

# GOOD TIDINGS

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## EDITORIAL

Autumn has come again. From the ceaseless round of the seasons we can learn a lesson: their varied character affects us, more or less, both naturally and spiritually. The profusion of life and beauty in the awakening of nature in the springtime inspires us with renewed energy in our endeavors; it is the time of sowing and planting when the husbandman looks forward in hope for a bountiful harvest. Spiritually, Spring may represent the time of receiving the good seed into the heart, the awakening of the sinner, and the new birth in Christ.

Spring gradually changes into glorious summer, the propitious time for growth and development. During this season the husbandman labors diligently, destroying the weeds and cultivating his fields and gardens that the life and growth of his crops may not be retarded, but stimulated. Spiritually the Summer may represent the time of toil when the pilgrim must bear the heat and burden of the day in his endeavor to exterminate the weeds of sin which hinder spiritual growth.

Now, glorious Summer has faded into Autumn. This is the last season of ingathering of the grains and fruits of the

earth. Autumn suggests the approach of death and decay. The sear and yellow leaf falling to its earthly grave awakens sober meditations. The inspired writer uses the leaf as a symbol of our mortality when he says, "We all do fade as a leaf." Though we are "fearfully and wonderfully made," how soon, physically, we fade and pass away—we, like the leaf, fall to the earth and return to dust.

If, however, we regard the grace of God, open our hearts to its influence and receive the divine life in the soul, this life shall not fade as the leaf in the Autumn of our days, but we shall be like "a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither: and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

This natural life with all its attractions, its many opportunities and attainments, its many responsibilities, is liable to gain too much of our attention to the neglect of the precious soul. The paramount design of our creation is to obey and glorify God. To this end His grace appears unto all men, and if we frustrate it then Christ has died in vain and we cannot hope for a joyful eternity.

#### BIBLE NOTES

Abraham was the son of Terah, born in the land of Ur of the Chaldees. After his father's death he was called by the Lord to leave his native country to go into a land which should be shown him. He was directed to the land of Canaan, which he was told should be the inheritance of his posterity. The reason for calling him from his native land is not given, but it may have been part of the plan for establishing in Canaan the true Temple Worship. "He called upon the name of the Lord," proving that he did not worship idols.

God suffered a famine in Canaan which drove Abraham to Egypt. His

way was not always prospered, though he had the promise of God's blessing. In those days he met Melchizedek, the priest, who blessed him. The Lord assured him of an heir whose posterity should be as the stars of heaven for multitude, which he believed, and "his faith was counted to him for righteousness." God foretold the enslavement of his people in the land of Egypt, and of their deliverance by Moses, which is very typical of our bondage in sin, and of our deliverance by our Spiritual Leader.

God made a covenant with Abraham, promising him an heir contrary to the course of nature, through whom great blessings should abound, and He changed his name from Abram to Abraham, giving him the rite of circumcision as a sign of the covenant. As then outward ceremonies were representative of agreement with God, so now religious ordinances seem to represent our covenant by faith, and they are not intended as means to save. The covenant by faith saves. The rite of circumcision, Paul defines to be a figure of the circumcision of the heart, by the sharp sword of the Spirit, cutting away our fleshly desires. Because of their wickedness, Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, only Lot and his wife and two daughters escaping; and his wife for looking back became a pillar of salt, impressing us that in escaping from our sins our affections are not to linger behind. As she became a pillar of salt, and salt having an enduring quality, the figure may give to us a lasting warning to forsake all in our flight from our sinful ways. Abraham's wife Sarah died at the age of one hundred and twenty-seven years, being buried in the land of Canaan, in the cave of Machpelah.

To prevent his son Isaac from marrying a daughter of the Canaanites, Abraham sent his trusty servant, who had charge of his affairs, to Mesopotamia to find a wife among his kindred.

By divine direction he was led to find Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel. She became the mother of twins, Esau and Jacob, who seemingly indicate the types of the Law and the Gospel. Esau was shortsighted, looking to present gratification, for, when Jacob proposed to buy his birthright with a mess of pottage he carelessly said, "I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" Jacob was farsighted and by his wisdom obtained the birthright, to which Esau as the firstborn was entitled. The Law, represented by Esau, was first in giving the promise of life to those who could fulfill it, which no one could do but Christ, so we all lost our birthright. We have lost it by our worldly lusts. We have sold it for a mess of pottage. We are shortsighted in forgetting the profit in the eternal birthright, by dwelling in our affection too much upon present things.

Christ, the antitype of Jacob, received the eternal birthright, and graciously offers us a share in it, if we are willing to forsake our worldliness, like as Jacob's posterity were under the blessing while they obeyed; when they disobeyed they lost the blessing. The terms under Christ are: while we obey we share His promises, when we disobey we have no promise.

In our spiritual experience the Law, in its ministry, is first to awaken us to a sense of our sinfulness, and to bring condemnation, that we may appeal for the mercy offered in Christ, the Minister of Grace. Therefore the mission of the Law has ceased to the believer, since "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." We err in ascribing saving merit to water baptism, or anything else that we do. All the good works that a believer does are done as a fruit of love, by the prompting of the Holy Spirit in him. It is written: "And by Him all

that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." We should not forget that the law of Moses covers the whole ground of good works, including church ordinances, by doing which we may think to be saved, and that if such good deeds would save us, our salvation would be self-wrought. Salvation is attained by an effort to bring our will into obedience to God, who will extend aid to our effort by the power of the Holy Spirit, which controls us as long as we keep our will subject. Herein consists what some people call sanctification. While we remain willing to obey we are sanctified, for the Spirit controls us; when we withdraw our will, we are unsanctified, for we refuse the Spirit's control. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

Heathen people are under our conditions, for God, who is a Spirit, operates on them as He does on us, for we are not saved by our knowledge of the written Scriptures, but by heeding the influence of the Spirit of God, which, we are informed, strove with the people in Noah's time when there was no written Scripture; and can we think that God is more absent now from those who have no written word? Paul says of those who have no-written law, that they "shew the work of the law written in their hearts."

God renewed the promise to Isaac which He had given to Abraham, that his posterity should inherit the land of Canaan, and should be prospered. Giving the tenth was instituted by Abraham, when, after his victory over the four kings he gave the tenth of the spoils to the priest Melchizedek. Jacob vowed that of the prosperity given him he would give the tenth to the Lord. Later the commandment by Moses was, of their increase the people should give the tenth to the Lord. The Temple worship was

costly and had to be maintained by the worshippers. In the New Testament no rule of giving is fixed.

Complying with the wish of his parents, Jacob went away from his idolatrous surroundings to take a wife of the lineage of his grandfather Abraham. As his father Isaac was, so was he, divinely directed. He served fourteen years for his two wives, Leah and Rachel, and six years more for a start in life. God signally prospered him though he was a polygamist, which departure from the first law God then "winked at." He returned to Canaan, the land promised to his grandfather Abraham for a possession to his posterity. In returning to Canaan he came to Edom, the province of his brother Esau, from whom he had taken his birthright, and as Esau had threatened his life in revenge, Jacob was afraid to meet him, and used great precaution, but the lapse of time and his own prosperity had so changed the temper of Esau that he met his brother affectionately. The Lord met Jacob and changed his name to Israel, because he was to be a prince. His people had strange gods among them, which Jacob required them to put away with their earrings, all of which he buried before they went to worship at Bethel, where he was commanded to build an altar.

Joseph was the son of Jacob's old age, who had dreams denoting his future reign over his parents and brethren, which he related, causing the enmity of his brethren who by opportunity sold him into bondage, where by his integrity and wisdom the Lord used him to be a savior of his father's family and of others. In being sold and by his faithfulness and office of a savior he foreshadows the true Savior.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

## TRUE WORSHIP

Men generally are inclined to view religion as moral duty, and feel that a literal obedience to the Savior's commands will secure them the reward promised to the faithful. The duties of prayer, attendance of church, the observance of baptism and communion are especially recognized. The literal observance of these commands seems to them a commendable service. One may proceed in this manner, obeying the letter of the New Testament and doing all the good he can to please the Lord, and find a degree of comfort and assurance. But such persons fail to search the Scriptures carefully in their deeper, spiritual meaning and the further duties which they require.

All men by nature are sinners and need to repent and be born again or converted. The heart must become changed and the mind renewed as the Apostle says, "Let that mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." His mind was to do the will of His Father in heaven; He was filled with love and sympathy for fallen man, and willing to give His life as a ransom for many. If we are converted we will love all men, be no respecters of persons, be passive under insult and injury, will not return evil for evil but good for evil, will love our enemies even as Christ did, who prayed for those that nailed Him to the cross: "Father forgive them, they know not what they do."

Conversion must precede baptism. Obeying the light that reveals sin creates a desire for deliverance from it, and leads to prayer for pardon and the gift of God through Christ, namely, His Spirit to abide in our heart. All such souls will receive peace of mind and be brought into fellowship with those who have had the same experience through conversion, and will desire to bind the

association by baptism as commanded by the Lord. Membership in the visible church of Christ necessitates oneness of mind and heart, being bound together by love. It involves mutual interest among the members:—"Ye are the body of Christ," "We are members one of another." 1 Cor. 12: 12-27. Should any member fail or err, it becomes a duty to remind him in order that he might be brought to reflection and become willing to correct his error in meekness and humility.

To observe baptism without the renewed mind, and true fellowship in agreement with Christ's teachings in John seventeenth, would not be acceptable to the Lord. It would be deception. All the commands and ordinances must be observed as representative of love and fellowship; and only by those who have received Christ's Spirit. True believers, in appreciation of God's grace through Christ bestowed upon them, also will be moved to commemorate Christ's suffering and death by partaking of the bread and wine, emblems of His broken body and shed blood. Their spiritual exercises in this service will revive and quicken them, bringing to remembrance their first-love and encouraging a closer walk with God.

