

# GOOD TIDINGS

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

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## EDITORIALS

Another eventful year with its joys and sorrows, its successes and failures has passed; its activities have ceased; its days of opportunity are now closed. None of us can turn back to alter or erase from its records the deeds we have committed. “The stream of life bears us on like the current of a mighty river.” The sincere and upright at heart will ever receive instruction by a careful review of the unrelenting past. Retrospection is profitable in giving us a better knowledge of ourselves which is so essential and important, especially to those who desire to live the true Christian life.

As we enter upon the threshold of the New Year, may we cherish the presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts so that our lives may be fruitful of good and the world have witness to truth.

\* \* \* \*

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. Luke 2: 11, 12, 13, 14.

Some of our subscribers have expressed a desire to have GOOD TIDINGS bound into book form, pointing out that the bound books may be preserved in the home libraries for many generations, whereas if not bound, many copies will be lost or destroyed. We heartily endorse the idea suggested and have arranged with a bookbinder in Lancas-

ter, Pa., to do the work in imitation leather at an approximate cost of \$1.25 each. These books will contain 640 pages, or twenty numbers, beginning with July, 1922, and ending with April, 1927.

Copies received since April, 1927, can be held until a sufficient number is accumulated for a second volume.

Should there be no bookbindery in your community, you can forward the twenty copies to GOOD TIDINGS, 236 N. Mary Street, Lancaster, Pa. If any copies are missing in your collection, please write GOOD TIDINGS for extra copies, which will be sent free until the supply on hand is exhausted.

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We frequently have word from our readers expressing appreciation of the spiritual instruction and encouragement received through these columns. This should be an incentive to those who are blessed with talent to give a liberal portion of their spare time to writing. By a continuous effort, though seemingly ineffectual, each contributor may be helpful in furthering the mission of GOOD TIDINGS.

To those who contemplate writing for April and July issues, we recommend that they prepare their articles now, when their time may not be so closely occupied as during the spring and summer months.

#### THE BIRTH OF CHRIST AND HIS MISSION

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. \* \* \* and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” Luke 2: 11-13. These good tidings were

announced to the Shepherds who were watching their flock by night. We can say truly that the birth of Jesus is the most significant event that has ever occurred in the history of the world. When God gave His beloved Son to redeem a sinful world, and restore man into favor and fellowship with his Creator, against whom he had transgressed, He manifested infinite love and mercy, and conferred upon mankind a gift of which the human mind can hardly conceive nor can it fully appreciate. The fact that the angels of heaven rejoiced at the annunciation of His birth, indicates that it was an extraordinary occurrence; and in the opinion of the world it was a remarkable event, for from henceforth time was reckoned from His birth.

The birth of Jesus, in its universal and far-reaching significance, promised a prospective blessing to all the sons and daughters of Adam then living and to untold millions yet unborn—a blessing, not only for this world, but eternal life for all redeemed souls in the world to come. He was also ordained to enter in spirit the domain of death and deliver from bondage the faithful of old, for “For this cause was the Gospel preached unto them that are dead,” etc. 1 Pet. 4: 6.

It is written that this child Jesus grew and waxed strong in spirit; that He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. Luke 2: 40, 52. He entered upon His mission of mercy and love and made known to man the will and counsel of God and the condition to attain salvation. He said: “The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe the Gospel.” Mark 1: 15. This was the only requirement, but it involved a sacrifice and proud, selfish man was loathe

to accept the gift of eternal life which He offered. It is written: "He came to His own and His own received Him not, but as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." John 1:11, 12. Many, of course, did renounce their sinful lives and believed on Him; yet their numbers were always few compared with the multitudes that rejected Him and His doctrine in all the generations of men who have lived and died since He said to Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." John 11:25, 26. Here He promised the gift of eternal life, and that promise holds good today.

Christ's invitation is extended to all mankind—none are excluded or overlooked; "for the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." Therefore this gift of redemption and salvation is within reach, or is attainable by all, and it does seem remarkable that multitudes are so indifferent to accept. It seems so reasonable that man should be willing to make the small sacrifice to attain peace with God, to receive His Spirit, thus to obey and glorify Him, and finally receive the inheritance of eternal glory and happiness. It seems contrary to sound reason and understanding that people should *oppose themselves* and jeopardize the destiny of the soul in eternity for the fleeting enjoyments, the uncertain attainments and accomplishments of this mortal life.

This condition so apathetic to spiritual interests is often ascribed to spiritual darkness which enshrouds the human heart. The Prophet of old proclaimed: "For behold the darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the

people." But the Evangelist says: "That men *loved* darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil." According to this it is man's *choice* to abide in darkness and not accept the gift of Jesus, who was the true light "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John 1:9. He also says: "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." John 3:21. All persons, if willing to humble themselves, can "do truth" and receive the light of Christ, so they will have no excuse. For the word declares: "As I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to God, so everyone of us shall give account of himself to God." Rom. 14:11, 12.

Many claim, however, that the birth of Jesus is highly appreciated by the world; that multitudes have accepted Him in the so-called Christian nations; that they celebrate His birth with great display and ostentation, sing praises to His name, extol His virtues and commend His righteous and holy life. They claim that, in this Christian era, the world has progressed to a higher and more enlightened standard through the refining and virtuous influence of Jesus. This statement no doubt is true but it ignores the real purpose of His coming. Jesus' mission was a spiritual one, and He came to establish a spiritual Kingdom, separate and distinct from the kingdom of this world. His Kingdom cometh not by observation or by the applause of man, but is silently and mysteriously established in the hearts of penitent, obedient, believing souls. Jesus does not coerce any one. He pleads. He invites; but unless we come to Him with humble hearts and obey His word we cannot be subjects of His Kingdom, and He will not impart the

gift of eternal life. Hence, He would have come in vain for all who are unwilling to come to Him. He said, "And ye will not come to Me that ye might have life."

Only to repent of one's sins will not suffice. John taught repentance, but he said, "I am not the Christ: He cometh after me," etc. To appreciate the birth of Jesus and be participants of the blessings accruing therefrom, we must distinguish between the carnal, natural life, and the spiritual life; between spiritual light and spiritual darkness, and this we cannot do until we receive the Spirit of Jesus; this will teach one and all the same doctrine and rule of life, and will effect unity, fellowship and peace.

Jesus has chosen His followers out of the world, therefore the world hateth them. If they were of the world, the world would love his own. Separation from the world in its many excesses, its intemperate striving for riches, honor, and preferment; non-resistance of evil, taking no part in political and litigious practices, separation from false worship, though all these duties are commanded by Jesus, they tend to make His people peculiar and often despised by the world.

Only the redeemed people can consistently rejoice in the birth of Jesus, for they have received Him as their Savior and Spiritual Bridegroom. They "have tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the world to come." They can rejoice, not by a carnal, vain display, but in spirit, in the heart, and praise and glorify God for the gift of eternal life. They can whole-heartedly join with the Angel throng in saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

## NEW YEAR

Time has run its silent and rapid course and we stand upon the threshold of a New Year. The passing of time brings serious reflections. When we consider the changes that have come, the bereavements, the many who have suddenly and unexpectedly been called from time into eternity, we are impressed with the importance of our passing through life. We are responsible for the use of time, and this is a fitting season for us to take a retrospective view. Changes have come and there are few of us who have not met sorrows and disappointments over which we had no control. We are not promised a life of ease, and these afflictions common to all may prove helpful if we meet them in a proper spirit. They help to mold our characters and lead us to reflection and to apply for help to that source from which alone we have promise of assistance.

In reviewing the past we can see many missteps. Shortcomings in duty may have retarded our progress and disturbed our peace of mind. We may test our faithfulness whether we have been giving Mammon too much of our affection, which the Lord claims exclusively as His own, for "we are not our own, being bought with a price."

We are thankful to be spared to enter upon the duties of the New Year. We thank the Lord for a continuance of life. His goodness and mercy in the past leads us to anticipations for the future, a longing for a closer walk that we may reflect a light to God's honor and glory, and that our influence may at least leave some impress for good on those about us.

The time for work grows short, for we are each day growing nearer the end of life's journey. This is not necessarily a gloomy thought, but is an impressive

one. "For we are all strangers before Thee, and sojourners as were our fathers; our days on the earth are as a shadow and there is none abiding."

Our prayer should ever be, "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." We feel the need of keeping close to the Lord for help that we may walk in safe paths. We are led to the fountain of healing, to the God of mercy who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities and is able to strengthen in every time of need.

