’s affairs. The tangible things of this life stand out more prominent than blessings of faith and love which will endure throughout eternity.

May God help us to “set our affections on things above.” The end of time may come to us any moment. The end of time has come to one dearly be-

loved. He has been closely associated with many of us. We believe his life may well serve to illustrate the meaning of victory. Were he here he would teach us to “Thank God, Who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Lancaster, Pa.

M. H. B.

ANTICHRIST

From the beginning, the Church of Christ has had its enemies. Satan, the great deceiver, who was permitted to tempt mankind, has devised many ways and snares to overcome the unwary. Even as he tempted and betrayed our first parents in the Garden of Eden, causing them to be banished from that happy place, so has he continued to lead men astray. His evil promptings through the flesh have caused untold thousands to turn away from the mercies of God and to remain under his power until eternally too late! He is described as the “man of sin,” “the father of lies,” “a deceiver from the beginning,” “our adversary, the devil, a roaring lion,” the “prince of the power of darkness.”

We are told that he has the power to transform himself into an angel of light, and that we should not marvel if his followers are able to transform themselves into ministers of righteousness. 2 Cor. 11: 13, 14. We do not wish to give the impression that we believe there are many wilfully going about as his agents, disguised under the cloak of religion. Surely no soul could willingly serve Satan, but it is evident that many, who have not fully yielded to the enlightening Spirit of Christ, will be laboring under the delusion that they are serving God when they are yet under the power of the evil one. Luke 13: 24, 27.

In the early days, such people persecuted the Church of Christ, believing that they were doing God service. John

16: 2. His meek and lowly followers were scattered, deprived of worldly possessions, tormented and put to death in many cruel ways. But the harder the persecution the more rapidly the followers of Christ multiplied in number. They were glad to confess Him, and thanked God that they were accounted worthy to suffer for His name. As this method of exterminating the faith of Jesus Christ proved ineffectual, it was finally abandoned. Since that time "evil seducers have waxed worse and worse," many false Christs have arisen, and many wonderful works have been done in His name.

The believers, in most countries now have freedom of worship. They are respected, and have equal rights with all other people, if they care to exercise them. How, then, can we apply the words of Paul to Timothy, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution?" Times have changed. No longer is the follower of Jesus called upon to suffer in body for his faith. He can safely live the defenseless doctrine of the Savior, having "the life that now is, and the promise of the life to come." So long as he keeps near to his God the tempter can have no power over him.

But in the world, which lies under the powers of darkness, Luke 4: 6, what do we see? A great wave of materialism, which is sweeping over the nations, engulfing the vast majority of humanity in its deceitful depths. People are reaching out for greater earthly attainments, intoxicated by the mad rush for pleasure, wealth and power. Religious convictions are ignored, lest they interfere with social progress and business success. Religion is no longer regarded as seriously as it used to be. Few people are enough concerned about their salvation to search the Scriptures and learn what is required of them, yet many

continue in sin, contrary to better knowledge.

The masses of humanity are more concerned about bodily than spiritual comfort, and are content to relinquish their religious differences, as being of small consequence, thinking that in so doing they are approaching nearer and nearer to the peaceable reign of Christ, and that, in tolerating all manner of human weaknesses, they are manifesting Divine love. God is represented as a Deity of endless love and mercy, who would not punish His creatures, and the idea of universal salvation is rapidly gaining ground. Instead of "seeking first the Kingdom of God," believing that these other things (temporal blessings), "will be added," people seek first the "other things."

Is not this the Babylon, spoken of by the Revelator? Is not this Antichrist in its most subtle form? Is not this the persecution to which Christians are subjected? It is the writer's conviction that this is the most potent form in which the enemy of our souls has ever appeared. Our liberty may become a snare to us. We are all in great danger of being swallowed up by the cares of this life, in the desire for ease, luxury and esteem, so that the final day may take us unawares.

Now, as never before, must the child of God watch and pray that he be not led into temptation. We are fast approaching the "abomination of desolation," Matt. 24: 15, and it behooves us all to be awake, and to put on the whole armor of God, so that we can fight the good fight of faith and escape the impending doom of the unrighteous.