Obedience is the fruit of love. Seeking credit for works done or obedience rendered is not what the Gospel requires. "If a man love Me he will keep My words." The vital part or substance of worship is obedience in the spirit of love and humility.

God's children are called out of the world with its idle pastimes and amusements, its strife and turmoil. They seek not to defend themselves by law, but trust in God and commit all to Him, willing to suffer wrongs and injustice patiently; and they will not be conformed to the world. As a brotherhood they seek to excel others only in sim-

licity, meekness and love. Without these fruits our hope is vain, for to this end Christ came into the world,—to restore to the heart of man the lost love and image; what was lost in Adam shall be restored in Christ, but only to them that accept Him. "We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1: 7.

Lancaster, Pa.

J. K.

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### "LIVELY STONES"

"Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

This plain Scripture is one we can all comprehend. It presents unto us a state we can all attain to. It presents unto us a state that will prove a blessing to us. It implies the ability to become living stones with which to build. It is meant for us all, for "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord." We need no greater wealth than to be a child of God, an heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ. In this we are His. Because to be joint-heir means to be co-heir, for He is heir of all things. Is this not a satisfaction, a state that we are interested in, and one that we would like to have part in? To come to be a lively stone we must become tempered and fit for use. The Lord testified through His servant that He was able from these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. This is emblematical of man in the darkness of his heart, but we find that such can attain unto life.

The words of the text prove to us that an unconverted condition exists, that there is a dead state, and that it is possible for us to be brought from death unto life. It is evident that we were not always living stones, but must become eligible. We are all acquainted with

revelation and love it because it unfolds and reflects mysteries, and it is that which brings light and causes light to shine upon our pathway.

The wise and learned of earth spent much time in reaching a conclusion about futurity, but it was all accounted foolishness with God. It is the wisdom of God we wish to attain to. It is that wisdom which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

The Bible represents man in a condition needing life, needing restoration. Take the Bible, consider it, follow its teachings, follow them carefully from Genesis to Revelations, and you will discover the one central idea—that is life, the need of life, the value of life. Man at one time enjoyed life and that life was the love of God; but he lost this life. Through the transgression the understanding was darkened, the heart embittered, the powers of the soul paralyzed. Since that time this is the condition we find him in naturally. He is disposed to be disobedient, thus we have man represented unto us. It need not be a question to any one, whether we can accept it without testimony, for it is the experience of man. Does not the Bible draw faithful pictures? The Bible represents him as having departed from that which is good and having gone in the way of evil, that the way of peace he hath not known. This, too, is the testimony of history. Take the experience of ourselves. Is there not a disposition with us to be selfish, to be unfair, to love darkness rather than light? Do we not find evidence within that we are just such beings as the Bible represents us to be? This is the dead state.

God is light, God is love. The Old Testament, by its ordinances, ceremonies and sacrifices, presents unto us a practice and service that impresses the mind

continually with the moral pollution, symbolized by the cleansings of the outer body. We have presented unto us the lack of unity, the lack of harmony among men. These characteristics deprive man of association with God. Christ was foretold as the woman's seed. He came in the fulness of time. When He entered upon His public ministry He bore witness of that which was foretold, and was in harmony with it. He advised all to search the Scriptures, to enter into the matter and discover if He is the Mighty God, the True Counsellor, and whether He possessed the attributes ascribed unto Him. He was reviled, He was threatened and stoned in revealing the Father's will and finally died upon the tree of the cross.

This was also in harmony with what was prophetically taught. Christ's coming was the symbol of the rock, the symbol of the source of life. On one occasion He testified, "Whosoever is athirst, let him come unto me and partake of the waters of life freely." He administered life to all. He is a living stone. His mission was to give life, because that is what we need. In considering man, the fallen race of Adam, He ever recognized this need. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the time is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live."

It is evident that all needed life, because even God's chosen people under the old covenant could not give evidence of it. It was the light that only the angels in heaven possessed. If mankind would have possessed the life, the effects would have followed. There is only one divine life, God's will is divine. Christ's teachings are all in harmony with divine love. There is not one paragraph to be found between the lids of the New Testament that is not in harmony with love to God and love to man. If there had been such life previous to the appointed

time, then Christ would need not have come.

Our text assures us that such power has come, "Ye as lively stones, etc." Have we the need of such a life? We have said we have this evidence, at least I have; and I think you will agree that we have testimony here with us of a dead state, of a void in our souls. How does it come that we have this evidence? We know there is a God in heaven, a source of love, a source of power, and man must have gotten away from that condition or there would not be the longing in the soul for something that not anything in this world can satisfy. If we had wealth and wisdom, it would not satisfy. We believe now that we need something. We know that we must leave this world; is it not a solemn thought that we are born to die? We may be light about it, we may speculate upon it, but the thought will some time intrude upon the minds of all that we are born to die. None of us believe that it is all of life to live or all of death to die. It cannot be. In the very nature of God's economy it cannot be. The question then is where will we be?

In order to enjoy certain conditions we must possess certain qualifications. If I were an invited guest in an intelligent family I could not enjoy myself unless I had some intellectual gifts. I could find no enjoyment because I would not be at home among them. Then how do I expect to be happy in the world to come? How do I expect to be happy in heaven? Heaven is a place of peace, where every duty is one of love, of inspiration. The angels stand before the great Jehovah with two wings shielding their faces and with two wings at the feet, emblem of happy submission. It is their joy, it is the inspiration of their souls, they are happy to be there. This heavenly city is what we want to attain to. We want to get where the streets are

gold, we want to get where there is no crying, where there is no pain, no death, where the fulness of joy is inexpressible. How do we expect to get there? If our hearts are evil, full of vain and foolish thoughts; if we spend our time in disobedience, serving divers lusts and pleasures, will this fit us for the Kingdom? If we administer to the creature what will we do when we do not have the creature? This mortality must be put off. If our enjoyment comes through the honor people confer upon us, what will we do when they pass away, because the time will come when we must all appear before the great white throne? Heaven and earth will pass away, but the word of the Lord will not pass away.

To live a life attached to heaven it must be a life attached to what God loves. It will necessarily be the love of God in the soul. It will be that which dwells upon the subjects of God, that of purity and sanctity. If you and I differed, became divided in our feelings and the difference caused a breach between us, do you think that you or I in this condition would be prepared for death and heaven? Death is a sleep, Job calls it a universal sleep. Man lieth down to sleep and will not arise in the morning. Some have fallen asleep by the wayside. These wake up in the same spirit in which they fell asleep. Just so it is with us. A sanctified spirit is a spirit that recognizes what is pure, what is just, what is honest, what is lovely. A sanctified spirit will not avail itself of anything contrary to love to God and love to man. A sanctified spirit separates itself from sin, it has power to resist sin. If we are in possession of this spirit, in this spirit we will come forth.

I know a man who has made futurity a study of forty years and has reached a conclusion satisfactory to himself, but he reached his conclusion outside the Bible. Take away this Blessed Book and

outside of it all is speculation. This person concluded that we will live always. He believes in eternal progression, that we will come out of this life just as we left it. If he cherishes the faculty of reasoning he goes upward and onward through all the ages of eternity. I would always have it understood that as soon as we go beyond revelation we get to the view of the agnostic.

We have no difficulty in knowing that we are just as the Bible represents us to be, that we need something we cannot give ourselves. A person once said, "Man is a weak creature. When he is put on trial the light he has takes wings and flies away." Is this not an evidence that we need power? There is an inward sense of the knowledge of sin if we accept the testimony of Christ, and they that hear this testimony shall live. Then they realize the dead state and know Christ came to give life. God has laid a chief corner stone. That stone is Christ. Here is the rock; we must all come to this rock but we must be careful not to stumble at the rock. If we realize the need of life it brings us to the Holy Jerusalem. This is a wonderful change. It gives us hope in Jesus Christ. He declared the Father. He revealed the divine life and fits us to receive it. In this change we become the spiritual temple. The material for building this temple has been prepared and fitted. In the process of building Solomon's temple no sound of hammer was heard, as all parts had adaptation. This symbolizes the children of Christ. They are regenerated through faith in Jesus Christ and thus are re-created. We must be born again of the life that is from above, the life that brings us into harmony with the divine economy.

Did the Apostles attain to an angelic state? No. Because here we are in the flesh, and flesh and blood can never be converted. The Lord looks upon the

pure desires of the heart. It depends very much on the character of the vessel in the reflection of the light; some emit greater light than others. The Apostle testifies to this when he said, There is a diversity of talents but one spirit, there is a difference of administrations, but one Lord. There are different members of the body but all dependent on the mind. Unity in believers in Christ is a doctrine that cannot be successfully disputed. A learned jurist in a conversation insisted that unity is impossible. He went on to prove it in his learned and philosophic way and claimed that it was preposterous in these times, as there is too much diversity of opinion among men to effect unity. We agree that his premises are correct from which he draws his conclusions, but he takes a natural ground. Man according to nature is of the earth, earthy, and thus unity is impossible. But the children of God are re-created, the divine life is shining in the heart, the new birth has taken place which builds up and constitutes the spiritual temple. It is the same spirit Christ brought from heaven; therefore He said, "Ye must be born again." Grace is from God, conviction is from God, knowledge of sin is from God; therefore it is all outside of ourselves. In order to attain to this life man must divest himself of self. He must come to a condition that he sees his own vanity and the folly of it.

If sin had never entered the world there would be no darkness, there would be no division, there would be no war; there would be peace, universal peace and righteousness upon the earth. Christ came to give us power to overcome sin. If that power has come to us then unity must exist. The Church of Christ is a united Church, the members are built up together, they have become lively stones that constitute the Church.

Practice the spirit of the Beatitudes. It will put an end to war, there will be peace. Follow the example Christ set before us, and can we resist evil, can we return evil for evil, can we practice eye for eye? If we can, then Christ testified what is not true. When we repel force by force it always means perpetuation of strife. But Christ, when He was reviled, reviled not again.

