

GOOD TIDINGS

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

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A year ago we requested subscribers and those who solicit subscriptions to co-operate with us in an effort to increase the circulation of "Good Tidings." It may be of interest to those who assisted in the work to know that, through their combined efforts, several hundred new names have been added to our list of subscribers.

If persons who solicit will again make an effort to add several new names to take the place of subscriptions that may have been discontinued during the year, we believe we will be able to maintain our present circulation of two thousand for the coming year, beginning with the October number.

Our object is to publish only such matter as may give light and encouragement to all seekers of truth; as may awaken a desire to know good from evil, and convey a knowledge of the life that we should live.

Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser : teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. Prov. 8: 9, 10.

We believe the purpose of those who kindly contribute to this humble little publication is to direct souls to Christ, and to encourage them in the reading and study of the Scriptures. In this way we may with God's blessing use our limited talents and invite our friends to return to the Father who is so appeal-

ingly portrayed in the parable of the prodigal son. Although the prodigal spent his substance in riotous living, his father rejoiced at his return; so the Heavenly Father and His holy angels rejoice when one sinner repents and returns to enjoy that happy relation with God where peace and love abound. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55: 7.

CLOUD OF WITNESSES

"Wherefore seeing that we are also compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Heb. 12: 1-3.

The Apostle in the previous chapter gave a summary of the achievements of the servants of the Lord in the past time by the exercise of faith. He defined Faith as being the Substance of things hoped for and the Evidence of things not seen. In other words the promise of God is the substance, and faith the hand with which to reach for it. He testified that faith is indispensable to the attainment of the Divine favor, and that by faith the elders obtained a good report.

In our text Jesus is declared to be the Author and Finisher of our faith. He opened the way for men to return to God. By transgression the way was closed; by the obedience and death of Him who was promised to the fathers as the woman's seed that should bruise

the serpent's head it was opened. He was born in due time, fulfilled the law by perfect obedience, revealed the Gospel, and suffered death upon the tree of the cross, arose from the dead, ascended to heaven and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

He produces faith in the hearts of his people by His Spirit, which maintains, strengthens, and perfects unto the end of life's journey. Those who attain this precious faith begotten by the Holy Spirit are admonished to lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset them, and to run with patience the race that is set before them.

The Apostle used the figure of the Isthmian games when they ran or wrestled for the prize. Those games were popular in some of the Grecian states during the lifetime of the Apostles. Participants in those games trained carefully in diet and wearing apparel they dispensed with all superfluous weights. So should Christians who are not striving for a corruptible prize, but for an incorruptible and imperishable crown, a crown of righteousness, lay aside every weight, that is, every hindrance to the growth in grace—worldly care, love of the friendship of the world of the praise of man, of inordinate indulgence of natural desires, jealousy envy, and lack of freedom and childlike simplicity with those to whom we are bound by ties of a common faith.

The family relation is a most important one and when not lived according to knowledge and charity it becomes a heavy weight upon the spirit and hinders prayers, and disqualifies such persons from bringing an acceptable offering to the Lord.

Where there is no peace there is no rest for the spirit. Believers are not only counselled against weights, but also against the sin which doth so easily be

set them. It is claimed that all persons have besetting sins, that they have some constitutional weaknesses, some failing they are in danger of being overcome by. We do not know whether that was the Apostle's idea or not. We incline to the view that Unbelief is the besetting sin. It is the source of all disobedience. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Living, active faith accepts Every Word of God as Truth. It recognizes the New Testament as containing the Will of God. It worketh by love and leads into obedience of every command given by Jesus Christ and His Apostles. It begets godly fear; it recognizes the fact that God is ever present and beholds every action and is cognizant of every thought of man.

The absence of faith gives license to the evil desires of man's nature. Unbelief is our greatest enemy, it assaults us when under trials, temptations, and suffering, and when under gloom and discouragement. It was thus with David, when in adverse circumstances his enemies reproached him saying, "Where is now thy God?"

"The sin that doth so easily beset us" may be fittingly used as referring to peculiar or suspicious dispositions, such as indulgence in evil surmisings, or a tendency to lightmindedness, to anger, to the evading of the truth under peculiar conditions, of exaggeration, too much freedom in talking, and a tendency to gratify strong natural desires that lead to the abuse of things otherwise lawful.

For encouragement to faithful adherence to duty the Apostle admonished his brethren citing them to the many examples of faithfulness and endurance of patriarchs and prophets and holy men of old, who looked for a city whose Maker and Builder is God. Among

that number (called cloud of witnesses) "Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

"Abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he should afterwards receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out not knowing whither he went. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

These together with a great multitude of faithful souls combined their most decided testimony to the faithfulness of God and to the power and efficacy of faith in overcoming the world. Though these are fallen asleep, yet being dead they Speak. Faithful souls will contemplate their faith, words, and lives with renewed courage and inspiration. They will feel as though they were around about them, like clouds filled with moisture overhanging the earth.

But all these witnesses gave only a reflection of the true Life and Light of the world, although by faith they had partaken of His fulness, yet they were inferior luminaries only able to give reflected light; so that faithful souls must not worship these, but only follow their examples and imitate their virtues; they must look away from these inferior lights that they may behold the Sun of Righteousness, the true Light, "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who for the joy that was

set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

By the counsel of the Apostle we shall recognize Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King, as the Author and Finisher of our faith. He is our prophet, that is our teacher and counsellor. He is our Priest, He offered himself without spot to God. He entered the Holy of Holies not with the blood of others but with His own blood, and by that one offering forever perfected them that believe. Being exalted at the right hand of the throne of God, He is the High Priest of all believers and presents the merits of his atoning blood before the Father in behalf of faithful souls. As King, He in Spirit is enthroned upon every Christian heart. He is their Ruler and Protector directing them through His Word and Spirit, that they are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.

These constitute that kingdom that standeth in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. This kingdom will never be destroyed, its throne is forever and forever.

"Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross." The joy before Him was the restoration of the lost sheep. "He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." "He shall see his seed, He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." The agony in Gethsemane, the ignominy upon the cross, was all endured "for the joy that was set before Him." That of glorifying His Father in Heaven and His return to the right hand of power.

The triumph over death, the effecting of the resurrection of the dead, and the saving of sinners, was celebrated by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousand of thousands of angels saying

with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

For consider Him that endured such contradiction at the hands of sinners against Himself lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. From His birth in the stable to His agony in the garden, and finally to His being suspended on the cross in ignominy there to expire amid apparent triumph of his enemies; in the tortures of a lingering death, insulted, reviled, mocked, and reproached, "His visage was so marred, more than any other man." Yet he bore it all patiently.

The Apostle's admonition to believers is to consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest they be faint and weary in their minds. It is very necessary and profitable to consider the example of Christ. He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet made Himself of no reputation, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the death of the cross. "When He was reviled, he reviled not again, and when he suffered he threatened not." The closing act upon the cross is wonderful, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

In Him we have an example of the Charity that never faileth. Of submission, "Not my will but thy will be done." Christ should be our example in health and in sickness, in sunshine and cloud, in adversity and in prosperity, when surrounded by the true and the loving, and when our enemies revile us and speak evil of us. We should look to Him as Lord and Counsellor, and strive to walk even as He walked.

In times of temptation we should look to Jesus with unwavering faith. He is

the strong arm of the Lord, upon which we can lean in perfect safety.

“For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame.” May we all be faithful unto a happy end.

J. S. L.

Chambersburg, Pa.

BIBLE NOTES

The plan of God is shown in His choosing a distinct nation; by which He shows His care, naturally and spiritually, for such who are obedient, and in whom He manifests His displeasure for disobedience.

While instinct should teach us to observe proper relations to one another, it is sorrowful that we have lost so much of the primitive nature that literal rules had to be made to govern us. The Ten Commandments give plain precepts. Numerous other commandments were given. Of old, human slavery was permitted, with care that it be not abused. When wrong was wilfully inflicted by one or another the offender was to be brought before judges who, upon evidence, laid the same suffering on the offender which he had wilfully caused, even life for life. For indifference to another's safety a penalty was fixed to make the careless suffer, just as now responsibility rests upon every one to be concerned for the natural and spiritual welfare of others.

Strict investigation was to be made of charges against any one, as is now proper in the government and in the church, to uphold right. Immorality and the abuse of one's natural faculties were severely punished. The first-fruits and the first-born of every perfect creature were to be given to the Lord, symbolizing that our perfect desires belong

to God. He commanded His people to make no covenant with the inhabitants of Canaan, nor to suffer them to dwell in the land, and warned them against their worship. He was very precise in directing their conduct and manner of worship, and how the tabernacle was to be built in which they were to worship. The Gospel commands are just as precise in their spiritual requirements.

While Moses was on the Mount receiving the Law his people turned to idolatry, showing how easily people may be swayed into error. Seeing their transgression, Moses, in his hot displeasure, cast away the two tables of the Law and broke them. The two tables may refer to the two subjects embraced in the Law, one portion teaching our duty to God, the other our relations to one another. The breaking of the tables may be prophetic of our breaking the law of holiness. The renewing of them may foreshadow the restoration of the eternal law in Christ.