'Stevensville, Ont.

W. I. T.

For the law was given by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. John 1: 17.

WORLDLY AND DIVINE WISDOM

“For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.” 1 Cor. 3: 19.

The apostle Paul in this chapter makes frequent reference to the fallability of man, and his inability to comprehend things spiritual when animated by worldly or natural wisdom. He makes clear that before man's transformation from darkness to light he is void of Divine wisdom.

Worldly wisdom may be acquired by strenuous study and learning in schools of theology. Those who have access to high schools and colleges and those who have ability to concentrate and learn more readily, acquire a greater measure of worldly wisdom than those who do not, but in the acquirement of Divine wisdom it is not so, God is no respecter of persons; the unlearned and illiterate have equal opportunity with the learned.

“The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise that they are vain.” Worldly wisdom may exalt an individual or a people, whereas Divine wisdom, since it gives us a better knowledge of our fallen and sinful nature, tends to humble us, thus fitting us for an entrance into the kingdom of Christ. The Savior no doubt had this in mind when he said, “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things (meaning spiritual things) from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes.”

The apostle Paul also conveys, that worldly wisdom offers no advantages to getting spiritual wisdom, but rather is a hindrance to the work of grace in the heart. “For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this

world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?”

There is therefore a marked contrast between worldly and Divine wisdom. Worldly wisdom serves us to advantage, in the affairs of this life only, while those who possess Divine wisdom, and live in accord with New Testament teaching, are not only fitted for the duties of this life, but they are qualified for the heavenly association.

When reading the scriptures we learn that the apostles, also the prophets, showed little interest in material things and apparently made little or no effort to qualify in the advancement of their worldly interests, believing that if they were faithful in the promulgation of truth, God would provide for their natural well-being. A child of God or one in possession of Divine wisdom considers material things as secondary; in keeping with the Savior's counsel, “first seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” knowing that “all these things” (meaning the necessaries of life) will be added unto them.

It is true that those who give first consideration to seeking God and His righteousness, may not be able to cope with the worldly wise in worldly pursuits. The Savior recognized this fact when He said, “The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.” Luke 16: 8.

Only those who surrender their will unconditionally to the Lord, complying with the conditions as set forth by Christ and the holy apostles, can acquire Divine wisdom. This course alone renders man capable of finding the heavenly treasure, namely, Divine wisdom. Our Savior delegated men to voice His teachings, who prior to their appointment were not classed among the worldly wise. Choosing such to represent Him and to broadcast His holy truths was an

offence to those scribes who made a special study of the law. With their superior knowledge of the law, it would seem reasonable that Christ should have delegated them to preach the gospel. He knew that they would stumble at His simple self-denying doctrines, confirmed in these words: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness."

At the age of twelve they found Christ in the temple sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions, and all that heard Him were astonished at His questions and answers. They evidently could not understand how one who was so young and unlearned could silence them as Christ did. While those doctors were trained in things pertaining to the law, they could not fathom the things of the spirit. The unlearned disciples performed wonders through the power of Christ which mystified the doctors of the law. The disciples were counted unqualified by the Jews to preach the gospel. Many reason in the same erroneous way to-day, holding the view that to be qualified for preaching the gospel we should be taught in a school of theology, overlooking the fact that our ability and power to declare holy truths must come by Divine inspiration. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men they marvelled." Such scriptures prove that worldly wisdom will not suffice in our effort to get salvation.

How important then to inquire of the Lord for that "wisdom that is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

Lancaster, Penna.

B. F. M.

BRIEF NOTES

Every follower of the meek and lowly Savior, in passing through life, leaves a record. The Apostle's reminder was, that "Ye are our epistle, known and read of all men." While we are leaving "Footprints on the sands of time" they ever lie back of us, unobserved by us, but may be observed by and be helpful to others who follow.

* * * *

It has been said that there is no finer culture than a sensible appreciation of the rights of others. Such appreciation is fullest in true Christian living, for then it necessarily is from an actuating principle over-ruling our conduct in life. The result will be manifest in a life so lived, that we will do unto others as we would they should do unto us.