These are statements from the Head of the Church and they should impress us with their depth of meaning. Let us remember that we are bought with a price, that our names are written in heaven, and it thus behooves us to ponder deeply the weighty matters of salvation. Turn not from the free offering of grace but be willing to become lively stones in the temple of God.

Chambersburg, Pa.

J. S. L.

### FALL AND RESTORATION OF MAN

With our limited knowledge of God's creation, we yet are impressed with its vastness, harmony and perfection. The only creature in this vast creation that departed from its original order is man. The glory of the heavens, the handiwork of the firmament, the speech of day and night, are all witnessed by mankind today as they ever were, and have the same effect.

We are unable to comprehend the boundless expanse of space, but the prophet said, "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him." As there is fear or conviction with mankind since the transgression, it is an evidence that they have not departed so far from their first estate that they could not again be restored. It was God's design that man should again be restored, and His plan of restoration is as perfect and as effective as any part of His creation. Effect

follows cause, as day follows night. Death is the effect of transgression, life is the effect of obedience.

Special mention was made of only two fruit trees in the garden of Eden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life. Adam was forbidden to eat the fruit of one tree only—the tree of knowledge—for by eating thereof death would follow. As Adam was created a two-fold being possessing both the spiritual and the natural life, immediately upon eating of the forbidden fruit he died to the spiritual life, and the seed of the natural death was sown in the body which developed later, as God had said, "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." The effect of transgression incapacitated man to serve God in an acceptable manner, and is the cause of all the evil and suffering that has existed in the world to the present time. Adam realized that his relation to God had been changed, since it was said to him, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground."

The fruit of the tree of life had not been forbidden, but now lest he should eat thereof and live forever, God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken, and protected the garden of Eden by cherubim and a flaming sword so that he could not again enter.

In the garden of Eden, though everything was most beautiful and pleasant, Adam's joy was not complete until the presentation of Eve. This union of Adam and Eve is a type of the union between Christ and the church. God caused a deep sleep to come over Adam before the new creation or life took place, and when Eve was presented unto him, he said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." The union between them and with their heavenly Father could not have been

closer, and it continued until the transgression. The only comfort now, and the one great hope for Adam was in the promise of the woman's seed, which should "bruise the serpents head" and restore that which was lost by the transgression.

The union between Adam and Eve followed Adam's sleep, so the union between Christ and the church followed Christ's sleep of death. The new life or bride of Christ could only be created after His suffering and death. He atoned for Adam's transgression, and brought "life and immortality to light through the gospel." That which separated God and man has been removed, and a perfect union between Christ and His church follows. If perfect unity does not follow God's plan of redemption, then Eve would not be a true type of the church of Christ, and divisions among the professors of religion, which are yet on the increase, might be justifiable; but all antitypes must agree with the types, or God's work would not be perfect. Christ prayed for perfect unity, and the fruit of His efforts will unite into one "the children of God that are scattered abroad."

This perfect unity is maintained among His people by the faithful exercise of His plain doctrines. They live in love, labor in love, reprove in love and when their efforts are not accepted in love by the erring ones, it is evidence that such are not in possession of the Divine Life, and must be separated from the body of Christ or His church. "Withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly."

Lemoine, Pa.

J. I. M.

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### CHRISTIAN JOY

The desire for happiness is a primitive desire; all seek to be happy. In the search for happiness we may be misled.

We shall not find it in the abundance of the things we possess, nor by following the course of our desires. Human wants are never satisfied: "The eye is not satisfied with seeing nor the ear filled with hearing." They who are eager for wealth and for the things which money can buy; the vain; seekers of popularity; lovers of pleasure, lovers of themselves, the idle are not happy. Faithfulness to the obligations which God and nature have imposed upon us—to work, to home and family duties, and to what we owe to our fellow-men brings contentment and simple joys. Yet the purest joys of this life—blessings granted us—are frail and uncertain. The joy that is real and lasting, and which only can supply the innermost need we feel and know not how to satisfy, is Christian joy. This like all joy is not found by seeking; it is dependent on other things.

We believe that man was created to be happy, and that unhappiness came into the world when he lost spiritual fellowship with his Maker and brought upon himself fear and guilt and shame—a sense of remoteness from God. It is obvious that if happiness is to be regained that which was lost must be restored.

The Gospel points out the way. It has brought light into the world, "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death," imparting such knowledge as is sufficient to faith, revealing the purpose of life and its duties, and solving the problem of sin by the promise of redemption. Its message is one of joy. It consoles the penitent; it gives assurance of God's care and keeping, and the promise of future life. The self-denials and crosses it requires yield a fuller, more abundant life, and the service it demands is one in which joy is found.

The faith which is begotten of the Gospel leads to obedience, and obedience

is followed by peace. The Savior said, "If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." Peace within, the consciousness of being divinely loved brings rest of soul, and a sense of nearness to God. "Peace I leave you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you."

Love and peace,—communion with God and with one another is the secret of happiness; and true happiness is the Christian's heritage, the Gospel promise: "These words have I spoken unto you that My joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full."

As this joy is not of the earth, nothing earthly can destroy it. It rises above the happenings of this life, above men and things. Jesus said, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall speak all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." Many have rejoiced in a martyr-death. James said, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." Paul, speaking of his own experience, said, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."

Joy is not always exultant or abounding but ever it is the inward happiness that comes from the holding of faith and a good conscience. It is proportionate to faith; and, though to believers faith, at times, seems weak and doubts and fears arise, they have an abiding comfort which those without faith do not have, in the knowledge that what they possess they would not give up for the world. Joy may be marred, but only one thing can destroy it, that is sin.

We are robbed of joy by sinning because sin separates us from God. This is the inevitable effect of sin. From sin and sinning come the woes and miseries of human life. Men are discontented, seeking rest but not finding it; dull and insensible of the cause of their trouble. To live in disobedience to one's convictions and at variance with God's will is to give sway to evil, and to be without God and without hope in this world.

The joy of believers may be marred by reason of human infirmity. In us, that is in our flesh dwelleth no good thing. The motions of sin which the law condemns pain and distress us. Our attainments are not what we would wish them to be. Always, it is but a "reaching forth unto those things which are before." When viewed aright this condition need not disturb our peace. In the blessed work of atonement human weakness is provided for: "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." By virtue of Christ's righteousness we are accepted, and it has been well said, "This relation is one that our manifold failings and weaknesses will not change."

But joy is marred by a sense of duty not done. As we look over the day's doings we are, at times, troubled for we discover that through a lack of sensitiveness to conviction, or of failure to instantly obey it, we have been remiss. We have taken too much thought for the things of our life, or too much thought for the body; an act that ought to have been done has been left undone; words have not been spoken that ought to have been spoken. Whether it was the omission of a duty enjoined, or the giving room to a desire which our conscience forbade, we are rightly troubled; our peace is disturbed, fellowship hindered and happiness marred. But, if grace

remains with us, we will penitently confess our fault, knowing that the desire for grace is an evidence of grace and that the promise is,—“If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Then joy will be restored, and made more secure through chastening.

Not only in relation to God may we lose for the time peace and joy, but also in relation to our brethren. The danger is greatest when there are close associations, daily contacts. Our dispositions are different and sometimes we will offend each other. The acts of another may weaken our confidence toward him, cause us to become suspicious, and to judge. Our duty is to take captive our thoughts and to go and speak to him. Again our feelings may be hurt by the words or conduct of others. Should we retort with bitterness, we will remember that words spoken in anger need to be recalled; offenses given, removed;—“If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” If these duties are omitted our prayers will be hindered, confidence and love will be disturbed, joy and peace be marred. When duty is done, wrongs are righted, forgiveness asked and forgiveness from the heart granted, fellowship will be restored, and love will be increased, for “love scarce is love that never knew the sweetness of forgiving.”

To live in the faith of the Gospel and partake of its blessed hope cause joy and rejoicing far above earthly joys. And to share this blessing with others who are willing to unite in the faith causes double rejoicing. This joy, so manifest in the early disciples, is a power for good in this world, leading men to a be-

lief in the truth by the evidence it presents of the reality and the power of Christian faith.

Lancaster, Pa.,  
R. F. D. No. 4.

M. H. M.

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### ADMONITION TO WATCH

Extracts from an article written soon after the time of persecution, by Th. J. Van Bragt, of Dort, Holland, July 25, 1659

Ruth, the Moabitess, said to Naomi, the mother of her husband: “Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.” Ruth 1: 16, 17.

With such inseparable love ought we, most beloved in the Lord, to be joined to our blessed fellow brethren who have been slain for the testimony of the Lord, that we might follow their footsteps unto the end; for surely the God whom they confessed and served is also our God; the Savior on whom they placed their hope is our Savior; the faith which they all confessed is our faith; the laws and commandments of God which they received as their rule of life are also our laws and commandments; they bowed their knees before God; they obligated themselves by the words of their lips to render obedience to God, and thereupon received holy baptism; we have done the same; they promised to continue steadfastly all the days of their life in the faith and due obedience, without departing therefrom, yea, if necessary, to suffer death for it; we have promised the same. What difference, then, is there between us and them? Certainly only this: that they all persevered unto the end, nay, unto a cruel death, without departing to the right or to the left; which we have

not yet done. They have therefore entered into rest, yea, have come to the Lord; while we are yet in unrest, proceeding in our pilgrimage in the absence of the Lord.

Therefore, my most beloved friends in Christ Jesus, let us also in this last respect seek to be conformed to our beloved slain fellow brethren, that we may continue steadfastly unto the end in the most holy faith which we have confessed with them. Oh! be careful in this matter; watch over your dear-bought souls; for it is highly necessary, yea, more necessary than at any former time.

These are sad times in which we live; nay, truly, there is more danger now than in the time of our fathers, who suffered death for the testimony of the Lord. Few will believe this, because the great majority look to that which is external and corporeal, and in this respect it is now better, quieter and more comfortable; few look to that which is internal and pertains to the soul, and on which everything depends, "for what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matt. 16: 26.