When Moses came from the Mount his face shone with such brilliance that he covered it with a veil in speaking to the people. Paul calls that brightness a hindrance which shall be taken away when the heart “shall turn to the Lord.” When a willing soul turns to the Lord all obstacles vanish, even difficulties like mountains will be engulfed in the sea of grace.

The tabernacle worship under Moses was typical of the worship under Christ, who directs the worship in His tabernacle, the Church. Do we believe that our present worship is as exacting as the former? “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?” Heb. 2: 3.

The fire on the altar was to burn continually, which may imply that our love should never cease. No blood was to be eaten, because the blood is the life of

creatures. In the blood of Christ lies the sacred work of the atonement. The Israelites were not to eat the meat of any creature that did not chew the cud and had not a divided hoof. Creatures that chew the cud are of the harmless kind, and divided hoof indicates separation.

Worldly governments have followed God's example in establishing a law of limitation, by which debts are remitted every six years when there is no renewal of the obligation. Under Moses every seventh year debts were cancelled, bought servants were set free, the land was to rest, and its fruits were to be free for all. Every fiftieth year all who had lost their property were to have it restored to them. It must have seemed hard for thrifty Israelites, when by industry and prudence they had acquired property, to surrender it to those less diligent, but the whole land was a gift to them; so all that we have are God's gifts to us, and we should use them as intended for the good of others as well as for ourselves, since God in His beneficence cares for all; only in gifts we differ, and some from negligence incur suffering. However, God teaches mercy to the poor regardless of what causes their want. This world is to be a means to serve all that they may fill the time of their probation. In earlier times God by decree curbed covetousness, now He may do it by unexplained reverses. The redeemed He will chasten that they may not perish with the world. The people were warned against every form of image worship, God knowing human tendency toward formalism tried to guard them against the snares that afterward entrapped the greatest of them.

Our Savior reproves the formalism of His time by calling the worshipers hypo-

crites. His reproof applies to every one whose profession allows him to follow the worldly life. Under Moses those who obeyed were to have rain in due season, and their harvests were to be abundant; God's presence was to continue with them. It was said, "If ye walk contrary unto Me then I will walk contrary unto you, . . . I will bring the land into desolation, . . . and I will scatter you among the heathen." History witnesses the fulfilment of this sorrowful forecast.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

OBEDIENCE

"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice."
1 Sam. 15: 22.

When king Saul was commanded by the Lord to utterly destroy the Amalekites and "all that they have, and spare them not," it is recorded that he spared the king and "the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God." Saul may have felt he could do greater honor to God by making this special offering, and may have been sincere in the act, acknowledging that God had given him the victory; but when Samuel appeared before him and informed him of the displeasure of the Lord, which he had incurred by not fully performing what the Lord had commanded, the question was asked whether God is better pleased with sacrifice than obedience; and the answer was, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice."

Saul was "rejected from being king over Israel" because he exercised his own judgment. Not fully carrying out God's command was accounted disobedience. It is evident that God's counsel will not admit of disregard. He is jealous for His word, which will never change.

It is intended that we should be benefitted and instructed by what is written in the Bible. Under the Old Testament dispensation there are many literal types and figures of things which are verified and fulfilled under the Gospel. In the Gospel we also have the plain and simple outline of the effect or fruit of the life of a converted person, a life in accord with God's commandments; God will not recognize as acceptable service anything that is not in full obedience to His Word or in agreement therewith.

Still, there are many professing the Christian religion who yet fail to distinguish between the days of Saul, with the strict obedience that was required under the law, and that which at present is the effect of Christian living under the controlling influence of the in-dwelling Spirit of Christ. Obedience to God's will and commands is now the result or fruit of the Divine Spirit and is not an obedience to the letter alone.

There is much evidence that many seek salvation by conforming their lives in obedience to the letter of the Gospel, doing good to their fellow-men, engaging in prayer, and observing ordinances, as baptism and the communion service—hoping thereby to gain the favor of God. The word of God also testifies that such service without obedience in all things is not acceptable to the Lord, and will be rejected as Saul's service was rejected; for it is declared by the Lord that in that day—the day of judgment—many will claim they worshipped Him and did many good works, yet he will say to them "Depart from me, I know you not."

Such souls must have been unwilling to obey in all things, using their own judgment though acting in sincerity as in the case of Saul, only to find at last

that their zeal was misdirected and their hope of salvation a delusion. It is a situation so awful to contemplate that it should cause anxious concern and lead us to scrutinize our motives while yet there is time.

It is written that if we give all our goods to the poor, even suffer our bodies to be burned, and are able to speak with the tongues of angels, and have not Divine love, it is all of no value. "Ye are saved by grace, through faith." It is the gift of God, through Christ who died for the sin committed by our first parents, and for the sin of the world, which barred man from communion with God. The light from heaven, for man to see his lost state, is God's gift. It is His gift of grace that enables us to attain heavenly desires, and to receive the same mind that Christ possessed, first and above all, to do the Father's will at any sacrifice.

All such renewed souls, then, who have in gratitude accepted these gifts, and have come under the influence of Christ's Spirit, are of the same mind, loving each other with a pure heart fervently. The evils in humanity will no longer be cherished. They can then rejoice in hope, as brethren. If one fails he will be admonished in love, and such help will be appreciated by him. They are then interested in heavenly things. The desire now is, to not engage in anything that is not in harmony with the teaching and practice of Christ, which was characterized by love, mercy and forbearance. They are no longer controlled by interests of self defense, but trust in the promised care of the Lord, whose blessings they acknowledge with gratitude.

If we can be saved by the doing of good works, then we would not need Christ and His righteousness. It would

be seeking salvation by the works of the law, whereas good works are but a fruit of regeneration. We should not forget the words of Christ: "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

Possessing the spirit and mind of Christ we will love our enemies and do good to those who evil entreat and persecute us; our lives will be in agreement with His word, which, it is said, is our guide in this life and shall be our judge in the last day.

Saved by the blood of Christ we become worthy subjects for baptism and membership in the Church of Christ. The church does not save, but it is a home or refuge intended to preserve the spiritual life of its members, and to stimulate mutual interest and love.

Lancaster, Pa.

J. K.

THE REARING OF CHILDREN

Of all the varied duties that rest upon Christian parents there is probably none that calls for more discretion than that of rearing children. In Ephesians 5:33 the husband is taught to love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband. There is no closer earthly relation than that of husband and wife. Next to this relation is that of parents to children and children to parents.

As soon as parents are blessed with children, there will be anxiety. The father and mother, although one flesh, are still human and may differ as to what is best for their offspring. One parent may be inclined to humor the child, and grant it many privileges; the other may insist upon more rigid measures to govern the little one. This situ-

ation calls for prayer to God for understanding, and for patience one with the other to enable them to act in such a manner that the child may be taught to respect both father and mother alike. It is very important to teach children obedience, and to fulfil every promise made to them. If a father promises a reward or punishment to a child and the mother fails to support him in it, the child having knowledge of the circumstance, its respect for the parents will be greatly lessened. Is there anything more beautiful than to see the injunctions of Scripture in actual practice? "Children, obey your parents." "Honor thy father and mother. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

We are persuaded that this would be the desire of every God-fearing parent. Yet, if we are not very careful, carnal love for our children may cause us to yield too much to their desires in order to please them. When children are young they are very susceptible to surrounding influences, and every effort should be made to have them associate with children who love their parents and are taught to obey them. They should be taught to be faithful and obedient children, and also warned of the direful effects of disobedience and wickedness.

Christian parents should have a special care for the spiritual welfare of their children, and, as they arrive at the age of accountability, they should be told of the nature of sin and its consequences and of the lowly Jesus who came to save us; and also the importance of heeding the convicting grace of God, and of reading His blessed Word. Here they may meet with great discouragement since their children are carnal, and

inclined to love the world with its pleasures and pastimes. This situation calls for prayer to God for light and wisdom to enable parents to know when to grant privileges and when to refuse them.

It would not become Christian parents to adorn little children with gay clothing or ornaments to make them attractive, but they should dress them in a modest way that would correspond with the parents' profession of non-worldliness. As they grow older and enter school, it is reasonable that they should have privileges and wear clothing such as their associates have, provided it is modest and not extravagant. In these days there are so many forms of amusements and entertainments for the young, often connected with the school work, that it is very hard to know where to draw the line in granting privileges to children.

Above all things it is important for parents to have the confidence of their children, and to impress them that any restriction they place upon them is intended for their good. Parents should extend full confidence to their children, but should they have conclusive evidence that a child has been untruthful, or has tried to deceive, love would prompt them to punish such.

There are multitudes of children who receive infant baptism and when very young are confirmed in many of the popular churches, who do not hesitate to engage in all kinds of worldly amusements and entertainments, including the dance, the theater, etc.; and their ministers will comfort them that these are harmless pastimes. Christian parents will always teach their children that so long as they practice these worldly things, they belong to the world; and they will also teach them that, even though they should deny themselves of

these things, they still are sinners unless they be converted, and that nothing but a new creature avails before God.