* * * *

In true Christian living there is a manifest disregard for the ever-changing fashions; for there is a present consciousness of the fact that "The fashion of this world passeth away," and that our life is "hid with Christ in God;" for which reason those who live after the fashion of this world may not comprehend the meaning, purpose and end of a real Christian life; nor the distinction between it and an inconsistent profession thereof.

* * * *

In a review of opinions regarding religion, as given in one of the magazines, the significant observation is, that "The whole experience of mankind seems to show that the true practice of religion enforces before all else an element of self-denial." It is often after long and painful experience that this conclusion is arrived at, though it is the Savior's simple declaration that "Who-soever will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow

me," self-denial and the cross are inseparable. If we are unwilling to bear the cross we shall never inherit the crown.

* * * *

The effect of Christian living should be such that "Men may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." When the work and service is rendered which characterizes a Christian life, men may see the "good works," and be influenced thereby to live their lives according to God's purpose—not their own—and thus glorify the Father in heaven. In real Christian living men may see our good works—not apparent to us, however, because they are unconsciously rendered, as a result of grace received as a gift, for which, accordingly, all the honor and glory is due to the Father in heaven.

* * * *

On the threshold of a new year we may be looking upon a wide stream, as it were, which we try to define in terms of time—ages—endless duration—eternity. We may have looked upon it before, may look upon it again, but we may never see the same water; for the current of time flows swiftly from childhood to old age. We ponder with awe the illimitable and the undefined—the stream that is without beginning and without end. Yet may we not idly watch the current; for it is only in the wonderful present that we may perform our work and service under a stewardship of which we may soon be required to give a final accounting. May that accounting be such that the welcome plaudit may apply: "Well done thou good and faithful servant."

* * * *

It was an impressive and significant occasion when the Savior told the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well that "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true

worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." It is still more significant when, in the next sentence, He makes it imperative that "they that worship Him *must* worship Him in spirit and in truth."

It must be reasonably conceded that to render true worship, we must possess the spirit and truth in our hearts; then our profession and practice will be in harmony with the teaching, precepts and practice of Christ, because the prompting within, and the dominating influence in our lives will be from the same principle ruling in our hearts.

Must not our conclusion with the same reasonableness be, that worship rendered when not in possession of the spirit and the truth in our hearts, is not true worship? If it is not true, it must be false, idolatrous and misdirected.

Knowing that "God is not mocked" is it not a matter fraught with serious consequences to engage in false worship, to countenance such, or to take part in it? The scripture command is, not to bid such God speed, lest we be partakers of their evil deeds. Must it not necessarily be the course of true love, to try to awaken a sense of danger by withdrawing from and taking no part in misdirected worship?

* * * *

A young man about to enter actively into the affairs of life remarked: "I am appalled to think that twenty-five years of my life are gone. Twenty-five more, then I will be fifty, facing life's afternoon. I spent twenty-five in getting ready for what I may get out of the rest of my life. What will I get out of it?"

We may be still more appalled under an awakened sense of life's uncertainty and our insecurity. Lapsing into unconsciousness in the comforting slumbers of health, the grim Reaper may be

hovering at our bedside, and consciousness may never return. Or a near and dear one, around whom much of our happiness and fair prospects in life are centered, may suddenly be removed from us, never to return. Engaged in our daily work, there may be an accident, and our life suddenly end, as the flame of a candle is snuffed out.

“What will I get out of it?” Living our life with only that consideration, how often does the question arise, “Is life worth living?” In Christian living the problem solves itself, and the accomplishment of selfish ends loses its importance. As the Savior’s purpose in life was foretold: “Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God,” so also life will be worth living when our selfish desires are subordinated to do the will of the Father in heaven.

In Christian living, too, the insecurity in life need not be appalling, for we can say with the Psalmist: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” The evening of life then may be crowned with a pleasing sunset, and death itself may become inexpressibly beautiful.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Does the Word authorize the church of Christ to separate from its communion unfaithful members?

A. Yes, Christ teaches that after faithful labor, those who will not hear the church shall be held as the Jews held the heathen and publicans. Matt. 18: 17. The church is taught to reject a heretic, and to withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly. Titus 3: 18; Thes. 3: 6; Eph. 5: 11.