These times are certainly more dangerous; for then Satan came openly, through his servants, even at noon-day, as a roaring lion, that he could be known, and it now and then was possible to hide from him; besides, his chief design then was to destroy the body; but now he comes as in the night, or in the twilight, in a strange but yet pleasing form, and, in a two-fold way, lies in wait to destroy the soul; partly, to trample under foot, and annihilate entirely, if this were possible, the only saving Christian faith; partly to destroy the true separated Christian life which is the outgrowth of faith. Ps. 91: 5, 6.

He reveals himself on the one hand as an angel of light, 2 Cor. 11: 14, 15, as a

kind, pleasant, yea, even divine messenger, with humble countenance, downcast eyes, plain garb, and living in seclusion from the throng of the worldly-minded, even as the holiest people, yea, the martyrs of God, formerly did. His words are modest, trembling and full of contrition—seemingly coming from deep meditation, inward fear and apprehension, lest he might speak amiss or untruthfully. Meanwhile, and before one is aware of it, he seizes hold and tears like a wolf in sheep's clothing, robbing the innocent lambs of Christ of their precious faith, which he pretends to be of small importance, but without which faith it is impossible to please God, Heb. 11: 6; nay, without which we, according to the words of Christ, shall be condemned, Mark 16: 16; for (says Paul), whatsoever is not of faith is sin, Rom. 14: 23.

It grieves us to the heart that we must live to see these times, and therefore speak in this wise. O Lord, strengthen our faith! help thy weak, trusting lambs, that they may not be led into error, nor moved from the foundations of the most holy faith.

On the other hand, through his instigation, the world now reveals itself very beautiful and glorious, more than at any preceding time, in a three-fold pleasing form—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Almost all men run after her, to worship her as a queen supreme, and are deceived thereby; yea, many who have drunk of the poisoned wine of her lusts from the golden cup of her iniquities and deceptions die a spiritual death.

As the first design is aimed at the faith, so this is directed against the true Christian life. Here lies great danger. Who shall escape these snares? He that would at no time be taken unawares by it must indeed be cautious and watchful. But our very flesh seems prone to it.

Here must be fasting, watching, praying, and calling upon God for help, otherwise there is no escape. . . .

It certainly was through worldly lusts that the old world perished; that Sodom, Gomorrah, Zeboim, and Admah were consumed, overthrown and totally destroyed by fire from Heaven; that in forty years, through serpents, fire, and other plagues, the wanton and lustful people of Israel perished to the number of over six hundred thousand in the wilderness; and that the mighty maritime cities, Zidon and Tyrus, whose ships were trimmed with embroidered, silken sails from Egypt; whose rowers sat upon benches of ivory; where incalculable riches were bought and sold, and, from carnal incentives, almost inconceivable arts practiced, were reduced to a heap of stones and so leveled to the ground, that the fishermen stretch out their nets to dry on the rocks upon which these cities stood. Gen. 7; Matt. 24: 37, 38; Luke 17: 26, 27; Peter 2: 5.—Gen. 19: 24, 25; Is. 13: 19; Jer. 50: 40; Hos. 11: 8; Amos 4: 11; Luke 17: 28, 29; 2 Pet. 2: 6; Jude 7.—Compare Num. 1: 2, 3, 46 with Num. 14: 22, 23. Also, Num. 11: 1 and 16: 31–35; 21: 6; Jude 5.—Is. 23: 4, 5; Ezek. 27: 26–28; 28, the whole chapter.

I will not now speak of Jerusalem, Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, and other mighty, licentious and luxurious cities, which, with all their inhabitants who had in this respect sinned against God, have borne his wrath, and felt, to their destruction, the plagues of his afflicting hand; for this would consume too much time. O awful judgments of God! O pernicious worldly-mindedness! O corroding and cankering luxury, that draggest after thee such a train of unspeakable miseries! Help, Lord, that our soul be delivered from all these dangers.

But what danger would there be, if none but the open enemies of God and

his holy truth were guilty in this matter? What harm could be done, if they alone, and no others, would arouse and call down upon themselves the wrath of God? For then every pious and serious soul would beware of their example as of a savage beast, venomous serpent, or deadly basilisk. But now such is the state of things that many commoners and such as are not total strangers to religion or the worship of God; who, as they say, would fain be saved; and who, therefore, though they are not truly enlightened, glorify and praise God and His word with their mouth, show nevertheless (to the seduction of the simple) that the world is their dear friend, yea lies nearest to their heart, since most of their works are directed to its service, that they may thereby partake of its glittering but deceptive reward. . . . O that Satan would show himself, as he really is, and that the world, too, might come forth without disguise or mask; then certainly no one possessing reason would allow himself to be deceived by them! . . . But, O how lamentable! all this is hid under a beautiful appearance. Satan appears to be a prince or king, and the world a noble princess or queen. . . .

There is, therefore, great danger of being deceived. O, ye upright children of God, be on your guard. Let your simplicity be coupled with prudence. Your faith as well as your life are the objects aimed at. If Satan gain the mastery over you, your precious faith which has been committed to your keeping as dearly as your soul, is ruined. If ye are overcome by the world, it will soon put an end to your Christian and virtuous life, without which latter the best of faith is of no avail. Care, therefore, my dear friends, equally well for both, for the one is as important as the other. Faith without the corresponding life, or the life without the faith, can, will and may not avail before God. They are like

two witnesses, who must agree; the one cannot stand or be received without the other.

TH. J. VAN BRAGHT.

Dort, Holland,

July the 25th, 1659.

### THE BEAUTIES OF NATURE

There is beauty in nature wherever we look;  
We see it in river, in streamlet and brook.

From the sweep of the ocean to the murmuring  
rill

There is beauty and grandeur, look where we  
will.

We sense a Creator in the heavens above;  
The sun, with its warmth, tells us of His love;  
The moon and the stars are the glory of night,  
The canopy o'er us tells of His might.

The beautiful trees like monuments stand,  
Without them, how barren would be this fair  
land;

In Autumn, when robed in crimson and gold,  
What a vision of loveliness then we behold.

The birds and the flowers so fair and so gay,  
The carpet of grass which we tread day by day;  
Our hearts swell with rapture as these wonders  
unfold

And the beauties of nature to us are unrolled.  
Waynesboro, Pa. A. S. F.

### BRIEF NOTES

The believer's peace and comfort may be much interrupted, the spiritual energies impaired, and time wasted by entering into much speculation in regard to our life and its problems. The prompting of the Christian spirit ever is to perform every duty as it comes before us from day to day, with a prayerful desire for wisdom and grace, that in the performance of these duties devoted service may be rendered unto God, that He may be glorified, and our lives brought into harmony with Gospel teaching and the Savior's example.

\* \* \* \*

The thoughts expressed in the 23rd Psalm are touching and beautiful; and we hear Bible readers frequently refer

to it as their favorite Psalm. The language is comforting and refreshing because it is the expression of David's implicit confidence in God, his dependence for strength and guidance, his thankfulness for the divine favor which God in mercy bestowed upon him and his people. His practical experience as a shepherd watching over sheep may have suggested the thought of placing the Lord and His people in the same relation as that which existed between himself and his sheep.

It is said a good shepherd loves his sheep: he gently leads them out and in to find pasture: he watches over them and endeavors to keep them secure from all danger. If any go astray he makes a special effort to bring them back.

The Lord is the great shepherd, His children, the sheep. The words of the Psalm give us encouragement to exercise faith in God and are no doubt intended to comfort all souls who believe and obey His word. We cannot consistently comfort ourselves with the words of the Psalmist if we have not become sheep in the fold of which the Lord is the shepherd; for according to Scripture testimony it is only those who confess Christ in word and deed that enjoy the sweet and peaceful rest of soul portrayed in the words—"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters." It is only when water reaches its lowest level that it becomes still; indicating the state of humility to which we must come before we can find rest for our soul.

\* \* \* \*

The Savior, as He declared, knocks at the door of the heart of every man, and in love pleads for admission; but He never opens the door. Opening the door to His loving appeals is optional with every one. Satan enters without knocking. His purposes and methods are those of a thief and a robber, and his influences

are dark and benighting, leading to everlasting death and destruction.

When we open the door to the Savior's loving appeals, light enters, and penetrates to the darkest recesses of the heart; darkness is dispelled, Christ's Spirit makes its abode there, resulting in salvation and everlasting life.

\* \* \* \*

Silence itself may be God's voice speaking to us. Have there not been times when our thoughts were best expressed in the language of the poet: "Compared with utter silence, what are words to-night?" In silent majesty the heavenly bodies move through space, each in its orbit, balancing and counterbalancing each other, without an error in time or revolution, preserving their identity and performing their mission through all the ages and vicissitudes of human life, continually witnessing the power and glory of God. The earth itself, in its majestic scenery which often fills our minds with wonder and awe, and in its products and their adaptation to the needs of all the creatures, joins in the music of the spheres, "Forever singing as they shine, The hand that made us is divine."

\* \* \* \*

Many profess justification by faith alone upon the ground, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Rom. 10: 9. Still, saving faith brings obedience to "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The apostle James fitly adds: "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Ye see then how that by works man is justified, and not by faith only." Works are the result and evidence of faith; when the corresponding works are not manifest it becomes evident that the faith which bringeth salvation is lacking.

Much thought is directed to the decrease of membership in many popular churches, and the wonderful increase in atheism. An editorial in a leading Daily assigns the principal cause to the corruption and inconsistency in practice which prevails in these churches.

A pitiful situation indeed! Is it not the very condition foretold in the declaration of revelation, in the mighty voice of the angel who lightened the earth with his glory, declaring: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird"; and of which it will finally be said: "Alas, alas, the great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come."

Every faithful soul will heed that "other voice from heaven," saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

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In current literature much thought is directed toward correcting the admittedly sad situation in the inconsistent practices among professors of Christianity in the popular churches. Strong efforts are made by these churches to combine their forces and work together for unity, world peace and higher standards of living. The result of such efforts is termed Christian work.