The argument is sometimes used that parents who try to walk and live according to New Testament teaching become so absorbed in spiritual things, that they have no interest in the pleasures of their children and consequently a barrier is formed between them. True happiness is that which all persons should desire, and it is marred when a barrier is formed between parents and children. Christians love what God loves and delight in doing His will. They walk in love toward all mankind, especially toward their children, and, while children may not be able to fully understand why parents do not encourage such carnal, worldly practices in which they have their interests, they will yet be able to see that they act on principle and that the motive is true love, therefore no barrier can arise between them.

Accusation is sometimes brought against the Church because the children of the members are not taken into the fold when very young. We should remember that the children of Christian parents are not different from other children, and though they have a Christian example before them, unless they heed the pleadings of grace when they arrive at the age of accountability, they, with all others will enter the broad way that leads to destruction. Much as Christian parents would desire that their children should enter the fold, they can only point them to the door, Christ, which is the only entrance to the Christian Church. They will teach them that it is not enough to profess faith in Christ, but that they must deny self, take up His cross and follow where He leads. They will also warn them against being deceived and, when conviction visits

them, encourage them to follow the light and prove by the word of God any religion that may be presented to them. It is the highest duty of Christian parents to be an example to their children, both in their conduct toward them, and in proving to them that the Christian life is a happy life, and that they prize their religion above every earthly possession. Unless children are impressed by observation that true love and forbearance exists in the Church of Christ there is little hope that they will be drawn toward the cross.

Parents may become greatly discouraged after having done all in their power, both by example and precept, to win their children to Christ, and having had evidence that in early life they were in sympathy with sound doctrine, to find them consenting later to doctrines that cannot be supported by New Testament teachings. Painful as it is to see children drift into darkness, there is nothing left for the upright but to walk in love toward their children, and warn them of the danger of building on a sandy foundation. This love will never comfort them in a false hope.

Lancaster, Pa.

J. L. K.

DELIVERANCE FROM SIN

At this season when Americans are celebrating the anniversary of the Independence of this Country we might well call to mind the deliverance of Israel from their bondage in Egypt. The Israelites were oppressed, and unkindly and even cruelly treated, they were given promise after promise, only to be disappointed, until they felt they could bear it no longer; then through the leadership of Moses and the power of God they rose up and broke away from their oppressors. When the Egyp-

tians saw that the means of their gains were gone they pursued them in the endeavor to bring them back, for they realized what a serious loss it was to the nation.

Although Israel had crossed the sea, and were forever freed from the Egyptians there were other enemies which they had to encounter, and sufferings and privations which they had to endure before they came to the promised land; they met with bitter water in the wilderness, and sometimes they lacked the food they desired, and even longed to be back in Egypt where they, at least, had sufficient food to eat and good water to drink; they only thought of their personal comforts, and immediate wants, and lost sight of the promise of the better things that were awaiting them. Even after they had entered the land which was "flowing with milk and honey" they had frequent conflicts with the nations that had occupied the land.

Americans had to wage a long and trying conflict before they succeeded in establishing the independence they strove for, and then they too had other enemies to encounter and hardships to endure.

The sinner, in bondage under Satan, is often weary and groans under the yoke of oppression, and sees no way of escape; he is kept in darkness by him who has the power over him, even though he hears the invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11: 28. He is afraid to venture because he fears he will not succeed, or he fears the enemies he will yet have to meet, for he has sent spies as the Israelites did, and knows something about what he will have to meet. His friends may forsake him, evil men may take advantage of him, many of his enjoyments and indulgences and wordly pleasures he will

have to forego, the way is narrow, and he must practice self-denial in many things which his nature loves. He reasons that he will count the cost before he begins to build his tower, lest after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Luke 14:29. These things he knows he will have to meet, and the enemy takes advantage of his opportunity to exaggerate them to him, and to rob him of the comforts of faith in Him who has said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28:20. If, however, in true humility and sincerity of heart he calls upon the Lord, He will help him and deliver him.

Other enemies are yet to be encountered, of which he had known nothing; his faith may grow weak, he may feel that the Lord has forsaken him, that he has no guide or leader, as the Israelites felt when Moses was absent for forty days. And as they made for themselves gods, saying, "As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him," so he may do. Their idol of gold, the most precious thing they had of a material nature, that which they had brought with them from Egypt, may fittingly represent the best of the gifts we possess in our natural life—our moral works, our kindness to our fellow-men, our knowledge of the Scriptures, and the good deeds we do in the world. When faith grows weak, and the light grows dim, we feel that we *must* have something to lean upon, and these are the best we have.

These moral virtues are good in their place, but they will not fulfil the requirements of the spiritual law. If we bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10:5, all

these virtues and the wisdom and intelligence with which we are endowed may be used to the praise of God; but if we put our trust in them and allow them to dominate our lives, we will be led away from the path of humility and dependence upon God, and they will become a snare and a curse to us instead of a blessing, and be just as much of an idol and abomination as was the golden calf of the Israelites.

Landisville, Pa.

C. S. N.

NO GOD?

"The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." Psalm 53: 1.

The mind is a marvelous creation, and is capable of great development. It enables man to accomplish great things in the varied activities of life. It is the highest endowment that God has conferred upon man. It gives him pre-eminence above all creatures.

This wonderful mind makes man a conscious, accountable being. Its development from infancy is a slow and gradual process. At a certain age consciousness of right and wrong is revealed; no Bible reading or mental training is capable of producing this awakening—it simply comes to us; but from whence? Unquestionably from God, reminding us that we are sinners and therefore under His judgment. His grace appears unto all men. Tit. 2:11. Fear seizes the soul in a greater or less degree, for condemnation, destruction and death are hanging over us.

Yes, but the atheist says, "I do not believe in God!" We venture the assertion that at this early period of life, and when under condemnation there are no atheists—all believe there is a God. Just so little as one can deny that they have felt the conviction of sin at a cer-

tain age, so little can they deny that there is a God; for this is conclusive evidence that a supreme intelligence and power is exerting its influence upon the mind.

How then can any rational, intelligent man or woman conceive the idea that there is no God? It is possible. By frustrating the grace of God and hardening the heart one's conscience may become seared, and carnal reason may sway the mind and pervert the understanding. A reprobate mind is the final result. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." Rom. 1:28. God does not reprobate men by making them wicked, but by not granting them the benefits of His gratuitous mercy. In this condition Satan can lead such persons at his will, and even induce them to believe that there is no God.

Strange to say that the development of the mind, the attainment of knowledge and worldly wisdom does not improve this condition, but rather strengthens it; for it seems the deeper man delves into science and philosophy the further he gets away from God. Many of the greatest scientists and worldly-wise have been unbelievers. Therefore the Apostle says: "For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." 1 Cor. 1: 20, 21. It shows with what gross darkness the human mind may be enshrouded when God's grace is rejected.

No God? Whence came these wondrous works which we behold? All nature shows a wonderful design, wisdom and almighty power in the formation and in the operation of fixed governing laws! When we behold the

multiplicity of animal, vegetable and insect life, the almost infinite variety of kinds and species, all of which are adapted to some end and purpose, we cannot fail to recognize a *first cause*, a creative power.

When we consider the solar system, the glorious sun, with the earth and the planets revolving around it with such precision and harmony, we cannot fail to be impressed with the supreme intelligence and unlimited power displayed. When we gaze into the heavens at night and behold myriads of stars, many of which astronomers say are mighty suns, with systems revolving around them, and as the powerful telescope brings into view yet many more stars and nebulae in the vast expanse of the infinitude of space, we can well say with the Psalmist: "The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament sheweth His handiwork; day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night sheweth knowledge." The multitude of stars cannot be numbered by man, yet God "telleteth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names."

The finite mind is bewildered in contemplating the wisdom of God and His wondrous works in the heavens and on the earth. We can well exclaim with the Revelator: "Great and marvelous are Thy works Lord God Almighty, just and true are Thy ways Thou King of saints." No God? Who then or what power accomplished these great works? They surely have had a beginning! They have not been formed by chance! Surely there must be a primal cause, a creative energy back of it all! And what could this be but an all-wise, omnipotent Creator—God!

The atheist denies the God who gave him life and being and a soul that is immortal, yet he knows he must meet

temporal death, and judgment must follow. In that great day he must face the God he contemned: the Spirit in Revelation saith: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." Also: "As I live saith the Lord every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." Rom. 14:11.

We hope, however, the atheist may see his folly, recant and repent before judgment is pronounced against him. Some atheists in history, though very bold and confident in confessing their unbelief while in health and the vigor of life, were stricken with fear and dread when disease seized upon them, and when confronted with death. A few recanted and called upon Jesus in their extremity. One confessed he was "taking a leap into the dark." Truly dark and foreboding would be the prospect beyond, if God and the hope of immortality were shut out of this life's experience.

Though the condition of the atheist is singled out by mankind in general, as a hopeless and abandoned one to be avoided and shunned, yet we do not consider him a sinner above all others. When Jesus was told of the sinful Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices; and of the eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and slew them, He said, "Think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell ye, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Luke 13.