Q. When shall a member be separated from the church?

A. When there is evidence of spiritual death. This may manifest itself in different ways. One who upholds a doctrine at variance with the doctrine of Christ is a heretic, and a heretic is not in possession of the spiritual life, even though he continues to lead a virtuous and commendable life. Again one may not be a heretic, but live a carnal and worldly life, thus giving evidence of spiritual death. The church will always exercise great patience and forbearance with such until it is evident that spiritual death has taken place.

Q. To what extent shall members of the church avoid those who have been separated?

A. The true Christian ban, like all of Christ’s commandments, is based on love. It is intended to win the fallen and bring them back to Christ. This requires great care and discretion by all of the faith. When one becomes an avowed enemy of the truth, their company should be strictly avoided, for to admonish such would be like casting pearls before swine. Matt. 7: 6. On the other hand, when there is evidence of spiritual life discovered in one under the ban, they should be admonished as a brother. In all cases, however, until they acknowledge their error, and show penitence, they are to be held as the Jews held the heathen and publicans. Matt. 18: 17. They avoid them in buying and selling and partaking of the natural meal, that they may be reminded that until they return to God, they have no fellowship with His church. The church will always consider it a duty to relieve such persons when in distress with food, clothing or any service they can render for their comfort.

Q. Did not Christ eat with sinners?

A. Yes, so do His followers, but if one falls from the faith, and again returns to sin, with such an one we are not to eat or company. 1 Cor. 5: 9, 12.

Q. Was the ark of Noah a type of Christ or of the church?

A. In its broadest sense, the word "church" means the whole body of Christ's followers, being composed of every true believer, who has been baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, whether organized or scattered over the world where there is no organized church. Viewing the church in this light, the ark of Noah is a fitting type, as those who were in the ark were saved from the deluge and in like manner only those who are baptized by the Holy Ghost will escape the judgment of God in the last day.

It is also a very fitting type of Christ, inasmuch as all outside the ark perished, likewise all who are outside of Christ will perish. The different animals, such as the lion and the wolf, received such a nature that they could dwell together in the ark. So, also, all persons entering the spiritual Ark, Christ Jesus, receive His mind and dwell together in love and peace. The ark cannot be a type of the organized church, as we believe there are many saved persons scattered over the world who may never find the organized church.

OUR DUTY TO GOD AND TO CAESAR

"They sent unto Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that Thou art true and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man, for Thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us, therefore, is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar or not? Jesus perceiving their wickedness said, Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. They showed unto Him a penny. He asked, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto Him, Caesar's. Then He said, Render

therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things which are God's." St. Luke 20: 21-25.

The wise and judicious replies given by our blessed Savior, when His enemies sought to entrap Him, always ended in their confusion.

The Pharisees did not come openly, but sent some of their disciples with the Herodians, who were friends of Caesar. They wished it to appear as though the subject had been in dispute and they would refer the decision to Jesus Himself. They addressed Him courteously, saying, "We know that Thou art true and teachest the way of God in truth." They bore testimony to the truth but it was with the design to entangle Him and make it subserve their wicked purpose.

In this instance they shifted their ground and hoped to have Him express Himself in favor of Caesar, or against him. They took up a question of state, which would either involve Him with the Roman government or with the great Sanhedrim.

The Sanhedrim was the Jewish seat of learning and it is claimed that it was composed of seventy-two members. The most important decisions of the law of Moses were made by this body, an exalted court. They professed love to God and seemed zealous in obeying His laws. They were fearful that Christ's teaching was injurious to the welfare of their nation, but Christ who knew what was in their hearts, knew that they were not honest. They were more anxious about their own honor and authority than they were about fulfilling the spirit of the law. They really did not obey it and this is why Christ called them hypocrites. It seemed to them to be a difficult question on account of the different sentiments entertained by the Jews. If He spake against Caesar He would fall under condemnation.