As long as the work and efforts so made do not begin with a desire for self-knowledge, humility, and a complete surrender of our selfish will, with a longing for the possession of Christ's Spirit in the heart, such work will ever be but making the fruit good without making the tree good that produces it. Instead of being a Christian work it becomes in reality an anti-Christian work; and, far from extending Christ's kingdom, it can only further the dominion of the prince

of darkness, for its highest attainment in unity can only be organic unity, not the unity brought about by Christ's Spirit in each individual, making all "one heart and one soul." So the peace attained is merely an economic peace, not the peace which results from divine love, active in the heart. So also the higher standards of living are merely higher moral standards, having no greater reward than those conveyed in the present life.

\* \* \* \*

In the affairs of life mankind have undergone hardships and suffering to free themselves and their posterity from enforced servitude and bondage; and to those who have not entered Christ's kingdom, and have no real comprehension of its nature, Christian living seems to demand a hard, compulsory service in requirements of self-denials and self-sacrifice.

Yet in reality a Christian life knows no compulsory service. The apostle Paul speaks of "the glorious liberty of the children of God," and declares, "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." He admonishes, "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

To every true believer the release from servitude under the power of Satan is a truly "glorious liberty"; for there never was and never can be a more oppressive and hard service than that we render when in bondage under his dominion and power. Yet no matter how much self-sacrifice may be involved in the service we try to render to the Lord, without His Spirit in our hearts as the prompting motive we become "entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

We solicit questions relating to spiritual matters. State clearly your question and send to GOOD TIDINGS.

Q. Were true Christians always united in faith and doctrine?

A. We read in the Acts of the Apostles that Christ's followers on the day of Pentecost became of one heart and soul, and that they all had the same faith and doctrine, and were organized into church fellowship. In the "Martyr's Mirror," a large book containing confessions of faith of the persecuted Christians covering a period of sixteen hundred years, we find authority to state that during all this time there were Christians who were united in faith and doctrine. After persecution ceased, many departed from the true faith, but at all times there were found those who held that all true Christians will be united in faith and doctrine.

Q. What is meant by "Blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved."

A. Israel, as a people, rejected Christ and in their blindness cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" But this blindness is said to be in part, and we are told that those who did receive Him were promised power to become the sons of God. The Lord revealed to Peter that the Gentiles who received the Holy Ghost should be baptized as well as the Israelites. Not all Gentiles were saved, but only those who believed; neither was all Israel rejected, only those who did not believe. So "all Israel shall be saved" would imply that all true believers among the Gentiles and Israelites constitute the true Israel of God and shall be saved.

Q. What is a sinner?

A. One who transgresses God's Holy law.

Q. What must take place with a sinner to become a child of God?

A. A new birth; which can only take place when persons truly repent of their

sins and plead with the Father for forgiveness; Christ Jesus intercedes for such souls, and grants them the Holy Spirit, which transforms them and enables them to become humble and obedient children of God.

Q. Can we have a false hope of salvation?

A. If our hope is not based upon the merits and righteousness of Christ it is a false hope. We may be conscientious, but our conscience is not always a safe guide, as it may become scared, perverted, or defiled.

Oftentimes souls are advised to associate themselves in church worship, observe the ordinances, practice charity, and lead a moral upright life so that they may entertain a hope of salvation. This counsel is misleading. While these fruits are necessarily a part of the Christian's life, they do not give a ground for a hope of salvation. We must accept Christ as our Mediator, obey His teaching, walking in humility and self-denial. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

Q. When truly converted people meet, who are strangers to each other, what evidence will they have that they are brethren?

A. All truly converted people have the mind of Christ, consequently they walk by the same rule. The principle of love and obedience will be manifest by their conduct. They will freely confess their faith one to another and as they agree, which they will surely do if they have the same mind, it will be very evident that they are brethren.

Q. Of what is the Scape-goat a type?

A. "Aaron chose two goats by lot, one lot for the Lord and the other for the Scape-goat. The one goat was sacrificed for a sin-offering, but the other was to be presented alive before the Lord to make

an atonement with him, and let him go for a Scape-goat into the wilderness. . . . And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited." Lev. 6. The Scape-goat, evidently, prefigures or is a type of Christ who, by His death and resurrection, became the sin-bearer. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." Heb. 9: 28. He not only bears our sins, but takes them away where they are lost sight of and forgotten by God, as the Scape-goat in the wilderness typifies. For He said, "and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." Heb. 8: 12.

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#### THE TEN LEPERS

"Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." Luke 17: 17, 18.

Christ spoke this after He had cleansed ten lepers. Leprosy is a malignant and obstinate disease. One afflicted with it was shunned in those days and treated as an outcast. The ten lepers besought Christ for mercy and He responded by telling them to show themselves to the priests, but while they were on the way they were cleansed. His word performed the miraculous cure. Nine went their way, but one returned to give "glory to God."

Leprosy may be used as a type or figure of sin, which, since the fall, afflicts all mankind. Through the atonement we are cleansed from sin. Christ cleansed the ten lepers; this being a full number, may represent the whole human family. It is shown by the parable that Christ is no respecter of persons or nations, for the one that returned was a Samaritan, a stranger as to the Jewish nation. Lepers under the law were directed to the priests and if they were found to be afflicted with the genuine disease they pronounced them unclean. They were

then debarred from the association of their friends and others. "He shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be." Lev. 13: 46. When sensible of our unclean, sinful state we may go to the priests, representing the Mosaic Law, but we obtain no relief or cleansing, only intensified anxiety and condemnation, for the law pronounces all men under condemnation and wrath, and spiritually unclean. The debt we owe remains unpaid, for all our moral works can not atone for sin. They can not bring peace and rest to the soul. We must with a humble heart and contrite spirit appeal, like the lepers, to the great High Priest, Jesus Christ: His cleansing blood alone will satisfy the offended righteousness of God. When we are cleansed we shall not go our way and forget our Benefactor, but return like the stranger, to give glory to God. We shall learn of Jesus and obey all His commandments, and "follow Him in the regeneration"; love what He loves, and by an obedient, righteous life give glory to God. In this we can glorify God; for if we are not in possession of His love, and have not the self-denying, submissive and self-sacrificing spirit of Christ we can not say in spirit and in truth: "Our Father who are in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name."

There is a touch of sadness in Christ's expression: "But where are the nine?" It is indeed sad that many want to take advantage of the saving, cleansing means, but are not willing to make the sacrifice of living in self-denial and non-conformity to the world, as the Gospel demands; consequently they cannot give glory to God. The multitude, representing the nine, go their way apparently heedless of the great love and mercy of God, "who gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3: 16. The one

that returned may represent the few on the narrow way of life who have promise. Christ's followers may fail betimes, but if contrite and penitent, forgiveness is freely granted, and cleansing for their infirmities, which Christ exemplified by washing His disciples' feet. John 13: 4, 5. It is also testified: "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2: 1.

Blessed are they who return to give glory to God, for they have the promise of "receiving manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come, life everlasting." Luke 18: 30.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

### THE GOOD SHEPHERD

"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." John 10: 11.

In the land of Palestine the life of a shepherd differs greatly from the life of one in our own country. No man here is supposed to feel much interest in his own flock beyond finding a market for them. The animal represents to him so many dollars, more or less. But it was different in the land of our Savior. There the shepherd was continually with his flock, sharing all their dangers, and leading them into green pastures, and beside the still waters. And thus it would be very natural for a strong interest to spring up for the sheep under his care; stronger, in part, than that feeling which we have for a faithful dog or horse which shared our dangers.

If we had been living among those to whom our Lord addressed the words of the parable, we should have understood Him perfectly, and at a glance could have taken in the whole scene—He as the faithful and good shepherd, we the sheep of his fostering care.

One of the main characteristics by which the true shepherd is distinguished is his relation not only to the flock as a whole, but to the individuals of the

flock. "He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." He not only gathers us all into one flock but He singles us out by some endearing appellation, and we hear His voice and follow Him.

We are too apt to measure Christ's mind and love by our own finite capacities; and, as we can select from our large circle of acquaintances or friends but one or two who are especially dear to us, so we imagine that Christ's kingdom is too extensive, His subjects too many, for Him to look after each individual. But the parable, and still more the practice of our Lord, teaches us the opposite. Following His footsteps as He goes through Canaan, we find Him on many occasions singling out individuals, and giving them a loving word—whether it be Matthew at the receipt of custom, or James and John by the seaside; Nathanael, the Israelite without guile, or Zacchaeus the publican; the woman who touched the hem of His garment, or the one who anointed His feet with ointment; so He loves each of His disciples now, and calls each one by name. Until we feel this nearness of Christ we shall never understand the blessed mystery of His death and passion; the merits of which must be appreciated by us individually.

Then too, "He leads the sheep"—another proof of His tenderness; there is no compulsion. The Eastern shepherd did not, like our shepherds, go behind the sheep and drive them on, but called them to follow him. And we see how consistent it must be with Christ's character to lead and not to drive His disciples.

Christ was the good shepherd because He gave His life for the sheep. In a country where the flocks were liable at any time to be devastated by wolves or other wild beasts, a man must have been prepared to risk his life in defense of

his charge. This would not be done by a mere hireling, one whose wages were the only inducement to him to serve as a shepherd, but by one who felt such a deep and personal attachment to the flock that no risk was too great to be run for their sakes. The life of each sheep must be as dear to him as his own life. In this we see how Jesus was the good shepherd.

The wolf, Satan, is constant in his attacks upon the flock, but Christ has not left them in his power. The Savior's life, laid down once for all, has vanquished the enemy, and over those who are Christ's he has no power. When furious assaults were made by priests and people our Lord did not flee. Had He been a mere hireling then was the time to have proved Him. There was no parleying, no tampering with the truth, no compliance with prejudices. The time had come when His life or that of the church was at stake, and we know which it was that suffered—"the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."