Since all unrighteousness and disobedience is sin, if not repented of we are no better off than the impenitent atheist and shall inevitably perish with him. O the terrible doom of impenitent and ungodly! May we not only believe there is a God, but may we accept His blessed Son as our Savior, obey

His commands, "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;" then by faith we can "look for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

TEACH ME TO PRAY ARIGHT

I prayed, dear Lord, to know Thy will
Assured that Thou wer't guiding me;
More fervent love I prayed instil
To make my heart more fit for Thee.

I prayed for wisdom on my way,
The light from heaven my path to bless;
That faith be strengthened day by day,
That doubts and fears no more distress.

And while I prayed I seemed to hear
An answer sweet fell on my ear—
"Thou dost not know how thou should'st pray,
Leave God to guide thee in His way."

Lord, give me what is best,
Lead me by waters still;
Then I shall sweetly rest
Submissive to Thy will.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

BRIEF NOTES

Christ's doctrine never was nor ever will be adapted and applicable to conditions existing in the world, with its past and present problems. It was intended to be, and is, perfectly adaptable and applicable to His people, in their relation to the world, their fellow-men individually, and to their God.

* * * *

There is a theme for deep thought in a recent editorial, stating that "Everything that is precious in life is based on a belief in righteousness."

It seems hardly possible for any one not to believe in righteousness. It is said that even the devils "believe and tremble." For any one, then, to profess

not to believe in God, appears as extremely inconsistent; for certainly God and righteousness are inseparable.

* * * *

Confusion and inconsistency will ever be in evidence, as indeed it now is, where renowned preachers, evangelists and writers eloquently extol the truths and doctrines proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount, and yet as openly declare in precept and practice that under present world-conditions this doctrine cannot be fully lived and applied.

The consistent course is for everyone, individually, through self-abasement and self-denial, to become adapted to these truths and doctrine rather than to try to make them adaptable and applicable to themselves and to world conditions.

* * * *

Many times honest and upright efforts under hard conditions, seem at the time poorly rewarded when compared with the accomplishments and attainments of the unscrupulous and dishonest. We may feel as David did, in his observations, that his step "had well-nigh slipped," when he "saw the prosperity of the wicked."

Yet, it is said, "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers; neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity." It is further declared that the wicked "shall be cut down like grass and wither as the green herb." Hardly a day passes in which we may not see this verified, even in high stations in life.

The reward of the faithful is not in the acquiring nor in the possession of material things, as is so strikingly typified in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

* * * *

A glorious condition is attained, a happy relation to God, and a truly rest-

ful state of mind, when through faith and humble submission, all circumstances and conditions in life are recognized and accepted as giving strength to the spiritual life, promoting growth and development in grace, and revealing a fuller knowledge of God's will. Paul's wholesome counsel is, "Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God that passeth all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Jesus declared that the purpose in His coming was that we "might have life," and that we "might have it more abundantly." When we allow faith to become weak, and this relation of trust and confidence is interrupted, we do, to that extent, shut out the benefits of the more abundant life, and peace is interrupted as well as the light that should be reflected to others.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. How can one attain salvation?

A. Christ is the only direct means of salvation. Conviction and repentance are means to bring about the new birth, which can be attained only through Christ. The church with its ordinances is a means to help believers hold fast the salvation attained through Christ. Therefore all can attain salvation who make an unconditional surrender to Christ, willingly crucify the flesh and obey His word. For Christ "being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." Heb. 5:9.

Q. To what extent are separated members to be avoided by the Church?

A. Business and social relations are to be severed even to the extent of eat-

ing the natural meal with them. 1 Cor. 5: 11. This avoidance must be based on the principle of love. The apostle Paul after outlining the duties of love that believers owe one to another, follows by saying, "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed, yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." 2 Thes. 3: 14, 15.

Q. Why does man, according to his natural understanding, not comprehend the difference between the Law and the Gospel—the Old and the New Covenant?

A. Man in seeking religion naturally clings to works for justification; and not having received the Spirit of Christ he cannot comprehend that the law is only a carnal commandment, and typifies the spiritual dispensation of grace; so he adheres to both covenants, and also makes a law of the Gospel. He has not received the righteousness of Christ, and like the Jews, tries to establish his own righteousness by the works of the law. The Apostle says: "If righteousness come by the law Christ is dead in vain." Gal. 2: 21. They that have accepted Christ, readily separate the law and the Gospel, as the ruling power of two separate and distinct kingdoms—the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of the world.

Q. Why are the most terrible wars fought by the so-called Christian nations?

A. The Gospel of Christ furnishes abundant proof that nations that engage in war are not Christian. Under the deceptive influence of Satan, people confuse patriotism and loyalty to country with righteousness and religion; and in their delusion they are inspired with a fiery zeal to conquer their enemies.

They claim they are waging a righteous war, and acquire the enviable distinction that "Christians make the best soldiers." Being equipped with the most destructive weapons that science and skill can devise, the wars of the so-called Christian nations are the most terrible that curse mankind. Some of the most bloody and barbarous wars in history have been waged by fanatical religious factions, thus stigmatizing the fair name of Christianity with infamy, notably the 30 years' war in Europe from 1618 to 1648 between Protestants and Roman Catholics.

Q. Why did Moses "command to give a writing of divorcement?"

A. Christ answered the question thus, "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so." Matt. 19: 8. Christ came to restore this primitive condition or relation, therefore in His kingdom, divorce for every cause is no more sanctioned. In fact it is no more a necessity, for under the New Covenant the Lord joins believers and the "twain shall be one flesh." Instead of the hard, selfish heart, love, peace and forbearance restrains man and wife, and divorce is not desired or contemplated; as long as husband and wife live in the Lord, only death can separate them. Christ said: "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." This annuls the Mosaic law of divorce for Christians.

Q. Why did Moses permit war and strife?

A. Though the law of Moses sanctioned war and strife, it was founded upon justice and equity; and the Israelites were only allowed to wage war to subdue and destroy their enemies who opposed them in taking possession of the

promised land of Canaan, or to defend themselves when their enemies assaulted them. Though they were God's chosen people, yet they were in a carnal, natural state, and therefore were under carnal ordinances and natural promises. Man through the transgression had lost the spiritual life and power, and was therefore incapable of attaining anything more than the law prescribed. They used carnal weapons and physical force to accomplish their purposes; they could not do otherwise for they were subject to a carnal or literal covenant.

When Christ came He fulfilled every jot and tittle of the law. The ceremonies, ordinances, wars and conflicts, were all typical of the spiritual worship which Christ established, and of the spiritual conflicts of believers. He regenerated the heart and imparted power to overcome carnal, revengeful passions; substituting love and peace; therefore war and strife were not only prohibited—they were “learned no more.” He gave power even to love one's enemies.

LIFE OR DEATH?

“He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.” John 12: 25.

The Scriptures teach that man is a fallen creature. We need only inquire within ourselves to verify this. By nature we do not love God; we are not willing to obey His teaching; we abhor the light of His grace, because it reveals our depravity, strips us of our self-esteem, and we stand naked before Him. We are selfish beings, anxious to excel one another in the fierce race for wealth, often taking advantage of one another in order to reach our end. The world holds forth tempting rewards to those

who outdo their fellow mortals, and we are actuated by desires to reach the pinnacles of fame and renown.

These aspirations are manifestations of our self-love. In our unconverted state the life that we live is very precious to us, and our carnal reason teaches us that we should make the most of it, in pleasure, in comfort, in worldly gain.

But the Savior came to reveal to us another life—one which “consisteth not in the abundance of the things we possess;” one which cannot feed on worldly enjoyment, a life which is “hid with Christ in God.” To receive this life we must come to a knowledge of our sinful and helpless condition, which brings us to repentance, and a willingness to accept Jesus as the only means of salvation. He tells us to “take up the cross, deny thyself and follow me daily.”

This life of self-denial is quite different from the life we formerly lived. Having come to the knowledge of the Truth, we receive the meek and quiet spirit of Christ, begotten of the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. This spirit reveals the folly of our carnal life, the vanity of our minds and the wickedness of our hearts. A death takes place—the crucifying of the flesh with its affections and lusts, and a new, spiritual life is born.

The person thus operated upon is now a regenerated being—a Christian. He wants to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, to give evidence by his walk and conversation that he has passed from death unto life. He longs to cry out against false teaching and false worship, he tries to shed his light around, in the hope that others may profit by his good example. Herein he meets with opposition. Through the flesh, which is not converted, he is tempted in many ways, and he finds himself unable to live the per-

fect, sinless life he seeks after. Thus he is engaged in a conflict—the flesh against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and he learns to hate this life of self, which is continually intruding upon his happiness. But he fights manfully on, knowing that, “in due season we shall reap, if we faint not,” and that, if he confesses his Savior here, He will confess him when he comes in the glory of the Father and the holy angels. Then shall that priceless treasure of eternal life be granted to the humble Christian.

How different the consequences to those who continue to resist the grace of God, and who cherish the carnal life. “If ye live after the flesh ye shall die.” Those who love this life, and in their lifetime receive their good things, have nothing wherewith to comfort themselves in their dying hour. Jesus died to save sinners, but it is necessary that sinners become willing to forsake all for His sake, if they would be saved. Eternal death, that is, separation from God and His saints, awaits those who do not repent in this day of grace; but joy unending will be the reward of those who hear and obey.