Our Savior, reading their thoughts, and seeing the craftiness of their malice, called them hypocrites. He did not discuss the question, but asked to see the tribute money. It was a matter plainly understood by all nations, the Jews as well, that when they accepted the coinage of a king they acknowledged his sovereignty. They were Caesar's subjects and in this case it was plainly their duty to obey the Roman power.

The Savior's reply was very simple and very plain: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's. The tribute they owed to Caesar was a legal due, a necessity, not a voluntary gift. The coin bore Caesar's image and it belonged to Caesar.

We owe to Caesar tribute, honor and obedience. Our taxes should be paid willingly and conscientiously. But we are only to render Caesar his own.

The Pharisees understood the meaning of our Savior's words "render unto God the things that be God's," since to fear God and keep His commandments was the summary of their law. No wonder the Pharisees marveled at our Savior's answers, for never man spake as this man did. Caesar would be satisfied with the wisdom of His replies; God would be glorified and the people should forever be relieved.

We render unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar when it does not conflict with our higher duty to God, which is paramount to all others. The Kingdom of Christ and that of Caesar are directly opposite. Christ's kingdom is one of peace and is founded on love. Caesar's and all earthly kingdoms are founded on equity and justice, and maintained by the sword. We dare not yield to Caesar's demands when they conflict with obedience to God's convicting grace.

Our Savior enjoined a higher duty upon His disciples than they owe to Caesar. Having His divine image impressed upon their souls they are under a higher obligation to render unto God what belongs to God, and to devote their lives to His service. Our obligations are weighty ones since we bear the image of Christ, and we are not our own but are bought with a price. Our lives, our consciences belong to God, and if we would have a conscience void of offence we must bring our natural desires into accord with the divine will and yield to Him faith, love and obedience.

May we be faithful in rendering unto God the things that belong to God, by walking in true obedience and humility, ever following in the steps of Him whose image we bear.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

LITTLE THINGS

Let us consider the importance of little things—we look at a great locomotive, a steamship, an aeroplane—or any invention of man. It is made up of parts—some large, some small, some very small. Each part has its particular place and its share in enabling the machine to do its work. A tiny imperfection or flaw in any one of these parts, would interfere with its proper action. The loss of a part, no matter how small, would hinder, or might even stop the working of the great whole of which it is a part.

We look at a building, the walls of which are of brick, what a strong and even appearance it has; yet it is made up of hundreds and thousands of pieces. If one of these would be defective or not properly placed, the wall would be weakened and in time would crumble.

We all know the beauty of a grassy bank on a roadside, or of a stretch of well-kept lawn. This green that cheers

the eye and looks so smooth is made up of thousands of blades of grass, each filling its little place, again teaching us the importance of little things.

The sands on the seashore are without number; yet each has its tiny place and its mission.

Our bodies, while they seem to be a perfect whole, are made up of many parts or members; and each of these members in turn is made up of tiny parts or cells, so small that they cannot be seen with the naked eye. The microscope shows their wonderful structure, each kind of tissue having its own kind of cell; and all under the influence of a central controlling power, called *life*—back of which is God, the Creator. Should several of these tiny cells grow discontented (if they could) and tire of their work, and band together for independent action and no longer obey the central governing power, a serious trouble would arise in the body. Should this condition not be recognized, and promptly dealt with, it would grow to such proportions as to greatly embarrass the body, and cause suffering and even death.

The firmament is filled with brilliant bodies—planets, moons, and stars in number that cannot be counted; yet all these are also made up of small particles of matter. They have been placed where they are and have been held there for thousands of years by the Creator who has made and controls all things. Thus all material things teach us of the wisdom and power of God, and that His works, however great they may be, are made of little things. We learn, too, that the power or strength of each great thing depends on the integrity or strength of the *units*, or little things of which it is made. "A chain is not stronger than its weakest link" is a familiar saying to all of us. Let us

then have respect for all little things. In Zechariah, fourth chapter, we read, "For who hath despised the day of small things?"

Passing from material things to natural affairs, we see that a city, a state, a nation, is made up of individuals. The character of a nation, state or city depends upon the character of its citizens. Therefore, each one of us is of importance: we cannot escape our responsibility, for it is far-reaching; even to the nation.