But one of the chief proofs of our Lord's right to be called the Good Shepherd is the fact that He knows the sheep: "I know my sheep and am known of mine; as the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father." The thought is, that Christ's knowledge of us and our knowledge of Him is just the same as the knowledge existing between Him and the Father. What then does our Lord mean when He says, "I know my sheep"—simply, I know who they are? We need not be told that. The truth lies deeper; He knows what they are, all their sorrows and cares, all their hopes and aspirations, their temptations and trials; so that there is not one poor man or woman, so oppressed by want or affliction but may feel that the Savior is ready and willing to help. Christ knows the needs of his people better than they do themselves. He knows them and

loves them with the same knowledge and affection that exist between the Father and Himself.

And let us not forget the great truth embodied in the words, "I lay down my life for the sheep." Not a day passes perhaps, in which we do not think of our Savior's dying for us; yet what practical effect has the doctrine had on our lives? Has it led us to give up all for Christ's sake and to follow Him in loving obedience? Has His love—the love wherewith He loved us—moved us to love others as ourselves and share with them the natural and spiritual gifts we have received in such a spirit that it can be said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me?" Upon our faithfulness to our Lord will depend the position which the Good Shepherd will give to us at the last day, whether among the sheep or the goats. Matt. 25: 33.

Springfield, Ohio.

M. R. M.

### WORRY

We are creatures of habit; we become accustomed to certain lines of thought, certain modes of speech, certain ways of doing things. Being human, we are interested in human affairs and affected by human interests. Although the new birth has taken place and we are trying to follow Christ, our old nature is still with us; its motions or promptings contrary to godliness are constantly felt. Owing to this fact, and to the pressure upon most of us of the great struggle for existence—it is good for us at times to stop and retire within ourselves and, figuratively speaking, hold ourselves and our habits up to the Light which we are trying to follow, that we may look and see what manner of persons we really are, and what sort of lives we are living.

The enemy is so subtle that unless we are very watchful we may get into habits

that are dangerous to the spiritual life. One of these is the habit of worrying. Worry and worrying have become so common that their real meaning may not be fully understood.

Through centuries of use the word worry has come to mean "To feel and express great care and anxiety." What place has this state of mind in the life of the follower of Christ? Does not undue solicitude really mean want of trust in God? Do we truly love God when we do not trust Him? If we allow our minds to be constantly disturbed by care and anxiety about what we are afraid may come to us or ours, we are guilty of fear. The Word teaches, "Perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment." 1 John 4: 18. This torment of mind caused by fear is the essence of worry—it is one of the weapons of the enemy of all good. Fear and worry go hand in hand, and if not checked, they will, by slow degree, rob us of faith upon which depends the power and influence of the Holy Spirit. If we find ourselves given to worrying let us pray for faith to overcome it.

In the fourth chapter of St. Mark we read that after Christ had quieted the wind and the waves when a great storm had arisen on the sea, He said to His disciples who were with Him on the ship, "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" St. Matthew's version of this occurrence is also impressive. Matt. 8: 24–27. Both accounts illustrate human weakness and God's displeasure when His followers lose faith and become fearful. Both evangelists also bring out the comforting fact of Divine pity and of God's power and willingness to help His poor children.

Christ encourages all who accept Him and tells them not to fear. He says, "Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." Matt. 10: 31; and again, "Fear not, little flock;

for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12: 32. True, St. Paul says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Philippians 2: 12. This fear, however, is not the fear that comes of doubting God's love and care for us, but is the wholesome fear of the enemy of all good—the fear of the evil spirit, or of the inclination to go wrong that is so strong in every one of us. Such fear leads to earnest prayer and strong efforts with God's help, to use to His honor the powers He has given us for self-control and self-discipline. No matter how weak we are, if we trust Him, He will give us strength for all our needs present and future. Looking back over our lives can we not all see how the Lord has provided for us when we trusted in Him? "He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." Psalm 103: 14.

The effects of worry on the physical body are as evil as its influence on the spiritual life. Because of its being made up largely of fear, worry like fear, causes a most depressing state of mind which affects the body in general, lowering its vitality.

It is not an honor to God when we worry—that is, when we have "undue solicitude" about the future. The sixth chapter of St. Matthew should be read very often, and, if possible, committed to memory, for it contains the assurance from God Himself that He will ever provide for those who have, by adoption, become His children, and who trust in Him.

Although the future is in God's hands, we cannot place upon our Heavenly Father all the responsibility for what comes to us. We bring much upon ourselves. Are not our to-morrows largely determined by our to-days? Let us follow out this thought for ourselves. The consequences of our thoughts, words and actions of to-day will surely meet us to-morrow or some other time in the future.

If to-day we spend our time in grieving over a past that cannot be changed, or in dread and anxiety about what the future may have in store for us, our present is neglected; the duties of to-day are either imperfectly done or entirely undone, and to-morrow finds us unprepared for what it brings.

The present, then, is our precious time in which to pray and love and work, "doing all things heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto men." So living we will be free from worry. Let us cherish the message left us by our dear Lord and Master: "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."

Lancaster, Pa.

L. L. F.

#### GOD'S CARE FOR HIS CHILDREN

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12: 32.

Considering life as we journey from childhood to the age of accountability, we conclude that children, though they possess a sinful nature are free from guilt, and are as innocent of evil as were our first parents in the Garden of Eden. God placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden, and said to Adam, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Innocent children are, as it were, in the midst of that garden surrounded by many trees bearing good fruit. When they reach the age of accountability, they have knowledge of God's will. The tree of knowledge bore fruit that was pleasing to the eye. This fruit may be compared to sin. The author of sin as a serpent is present to entice them to disobey and yearn for the deadly fruits of sin. Satan would have them disobey

God's commands and follow evil promptings, since he is an enemy to all good. When they partake of the forbidden fruit, they are found under penalty of death, as were our first parents, and are driven from the garden and the way is closed for their return.

Unbelief and vanity lead into carnal lusts and desires. When there is a consciousness that they have disobeyed God's word, they realize the great debt they have incurred and see that they are stripped of all that is pleasing in God's sight. Their best efforts to do good are unavailing since they cannot of themselves pay the debt. In their distress God's grace appears, and like the Prodigal who had wandered into a far country, they penitently return and say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son: make me as one of Thy hired servants." Their spiritual eyes are now opened and they realize that they had wandered away from the Heavenly Father's care and in that condition cannot please God. This experience prepares and fits them to become one of the little flock to whom He says, "Fear not, little flock."

All such penitent souls are willing to be led by the Good Spirit as a dependent child is led by a loving father. They now have knowledge of their helpless state and realize that with all their best efforts they cannot attain to perfection. The Lord Jesus Christ now appears and quiets their fears, saying, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Such souls seek the company of others who have had like experience; their homes may be far distant and their rearing very different, but if truly awakened, they will enjoy a fellowship wherein peace and happiness exist, such as words cannot express. Wherever this little flock is found, there is Christ's Church,

His Bride, established as a means to sustain and preserve the spiritual life that has been begotten in the soul.

In a natural household, parents care for their children until they grow to manhood and womanhood. They warn them in times of danger, and comfort them in times of trouble and suffering. Where a number of children are reared together one helps to temper and discipline the other. In the household of faith — the church — "the members should have the same care one for another," and though differing in gifts all may be helpful. Christ is the head, who has promised to be with His people "always, even to the end of the world." Satan will assail and try to rob them of their precious faith, but they have a strong arm to lean on, and the church is provided with the sure armor of the word of the Lord for the reproof of sin and error, so that every penitent upright soul may be comforted by the words of the Savior, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Elmira, Ohio.

A. R.

#### THE APPREHENSION OF FAITH

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, "Lay hold on eternal life." In this life we may desire many things but we know by experience, if we do not put forth an effort to attain them, we shall not be successful. And so it is in the spirit. If we do not continually press toward the mark we shall not grow in grace.

The Psalmist David said at the end of his seventy years, the allotted age of man according to the Psalm of Moses, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." History informs us that he had an eventful life and not all of his days were spent to the honor and glory of God. Yet who can read the fifty-first Psalm and not see that

he was humble and contrite after committing errors, a state of mind that we know the Lord commends? In recounting the history of the chosen people of the Lord, when he preached in the synagogue at Antioch on the Sabbath day, Paul said, "He raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will." So we see that although he was not always obedient, yet because of humility he found favor in the sight of God. Though he knew times of discouragement, yet he could review his life and say that faith in God was the means of inspiring him "to refuse the evil, and choose the good."

When the two blind men followed Jesus imploring Him to have mercy on them, He inquired whether they had faith that He was able to heal them. Upon being assured that they had, He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it unto you." All receive the gift of the Spirit according to the degree of their understanding, which varies greatly in different individuals. Yet this need not discourage any from seeking the Lord, for we learn in the parable of the talents that different responsibilities are given to each. Our reward is reckoned according to our faithfulness in using the ones given us.

Jesus frequently warned those whom He cured of diseases and infirmities to tell no one. He was grieved because the people were more interested in the material gifts He could bestow upon them than in the spiritual gift. He tried to draw their attention from the miracles He performed so as to interest them in the spiritual life which He came to restore rather than to heal diseases. But they were always so grateful for the gift of health that they did not heed His request not to speak of the miracles.

However in telling of them, the good news of the Kingdom was spread.

Some who are not inclined to have faith, sometimes suddenly break down in this attitude, and can only exclaim like Peter, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Have there not been times in our own lives when the power of God has worked through others to give us greater comprehension of the purposes of God? This we can witness in the case of Naaman the Syrian who was healed of his leprosy through the medium of Elisha. He was slow of heart to believe as Christ told the two who walked from Jerusalem to Emmaus with Him after the resurrection. But when skepticism was replaced by faith he was able to receive the gift of health.