Stevensville, Ont.

W. I. T.

SITTING AT THE FEET OF JESUS

We read of Jesus and His disciples stopping at Bethany on their way to Jerusalem and of their being kindly entertained in the home of Martha, the sister of Lazarus and Mary. An incident occurred upon this particular occasion that especially appeals to us. Luke 10: 38–42.

As soon as Jesus was seated and began a discourse which was as His discourses always were, both interesting and instructive, Mary sat at His feet

glad of the opportunity of hearing His blessed words, for she evidently welcomed Him, believing Him to be a great teacher and Savior. But Martha was cumbered and troubled about much serving, and said, “Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.” Jesus answered “Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

We have no reason to doubt Martha's sincerity, and also her belief in Jesus, but she was differently impressed as to the manner of showing her respect and affection for the Master, for in providing suitable entertainment for Him, she was cumbered about much serving. In a most kind and compassionate manner He noted her being careful and troubled about many things, and yet without severe reproof told her, “But one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.”

We see and admire the wisdom of Mary's choice, and have felt the same longing to sit at the feet of Jesus and hear from His lips the words of salvation which were so comforting to her. But sometimes I think many of us are more nearly akin to Martha than inclined with Mary to seek the good part. However, when we waken up and realize the short duration of all that is earthly, in contrast with eternity, then we begin to see beauty in the Christian life, and we long to sit at the feet of Jesus, learning what is implied in that “One thing needful” receiving strength from His words. Both the petty and cumbersome things of earth lose for us the great importance they once held, and we are more

concerned in securing the greater and more enduring prize.

When we are happily busied in providing and preparing for our loved ones the bounteous gifts God has given us, and enjoying the fruits of our labor, sometimes in excess of what is needful or even beneficial to our mortal bodies, we are reminded of Martha and it may help us to recall these words, "Let your moderation be known to all men."

Many of our dear friends have experienced that we are living in a time when it requires a strenuous effort and great labor to provide for the needs of those dependent upon us. Our Savior knows all these conditions and does not condemn us, even when our wearied bodies in need of sleep may prevent us from sitting at His feet or meditating upon the most needful for which our spirit longs. For while we enjoy the quiet meditation and the blessedness of sitting at the feet of Jesus, we are reminded to labor with our hands the thing that is good. "Be not slothful in business; fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Nowhere is idleness encouraged. Honest labor is man's greatest blessing and the busy man is the happier one.

I remember hearing a most devoted believer in Jesus, when speaking of the strenuous life, with its cares and burdens, often made heavier by the want of efficient helpers, say that he thanked God for the comfort of good thoughts of an inspiring nature coming to him as a heavenly message. Sometimes even while he worked a passage of Scripture would recur to his mind bringing a clearer vision of its meaning, strength, and beauty than ever before. So that even under such circumstances he could commune with the Most High, and verily sit at the feet of Jesus.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

LAW AND GOSPEL

One error is to make Old Testament teaching a rule for present conduct. The Sermon on the Mount repeatedly refers to what was of old, and Christ substitutes His precepts for former ones. "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the Kingdom of God is preached, Luke 16:16; "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," John 1:17; "By Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses," Acts 13:39; "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," Rom. 10:4; "The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law," Heb. 7:12; "There is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before," Heb. 7:18; "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old," Heb. 8:13; "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second," Heb. 8:7; "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel," Heb. 8:8.

The Scriptures quoted, and others, are convincing evidence that the old law is no longer in force, and that to be saved we must obey the new covenant. But some may be perplexed when they read: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Matt. 5:17. When a thing is fulfilled it is ended.

The death on the cross, the resurrection and the ascension were the fulfillment of what was foretold; they were the "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." Col. 2:14. When former things are so fully ended in Christ we cannot cloak our re-

ligion by using the liberties allowed by a religion that is ended. If we use former liberties we are under Moses and not under Christ. Moses allowed liberty "because of the hardness of their hearts,"—which in Christ is taken away.

The former laws and statutes were to govern a people who were not commanded to be born again, who had ordinances which Paul calls "carnal." By their ordinances they were to inflict the same punishment on others which the guilty had wilfully inflicted, even unto the death penalty. God sanctioned the punishment of ungodly nations by the severity of war.

The people of Israel were righteous, or right when they obeyed God's word, and He gave them temporal blessings for their obedience, but when they disobeyed they were punished to the extent foretold by the Savior that their city and temple should be destroyed, in which over a million of lives were destroyed and great numbers were carried captives to heathen lands.

The laws given them are a basis for good government now. Capital punishment, war and litigation are means used now, as of old, to suppress evil, to repel and conquer, to enforce claims, all of which measures are foreign to the spirit of the kingdom of Christ. He says, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." John 18:36. When Peter before his conversion began smiting with the sword the Savior stopped him and healed the wound he had made. He told His disciples, "I have chosen you out of the world." He explains by His teaching what He means. Among other things He says, "But I say unto you that ye

resist not evil." Matt. 5: 39. This precept forbids the use of the sword by His disciples and separates them from the worldly government. If they cannot support government in the extreme crisis, they cannot be consistent factors of it in a lesser function. It is an error that persons who claim to be chosen out of the world should aim to conduct worldly government.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

"Add to your faith virtue; to virtue knowledge; to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." 2 Peter 1: 5, 7.

The Apostle is writing to his brethren who have accepted Jesus, the Savior, by faith. He places faith first in the list of Christian attributes; and it is the most essential, for without faith it is impossible to attain a hope of eternal life.

Virtue is the fruit of faith and it must follow as a confirmation or evidence. The Apostle says, "Faith without works is dead." In the world to-day there is a strong tendency to place virtue first. Those who do not by true repentance come to Jesus are liable to be deceived and substitute moral and charitable works for the "faith which worketh by love."

Knowledge is a clear perception of the truth as taught by God's word, and by diligently reading we can "prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." By spiritual knowledge we get a clear understanding of the duties incumbent upon us as the children of God. By worldly or carnal knowledge we can never comprehend the plan of salvation. The Apostle observes "that they are ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the

truth." Also "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2:14. Now possessing faith, virtue and knowledge, we grow in grace and have a clearer perception of the plan of salvation. We now must observe temperance as a controlling influence. We need restraint in our appetites, passions, speech and thoughts. We are liable to excesses. Our flesh is unconverted and continually tempts us to intemperance. The Apostle says, "Let your moderation be known unto all men."

Add to temperance patience. Patience qualifies us to suffer for well doing for righteousness sake; to endure affliction and pain without murmuring. It enables us to say with the Apostle, "Our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Cor. 4:17.

It is the divine temper which controls a revengeful, selfish, quarrelsome disposition. Unless we exercise patience we cannot be the "light of the world," we cannot convince the world that spiritual power has been given us—that we are born again, new creatures in Christ. Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. James 1:4.

To patience godliness—a godly life, obedience to the commands of Christ, faithful discharge of every duty through love and reverence to God the Creator and Christ the Savior.

Brotherly kindness will be a fruit of Christian fellowship. The natural mind responds very readily to kindness, and the spiritual mind should practice it to a marked degree. "Be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another." Eph. 4:32. "Be kindly

affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." Rom. 12:10.

To Brotherly kindness charity. Charity or love is the ruling scepter of the Kingdom of Heaven. It is the crowning virtue, the greatest of all. It will endure though all else fails and passes away. Since "God is love" it follows that love is eternal.

The Apostle Paul defines Charity 1 Cor. 13.

Stevensville, Ont.

R. S. B.

ADVERSITY AND ITS COMPENSATIONS

When our experiences in this life are contrary to what we like or long for; when to-day we realize the opposite to the pleasant and agreeable anticipations of yesterday; when joy and pleasure ends in sorrow and disappointment; when we are even deprived of the pleasures of some or all of our senses, even to the extent of sickness and physical pain; when those we love dearly grow cold and probably cease to return our love, then it is we understand at least in part, the meaning of adversity—all of us in a measure have experienced some of these things. No wonder that even the word adversity itself would cast a shadow upon our horizon! Happiness depending upon our natural blessings is momentary only with no promises of continuation and, in this case, truly adverse things would bear little resemblance to compensation.

But what a different meaning all these experiences convey to one who believes that God, the Creator of the Universe, directs and permits all things for a wise purpose! How great is our faith in God? Probably not one of us can answer this question, because we do not have sufficient knowledge of ourselves

and God. He wants us to be happy and indeed our happiness and even our salvation is entirely dependent upon our faith in Him, hence, it is vital that we endeavor to measure our faith.

Does our faith in God enable us to believe that adverse things just as much as pleasing things bear the semblance of God's love for us? If we believe that in this short span of years here we are being moulded for a greater life and that our preparation is entirely dependent upon obedience to our knowledge of His guidance, then we will value His way even though it be in contrast with our own. Surely God loves all His creatures and if pain follows violation then our faith in Him will greatly soften what ordinarily may seem to us adverse. Adversity has a different meaning to one who loves God and realizes its value, and no doubt if we loved God as we should, we would love even adversity inasmuch as our sinful present state needs constant chastening. The Apostle James said, "My brethren count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations; knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience."