The Lord through the prophets asked, "Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets do they live forever?" The Lord was displeased with the fathers who had not hearkened unto the words spoken by the prophets of old. Those who had declared God's word were dead, but their predictions and warnings remained. God's word is unchanging, the same yesterday, today and forever. We feel the need of keeping close to the Lord, for we have here no continuing city, but "we seek one to come, a city that hath foundations whose Maker and Builder is God."

May the New Year be to us a joyful time, a day of grace, that we be sober and watchful, for the enemy of our souls is ever busy, and if he can, will deceive the very elect.

The Apostle says, "For he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him eschew evil and do good, let him seek peace and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers, but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

### THE VICTORY THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD

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

In this language the Apostle holds out encouragement. He gives us a promise. It is the promise of victory—a victory that is to gain the mastery over the world. We are all reminded that there is something in our human nature that is encouraged with the promise of overcoming; of attaining certain ends or aims. The world applauds its heroes. The pages of history are largely filled with what man has done; attention is directed to the conquests and to the victories that have been won. This agrees with our nature. In the early years of our life we are taught that we should have an object in view, that we should avail ourselves of the opportunities that are within our reach. When our attention is directed to the higher duties of life, when we call to mind that which the Lord directs us to in his word, it brings to us the idea of conflict, the necessity of exercise on our part, the resistance of those things which are to be overcome and over which we are to gain the mastery.

When the Apostle would teach us that whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory, even our faith, the question would present itself to us, what is to be comprehended by the world? We recognize it as the home of this earthly life, that which has interest, about which we are concerned; and here it is said unto us, that we are to overcome the world. There is, no doubt, an impression in the minds of each of us as to why this language is made use of. There is a consciousness with each one of us that by the worldly-

mind the will of God is not fulfilled. There is a deep consciousness with each one of us that we by nature do that which is not pleasing to God. We do not love that which He loves, we do not yield to those influences He brings to bear upon us; those influences which would tend to His glory. We know we are inclined to seek the things which are pleasing to our natural minds and dispositions—this is the world. We are of the world, we are in harmony with the world, we are in agreement with the principles, the relations and regulations of the world. Therefore there is agreement between that which we are by nature and that which is in this world; consequently we are represented as being a part of the world. But when the Lord reveals Himself and teaches us in what relation the world stands to Him we realize the world is dead in trespasses and sins. That is what we all are according to the natural life and disposition. The will of our Creator is that we might be awakened to a knowledge of this condition, and that we might become humble and willing to flee from the wrath that is impending over the fallen world. Therefore He tells us that if we come to Him we may be partakers of life. This is a divine life coming from God, it is a life which is in agreement with His own character. It is a life that when restored to the soul of man, will fit him to meet the conflict that is in the world. It is declared unto us that we may be partakers of life. The Lord sent His Son into the world that we might be able to receive this life. The Evangelist says, "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Beloved it is for us to realize the manifestation of God. There is that

which is beyond the natural mind to receive which can only be spiritually discerned by grace.

God has made known unto us what He would have us do. He has brought us into a relation that we cannot say we did not know. He has not left Himself without a witness, something to impress us that there is a duty resting upon us, to which we have not given attention. God's will is that we should be saved, and salvation, of which the word gives promise, is the manifestation of a power by which opposition to Him shall be overcome. If it be a truth that the world is covered with "darkness and gross darkness the people," it would necessarily follow that unless He would reveal Himself, we would never learn to know what His will is. He did not only include those who had His word, not only those to whom His Oracles had been committed, but also the Gentile and Heathen nations as well. They had a revelation telling them there was a duty resting upon them.

How may we come to Christ? The way to come to Him is with our whole heart, to come because we want to enjoy His blessings. If He did not assist us we would be helpless indeed. The conception was fixed then in our own consciousness, that it was alone through what the Lord Jesus would do for us that we could be saved. Our hearts are now humbled, we desire to be taught of Him and if we accept Him we will be faithful in all things. In order that we may attain to rest, it is necessary that the burden that rested upon us should be taken away. Hence we come to the Lord Jesus by faith. We come believing in Him, trusting in Him, recognizing that He can help us and having assurance that He will help us. We believe in Him as the Savior, as the Redeemer,

One who has given satisfaction for our sins because He fulfilled the law man had broken. He satisfied the demands of Divine justice, for He made reconciliation for the broken law by offering His body on the tree of the cross. He brought the gift of salvation to all. In the acceptance of Christ we enjoy the promise of restoration. The promise is rest for the soul. The life He speaks of is not a natural or physical life. We understand that He gives to us spiritual power, because this life has power in itself. In no way has He so fully expressed it as in the words, "I am the way, the truth and the life." He came to give life and give it abundantly. He illustrated it when He met the woman of Samaria at the well. Jesus said to her: "If thou wouldst know who it is that speaketh, thou wouldst ask for that living water." He also said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

This life comes from God. It is a rebirth of the divine principle in the soul, hence those who receive it are called the children of God. In His word He gives comfort by saying, "I will be a father unto them and they shall be my sons and daughters." They are brought into agreement with the principles that rule in heaven, fitted to use the petition, "Our Father which art in heaven." When there is a longing to be born of the principles which rule in heaven, the power of that life gains the mastery over the worldly or carnal life.

The idea that comes to the mind when reading the Scriptures is one of unceasing conflict, because these two influences are contrary one to the other and can never be made to harmonize. The conflict will continue as long as man is at home in this earthly body. Those two conditions bring strife, but let us not

lose sight of the fact that our text holds out the promise of victory. Here we can illustrate the conflict and mastery of which our text gives promise. Some one does us an injury, we are affected. He takes what rightfully belongs to us. It may be something that is necessary to our comfort. The first thought that springs up in the mind is that which reflects upon him for what he has done. We do not stop at the reflection, we demand satisfaction. But the divine life that God has implanted in the soul offers another teaching. It teaches peace, forbearance and forgiveness. Here we find a conflict. One or the other must gain the mastery. If we reason by the natural mind we will base our reasoning upon the principles of justice. If we are ruled by the spiritual life, we will bear and forbear. Do we recognize the principle with which God deals with us when we transgress? He deals in mercy. When we take the plain precepts in which the Lord Jesus says, "If any man smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other also," we find that all the world knows it. The great men are not strangers to it, but there are different impressions about it. There are those who comfort themselves that they have the Spirit of Christ, who recognize Him as the Savior of the world, nevertheless they excuse themselves that this precept is not to be accepted according to the letter; that it would be impossible that such teaching could be carried out in the world. Jesus did not teach the world. He taught His children. He taught those who came to Him, who heard Him, and committed themselves to Him, who bowed in faithfulness to Him.

The acceptance of Christ and victory gained does not make us immune from evil influences, our selfish nature goes with us from day to day. It will be

with us as long as we are in this earthly house. But let us comfort ourselves, for the promise is victory. I may fall into temptation, I may fall into darkness, I may give room to my selfish nature, I may measurably be brought into bondage; but if the divine life is in the soul it will effect its work. If I am open to its teachings, it will assert the mastery and selfishness will be overcome. In yielding to selfish and evil influences, I may have gone astray, I may have reflected a bad example. But if the inner life asserts itself I will realize it and necessarily it will lead me into sorrow and into repentance. I will confess wherein I have transgressed the law of God and I will labor to restore and do all I can to repair any injury I may have done. That will be an assurance of victory.

I would wish that we might be moved by the great love God has shown in our behalf and that, in remembrance of the precious promises He gives to us in the word, we might ever be moved to walk closer, to appreciate our calling, to remember and consider it is a high and holy calling. He called us out of the world, He gives us a power by which we are to overcome the world. He reminds us that we should have courage in all troubles, in all trials and conflicts because as He overcame so shall we overcome. There is a promise which meets us in every difficulty, it matters not what the situation may be, nor how great the burdens may be; He invites us to cast all on Him. He has promised to sustain and support us and to supply all our needs.

Let us encourage that which is within our reach. He wills that all should come and buy wine and milk without money and without price. He does not ask our ability nor our wealth; He only asks our

heart. He will then accomplish the work, He will make us a new creature. He will fit us that we may rejoice before God. He will give us the comforts of this life and that which is to come. We say this life because He will fit us to faithfully discharge the duties of this life. May all cherish a desire that would lead to God and enable us to put our trust in Him; to reverence and honor His holy name.

Waynesboro, Pa.

H. B. S.

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### BIBLE NOTES

When new questions arose Moses always asked counsel of the Lord. Since God in His word has not explained every detail, in many things we have to ask counsel of the Lord in prayer. There was no counsel given how to dispose of an estate in case there is no son, so Moses asked the Lord and He directed him how to do. Moses was reminded that he and Aaron expressed too much self-dependence in smiting the rock in the wilderness to bring forth water for the people, which failing prevented their entrance into the land of Canaan. If Canaan is a type of Christ, then by this example self-dependence will hinder us from entering into Christ.