We want to remember the parable of the man about to travel into a far country, who called his servants and gave them talents to care for in his absence. Matt. 25: 14, 30. The servant who received but one talent did not appreciate it, nor try to improve it, and his master, on returning, was much displeased and punished him severely. In the spiritual life the same principle holds; for God is consistent and truth is harmonious in all its applications—the whole is made up of its parts and depends upon them.

In regard to the church, we read, "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit," and "For as the body is one, and has many members . . . so also is Christ. . . . For the body is not one member, but many . . . now are they many members, yet but one body, . . . Those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, are necessary." 1 Cor. 12. Is this not comforting?

"But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth;" 2 Tim. 2: 20. This is intended to teach us contentment and thankfulness; we cannot all be vessels of gold, nor can we all have the highest places or the most brilliant gifts. If our place in life be lowly, let us fill it with humility, thanking our kind Heavenly Father that we can have any place in His blessed "household of

faith." He it is who has dispensed the gifts; He it is who will help each one to put his or her talent or gift to use; and His is the honor for whatever good may be accomplished by any of His children.

There is a kindergarten song which many of you doubtless know, but which will bear repetition.

"The world is full of darkness,
So Jesus bids us shine,
You in your small corner,
And I in mine."

The enemy of all good well knows the power of little things, and he tries, through their power, to destroy the work of God in each soul.

Evil may suggest to us, "This is only a trifle—a little thing—it will not hurt you—there is nothing in scripture against it—what harm can there be in doing it?" If we yield, and do anything about the right and wrong of which we are doubtful, or if we enter an untried way or field without prayer or consultation with the Word or with tried true soldiers of the cross, we are on very dangerous ground. Self-confidence may grow so large within us as to shut out from our soul the light of God's grace and we will fall into darkness; that wceful state in which a man cannot tell where he is going, and cannot even discern right from wrong. So let us "watch and be sober." Solomon, the wisest of men, speaks of the "foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines." Song 2: 15. So we should guard against the little transgressions which, if committed, will in time ruin the soul.

Lancaster, Pa.

L. L. F.

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. Math. 18: 10.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL

God is omniscient and we are limited in knowledge. The prophet Isaiah said, "There is no searching of His understanding." We cannot inquire, "Who being His counsellor, hath taught him?" but rather would we pray with the Psalmist, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins." Recognizing God as the Source of all knowledge and truth, we would come to Him through Christ to learn of His will. We must first believe in Christ and be willing to follow His teachings.

Believing that Jesus was "a teacher come from God" Nicodemus went to Him by night. He thought no man could do the miracles that Jesus did "except God be with him." The Savior told him, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The spiritual birth was dark to Nicodemus and it is hard for us to understand the second birth in Christ before we yield to His will. We cannot realize the effect God's love will have on our lives.

But the new birth opens up a different life before us. We have many strange experiences. If love is the ruling power in our daily lives there are various ways in which it will be manifest to the world. We will be kind and thoughtful for the welfare and interests of others. His love will help us to bear all trials patiently for Christ's sake. Then, too, we will not be envious of the position or possessions of others, nor will we be vainly uplifted over our own attainments.

How fitting is the desire of the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Colossians, that they "might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; * * * increasing in the knowledge of God." But this increase in knowledge is only possible through an entire submission to God's will as it is

daily revealed to us. In this way only can we grow in grace, and in the favor of God. Jesus told His disciples they would receive power, after the Holy Spirit had come upon them, and they should be His witnesses. Experience has taught us if we seek our own selfish ends and not the Lord's way, we lose power and cannot witness to the truth.

In seeking continually to learn His will, we also gain much knowledge of our own hearts. If we honestly study to know ourselves, we will discover that many of the desirable attributes of a Christian are lacking. When we know our vulnerable points, we can the more easily protect them by watchfulness in the hour of temptation. It is impossible for man to live in perfect harmony with God's will, as the Apostle Paul says, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." A more perfect knowledge of ourselves will help us to have greater forbearance for the weaknesses of others. If we have a perfect desire and are humble, sincere and contrite when we fail, we believe our offering of service will be accepted by the Lord.