There is strength revealed by adversity that no other experience can bring to the surface. It may be that when we feel utterly helpless and discouraged, we will look away from ourselves and truly find God. Faith asserts itself not so much when things look bright, but when all seems gone except God. By this form of love (Adversity), we are persuaded again and again to return to the true foundation, Jesus Christ, upon which all that is of value is based.

God's creatures should be moved with gratitude for anything by which sin may be revealed, and from which He has prepared a way of escape. Let us prayerfully endeavor to retain that

blessed child mind, receptive and impressionable.

Were it not for God's wonderful love, demonstrated just as forcefully in the clouds as it is in the sunshine; in the thorn as in the rose; we would soon, very soon, forget Him and also forget that "He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." Who has not realized in sorrow, disappointment, or pain, the very shadow of the Almighty?

May we through Jesus Christ be able to say, "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Lancaster, Pa.

M. H. B.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DOCTRINE

Since the importance of the Christian life is so constantly in our thoughts, and means so much to our peace and happiness and to the happiness of others, we may overlook the importance of Christian doctrines. Some have gone so far as to say, "It matters not what one believes, if one lives right."

A truly Christian life is the fruit of faith; and faith, simple though it be, requires some knowledge and understanding of its object, of God and His truth. For this reason a revelation was given to mankind. Matt. 13:13; Rom. 1:19, 20.

Again, our beliefs in great measure form our character and influence our conduct. In order to do right we must believe aright: the conscience needs the enlightenment of truth. Though men do not always act according to their better knowledge, it makes a great difference in this world whether they believe in moral principles, in the sacredness of human life, of government and law, of marriage and home and family, and of

all human relationships, or whether they do not. The appalling effects of false teaching prove to us the value of right doctrine.

Christian doctrines are based upon Christ's teachings. These teachings are not vague nor hidden. They appeal to the conscience and the understanding and fix in our minds a definite belief. He taught the doctrines of repentance, of the new birth, of Christian love and unity. Even the simplest of His sayings teach great truths. From the parable of the heathen man and the publican who went into the temple to pray, we get a vivid impression of the truth that man is not justified by the works of the law, but through repentance and faith—a doctrine so fully developed by the Apostle Paul in his epistles to the Romans and the Galatians.

What would the Gospel mean to us if we should take from it the positive doctrines on which we can base our faith—if we should reject the divinity of Christ, the authority of His word, the judgment upon sin, the atonement, the resurrection of Christ, the gift of His Spirit, the hope of a future life? It would have no power to quicken nor to comfort the soul; our religion would be cold and formal; our lives here, destitute of faith, could reach no higher level than we ourselves are capable of; and in death we would be without hope.

True doctrines embody the principles of truth which the Holy Scriptures teach. They are formal statements in such words as convey to the mind a clearer representation of truth. They are not assertions of human opinions. Divine truth is unchanging; to it nothing may be added. And they are not dead forms. They are the expression of living truths, of truths which are impressed on the minds of believers through experience, by revelation, and

by commandment. John 16:13, Gal. 1:12. We need not be told that "God is," for we have realized it; we are witnesses of His goodness and of His power; we have experienced His judgments; we have felt the need of the atonement, of the forgiveness of sin, of a righteousness better than our own. The doctrines of love and peace and non-resistance, of humility and non-conformity to the world, and all Christ's teachings are in harmony with the spirit of the Christian. So real is the correspondence between inward belief and formal Christian doctrines, that there is unity in doctrine as well as in spirit in the Church of Christ. 1 Cor. 1:10.

Yet, even though these truths are revealed to us, they are not always clear to the mind nor fully understood. In a given case one may act right through conviction but yet be unable to define the reason or to state clearly the ground of the action. In our own minds we may not be able to formulate our beliefs although, as we read or hear them explained, we can immediately say, "that is how I feel, that is what I have believed." It is important that they be understood, for without an adequate conception of truth we could not obey the Apostle's injunction, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you," the path of duty would not be so plain, and the mind would be more easily swayed by false doctrine. We need to take time from a busy life, to live in a measure apart from a restless world, in order to read, reflect, meditate. Col. 3:16.

The Church has always needed a plain statement of doctrines. When heresies arose in the Apostle's time, they were met with a full exposition of truth. When Jewish teachers sought to impose the rite of circumcision and other legal

ordinances on the Gentile converts, Paul not only asserted that justification is by faith alone, but he gave the reasons why, and such proofs as to make the doctrine of justification by faith invincible. The importance of this teaching is apparent to all since we are prone to seek merit in works. The importance of right teaching is further seen in such doctrines as separation from unfaithful worship, church unity, and church discipline as defined in the Epistle to the Corinthians, because our nature is opposed to the cross they bring and we may be tempted to do as nearly the whole professing world have done, take up the doctrine that one has no responsibility for the sin of another and no duty to do—a doctrine at variance with the plainest commands of Scripture and destructive of love and confidence, the foundations of church unity.

In respect to doctrine Paul counselled his fellow laborers, Timothy and Titus: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine," etc. "Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me." "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine."

Errors will continue; they may prevail; they will increase: "There shall arise false Christs and false prophets." "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." "The time will come when men will not endure sound doctrine." 1 Tim. 4: 1, 2 Peter 2: 1.

In our day of many delusive opinions and doctrines of men, amid the discord and confusion, our beliefs dare not be doubtful and uncertain. When religious teachers are substituting their own

authority for that of the Bible and denying its central truths; when the schools are teaching theories which instil doubts and confuse the minds of the young; when misleading books and papers are on every hand, and ideas are being advanced which set at naught the primeval ordinances of God; when sacred things are made to give way to material things, we need to nourish faith and to deepen our grasp of truth. We need to keep in mind the words of the Apostle, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle," lest we "be tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine."

Laying aside all prejudice and self-confidence, it should be our wish and our endeavor to continue in His word that we may be His disciples indeed; to so follow the light of truth, which is the gift of the New Covenant, that we might, through His grace, "Be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." "For with Thee is the fountain of life; in Thy light shall we see light."

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

THE BIBLE

The Bible contains the word of God in its purity and holiness. It makes known the will of God to man. It is therefore of divine origin as it is testified: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.

The Bible then becomes the guide to man in his moral and spiritual conduct. It acquaints him with his unsaved condition and the imperative duty to obey

God and accept Jesus, the Savior—thus to escape wrath and judgment to come, and attain peace and rest for the soul. There is, therefore, great reward in believing and obeying the Bible.

The Psalmist says, "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes, . . . more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honey comb. . . . And in keeping of them there is great reward." Everyone should diligently read the Bible and pray God for light and understanding. The apostle James says: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and unbraideth not; and it shall be given him." To them who desire to obey its precepts, it will be, "the power of God and the wisdom of God." It will be meat and drink to the soul that thirsts for righteousness. To comprehend its hidden mysteries, man must be born again. He must receive the "Comforter which is the Spirit of Truth which shall teach him all things." The carnal, natural mind cannot understand its meaning, to such it is foolishness.

In the days of our Savior, the Scribes and Pharisees were familiar with the letter, but the spiritual meaning was hidden from them; they sought it by natural wisdom and in the traditions of the law. Therefore Christ said unto them: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think we have eternal life—and they are they which testify of me." John 5:39.

The Bible is the only standard of righteousness and truth, and of Christian conduct; it analyzes the character of man and shows him that a change is necessary in order to secure salvation. It also pronounces punishment upon disobedience, and announces consolation

and joy to the soul that obeys its blessed words.

The Bible describes or sets forth two covenants or dispensations; the one of Moses or of the law of works; the other of Christ or of "grace and truth." As the Evangelist says: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The first covenant is still in force in the world; the second is spiritual and directly opposite to it in character. These two covenants constitute two kingdoms which are separate and distinct; we cannot be in the two kingdoms at the same time. Christ said: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." We must renounce one kingdom to enter the other. The kingdom of this world is ruled by coercion, "eye for eye"; and rulers are "sent for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well." The redeemed are called out of the kingdom of strife and resistance into the kingdom of love and peace—the kingdom of God's dear Son. They do not make use of carnal weapons, for it is written: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. neither shall they learn war any more." They now use the weapons which "are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. 10:45. They have the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. They are saved by grace through faith and not by their own good works. God's grace is not limited, but is sufficient to save everyone that believes and trusts in Him.

Williamsville, N. Y.

A. M.

THOUGHTS ON DUTY

Every one should know what duty is. Duty is something that should be done, or, on the other hand, something that should not be done. Every situation in life has its duties for those who are in the situation. Parents have duties to their children, children to their parents and to each other; husbands to wives, wives to husbands; employers to the employed, the employed to their employers; all men and women to their fellowmen and women—no adult of sound mind is without duty of some kind.