The worship of old was costly in the time to be devoted and in the many animals constantly to be sacrificed, which example should urge us to be self-sacrificing for the advancement of the true worship to which we are called. The Levites were not to inherit with the other tribes, but were to be given by the other tribes cities and surroundings for their possession, and were to be maintained by the others, since they devoted themselves to the temple service.

Of the children of Israel we read: "Moses wrote their goings out according

to their journeys by the commandment of the Lord," and that they were to drive out all the inhabitants of the land, and to destroy all their pictures, their molten images, and to pluck down all their high places. Since God's people then were to make no compromise with wrong worship the reproofs should seem reasonable to us that now are directed against disorderly members in the church, and against all who do not obey the Scriptures, whether as individuals or formed into churches.

Six cities of refuge were provided to which every one could flee who killed another. His case was to be tried before the judges in those cities. If the proof of intentional killing was established the guilty party was surrendered to the avenger of blood, to be slain. If it was not intentional he could remain secure in the city during the lifetime of the high priest, after which he could safely return to his possessions.

Moses was permitted to view the land of Canaan from Mount Pisgah, but was not permitted to enter it because of his failing at the rock. This circumstance witnesses that the best of the race cannot be perfect enough to obtain rest by their works.

The protest against image-worship was strong, God foreseeing the danger of His people becoming ensnared by idolatry. Do we see danger of worshipping our images, or those of others, or of worshipping religious forms, rather than cherishing the true spiritual life? The appeal of God was: "Remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep His commandments or no." We also need strong trials to test

our steadfastness. They were warned lest in their prosperity: "Thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, \* \* \* and thou mightest say in thine heart: my power and the might of mine hands hath gotten me this wealth." How fickle God knows our hearts to be! He wanted them to know: "Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out before thee." Moses gave them the reproof: "Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you." Are we more obedient than they were? We cannot be saved without yielding every desire to God.

If a man's wife, or his nearest friend, would propose secretly, let us serve other gods, the seducer was to be exposed and was to die without mercy, as a warning to all Israel against false worship, "from one end of the earth, even unto the other." The New Testament teachings are as numerous and forcible against unfaithful worship as those of the earlier dispensation. Pure worship is to be upheld with all diligence as to the sanctity of the church, and the reproof of all who corrupt it is distinctly taught. When the inhabitants of the city corrupted true worship, that city was to be entirely destroyed, and none of the spoils were to be taken by God's people, but they were to be utterly burnt up, and it was to be "an heap forever." The people were to be guarded so vigilantly against idolatry that when they took a city in the land to be theirs they were to save nothing alive, "that they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods."

At the end of three years they were "to lay up the tenth of their increase

for the Levites, the stranger, the fatherless and widow." They were to be liberal to the poor without being grieved. If any one did not obey the judges that were appointed they were to be put to death.

The law was that the firstborn son was to have double inheritance. The firstborn and all other special offerings had to be brought into the tabernacle before the Temple was built, and, after the Temple was built, into it. When the distance was too great to bring their sacrifices to Jerusalem the worshipers could bring money and purchase sacrifices in Jerusalem. God put strong emphasis on obeying His commandments. His word is very sacred: "Thou shalt not add thereto nor diminish from it."

Over 2600 years before the sorrowful events happened, Moses was led to foretell what would happen God's people for their transgressions, even the fact that delicate mothers would eat their own children in the dire famine during the siege of doomed Jerusalem; and he foretold of the nation being "removed into all the kingdoms of the earth." Deut. 28. The conditions relating to the destruction of Jerusalem predicted by Moses, centuries before, are fully confirmed by the Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, who was a witness to those terrible scenes!

We find in Deuteronomy 30:14, what Paul uses: "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart." That sentiment was written before the Holy Ghost was given as an inward unction; but as Paul writes, Romans 2, there now is, and always was, enough light in human nature to teach mankind to obey the knowledge given them. This fact is verified in the case of Cain: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" And in the time of the Deluge: "My

spirit shall not always strive with man." They had more knowledge than they were willing to obey. Disobedience to knowledge makes us guilty; and let us who claim to be redeemed be vigilant against disobedience, for we may easily quench the Spirit. What is stated in the Scriptures the Spirit witnesses to the inwardly sanctified. God is not far from every one of us. His tender presence should lead us in paths of holiness.

When the Lord said to Moses, "Thou shalt sleep with thy fathers," then Moses gracefully committed his charge to Joshua; but the Lord then foretold the disloyalty of His people and the sorrows that would come upon them. Moses was suffered to view the land of Canaan from Mount Pisgah, where he died, and the Lord buried him without any one knowing his grave. His grave possibly was not to be idolized. He was an hundred and twenty years old, yet "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated."

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

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### THE CHURCH AND ITS PURPOSES

The church of Christ and the kingdom of heaven are synonymous terms, as used in the Gospel in the outward sense. Neither the church nor the kingdom existed on earth prior to the atonement by Christ, as is evidenced by Matthew xi, 11; Hebrew viii, 13, and Hebrew xii, 26-29. The church is God's spiritual house or temple. It is a body composed of persons made alive spiritually, evidenced by Christ's saying: "I am come that they might have life;" and by the Apostle Peter: "Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Its existence dates from

Pentecost. Its characteristics are unity, peace and purity, of which the following Scriptures are evidence: "That they all may be one as thou Father art in me and I in thee." "My peace I give unto you." "Have peace among yourselves." To demonstrate the purity of the church we quote the following: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother, but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them tell it unto the church, but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." "Rebuke them that sin that others may fear."

Its ordinances as enjoined by Christ are baptism, Lord's Supper and feet washing. Its civil duties are to faithfully obey all laws imposed by the magistracy unless such laws impose duties in violation of Gospel precepts.

Its moral obligations are to be hospitable, kind to the poor and faithful in the discharge of all natural duties.

### Baptism

Authority for its administration, Matt. xxviii, 19-20; Mark xvi, 15-16. Apostolic practice, Acts ii, 38; viii, 12; ix, 18; x, 48; xvi, 15 and 33; xix, 5.

According to these testimonies there is authority only to baptize upon faith. Baptism is an initiatory ordinance into the visible church. The ordinance has no saving virtue, neither is the church possessed of direct means of salvation. It has no life-giving power. Each individual member has obtained spiritual life through faith in Christ, who is the true ark of safety and of salvation.

The church is composed of saved persons; it is God's building for the edification and safety of its members. Persons admitted to membership testify to their attainment of salvation and it is to them the answer of a good conscience. Since all ordinances and ceremonies under the Gospel dispensation are expressive of a state of heart, which is the occasion for the use of them, there is therefore no specific time, mode or form for the observance of them.

### The Lord's Supper

Authority for observance of the Lord's Supper is found in Matt. xxvi, Mark xiv, Luke xxii; Apostolic, 1 Cor. x and xi.

The Lord's Supper or communion of breaking the bread and drinking the cup in memorial of His suffering and death has no merit or saving virtue. "This do in remembrance of me." "As often as ye eat this bread ye do shew the Lord's death until he come." A memorial service implies a benefit having been received through the services of him whose memory we cherish. A qualification for the observance of this ordinance is faith in Christ, the attainment of spiritual life, power to overcome sin, and the love of holiness. A further qualification is brotherly love, fellowship in the spirit and confidence in one's fellow-members, as attested by this Scripture: "For we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." A disqualification to commune is the absence of saving faith in Christ, and full confidence in the spiritual integrity of every member who communes. The church cannot show forth the death of Christ when it admits members to the communion who are not united and who are not living Christian lives. The purpose for which Christ came into the world was to

destroy the work of the evil one and to gather his children together into one. Therefore a divided church cannot show forth his death.

### Feet Washing

In John xiii, 4-17, it is related that Christ washed the feet of his disciples and commanded them to wash one another's feet. The meaning is two-fold. Christ in his service of washing the disciples' feet set them, and his people for all time, an example of humility and a figure of his intercession for them, after his ascension to the right hand of the Father, as their merciful High Priest to cleanse them from their daily infirmities, and to teach the disciples and all his followers the duty of brotherly service, both naturally and spiritually. In the discharge of all the duties enjoined upon the church there is an expression of the Christ spirit enthroned upon the heart. It is a fruit of love, but has no merit in itself beyond edification to participants.

Prayer, brotherly service, naturally and spiritually, the greeting of the kiss of peace, enjoined five times by the Apostles, all of these are an expression of love in line with all Christian duties. The observance of any Christian duty in the absence of love is legalism.