We have the privilege of receiving or rejecting Christ. Whatever our course, we are still instruments in God's hands. But who can resist the power of His appeal, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." Why is there so much suffering? Because of lack of faith and unwillingness to trust in God. Would that all might accept grace and embrace the opportunity to receive sight and become willing to do His will! If many could but realize the fullness of peace and joy in the Spirit which might be theirs if they had greater faith, surely they would not remain in the darkness of doubt as did Thomas until he was forced to exclaim, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus told him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Examples could be given of those who resisted the power of God for a time. The Apostle Paul is a notable example. He was very zealous in persecuting the followers of Jesus, being with those who stoned Stephen, a Greek convert, one of the first seven deacons and the first Christian martyr. But when he was

able to comprehend the love of Christ in the query, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" his strong nature acknowledged defeat, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Paul was fully enlightened in the letter of the law, but he had missed the spirit. He himself wrote to the Galatians, I was "exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." We may know he really was converted to faith in Jesus when he could say, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord." And none but such an one could say as he wrote to the Galatians, "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" Growth in the spiritual life is infinitely more to be desired than advancement in this world.

Waynesboro, Pa.

B. F. M.

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### FAITH

There is much written in both the Old and New Testaments of faith. We read of Abel bringing his offering to the Lord in faith. Noah was faithful when God told him to build the ark, and how to build it. To the world at that time it must have looked foolish to see Noah building anything so peculiar in construction, and in a time when, no doubt, there was no sign of rain; but Noah did not question the request of the Lord. He might have thought the Lord's design of the ark to be altogether out of proportion, but we do not read that he offered any objection, but did as the Lord commanded him.

The faith of Abraham is a striking example to us. Abraham, like Noah, obeyed God. When he was told to offer up Isaac, his only son, as a sacrifice to

the Lord, he asked no questions, but obeyed. We have reason to believe that Abraham had the same affection for Isaac as other fathers have for their sons, but he did not falter. God accepted the will for the deed, and Isaac was spared.

There are many more examples of faith. Daniel was saved from the lions because he petitioned God instead of the king. The three Hebrews who were thrust into the furnace, which was heated seven times greater than it was wont to be heated, were also preserved because they prayed to God instead of the king.

In writing to the Hebrews, Paul says that "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." So the followers of Christ believe that at some time all God's promises will be fulfilled. Faith also means fidelity and loyalty. When we want to be loyal to a natural ruler, we learn his wishes or laws and then obey them to the best of our ability. If we want to be loyal or faithful servants of Christ, we will study well his commands, and then strive to obey them. The prophet Isaiah said, in writing of the coming of Christ into the world, "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." A fool is not an intelligent or a much learned person, yet it would seem that he can find this way, and keep thereupon.

The natural highways of to-day are well marked, but if we are not careful to observe the markings we may miss them or get upon the wrong road. We hear people say that there are many roads or ways which lead to heaven, but if we want to go to a certain city we are careful to get upon a road which leads in the direction of that city. Then we are care-

ful to observe the markings along the way. If they do not correspond with those of the first part of the journey, we stop and consider. If the way upon which we have started to heaven leads to idle pastimes of the world, to suing at the law, and to war and violence, then we are not on the way of the meek and lowly Jesus.

We need faith to live the non-resistant life which our Savior taught in His sermon on the mount. We are not promised that we shall not suffer loss, but faith in Christ gives us strength to bear what He permits to come to us. When we resign our will to the Lord, we believe that He will sustain us at all times and under all conditions, so long as we are faithful. We may be asked to sacrifice something as near to our nature as Isaac was to Abraham. We need faith also to enable us to separate from worship which does not accord with Christ's teaching. The Epistle of John tells us that to false teachers we shall not bid God-speed. This is not pleasant to the natural mind. It is much easier to give our friends the hand of fellowship, for we all love the good-will of our friends and the world. But since Christ has commanded this, we cannot be faithful, loyal citizens of His kingdom if we do not obey. This separation may appear selfish to many, but a servant of Christ can never act from a selfish impulse. Christ's people are a peculiar people, also a separate and peaceable people, and they shall be known by their love for one another.

It is said sometimes that the world and times have changed and that the teachings of the meek and lowly Jesus are not applicable to this day. But Christ has said, though heaven and earth shall pass away, yet shall His word stand. He does not say, that at some future time it shall be changed. Noah did not question the Lord when He said

the people should be destroyed, but he obeyed God and built the ark. Faithful Abraham did not ask the Lord why he could not sacrifice Isaac at some more convenient place, neither did he question the Lord as to His promise that he, Abraham, should be the father of many nations, but he obeyed God and added works to his faith. So, we see faith without obedience is no benefit to us.

Many people are inclined to think that God is merciful and will not punish the people whom He has created. Truly, it is not His will to do so, but we are created free agents. He has given us a way which leads to eternal happiness. There is also a way which leads to eternal sorrow. We can choose between the two. We cannot dictate to our Heavenly Father, neither can we say that His commands are not applicable to the present time. We are told that the way to eternal happiness is narrow: so we cannot take much of the world with us. The spiritual life requires a strife and a continual warfare. In a natural war the soldiers are never at ease, but are continually on guard because of the enemy. Only when the battle is ended can they lay down their weapons. So it is with the soldiers of Christ: only when life here comes to an end will they find perfect rest. Yet the true followers of Christ are a happy people. While they meet the cares and disappointments of this life, their faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice and His promise of grace to meet all trials which come to them—believing that whatever He permits is for some good purpose, gives that peace which passeth all understanding. So by grace through faith, we have the promise of eternal life.

Chambersburg, Pa.

E. K. L.

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The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Prov. 9:10.

### SUPPLICATION

Dear Lord, we humbly come to Thee  
 To praise Thy holy name.  
 Teach us to know Thy will, dear Lord,  
 Have reverence for the same.

We would Thy faithful servants be,  
 And bring our all to Thee.  
 Help us when we through weakness fail—  
 Our imperfections see.

Lord give us strength to overcome,  
 We need Thee every hour;  
 That we the evil may subdue  
 Do Thou give strength and power.

Help us, dear Lord, to strive each day  
 Walk closely by Thy side;  
 And follow in the narrow way,  
 And in Thy love abide.

Then, when on earth our days are o'er,  
 If Thou hast been our guide,  
 In faith we'll safely trust in Thee,  
 Nor fear death's swelling tide.

If blessed to reach that happy home  
 And see Thee face to face,  
 We'll know 'twas not by works we're saved  
 But only through Thy grace.

Lancaster, Pa.

J. C. L.

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### THE GIFT OF GOD

“The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. 6: 23.

The question often occurs to one: How many who profess Christianity give evidence in their deportment and life that they have received the gift of God, which is eternal life?

Adam and Eve, the first of the race, possessed eternal life but by yielding to the cunning and deceptive reasoning of the serpent, they disobeyed God's holy command in the garden of Eden, forfeiting for themselves and all their posterity this precious gift. They evidently were conscious of their guilt, for it is written, “They hid themselves from the presence of the Lord.” It is said, “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” Man

lost communion with God because light and darkness have no communion. Through Adam's transgression all have become unclean, separated from God and incapable of approaching Him.

The first evidence given in the Scripture that God would provide a means of restoration as a gift to mankind is recorded in the book of Genesis. He was moved to regard the condition of poor fallen man, and soon after the fall gave our first parents the promise of the woman's seed which should bruise the serpent's head. It is recorded that the Lord said unto the serpent, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise His heel.” Gen. 3: 14, 15. All who, from that time, accepted this promise had assurance of deliverance from this fallen state.

In the fulness of time, about four thousand years later, God fulfilled His promise by sending His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, as the promised woman's seed: the greatest gift that God ever gave the world. He bruised the head of the serpent by the perfect fulfillment of God's holy law, by His death, and by His victory over death.

There are many testimonies in the word proving that we are, by nature, a fallen and sin-stricken people; that we need something that we cannot give ourselves, namely, the gift of God. The Jews were God's chosen people under the law, but were found lacking with all others when Christ came. They had every opportunity of knowing the will of God; of Christ's coming and of His peace doctrines. They considered themselves righteous above all others; nevertheless when Christ came He included all under sin, both Jew and Gentile. Quoting from the prophet, in his epistle to the Romans, Paul includes Israel when

he says, "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Rom. 3: 12. The Gentiles were guilty before God because of their evil deeds; the Jews, because they relied upon their own works of righteousness rather than the righteousness of God. This same condition exists to-day in the world.

Contrasting our defiled state with God's purity and holiness, we, like Adam, are conscious of our guilt; afraid to appear before Him who, it is said, can make no degree of allowance for sin. This fear brings unrest and terror to the soul. On the other hand, we have the comforting words of the great apostle Paul which should encourage us to seek refuge in Christ whom God has sent as a gift to mankind. "Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Rom. 5: 18, 19.

Christ lived in the world and performed many miracles to prove that He was the Son of God, the gift of promise. He called into His ministry disciples to whom He revealed His Father's will. He told them that after His return to the Father He would send another comforter, the Holy Spirit, which would be a guide to all who would come under its power and influence.

Many claim to have received this gift but all who make this claim should examine themselves by the word which teaches us that the tree is known by its fruit. By the fruits we shall know those who have received the gift of God. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Matt. 7: 16-18.

Dear reader, let us examine ourselves and consider what kind and how much fruit we are bearing. Jesus said, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." John 15: 8.

Lancaster, Pa.

J. C. L.

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### WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

This question was asked by the jailor when he found the bands of Paul and Silas and of all the prisoners were loosed by "a great earthquake" when "the foundations of the prison were shaken and all the doors were opened." The keeper, in his excitement and fear of the penalty of the law, would have killed himself had not Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do thyself no harm; for we are all here." Acts 16: 27, 28. Then the keeper fell down before Paul and Silas and said, "What must I do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house." Acts 16: 30, 31.