As we are creatures of God, and dependent upon Him for life, and for all that makes life worth living; our first duty, evidently, is to honor and love our Creator, and thank Him for all our blessings. Christ our Savior and Master said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment." Matt. 22: 37, 38. Again He said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." John 14: 15. Reflecting on this saying we see that the human family may be considered as consisting of two classes—those who love Jesus Christ, and those who do not love Him. To those who love Him He says, "Keep my commandments." This is their duty. His commandments are not grievous. They all are the evidence of love and wisdom exercised for our benefit. If we love Him, our duty will be to us a pleasure, because to serve those we love is never burdensome. If the path of duty leads where we would rather not go, or if it requires us to do things that are not pleasant or congenial, wherein is our joy? It is in the "hidden man of the heart." We are trying to follow Christ. He is our teacher and Master and "even Christ pleased not Himself." He lived the higher life—a life that is a perfect ex-

ample for us to follow. He said to His disciples, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." What joy He must have had in the spirit as He realized communion with the Father, and as His humanity was ever strengthened and comforted by His divinity!

We cannot attain to this, for we are weak and erring, but we may and can attain to much joy in the spirit. Every duty done cheerfully and heartily "as unto the Lord and not unto men" is a stepping-stone in the way of "the wisdom that cometh from above," and there is so much of joy yet to come.

We have, perhaps, heard people say, with a set countenance, showing no trace of joy, "I mean to do my duty." We ourselves may have expressed the same idea, looking forward, rather gloomily to a season of self-denial, of bitterness or of suffering. Even if it should prove so to the flesh, there is the higher joy of an approving conscience. The followers of Christ cannot and do not expect their sojourn in this life to be always smooth and comfortable. The ordinary trials, pains and disappointments of life are experienced by every human being. Faith in God and love to Him help us to bear these with resignation, and even with cheerfulness—they are "the common lot of man."

Is it not a real joy to lift one's spiritual eyes and ears above one's weaknesses and the mistakes and turmoil of life and to remember with St. Paul "whose I am and whom I serve?" It would be such a help in joyful Christian living for each weak disciple to think daily of these words, and what they mean.

Christ's followers are His children, they belong to Him and are trying to live as He lived. In trying to do God's will they find their meat, that is, their soul's food—their real joy. He, our

Lord and Master said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work." By His obedience unto death He finished God's work. His last words, in His agony on the cross were, "It is finished."

By His death He atoned for all the sins of the whole human family, and thus won salvation for each human being. In our age it merely remains for those who appreciate this great sacrifice, to accept the free gift it has brought, on the conditions on which it is offered. These conditions are so reasonable that it seems they should appeal to all. Christ gave Himself for us. Do we not owe Him the duty of appreciation and thankfulness? Who can help loving Jesus? Our duty to Him is the duty of love, of worship, of unconditional devotion to His service. God's conditions are found in His last will and Testament preserved to the present time by Divine wisdom and oversight. The learning of these, and the trying to keep them are the duty of the Christian.

In doubtful cases how shall we determine our duty? In the matter of deciding on our duty we have always to remember what is often called "the personal equation"—that is, we are apt to consider as our duty that which we like to do, or which it may be to our own interest to do. Here especially we need Divine direction. We can scarcely get away from ourselves. In such cases advice may be sought from one or more of those in whom we have confidence, and whose judgment we consider good. They may help to clear up the case for us. Each one is responsible to God for his or her own actions.

Having considered at some length our duty to God, let us look at our duty to our neighbor. What are our instructions? Christ quotes and endorses the words of the law recorded in Leviticus

20, and written almost 1,500 years before His time, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." How much do we love ourselves? Let each one answer this question for him or herself. Who is our neighbor? The teachings of Christ show us that all our fellow-creatures are our neighbors. So we are to love all men and treat them as we ourselves would like to be treated. This is simple. We can all understand it. Christ does not ask us to make our neighbors better. Our duty to them is simply to love them, and that means to be kind to them. We could not think of going to war with them, or of doing any one a wilful injury of any kind.

We now come to consider our last duty—our duty to ourselves. To arrive at this we will first give some thought to what we are: God has given us a physical body, "fearfully and wonderfully made." Its many different parts He has so tempered together that, in health, they are quietly and beautifully harmonious in their workings. He intended the body to be under the control of the mind or intelligence which He has placed within us. God has also given each responsible being a sense of right and wrong through which He transmits His will to us.

It is our duty to appreciate the wonderful physical body that God has given us, to thank Him for it, and to take good care of it both for His sake and for our own. It is our duty as followers of Christ to live, as He teaches, a temperate life in eating, drinking, working, thinking, that we may keep our body in as good a condition as possible.

What a privilege, what a responsibility, what a duty have those who have consecrated themselves to God's service! They are instruments in His hands. All their powers are at His disposal. He, as the Master Workman, uses them in what-

ever way He will to fulfill His purposes. We know that to do good work instruments must be kept in good condition. The most skilful workman cannot work with dull or injured tools. Our duty to ourselves, then, is to keep ourselves in as good condition as we know how physically and mentally and above all to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God that we may be vessels "meet" for His use.

Should we through lack of vigilance, become ensnared by the gratifications of the flesh, of whatever kind they may be, our physical body is liable to suffer; our mental and spiritual perceptions are dulled; and we are not in condition to receive and understand God's message to us, nor to carry out His will. In short, we are poor instruments, and we will miss much of what God meant for us to learn and to do. He will pass us by and go to other instruments better fitted for His use.

We are weak human beings. We have constant need of Divine help. With our very best efforts we fall far short of our ideal, Jesus Christ. However, let us not, on this account, allow ourselves to be discouraged. Think of it! our ideal is right here with us; never sleeping or resting, but always ready to hear and to help us if we are obedient and do truly try to follow Him. Let us pray Him to keep us from self-gratification; from the dullness of mind and spirit that go with over-indulgence in what the flesh calls the good thing of this life. Let us pray Him to help us keep our understanding clear so that His precious messages to us may not be unheard or unrecognized.

Lancaster, Pa.

L. L. F.

SYMBOLIC CROSSINGS

In the Scriptures we find a number of instances where the crossing of a body

of water is significant of progress or advancement from a lower to a higher place in life.

From the time that the sons of Jacob in jealousy sold their brother Joseph as a slave to the Ishmaelites, calamity fell upon them. "And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard." But Joseph was able to return good for evil and eventually all of his father's family came to dwell in Egypt.

Finally, "Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation." "Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." Because the king feared the children of Israel would overcome him for they were increasing in numbers, he "set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens."

Moses was sent to deliver Israel, and led them into the Wilderness of Sin where they wandered forty years. But because they murmured against the Lord, He "was wroth, and sware," saying, "Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers." And for the same reason Moses also was not permitted to enter the promised land of Canaan.

When Pharaoh let them go out of Egypt, "God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near," being fearful they would return to Egypt. "But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea." While those in that generation did not inherit the blessings of Canaan, yet because of their leaving Egypt, the future generations did. Otherwise, had they remained under the rule of Pharaoh they could not have enjoyed the freedom in their work and worship which they desired. So we may say that crossing the

Red Sea signifies the turning point in their lives. Thus it is true in life, once we resolve to go forward, we cannot so easily turn back, like the Israelites when they had passed over the Red sea upon dry ground, the waters closed in upon those who followed them.

After the death of Moses when Joshua became their leader, the Israelites gave up their wandering life, for the Lord commanded them to pass over the river Jordan so as to possess the country "from the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast." This was their inheritance as we learn that Abraham "sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country" and that there sprang from him as "many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable." "These all died in faith, not having received the promises but having seen them afar off." So we, having confessed the faith of Jesus, declare that we "desire a better country, that is, an heavenly." But before we pass into our spiritual inheritance, we must be proved by the many experiences of this life to see whether we desire the influence of the Spirit to transcend that of the flesh.

When the Christian order was about to be established, we find John the Baptist calling the people to repentance and baptizing them in the river Jordan. This baptism signified a change in their lives, a crossing over from "dead works to serve the living god."

Later Jesus began to preach the Gospel of the kingdom of God. "As He walked by the sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers." They were invited to become

fishers of men. This decision meant that they would leave their families and occupation in order to follow Him.

Then we find Jesus giving most comforting instruction to His disciples, knowing that His hour had come. Evidently He was speaking to them as they walked together for He said, "Arise, let us go hence." After uttering His prayer for unity in behalf of His disciples, He prayed not only for them but for those also which shall believe on Him through their word. "When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which He entered, and His disciples." He had crossed into the garden of Gethsemane where He was betrayed to be crucified for the sin of the world. His prayer there was, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." We too shrink from duty when it brings us into reproach and suffering, yet when we are pure in heart, we have the assurance that "the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us."

When He was about to cross the river of death, it would appear that His spirit faltered for a brief space of time for He said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He entertained malice toward none as is evidenced by His prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled . . . said, It is finished" and thus addressed Him who holds the issues of life and death, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my Spirit."

The Apostle Peter expressed the prayer that God might make the believers, after they have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, settle them. And the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians uttered this

prayer, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." This state of blessedness could be ours only if we are willing to obey Christ's command, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." Then through faith we shall "see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor."