Chambersburg, Pa. J. S. L.

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### NATURE LESSONS

By the term "works of nature," we understand the visible creation is meant—that part of the Creator's handiwork which is seen by the eye, or comprehended through our different senses. Our natural bodies are formed from the dust of the earth, and will return to the same. Our days here are spent amid the beauties of the natural creation, so it is to be expected that we would enjoy their proximity. Countless volumes have been

written, and innumerable people have given their time and talents in the study of nature, cause and effect.

The child pursues the butterfly across the field; the invalid eagerly watches the growth of the vine outside the window; the aged listen to the ceaseless roar of the waves upon the shore; we all delight in the fragrance of the flowers and the singing of the birds. No matter what our age or condition in life, we are continually interested in this vast, animated creation.

It is evident to every sober-thinking person that the works of nature are intended for a great and wise purpose. They not only serve for man's support, comfort and enjoyment in the body, but they so clearly reflect the almighty power of Him who formed them. In contemplating the grandeur of the mighty mountains, in beholding the effect of the elements, in watching the humblest weed in the garden, can we not say with Paul, "O, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God: how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out." It is further declared that "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork."

When we become willing to be taught of God, we can see His lessons in the simplest things around us. First of all, each animal and plant is content to remain in the form and order in which it was created. Man, alone, rebels against God, and desires other than the purpose of his being. Secondly, all of the various forms of life are dependent upon the Creator, and wait upon Him. "The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God"—"these all wait upon Thee, that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season." (Psalm 104.) Thirdly, the Lord supplies them, and wants us to believe that

He will do the same for us. The Savior reminds us of the lilies, which neither toil nor spin, "yet Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these;" and of the lowly sparrows, not one of which falls to the ground without the Father's notice. If God so cares for these soulless creatures and plants, much more will He care for His children, who are as the "apple of His eye."

We may apply spiritually many of the lessons we learn from the characteristics of natural objects, plants and creatures. The followers of Christ are compared to lambs, or sheep, which have no means of defense; they will follow only the "Good Shepherd." The dove, harmless, affectionate, and spending most of its time away from the earth is another example. Enemies of the cross are known as wolves, which come but to kill, steal and destroy. The hypocrite is likened to a wolf in sheep's clothing, having a meek appearance, but at heart selfish and unconverted.

Water, that colorless, tasteless and scentless element, so essential to life, represents the cleansing of the sinner in the blood of Christ, and the supplying of that refreshment and nourishment which are necessary to sustain the new life. Water always flows to a level, so the effect of regeneration is to bring us together in unity, without respect of persons. The making of bread into a compact loaf from many grains of wheat, and the union of many grapes in the wine, also teach the lesson of unity, and the subjugation of self. The tendency of "birds of a feather" to flock together reminds us of the delight God's children have in associating together.

The lowly worm crawls about for a season, then retires into a dormant state, from whence he issues a beautiful

moth, and flies away. So we, after our span of life is ended, lay down this corruptible body in the grave, from whence it will come forth a glorious body (1 Cor. 15). All of the reproductive operations in nature confirm the surety of the resurrection; the processes by which new life springs from old demonstrate that man, too, shall die, and live again.

Mire, filthy, sticky and without foundation, represents the condition into which man fell through disobedience; while snow, composed of clean, pure crystals of white, is comparable with the cleansing effect of Christ's shed blood upon the hearts of sinners. Likewise the light of day, and the darkness of night, remind us of the difference between spiritual light and darkness.

If we brush against the nettle, pain is inflicted; if we grasp it firmly, there is no danger. So with many of our trials in life. If we seek to evade our duty, we suffer more than if we meet the situation bravely. Paul says, "Quit you like men, be strong."

What can we learn from the humble toad? Formerly dreaded by the superstitious, accused of many evil powers, the toad has now come to be known as a friend of man, not fair to look upon, but harmless and beneficial. He teaches us not to judge by outward appearances.

The possibilities for such lessons and comparisons are almost endless, but these examples will, we hope, suffice to convey our meaning, and they are submitted with the wish that they may stimulate our interest in the salvation of our souls. God created all things, visible and invisible. The one should remind us of the other, and draw our hearts to Him in gratitude for His mercies.

Stevensville, Ont., Can. W. I. T.

### THE NEW YEAR

'Tis a fair New Year that is ushered in  
Like a pure white page, no stain of sin—  
And our daily acts will be written there.  
Will the record be as the days go by  
That no deed of ours has caused a sigh  
Or a heart made sad by an added care?

We know what the years in the past have been;  
We've failed sometimes where we hoped to win,  
But we bravely keep on trying.  
With faith in God, a promise sure,  
His grace will help us to endure;  
On this we are relying.

What a blessed gift to us is given  
When we've sought and found the peace of  
heaven,

This gift of love receiving.  
The years, they swiftly pass away;  
May we now walk in wisdom's way,  
In Jesus' love believing.

'Tis a happy thought, that the precious goal  
Is awaiting us in the home of the soul.  
When the record's closed, may our greeting be:  
Ye blessed come and enter rest  
Prepared for all the truly blessed  
Throughout eternity.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

### BRIEF NOTES

In a real Christian life there is a boundless realm of thought, reaching out into infinity and eternity. We may feel that if all were to be recorded the world itself could not contain the books that might be written.

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Each New Year's day serves as a milestone on a highway over which we never can return. In passing them may each one well impress us with the swift flight of time; and that finally time shall be no longer—for eternity knows no time. May these impressions, so forcibly made on our minds, strengthen our desire to better perform our duties in life—duties we owe to our God, and fellow-man and ourselves.

\* \* \* \*

God manifests Himself to all, in His attributes in that which is holy,

pure and good. All who have come under the prompting influence of His Spirit and love, subordinating selfish desires to His will and purpose, seek to glorify Him with all their powers, according to their endowments—faculties of body, mind and soul. It is that feeling and desire which accords with that which is written: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Doing what is truly worth while in this life ever necessitates a thus consecrated service.

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So subtle is the influence and power of Satan as a spirit opposing all that is good, that many have allowed themselves to come so fully under his influence as to declare his very existence to be only a mythical belief.

To all who allow the light and awakening influence of God's grace to enter their hearts, his existence is a very apparent reality in the evil influences which try to assert themselves from within, and which continually assault from without, causing a never-ending conflict throughout their earthly life, in which Satan figures as "prince of the power of the air."

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Much admiration is expressed at this season of the song which the herald angels sang at the Savior's birth. The echo of that song is still heard, as it was and will be throughout the Christian Era, and its refrain continues a significant one, ever reflecting "Glory to God in the highest."

There are many who possess rare gifts in voice and speech, and whose endowments in intellect and fine natural traits impress us as almost angelic. Yet, how many, gifted in song, exercise that gift to amuse and while away the time, and to entertain by catering perhaps to vul-

gar tastes or purposes, in all of which there is not reflected "Glory to God in the highest?" Is it not even so in the oral and written expressions of many with rare intellectual endowments? Is it not the sad instance of man, designed to glorify God and enjoy fellowship with Him, yet going on through life without accomplishing the purpose for which he was created—not rendering "Glory to God in the highest?"

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What are some of the stumbling-blocks to faith?

A. Seeking honor from men. Harboring an exalted spirit. Commending our own righteousness. Trusting in the arm of the flesh instead of the living God. Justifying ourselves when we fail and do wrong. Quenching the Holy Spirit and indulging self-love. Giving way to besetting sins. Conniving at and countenancing secret sin. Participating in worship with those who do not obey the Gospel and with whom we are not united. Being ashamed to confess Christ before the world.

Q. Should Christians expect to escape trouble?

A. No. It is only "through much tribulation that we can enter into the kingdom of God." Trouble tends to humiliation and self-abasement, and is often a wholesome experience. "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." Rom. 5:3, 4, 5.

Q. Why is Jesus called Christ in many Scripture passages?

A. Jesus was the name miraculously given to the first born son of the Virgin Mary conceived by the Holy Ghost. An

angel who appeared to Joseph directed that He should be called Jesus, "for He should save His people from their sins." Some persons suppose that when Christ is added the name Jesus would correspond to what we now call the Christian name, while Christ would be the surname. This view is erroneous. The only *personal name is Jesus*, and Christ is used to designate the office or mission, indicating that the Being who bore it claimed to be the Messiah promised to the Fathers—"Christ, Messiah".

Q. What did Paul mean by being "pure from the blood of all men?"

A. As he had faithfully taught the whole truth of God, and had earnestly instructed his hearers in the plan of salvation, they had only themselves to blame if they rejected it and were lost.