This is a significant question and concerns all mankind; for as the salvation of the soul is involved, it not only applies to this world, but to the eternal world. Through the transgression of our first parents, we are all afflicted with sin. After attaining the age of accountability we all leave the Father's house which we occupied in the days of innocence, and wander away from the love, the peace, and the gracious influences of our Heavenly Father. Though we forsake Him, yet He loves us and wills not that we should perish. He "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. 2: 4. We therefore are all lost, as it is testified, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." We are without hope and God in the world. "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did

understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Psalm 53: 2, 3. We, therefore, all need salvation and the question should appeal to every one, "What must I do to be saved?"

According to our carnal nature we are in darkness; we are dead in trespasses and sin. We must be awakened, we must be enlightened before we can realize our helpless, lost condition. God in His mercy and love conceived a plan from eternity to save man. He gave to our disobedient first parents the promise of a Redeemer. He said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Gen. 3: 15.

Before this Redeemer came, God cared for man; He gave him a code of laws to rule and regulate his moral, social and political life. If he was obedient to these laws he was promised prosperity and happiness; if disobedient, he suffered adversity and severe judgments. God sent prophets unto His people to warn them of the woeful consequences of transgression and disobedience; also to remind them of the promise of the coming Redeemer, for by looking forward in faith to Him their faith was "accounted unto them for righteousness."

In the fulness of time this Redeemer came—the Lord Jesus Christ. He fulfilled and perfected God's great plan of redemption and salvation by His holy life, His crucifixion and resurrection. Every one of us must now come to Jesus, like the jailor of old, and believe in Him and do His commandments, if we would have the question answered, "What must I do to be saved?"

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." Titus 2: 11. If we heed this call we will be awakened, a ray of heavenly light will

penetrate our darkened hearts and we will realize our forlorn condition. The law of God reveals unto us His righteousness, purity and holiness. We fear the wrath to come, for that law condemns us to eternal perdition. We see we cannot fulfill its holy requirements; but it serves its purpose in our experience, as the Apostle says, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Gal. 3: 24. Now, we have been drawn by the Father, and by repentance and the forsaking of the old sinful life we come to Jesus. We believe on Him and He answers the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

God's plan is now accomplished in our hearts; we are renewed in the spirit of our minds; we are born again. We can now rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, for we are saved. Jesus saved us from our sins. He was appointed by God to consummate this great plan. The Evangelist says, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3: 16.

Lancaster, Pa.

B. G. L.

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### THE CLOSE OF KING DAVID'S REIGN

After the death of Absalom, David ruled in peace for many years, and his kingdom was greatly extended. He may have thought of extending his dominion still farther, for he decided upon having his people numbered to find out who were able to go to war. Joab felt it would be wrong and said, "The Lord make His people a hundred times as many more as they be, but are they not all thy servants. Why then doth my Lord require this thing which will be a cause of trespass to Israel?" But David commanded and Joab obeyed.

The numbering of the people might not have been wrong but the motive prompting it was evil in God's sight.

Joab and his men were nine months and twenty days in numbering the people throughout the land, and then came to Jerusalem. The number of valiant men of Israel was eight hundred thousand and the number of Judah was five hundred thousand men.

Before the work was finished David was made to feel God's displeasure and he asked forgiveness for the wrong he had committed. The Lord sent a prophet named Gad to tell David that he would be punished for his wickedness. He gave David choice of three evils and said, "Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land, or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies while they pursue thee, or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land?"

David said, "I am in a great strait. Let us fall now into the hands of the Lord, for His mercies are great. Let me not fall into the hand of man." The angel of death then passed through the land and in three days' time seventy thousand men died of pestilence. When the destroying angel stretched out his hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord had pity and said, "It is enough, stay now thine hand."

David saw the angel with a drawn sword in his hand, and praying to the Lord, said, "Lo I have sinned and have done wickedly, but these sheep what have they done? Let Thine hand, I pray Thee, be against me and against my father's house."

David was told by Gad, the prophet, to rear an altar unto the Lord, in the threshing floor of Araunah and offer burnt and peace offerings thereon, that the plague might be stayed. Araunah wished to give the threshing floor as a gift, the oxen for sacrifice, and their

yokes for the wood upon the altar. But David refused them as a gift and bought them of Araunah.

David built the altar upon the spot where he had seen the angel stand with the sword in his hand, and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord was entreated for the land and the plague was removed.

David's son Adonijah, older than Solomon and a full brother of Absalom, formed a plan that he should be made king. He prepared a feast, inviting his friends, but did not invite David's friends, Solomon nor the prophet Nathan. He invited Joab, also Abiathar, the chief priest. They both turned to Adonijah, forsaking their old master, whose fortunes they had shared in the past. They were about to proclaim Adonijah as king when the prophet Nathan told Bathsheba, mother of Solomon, to inform King David of what was being done. David was no longer able to go out among his people, but he said they should at once proclaim Solomon king.

At David's request the mule was brought upon which none but the king might ride, and Solomon was placed thereon and rode to the valley of Gihon, where he was anointed king by Zadok, the priest. The priests blew their trumpets and the people cried, "God save King Solomon." The people rejoiced greatly and the earth seemed to be rent with the clamor of the music of the pipes and trumpets.

When Joab heard the shouting of the people and the sound of the trumpet he asked, "What is this noise of the city being in an uproar?" When they were told that Solomon had been made king, Adonijah and his friends fled in fear. Adonijah hastened to the tabernacle of the Lord and kneeling before it took hold of the horns of the altar. The altar was a privileged place and it was deemed

sacrilege to molest any one who took refuge there.

Adonijah hoped Solomon would forgive him. This the king promised to do if Adonijah showed himself worthy but if he did wickedly, he should surely die. Adonijah then came and bowed down to Solomon, promising obedience and he was sent to his own home.

King David was growing old and could no longer go out among his people, but he was able to stand upon his feet and address the people who were called together to ratify and witness the coronation of Solomon. He was careful to tell them how the scepter had been assigned to Judah, not the first born of Jacob; and to the family of Jesse, not the first or most powerful of Judah's tribe; to David, the youngest of Jesse's eight sons. Nor was Solomon, now anointed king, the eldest son of King David, for there were three older brothers then living.

David also related how he had wished to build the temple and how he had gathered much material for it. "I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord. . . . But God said unto me, thou shalt not build an house for My name, because thou hast been a man of war and hast shed blood. . . . Solomon, thy son, he shall build My house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be My son and I will be his Father. I will establish his kingdom forever, if he be constant to do My commandments and My judgments as at this day." David then commanded Solomon, his son, saying, "Serve the Lord with a perfect heart and with a willing mind. . . . If thou seek Him He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever."

David gave directions how the house should be built, and the pattern thereof. He said unto the people, "Solomon, my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet

young and tender and the work is great, for the palace is not for man but for the Lord God." He asked the people to contribute their offerings, and they did so willingly. David rejoiced greatly and blessed the Lord before the congregation, concluding with a beautiful prayer of thanksgiving, saying, "Blessed be Thou, Lord God of Israel, our Father forever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty. . . . But who am I, and what is my people that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of Thee and of Thine own hath we given Thee. For we are strangers before Thee and sojourners as were all our fathers; our days on the earth are as a shadow and there is none abiding." David asked the congregation to bless the Lord, and they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord. They sacrificed a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams and a thousand lambs and did eat and drink with joy and gladness.

The days of David drew nigh that he should die and he gave his last charge to Solomon, saying, "I go the way of all the earth; be thou strong therefore and show thyself a man. Keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes and His commandments, His judgments and His testimonies, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest."

He rehearsed to Solomon the gracious promises God had made to him and his posterity. The fulfillment of these promises as well as the prosperity of the kingdom depended upon their observance of and obedience to the divine law.

All David's words gave evidence that if his physical powers were declining, his mental faculties were yet in their prime. David died in a good old age full of days, riches and honor, and was buried in the

city of David, and Solomon, his son, reigned in his stead.

Lights and shadows were reflected in many ways in David's life, and as the prophet foretold, the sword of Uriah never departed from his house. David was human and showed great weakness oftentimes, but while his sins were great, his penitence was sincere and he sought the Lord's forgiveness. He was never moved to turn from the true God and this is the reason he was so near to the Lord, a man after God's own heart.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

### A CHILD'S STORY

My dear little Children:

My last story was about St. Peter, but it would have made my writing too long to have told you all that happened to St. Peter, so I am now going to tell you more about him.

There came a day when Jesus was speaking to His disciples about forgiveness. "If my brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." Forgive as you would be forgiven. Peter asked, "How oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? till seven times?"

We might think this a fair question and well answered, or we might wonder if we would be so patient as to forgive seven times, but Jesus answered by saying, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."

The teachings of Jesus to His disciples were so different from what they were accustomed to hear, that some of them turned back and walked no more with Him. To those remaining with Him Jesus said, "Will ye also go away?" Peter's answer was, "Lord, to whom

shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

One of the most striking and tragic scenes in Peter's life is where Jesus told His disciples of His being put to death, and that even they might be led to forsake Him. Here Peter felt sure of himself and he said, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I."

We read how he failed in this, and even denied the third time with an oath that "He never knew the man." Jesus turned and looked at Peter; that look was enough to show Peter how weak he was, and we read, "He went out and wept bitterly."

We know that Peter loved the Savior, but his love needed to be tried, and when we think of what was taking place all around him, we do not wonder that he became excited and frightened.

Peter grew stronger as the days and years passed by, and his love and devotion for Jesus strengthened. His denial and repentance were known and he was forgiven by his Master, and he became a most fearless disciple and worker for the cause of Jesus.

We read that the people who saw his courage and boldness, called to mind that he had been with Jesus, and once when commanded not to speak in His name, Peter replied, "We ought to obey God rather than man."

When we see a boy or even a man who is very impulsive, and quick to become angry, and, in excitement will swear or even get into a fight, we pity him but he is not hopeless. If he stops to think and regrets the action or deed, God will give him grace to overcome and very often like Peter will become one of our best and most useful men.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.