We need not fear death for He said, "I go to prepare a place for you." And through His atonement we are made worthy to partake of the fruit of the tree of life which John the Revelator, in the Spirit, saw growing on either side of the river of water of life.

Waynesboro, Penna.

B. F. M.

FAITH

O precious gift of God to man
Is faith that works by love!
It underlies salvation's plan,
Brings blessings from above.

The substance of true faith is hope,
The proof of things not seen.
By faith the saints the Lord invoke,
And live in love serene.

By faith they love their fellowman
Though sinful he may be;
They know that God in His great plan,
Doth grant His blessings free.

By faith the world they overcome,
And Satan's fiery darts.
The cross of Christ they do not shun,
Because its power imparts.

Though faith and hope are virtues rare,
While in this world we stay;
We'll need them not in world so fair
Where love shall reign for aye.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

JEROBOAM, KING OF ISRAEL

Jeroboam returned from Egypt upon hearing of Solomon's death. Solomon's oppressive rule during his latter years when he imposed heavy taxes upon his subjects in order to support his court, caused great discontent among his people. It is probable that Jeroboam used his influence in asking Rehoboam to make their yoke of service lighter.

The people did not seem to think of revolting against their king but asked to be relieved of their laborious service and heavy taxation. Rehoboam promised to give them a reply in three days' time, and Jeroboam waited with the people to hear what he would say.

Rehoboam first consulted the old men who had stood before his father. They told him to speak kindly to the people and yield to their wishes, then Israel would submit and serve him always. But Rehoboam forsook their counsel and consulted the young men who had grown up with him. They told him to say, "My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins, and now whereas my father chastised you with whips, I will chastise you with scorpions." After this reply the people rebelled and called for Jeroboam and made him king.

Only the tribe of Judah remained with Rehoboam. He proposed to fight and compel the ten tribes to return, but he was told by the prophet Shemaiah not to fight against Israel, that the Lord has done this thing. Rehoboam ruled over the tribes of Benjamin and Judah but they were regarded as one tribe, under the name of the Kingdom of Judah. Jeroboam was proclaimed king over the ten tribes, the Kingdom of Israel.

Jeroboam dwelt in Shechem, and reasoned within himself that if his people went to worship in Jerusalem they might be influenced to return to Rehoboam, and thus his life would be endangered.

Had he put his trust in God, a way would have been provided, but he determined in his own mind what to do and he then set up two places of worship, at the extremes of his kingdom: at Dan in the north, and at Bethel in the south and placed golden calves there, telling the people that these were the gods which had brought them out of Egypt. He ordained priests of the common people, offered sacrifices and burned incense unto their idols, which was highly displeasing unto the Lord. Jeroboam is always referred to as "the one who made Israel to sin."

At one of their feasts at Bethel, where Jeroboam was offering incense, a prophet from Judah appeared and pronounced the destruction of that altar. He said, "Oh, altar, altar, thus saith the Lord: Behold a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burned upon thee."

The prophet then said to Jeroboam, to prove that he was speaking in the name of the Lord, "Behold the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out."

When King Jeroboam heard this he became very angry and stretched out his arm toward the prophet, saying, "Lay hold on him." Instantly his hand which he had raised became helpless. The altar was rent and the ashes poured out. Jeroboam realizing the truth of the prophet's words asked him to entreat the Lord in his behalf. This the prophet did and his arm was restored.

Jeroboam then requested the man of God to go home with him and rest, and he would give him a reward, but the prophet replied, "If thou give me half thine house I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water

in this place: for the word of the Lord charged me saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest." So the man of God went another way and returned not by the way he came.

An old prophet dwelt in Bethel whose sons told him of the words that day spoken unto the king by the man of God. He asked which way he went, and had his ass saddled that he might go and overtake him. He found the prophet of Judah sitting under an oak, probably taking a rest, and asked him if he was the prophet from Judah. He replied, "I am." The old prophet of Bethel then asked him to stop with him but this he first refused to do, telling him what the Lord had commanded. Then the man of Bethel told him he also was a prophet of the Lord, and had been told by the Lord that the prophet of Judah should stop with him and be refreshed. This was an untruth but the prophet of God went home with him and did eat there. While he was eating the word of the Lord came to the man who had enticed him to disobey, saying, "Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the word of the Lord . . . thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy father's."

After eating, the man of God started home, but a lion met him on the way and slew him. The lion was found standing by the body of the prophet which he had not torn nor eaten, and the ass also stood by. When this was told to the lying prophet he took up the body and buried it and requested that his own body be buried beside the prophet of Judah. He knew that what had been prophesied against the altar would surely come to pass.

A son of Jeroboam's fell ill and the king sent the child's mother to the prophet Ahijah to consult him concern-

ing the child's recovery. She took a present with her and went in disguise. The prophet almost blinded by age received from the Lord the knowledge of her coming, and of her being in disguise. When she entered Ahijah said, "Come in thou wife of Jeroboam why feignest thou thyself to be another? for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings. . . . Go tell Jeroboam, thus saith the Lord God of Israel: 'Thou hast not kept my commandments but hast done evil above all that were before thee, therefore I will bring evil upon thy house and it shall be destroyed. . . . For the Lord shall smite Israel as a reed is shaken in the water and He shall root up Israel out of this good land which He gave to their fathers and shall scatter them beyond the river.' " "Arise and get thee to thine house: and when thy feet enter into the city the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him; for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord."

Jeroboam reigned twenty two years and lived to see three kings upon the throne of Judah.

His son Nadab succeeded to the throne and he adhered to his father's practices. Nadab only ruled two years when there was a conspiracy by Baasha, and Nadab was slain together with all the members of his family who might have aspired to the throne, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Ahijah.

The rule of Baasha was oppressive to the people and he continued in the evil course of Jeroboam so the prophet Jehu was sent to him to declare the same destruction to his house that he, Baasha, had caused to befall Jeroboam. Baasha ruled twenty four years and his son Elah succeeded to the throne.

The kingdom of Israel seemed to be-

come the prey of bloody revolutions. Elah was assassinated while drinking wine during a feast, after a reign of only two years. A servant named Zimri killed him together with his family, and all the posterity of Baasha. Zimri then attempted to usurp the kingdom.

The armies of Israel were away in a war with the Philistines and when they learned what had befallen Elah, upon their return they declared in favor of Omri who was their commander and proclaimed him king. Omri marched with all his forces against Zimri. The latter made no resistance but fled to his house in Tirzah which he set on fire, himself perishing in the flames. He had reigned only seven days.

Omri had another competitor. The army had selected Omri as King but the people, who were displeased with Zimri, had made Tibni their king. After a series of wars which lasted six years, Omri prevailed and Tibni was put to death.

Omri's reign was very idolatrous and displeasing unto the Lord. But he was a man of power and he purchased for two talents of silver, a site on a high hill on which he built a city. He bought the site of Shemer and named the city Samaria. This city was the capitol of Israel while it remained a kingdom or a nation. Omri reigned twelve years and was succeeded by his son Ahab.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

A CHILD'S STORY

My dear little children:

I have told you the history of Peter and James now you will be anxious to hear of the life of St. John, one of the three favored disciples of Jesus. John was a man very different in disposition from his brother James. He was quick to think and speak and often became excited, at times showing a violent temper.

We think of this being the case when we read that Jesus and His disciples were going to Jerusalem and as they came to a village of Samaritans at night-fall they asked to stop in the village over night. But the Samaritans would not allow Jesus to sleep in their town because He was a Jew, and the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans.

John asked Jesus, "Wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them even as Elijah did?" But Jesus said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." So they went on to another village that would receive them.

On one occasion John came to Jesus saying, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us." But Jesus said, "Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us."

The Apostles thought Jesus would set up a great kingdom at Jerusalem, and as they stood so close to the Master they wanted a special place of honor in that kingdom. We read that James and John came to Jesus and said "Grant that we may sit one on Thy right hand, the other on Thy left in Thy glory." Then Jesus asked them, "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?" and they said, "We can."

John was near by when Jesus was betrayed into the hands of His enemies and he followed to see what would be done to His Master. He followed Him into the palace of the high priest, thus showing splendid courage when all who

were around him were ready to crucify His Master. St. John is alluded to "as leaning on the breast of Jesus" and is named "as the disciple whom Jesus loved." He may have been of a more kindly and affectionate disposition than the others were.

I think the most beautiful and touching tribute given him is that related when Jesus was dying on the cross. He looked at John who was standing near and beholding His own mother there weeping, He said "Woman behold thy son: and to John He said, "Behold thy mother!" "And from that hour," we read, "that disciple took her to his own home."

History tells us that St. John was thrown into a caldron of boiling oil, but had a remarkable escape from death. Later he was banished to the Isle of Patmos where he is supposed to have written the book of Revelation. There in solitude, with only wild beasts for his companions, it is not strange that those writing have rather a weird and somewhat difficult meaning to us.

After the emperor's death he was permitted to return to Asia, and as he had grown very old and feeble he could no more speak from the pulpit, but they carried him to the place of worship and then he would look over them with a smile and say, "Little children love one another." This seemed to have been his farewell message. He lived to be almost a hundred years old and was the only one of the Apostles who died a natural death.

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