Q. Why separate in worship from other denominations?

A. True worshipers are those who "worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." John 4:23. This implies that they must possess God's Spirit and be obedient to His word. They are actuated by true love in their walk and deportment. To worship in truth signifies a zealous and conscientious adherence to God's word and to truth: "His word is truth." This love of truth begets love for the souls of others and constrains the true worshiper to separate from worship which does not agree with Gospel teaching. They will discourage all deception and discountenance all doctrines which are at variance with truth. They know unfaithful worshipers by their fruits and separate from their disunited worship, not from a selfish, or "holier than thou" motive; but they know that God is a jealous God and will not permit His children to have fellowship with a worship that is tainted with idolatry or disobedience.

Q. What is Evil?

A. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." 1 John 7:8.

Every prompting, thought or deed that is contrary to love and purity is opposed to God and is evil. Therefore we all are evil by nature, for we all have such inclinations. By natural law we are opposed to God's holy law, which makes us guilty of inward sin. According to the Tenth Commandment, to covet is evil. Paul says, he had not known sin except the law had said, "Thou shalt not covet." Rom. 7:7. As we all have "motions of sins" we all have sin in the flesh, and of ourselves are impure. Rom. 7:5. For the sin in us, Christ became our Sacrifice. He did not take sin out of us, but He bore the penalty which by the law of holiness was against us. He took our sins on Himself. I Pet. 2:24.

Because of moral debility our best works will not commend us to God when not prompted by love to Him. The Savior's service is to make us, with our debility, acceptable to God by His sinless offering, and to give those, who hate sin, power to rule over it by love for holiness. This makes salvation a service of grace to all who will accept it. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." 2 Cor. 5:19. If we obey the spirit and letter of the word, we are now saved by ceasing from sin, and by steadfastness are forever saved.

The word teaches love, which, if we disregard wilfully we do evil. To cherish a purpose opposite to love is evil in the heart. Love is the godly element in us, which when suppressed makes us evil.

Our Savior upholds this view, in saying, Love your neighbor as yourself, love your enemies, resist not evil, forgive as God forgives. Paul supports it in saying, overcome evil with good, follow peace with all men, by love serve one another, let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. Peter says, See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently, love as brethren.

Love is the leading theme of the Gospel, it is the life of the church, the means of fellowship, the witness of discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:35.

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#### "FOR WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?"

James 4:14

It is very evident that James was greatly impressed with the fickle nature of our lives and realized how repugnant to our Creator we must be when we allow ourselves to become independent, self-sufficient and even conceited; when the truth of the matter is, we are dependent upon Him for every breath we take. It certainly should cause us to be appreciative, and in this mental state it would be reasonable that we should acknowledge that our ability to act depends upon whether or not He permitted it. And when He does thus permit us to give expression to our desires even then we may not act according to His will. After we are impressed with the brevity of life and our helplessness the question, "What is your life?" reaches deeper. It should cause us to ask ourselves, what is the quality of our life?

Probably every normal man has an incentive to live. His mind usually is centered upon one particular line of thought. We should consider and meditate and ask ourselves, what is the

nature of this more prominent interest in our life? Are our thoughts or affections associated principally with temporal, perishable things or are enduring and eternal things the main object of our being? Also how do these things that are so much our LIFE compare with eternity? When our mortal part has served its purpose will there be Life left?

We do not know why we were brought into existence nor do we know when our physical scaffold will be broken down. We should know however that our stay here is for a wise purpose. Hence we can safely conclude that that purpose is for the preparation for life beyond the grave.

Some people are too preoccupied in the details of time to think of eternity. Some are too careless of time to think that it will cease. Is there a more reasonable or vital question than, "What is our life?" Many around us tell us that the question is not practical, it is too visionary. These days especially are days of action. But, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Matt. 16:26. God says that all else is of second consideration, inasmuch as the things about which we naturally concern ourselves so much will pass away with our body.

God apparently can not impress us sufficiently with the insignificance of our present existence and its brevity as compared with eternity. We find this in the Bible—our life here, "is as a vapor," "a shadow," "as water spilled on the ground," "a pilgrimage," "like grass, in the morning it groweth up and flourisheth, in the evening, it is cut down, and withereth." Truly in the midst of life we are in death. Is it not strange how much we become infatuated with worldly interests and finally become almost thoughtless of the end, when the

"Reaper may be now standing at our very door?"

But if, after all the admonitions given us throughout the Bible, we do not realize the need and help of Jesus Christ, then it will avail nothing. The life that is agreeable and acceptable to God is not possible to the natural man inasmuch as the natural and the spiritual lives are antagonistic.

May God help us to appreciate and understand the meaning of "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." John 3:7.

Lancaster, Pa.

M. H. B.

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### OUR UNSEEN FOES

The divine equipage of the Scriptures is always represented as a chariot of fire. Ezekiel, Isaiah and John never described it as a chariot that kings and conquerors of the earth might mount, but as an organized, compressed fire of purity, justice, chastisement or deliverance.

A chariot of fire to free us from bondage, to disenthral our souls in scorching agony, for it is through tribulations, alone, that the Christian rises, that the spirit is made free.

We read in the Scriptures how the King of Assyria sent out a whole army to capture the God-fearing prophet, Elisha, while he was staying at the little village of Dothan. But when Elisha's man-servant, seeing the host with horses and chariots, exclaimed: "Alas, my Master! how shall we do?" He was not frightened. He looked up and saw that the mountains all around were full of supernatural forces, and he knew that, though there might be 50,000 Assyrians against him, God was with him with a mighty host.

In answer to the prophet's prayer in behalf of his affrighted man-servant, the

young man saw it, too; for "the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw, and, behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

Just as God protected the natural lives of his prophets in days of old, so will he preserve the spiritual life of his children, safe from the assailants that seek to rob them of spiritual peace and happiness, to-day.

Elisha did not attempt to defeat the enemy himself, for he knew that he had a more powerful adversary in the Lord than any other which he might be able to produce.

So we, if we put our whole trust in the Lord need have no fear for, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Neither height, nor depth, nor any other creature."

Paul, the Apostle, said, "My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Through suffering we are cleansed; the hot furnace of adversity tends to humble the spirit and purify the heart.

Do we repine at our lot? We can not understand why we are bereft of those we love, why misfortune seems to follow our steps, why continued persecutions should be allowed—but let us remember that God, in his wisdom, sees the danger approaching, while we in our ignorance and blindness see nothing. Perhaps it is pride advancing, perhaps it is love of luxury, it may be emulation, possibly earthly love, and He uses the only remedy which may remove from our path a serious handicap to our spiritual well-being, and the work He would accomplish through us as His agents. Our earthly possessions may depart; indeed, the hand of the Lord may be seen in

this, for does not prosperity often dull our understanding of the lives of those less fortunate, and thus becomes an enemy eager to destroy us?

We have so much to be thankful for in this day and age. We need not bear physical suffering for the sake of our faith. We enjoy freedom of conscience and the blessings of civilization. But there will always be a spiritual warfare going on between the flesh and the spirit. Conflicts that will severely test our faith. What a blessed comfort to know that we have such a mighty Defender, such a Tower of Strength, ever ready to help in time of need, if like Elisha we put our whole trust in Him.

To those who have given all for the love of Christ, how comforting is the thought "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

We must believe, therefore, that God does not inflict adversity without a purpose.

"Now we see through a glass darkly" but let us believe that those unseen enemies constantly seeking to take us prisoners, will be met and vanquished by One mightier than ourselves, if we but put our whole trust in Him, and earnestly seek to do His will.

Shippensburg, Pa.

M. E.

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### THOUGHTS ON JOY

When Jesus, our Lord and Master, was here upon earth, He said to His followers: "I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me, and I in Him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without Me ye can do nothing." St. John 15: 5. The beginner in Christ's service may wonder what is the fruit He expects us to bear. Is the fruit of the Spirit going into missionary work and

bringing souls to Christ? Is it in good deeds done or presented for His inspection? What is this fruit that the Father requires of us?

In Galatians, fifth chapter, St. Paul enlightens us and names the fruits of the Spirit. Let us review them; "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

Love comes foremost. Love is the first fruit of the in-dwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer. Love is fundamental in the religion of Jesus Christ. God, Himself is love. Has it occurred to us to wonder why St. Paul gives joy the next place in the list of spiritual fruit? May it not be because of all the lovely fruit of the Spirit, joy is next to love in importance?