In Christ's intercessory prayer in behalf of His followers, he petitioned the Father, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil." We never know God's purpose in permitting trials and sorrows to come into our lives. If we are not submissive to His will, we may frustrate His grace and bring dire calamities upon ourselves and others. But if we are obedient, His name will be honored and we shall be able to enjoy that "peace of God, which passeth all understanding," and our lives will yield the fruit of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

Waynesboro, Pa.

B. F. M.

KING SAUL'S REIGN

(Continued)

The Lord said to Samuel, "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul seeing I have rejected him?" The Lord did not mean to take the kingdom at once from Saul, but in His own time He would prepare another king better fitted to rule His people.

Samuel was told to go to Jesse the Bethlehemite and anoint one of his sons to be King. Samuel was afraid, and thought Saul would kill him if he knew of his anointing another in his stead. The Lord told him to take a heifer along, and offer it for a sacrifice and ask Jesse and his sons to be present. Samuel did so and the first of Jesse's sons pleased Samuel so much that he supposed him to be the one chosen. But the Lord told Samuel, not to look upon his countenance, nor at his height, for "the Lord seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance but the Lord looketh on the heart."

Not one of the seven sons of Jesse was the chosen one, and Samuel asked if there were no more. The father replied, the youngest son is out caring for the sheep. He was sent for and the Lord told Samuel, this was the one He had chosen. Samuel then anointed him in the midst of his brethren, and the spirit of the Lord came upon David from that time forward, while Samuel returned to Ramah.

It is not supposed that the people knew that David was anointed to be King. They likely thought he was anointed to do some special work. He returned to his work of caring for the sheep on the hillsides about Bethlehem. He grew up brave and strong, killing the wild beasts that threatened his flocks. He must have practiced throwing stones with a sling, since he could throw a stone and strike the spot at which he aimed.

He played on the harp and sang to the Lord. He was called the "sweet singer of Israel." He not only sang, but composed many Psalms, one of which, the twenty-third, is called the Shepherd Psalm. It is not known whether he wrote those beautiful words while a shepherd, or whether in later life he remembered his shepherd life at Bethlehem.

While God's Spirit seemed to attend David and he was happy, King Saul grew despondent and unhappy. No doubt he realized that the spirit of the Lord had departed from him. He had been qualified for his high position by God's bestowing upon him such graces as wisdom, prudence and courage, but when he failed to use them, they were transferred to David.

Saul's servants saw that music had a soothing effect and caused his gloom to disappear. It was suggested that they send for David, to play on his harp before the King. David came and Saul loved him and grew strong and well. David then returned to his father in Bethlehem, and again became a shepherd.

There had been constant wars with the Philistines, and some years after David was anointed, the Philistines came against Saul with a large army. Three of David's brothers were in Saul's army, and their father sent David to see how they were and take them a present of some food.

The two armies occupied opposite mountains, with a valley between. Each day a giant named Goliath came from the army of the Philistines and asked King Saul to send a man to fight with him. He said, "if he kills me we will be your servants, and if I kill him, you shall be our servants." He had continued this challenge for forty days. The giant was six cubits and a span in

height, probably over nine feet tall. He was clothed in a coat of mail, a helmet of brass upon his head, and the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam. A soldier went before him bearing a shield. Saul and all Israel were dismayed. They saw no man able to accept the challenge.

David came just as the giant was repeating his challenge, and he asked, "Who is this man that defies the armies of the living God; why does not some one go and kill him?" David's brothers spake harshly to him, asking why he had left his sheep, and had come to see the battle, but David did not heed their unkind speech, and offered to go out and meet the giant.

Saul had offered a great reward, and promised to give his daughter as a wife, to the man who would attack and kill the giant.

David appeared before Saul and offered to go out and meet Goliath. Saul did not think such a youth would be fitted to meet a giant who was accustomed to war from his youth. But David reminded him that the Lord who had delivered him from the paw of the lion, and the paw of the bear, would also deliver him from this Philistine.