Joy is the fruit of love in the heart. Christ said, "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance"—St. Luke 15:7. Do we not echo in our hearts the same joy? Each one of us is a very tiny speck of the kingdom of heaven ("For lo, it is within you.") How joy increases when one sinner repents. And O the joy of penitent sinners, when they receive forgiveness of their sins, and realize that they are no more strangers and foreigners to God's grace, but are adopted into His family, are on the narrow way that leads to life eternal, and have become "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Eph. 2:19.

Let us cherish joy. It is an inspiration, and will ever buoy us up. We know that life brings with it at times, trouble, sorrow, bereavement. So that there will be for us tears, sadness, disappointments. But joy is always in prospect if not actually present with us. Here faith and hope help us greatly.

We believe in God's love for us and we hope that, if we do not now see His wisdom in these dispensations, it may sometime be revealed to us. In Psalm 30 we read, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," and in Psalm 126:5, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

St. Paul says, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Roman 14:17. This joy is the joy of service to our dear Lord and Master. In whatever field He calls us to work, He is with us. Is this not joy?

The actual circumstances, concerns and affairs of this life in which He has placed us are of minor importance. But they always require that we should attend to them with interest, do our work "heartily as unto the Lord and not unto men." But they are not our main concern, nor do they have the first place in our affections. Our dear Lord and Master has that place.

Should our lot be even grievous to the flesh, heart-rending, or by slow degrees exhausting to mind and body, we, through grace, can still rejoice if we are convinced that it is God's will so. Christ said, "I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman. . . . Every branch in me that beareth fruit, He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit." St. John 15:12. He looks for much fruit from those that profess His name. If we bear a little fruit, He purges, tests, tries us that we may bring forth more. He says, "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear *much* fruit—so shall ye be my disciples—even so, dear Lord, through whatever paths it pleases Thee to lead us, be with us, help us to keep ourselves in subjection, clear our spiritual vision that we may see back of the clouds of trial, the glorious light and joy

of Thy presence. Surely this is true joy. If it please Thee, *so* shall it be proven that we are Thy disciples. Sometimes our Father tries us by prosperity. Lord, teach us how to bear it. If things go well, and we have natural comforts, and enough to share with those who have less, dear Lord, help us to glorify Thee in these conditions, when it please Thee *so* to lead us. Thou sayest, “*So* shall ye be my disciples.” How? By bearing much fruit. Prosperity teaches us thankfulness, humility, charity. “For what hast thou that thou didst not receive?” 1 Cor. 4:7.

Christ teaches us how to rejoice in adversity. He says, “Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company . . . rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.” St. Luke 6:22, 23. Here again is the joy of service to Him who suffered for us, and the anticipation of joy hereafter to those of the faithful who, in this life, may be and have been called upon to suffer for the sake of Christ and the Gospel.

We, who are now living in a land of religious freedom are not required to suffer as did the martyrs. We are living lives of peace, quiet, and toleration. Are we thankful for these privileges? Let us not forget to count our blessings in all things and at all times. There is always so much to be thankful for, and thankfulness is a great help to joy.

Human nature is much inclined to be forgetful and unthankful—in other words we are by nature selfish and grasping, apt to take all we get and look for more, and forget to be thankful. In our every day lives it would be well for us to get into the habit of reminding ourselves of our blessings and to whom we owe them.

When Christ’s seventy disciples came back to Him with joy and told Him that even the devils were subject to them through His name, He said to them, “In this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” No matter how scant may seem at times our store of natural blessings, those who have made an unconditional surrender to God and are truly trying to follow Christ, have always a cause for rejoicing. The New Testament is full of precious promises to the faithful. Christ said to His disciples, “The Father Himself loveth you because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God.”

These precious words are for all who ever will believe in Christ and try to keep His commandments. Can there be a greater joy than this, that our Father in heaven loves us? This thought is enough to sweeten the whole of the longest life. Let us love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our strength. Then we may say with David of old, “Let them that love Thy name be joyful in Thee.” Psalm 5:11.

Lancaster, Pa.

L. L. F.

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### RENEWED ZEAL

The beginning of the new year is a good time to take inventory, as it were, of our ways of living, habits, thoughts and desires, to see if we are honest with ourselves and with our God; and are not living in vain. From childhood we realize there are duties devolving upon us that cannot be evaded; duties relating to this life as well as to the service we as human beings owe our Creator.

We know if life is not properly regulated by the Holy Spirit it may become very complicated and disappointing and will bring us much unhappiness here

and suffering in the world to come. Then too we may have false hopes and be deceived even when we do try to follow the higher way of living, for we always have an enemy near who is working against the promptings of holiness. There are discouragements to meet, heartaches, anxieties, suffering and loss. But this is life, which may well be pictured as a battle between good and evil, happiness and sadness.

We should be using diligence to press forward. It is God's will we are spending our time in a world like this that is full of labor, sorrow and change. We deserve no special sympathy for our situation. Older ones with weary eyes may look across the borderland to eternity and well deserved rest, but we who are younger must keep courage and diligence without laying down our weapons. We dare not let our interest in the conflict slacken if we would be strong in the Lord and come through victorious.

The Apostle Paul, of whom it could be said in the words of the Prophet, that he was "Clad with zeal as a cloak," told the Ephesians to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might,—not strong in themselves. They were to put on the whole armor of God, and what a blessed protection he pictured it as they wrestled "not against flesh and blood" but against the powers of sin and darkness and "spiritual wickedness in high places." Truly we have all this around us in the world to-day when we consider the honor and attention given things that in no way pertain to holiness.

The armor first had a girdle of truth and a breastplate of righteousness making sure that we will be safe from anything that might reach the heart or secret purpose of our devotion. Having our "feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," would indicate our

eagerness to follow Christ, the Prince of Peace, and not loiter along the way of life disturbed by its trifles. We are as travelers who have an object in view. The shield given for every emergency is faith. No matter how the attack comes when a shield is used in active hands there is protection. Faith is this shield to us in the trials and temptations we meet. Next is mentioned the helmet of salvation. We know less of helmets than in the days of antiquity, but they were used to protect the head, the seat of intelligence. May it be that the thought of our full salvation from sin and death through Christ thus protect us from doubts and fears and spurious notions that come in place of right thinking in God's sight.

"And the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God." The Spirit is ever with us as a guide but is doubly effective if coupled with the Word. We need to read frequently with prayerful hearts what is left on record for us as God's will. What He has said is yea and amen and is just as applicable as when Christ was here and the church on earth formed. He is Christ yesterday, to-day, and forever and we cannot go our own ways, compromising with the natural mind and expect to be accepted because God is love. Not every one who says Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom but he that does His will shall be blest. We cannot worship Him acceptably and have our hearts taken up with the worldly life. For our protection the way is narrow and the gate placed so strait that we have to strive to enter. Otherwise we would be caught in the snare of trying to worship God and mammon at the same time, and this cannot be done. All these things the Word and Spirit teach and it does cut like a sword into the comfortable, easy way of accepting

things that is so popular in the world to-day.

With all this protecting armor the work is still not secure without prayer. "Praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." This is what keeps the heart pure and the purpose active. It is like dew and rain in helping to produce the fruits of the Spirit. We are happiest when we can feel the nearness of God's presence and nothing helps so much to this communion as a heart that is filled with the spirit of prayer. We cannot pray as we would like. We have to be taught. But we do know words count for naught if they come only from the lips. Solomon said "God is in heaven and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few." God knows our sincerity and the secret longings of the heart and has more regard for the "groanings that cannot be uttered" than for any amount of lip service.

In our desire to do right and know self we are to guard against being snared into too much self-analysis which after all may be a form of self-love. The idea of developing our inherent abilities, that we are makers of ourselves is very popular to-day. This may be partly due to knowing, as we do, how our attitude of mind colors our lives. We must be careful not to put our trust in anything but God's armor. If we are humble enough to put ourselves where we belong, the self improvement that God loves and would have us cultivate is not so complicated or difficult as psychologists are teaching. We must guard against the spirit that wants to be something when we are nothing.

"Come unto Me, . . . take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly of heart and ye shall find rest for your souls." This is the call of our Captain, and the would-be

Christian soldier's solution of peace and happiness and the one best suited for all the ills of life. This is where we find strength to go on with the conflict. First to recognize that we are sinners, feel repentant, accept Christ as the world's Redeemer and follow His humble teaching; then we are in line for the inspirations and consolations that go with a life that is given to God's service. In this way He will equip us as good soldiers for every conflict and emergency that may meet us as we travel on from day to day.

Now another year opens before us a renewed opportunity to do better than we have done in the past. If we have an enlightened conscience it is not possible for us ever to do well enough to be satisfied, but we can be thankful that every day is a fresh beginning. We know the years will hold difficulties and heartaches for most of us but with faith in God and hope such as He imparts we can with renewed zeal move forward without fear. "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us" was the grateful cry of the old warriors in Israel and we in our little lives have felt the same.

Waynesboro, Pa.

M. C. S.

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### THE HEATHEN AND FOREIGN MISSIONS

"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

There is abundant evidence that God designed that the Gospel should be preached; Luke 24:47, to this end the Apostles were chosen by Christ—"Fishers of men." But does the salvation of the heathen depend upon the audibly preached word? Is it binding upon the church to send missionaries to foreign lands to preach the Gospel to the

heathen? Or was the command given more particularly to the Apostles because they were loathe to teach a doctrine that would nullify the law of Moses and require of them to go among the Gentiles to teach, contrary to the customs of their law?

Although this subject, to-day engages wide-spread attention, our belief that this command applied particularly to the Apostles' times is strengthened by Scripture testimony. When Christ was here the Jews had nothing in common with the Gentiles. This separation was of long standing, having existed for centuries. Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, calls it a "wall of partition" that stood between them. The Apostles were not prepared to accept a doctrine that would abolish the whole Old Testament system of religion. They had not yet been fully enlightened by the power of the Holy Ghost. They had the erroneous view that salvation depended on obedience to the letter of the law, and as the Gentiles had not obeyed the law, they naturally concluded that it was the will of God that the Gentile converts be barred from their assemblies. To convince them that He had the power and authority to establish and teach this new doctrine required many miracles and much patient labor, and this may have been the design of the Savior in calling the eleven together on the occasion when the command was given. Not only the Jews but also the Gentiles were now to be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of God's promise in Christ by the Gospel. Eph. 3:6.

Prior to this time Christ recognized the law of Moses as authority, but now having fulfilled every jot and tittle of the law, and having met all the requirements of its prophecies He became the end of the law for righteousness to every

one that believeth. Earlier, on one occasion He said to the disciples, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not." Matt. 10:5. He could not then have taught otherwise because they were still under the law of Moses, but now that the day of Pentecost was nigh and Christ was about to establish His Church whose members must ever be identified by the characteristics of unity and peace, the wall of partition that stood between Jew and Gentile had to be broken down. There was a necessity for the new command, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," etc.

The Apostles knew that if they would go among the Gentiles, contrary to the law, they would be brought under ridicule and persecution by their own people, the Jews. As a means to persuade Peter now to teach that God was no respecter of persons, and that Christ was the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, he was shown by God in a vision that he was to go to Cornelius, the first Gentile convert. Acts 10:1-44. When they were brought together, Peter said to Cornelius, "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation, but God has showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean." Peter's words here clearly testify that he questioned whether the Gentiles could conscientiously or consistently be admitted into the church on a parity with the Jews. It is clearly shown by this circumstance that the Apostles and the early church had to meet a situation which does not now exist.

Although the Apostles, from the beginning were not inclined to obey the Savior's command, we have Scripture testimony that their prejudices were

overcome, and thus we understand the Divine will concerning the Gentile converts was accomplished in the apostolic age, as is testified by Peter's words to Cornelius,—“Thy prayer is heard, of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him.” Acts 10:35; Col. 1:23.

It is said, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” Titus 2:11. That this grace visited Cornelius and that he stood in favor with God before he had met Peter, is evident, for he said to Peter, “Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold a man stood before me in bright clothing and said, ‘Cornelius, thy prayer is heard.’” As God revealed Himself to this heathen man, will He not surely reveal Himself now to every heathen who gives place in his heart to the grace of God which, it is testified, appears to all men? Paul also reasons in accordance with this position when he says: “For when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another, etc.” Rom. 2:14, 15.

History informs us that after the destruction of Jerusalem the Jews were scattered throughout Asia Minor or the greater part of the then known world. On the day of Pentecost there were Jews at Jerusalem out of every nation under heaven. Acts 2:5. It is evident that from that time there were believing Jews and Gentiles living in the same communities. In reading carefully the Acts

of the Apostles, we notice that there was contention in the early church because at different places the Gentile converts had been received into the church without being circumcized. This caused the perplexity of the Apostles, and to show them that God is no respecter of persons, the command was necessary. Peter's vision evidently was designed to show him that all Gentiles who repented were to be received into the church though they had not been circumcized nor obeyed the law of Moses. “There rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying that it was needful to circumcize them and to command them to keep the law of Moses, and the Apostles and the Elders came together to consider this matter, and when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and said unto them, ‘Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel and believe.’” Acts 15:5, 6, 7. Following this notable council meeting of the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem, it is said they wrote letters by them after this manner: The Apostles and Elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria and Cilicia. Acts 15:23.

From these Scriptures we learn that the command “Go ye, therefore, and teach all” was not given the Apostles because the souls of the heathen were in greater jeopardy than the Jews, nor because their salvation depended on being taught by man, but that a long standing prejudice be removed; that Jew and Gentile become one in Christ; “that He (Christ) might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.” Eph. 2:16.

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“How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?” Rom. 10:14, 15. These words written by the Apostle Paul are also cited as evidence that the salvation of the heathen depends on being taught by man and that it is our duty to go to foreign lands to teach them.

The church at Rome consisted partly of heathens converted to Christianity and partly of Jews, among whom there had arisen serious contentions about keeping the law of Moses. The Jewish party held that the Gentile converts must be circumcized and keep the law or else they could not be saved. Others who comprehended that Christ was the end of the law for righteousness and that no man could be justified by the works of the law, maintained that the Gentile converts should have equal privileges in the church with the Jewish Christian. When Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans desiring to reconcile both parties in the controversy, his object no doubt was the same as the Savior's when He gave the command, “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations.”

By keeping in mind the contention between the circumcized and the uncircumcized much that would otherwise be hard to understand in Paul's epistles is made plain, for this had become an issue, not only in the Church at Rome but in other congregations also. Paul was miraculously chosen by God and was specially endowed with wisdom and knowledge that fitted him to cope with this very perplexing situation. To effect a reconciliation between the two classes, Paul, in the first part of this Epistle, shows that both Jew and Gentile had

gone out of the way and that both were under sin and condemnation. “For God hath concluded them all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all.” Rom. 11:32. “But the Scriptures hath concluded all under sin.” Gal. 3:22.

Paul then proceeds to show that the Gentiles were guilty before God because they had transgressed the law of God which was written on their hearts; for they had indulged in many sins which they knew to be wrong. He next shows how the Jews were equally if not more guilty, inasmuch as they had sinned against more light and knowledge. He then explains, as both were under sin, they must by faith seek redemption through Christ, to whom the one had equal access with the other, and in the church the Gentile convert shall enjoy equal privileges with the Jewish Christian; all prejudices must be removed and the “partition wall” that stood between them, broken down.

That Christ came to establish a church in which these two peoples, who for centuries had stood so decidedly apart and separate, were now to be brought into harmony and unity, was hard for either party to understand. In Paul's effort to make clear his meaning and that both be reconciled, he at one time addresses the one party and then the other. In the seventh chapter he directs his words to the Jews: “I speak to them that know the law”—Rom. 7:16—and in the tenth and eleventh chapters, to the Gentiles: “For I speak to you Gentiles”—Rom. 11:13. When he says “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?” etc., it is obvious that he means “How then shall *Israel* call on Him in whom they have not believed?” etc., for in the beginning of the same chapter he says “My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved.” In the seventh verse

of the eleventh chapter he says, "Israel has not obtained that which he seeketh, \* \* \* for God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear." We notice that Paul here is enumerating some of Israel's errors and transgressions, and how that in other words he said they had a form of godliness but denied the power thereof, to show the despised Gentiles that the Jews were no better than they.

We would therefore understand that this Scripture cannot consistently be cited as an evidence of duty that we should go to foreign lands to teach the heathen, nor that the salvation of the heathen depends on our teaching them the Scriptures. Were we to assume this position would it not be a reflection upon God's ability and power to reveal Himself to all mankind and to save? If we accept this view then we virtually acknowledge that the millions of heathen who lived before the sending of missionaries and those who are not reached now, are lost.

If God has created and endowed the heathen with sufficient knowledge to provide for his natural life and being, would anyone venture to say that He will not impart such light and knowledge that will prompt him to prepare for his spiritual well-being, which is of far greater importance than the natural? The visible creation preaches to the whole human race. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork, day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world." Psalm 19. "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath ap-

peared to all men." Titus 2:11. John the Baptist testified that Christ was that true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Paul was addressing the Gentiles in the church at Rome when he said, "The word is nigh thee even in thy mouth and in thy heart." Rom. 10:8. According to these Scriptures all rational souls have a revelation of their guilt and such a degree of light as to give them opportunity to be saved.