Saul offered David his own armor to wear, when he went to meet Goliath, but it did not fit him as Saul was a much larger man. So David took it off, and picking five small stones out of the brook he put them in his shepherd's bag, and carried the sling and his shepherd's staff in his hand. He went out to meet the giant, who looked upon him with disdain and laughed at him, saying, "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?" He cursed David and said, "Come to me and I will give your flesh unto the fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the field."

David replied, "Thou comest to me with a sword, spear and shield, but I come unto thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel." David ran toward the Philistine, hurling with his sling a stone which struck the giant in his forehead and he fell to the ground. David then took the giant's own sword and cut off his head.

When the Philistines knew that their great champion in whom they had trusted was killed, they fled. Saul's army followed in pursuit to Gath, the chief city of the Philistines. Many of the Philistines were slain, so David was the means of their obtaining a great victory.

David was brought before the King, but Saul did not recognize him as the youth who had played on the harp before him years before. Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people.

Saul's son Jonathan loved David, and the most intimate friendship existed between them. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him and gave it to David, as a token of friendship and love. David possessed a spirit that drew men to him, but the love between him and Jonathan was such that was never affected by time or its changes.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

A CHILD'S STORY

My dear little children:

I think you would like a Christmas story.

Some hundred miles from Jerusalem in a land of the east lived some men called Magi, or wise men. They spent nearly all their time in studying the Bible, medicine and stars.

At this time they noticed in the sky some peculiar signs and a brighter star appeared in the west toward Judea. As

they were watching and expecting that Christ would soon come, they took this bright star for a sign and set off to follow it. It led them to Jerusalem. Here they began to inquire, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east and are come to worship Him."

Herod, the king of the Jews, had now reigned over that country more than thirty years and when he heard of the wise men, he and all Jerusalem were troubled at their question. For Herod was afraid if a new king had come he would take his throne, and the people were afraid it would cause a disturbance. So he called the wisest men of the people and asked them where it was expected that Christ would be born; and they said, "In Bethlehem of Judea."

It was written by the prophet Micah, "And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel." When Herod heard this he called the wise men secretly, and said, "Go and search diligently for the Young Child; and when ye have found Him, bring me word, that I may worship Him also."

As Herod bade them the wise men went to Bethlehem, and the star went before them and stood over where the Young Child was. How great must have been their joy when they saw their guiding star stop and knew that their wearisome journey had not been in vain.

When they went into the house, they saw the Young Child with Mary His mother. They knew this was the Christ and they fell down, and worshipped Him and presented unto Him gifts, gold, as if He were an earthly king; and then as if they were taught He was a heavenly King also, they offered Him frankincense and myrrh.

Frankincense and myrrh are gums found in Turkey and Arabia, which

when burned give out a sweet odor. On this account they were burned during religious worship to perfume the temple.

Now the wise men were warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, so they went to their own country another way. After they left, Joseph was warned also in a dream, saying, "Arise and take the Young Child and His mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the Young Child to destroy Him."

When Herod found that the wise men did not return he became so angry that he sent men out into all the country around Bethlehem to kill the little boy children, who were less than two years old, thinking in that way, Jesus would be certain to be killed.

It is hard to imagine so cruel and wicked a man as Herod. We read that he was seventy years old and that he had killed his wife and two of his sons. Soon after he was stricken with a dreadful and painful disease, from which he died.

After Herod was dead an angel appeared in a dream to Joseph and told him to take the Young Child and His mother and go into the land of Israel,

for they were dead who sought the Young Child's life. Later he dwelt in Nazareth. It was there He spent His boyhood.

There is a pretty story written by Henry Van Dyke, called "The other wise man," but we do not find this account in the Bible, so I will leave my little readers to read it when they have an opportunity. It is very interesting.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

Little children, do you know
In the long long time ago,
Once upon a starry night
There was seen a wondrous light?

Wise men who were watching, too,
Saw a star, to them 'twas new.
And they followed it to see
What the mystery might be.

Soon it halted on its way
Where the infant Jesus lay;
And 'twas here they found the babe
Who was in a manger laid.

Thus the star had helped them find
Christ the Savior of mankind;
And with joy they gifts unfold,
Myrrh and frankincense and gold.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.