Many persons have the view that the heathen cannot be saved without having knowledge of a personal Christ. On this ground they claim it becomes obligatory upon the church to send missionaries to foreign lands to teach them. "Christ died for all mankind. Children who die in their innocence are saved through the death of Christ without a knowledge of His mission upon earth. Persons of mature age whose mental faculties are not sufficiently strong to comprehend and embrace by faith the meritorious righteousness of Christ, are saved through His death since they will not be held responsible for that which they were not capable of, yet they were sinners, persons of like passions as other men. May we not conclude that the faithful obedient heathen will make such discovery of his duty toward his God as will secure his salvation? It is true that salvation is only through Christ, yet if persons have no opportunity of learning of Christ, and yet obey the light they have, we believe God in mercy through Christ will save them." If we accept that through Adam's transgression the heathen are lost, without the knowledge of a personal Adam, must we not also accept that they can be saved through Christ's atonement without the knowledge of a personal Christ? "Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came

upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Rom. 6:18.

Conditions in the world to-day are very similar to the days of Christ. "He came to His own (the Jews) and they received Him not." They had their learned teachers—the Scribes and Pharisees. Paul said, "What advantage then hath the Jew? \* \* \* much every way because unto them were the oracles of God committed." Through the prophets they had every opportunity to learn of Christ and of the peace doctrines that He would teach, long before He appeared, and it would seem they should have been prepared to receive Him before the Gentiles, yet they were the first to reject Him and at their hands was He crucified. They boasted of their good works, they paid tithes and gave alms; they offered many prayers; they fasted often; they were a religious people; they were classed as a civilized nation and the Gentiles as uncivilized. Notwithstanding, the Scripture records show that these learned and so-called religious people were in greater spiritual darkness when Christ came than the Gentiles whose knowledge of the law and the prophets was very limited. Matt. 8:11; 11:21, 22.

We ask, may not the souls of the civilized be in greater jeopardy than the heathen? Should Christ come to-day, would He not find conditions the same as when He was here? Would He not direct His followers first to go to the civilized nations where so many who know to do good, flagrantly violate, with a guilty conscience, the plain Gospel truths? Are they not under greater condemnation than the heathen who through ignorance may not know? "For to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

Would not divine wisdom actuate every sincere teacher to labor among those who are under the greater condemnation? History witnesses that the most terrible wars have been fought by the most highly civilized. Among the worldly-wise and progressive nations of the world there is greater danger that the spirit of envy, covetousness, pride and suspicion may frustrate the work of grace in the heart, consequently, a greater need for preaching and teaching sound doctrine, that the souls of our own dear people may be saved.

History informs us that for many centuries the civilized nations were not active in compassing land and sea to reach the heathen. Only in more recent years our people have become deeply interested in a command that we believe was given more particularly to the Apostles in order to overcome a prejudice, and to decide a question that caused so much contention in their day.

As the questions relative to circumcision and eating of meats offered to idols, had caused so much contention in Apostolic times but were finally settled, so the contention about teaching and receiving the heathen into the church was also concluded in their day. The partition wall which had stood between Jew and Gentile for centuries was now broken down. Christ's authority was established; His doctrine was accepted and the Apostles obeyed His command by going among the heathen to teach, thus no longer showing partiality to the Jews. The point at issue had passed its climax; both Jew and Gentile were now reconciled unto God in one body by Jesus Christ. "But now, in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace who hath made both one \* \* \* For through Him we both have

access by one Spirit unto the Father." Eph. 2:13, 19.

That we may not be misunderstood, however, we agree that it is our highest duty to teach, and receive into the church, converts of every nationality because God is no respecter of persons and knows no man after the flesh. Our ministers are willing to go wherever opportunity offers. Although we believe that those passages in the New Testament relative to teaching the heathen, also those which pertain to circumcision, and the eating of meats, were written more particularly to meet contentions that existed in the days of the Apostles, we nevertheless claim that believers, everywhere, will ever be constrained by love to follow the spirit of the letter. In this way we accept all New Testament teaching as profitable to us for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness.

Lancaster, Pa.

F. E. E.

### SWEARING OF OATHS

Swearing and oaths are relative terms in the Scriptures. The one is used as often as the other and in the same sense. It seems remarkable that God condescended in His omnipotence and majesty and saw fit to use an oath upon different occasions to confirm His promises and covenants with man. Through the fall man's spiritual perception was lost; Adam and Eve lost the divine life, and their posterity was affected as they were. Now, God could only deal with man as a fallen, darkened and incompetent creature, inclined to unbelief; and, to encourage faith, God saw fit to confirm many of His promises with an oath. This apparently was meeting man on the level of his darkened condition, and was likely to impress him with God's mercy, and that He did not expect more of man than what he was capable of comprehending and doing.

God's covenant with Abraham was called an oath, when He blessed Isaac. Gen. 26:3. The covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with Israel He also confirmed with an oath. Deut. 29:12. Again it is said, "As He hath sworn unto thy Fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Deut. 29:13. God also in several places confirmed His judgments upon disobedient and idolatrous Israel with an oath. Jer. 22:5. Psalm 95:11. This adds greatly to the sacredness and impressive character of the swearing of oaths.

Since God used oaths, it may have induced man to do likewise, for there is no direct command given that His chosen people should confirm or bind their spoken word, or their promises to fulfill their duties and obligations with an oath. All through Old Testament history the swearing of oaths was permitted and frequently practiced. The Jews were, however, commanded not to swear falsely, but to "perform unto the Lord their oaths." "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," is one of the ten commandments.

When Christ came He taught and commanded among many other precepts—"Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; neither by the earth, for it is His footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black." He substituted for the oath: "yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Matt. 5:34-37.

Christ came to fulfill the law, and thus paid the debt incurred by the transgression of our first parents. He taught the new law which is now written in the heart of the believer. Under the law they resisted evil, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But Christ said "resist not evil." Christ's disci-

ples before His ascension could not obey these commands, for to do so required a change of heart. They had to be born again, and be endued with power from on high. Christ came to establish a spiritual kingdom, separate and distinct from the kingdom of this world. His kingdom is controlled and governed by love. And this kingdom was instituted on the day of Pentecost when the disciples were all "filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts 2:4. Now they were qualified to obey the new law, and the love implanted in their hearts enabled them to love their enemies; not to resist evil but overcome evil with good. Now, the swearing of oaths was forbidden, whether they were judicial, religious, or the taking of God's name in vain. Their yea and nay, or their affirmation, is just as binding as an oath; for they are now worshipping God in spirit and in truth, and, therefore, their spoken word must be truthful and the oath is unnecessary.

Both Christ and the Apostle James (5:12) announces this command in language so explicit that it needs no explanation, yet there are multitudes who claim to worship God, among them learned theologians, who find excuses for performing oaths. They claim, though, "that we should not swear rashly or falsely, but what is agreeable to justice and equity: and that there are circumstances wherein we cannot morally be excused from it." It seems remarkable that men should misconstrue so plain a command. It is conclusive proof that such worshipers are yet under the law, are outside of Christ's kingdom, and are under condemnation. We are commanded not to add to or take from the prophecy of this book. Rev. 22:18, 19. If Christ only meant that swearing should be discretionary, or only be used to confirm certain matters, why did He

give the command at all? Why did He not let the oath as it stood under the law? *Swear not at all* is the solemn command, and must be obeyed without any reservation; and it will stand immutable, and all disobedient falsifiers must fall and, we fear, great will be their fall.

Williamsville, N. Y.

A. M.

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### THE EFFECT OF SIN

"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23.

This is the concluding statement of a chapter devoted to the discussion of the consequences of sin, as the Apostle says, "For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness." We are here told that "so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death." This would teach us that we must mortify our evil desires so as to "walk in newness of life." Since we have accepted Christ as our Redeemer we are under grace. How can we despise "the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long suffering" by violating this state of grace wherein we stand? We may do so deliberately, or thoughtlessly—not realizing the final outcome of seemingly small concessions to the tempter. Although Peter was instructed to forgive his brother seventy times seven times, this does not give license to any one to sin, and feel assured that they shall be forgiven.

When our Lord taught that the right hand should be cut off if it offends, He did not mean to be understood literally, but that our evil inclinations should be controlled or that the occasion for temptation be cut off, which effort from the natural point of view may seem to be as painful as the physical amputation. It is only when a member of the body

becomes badly diseased that we finally consent to its severance with the hope that it will mean the preservation of the health of the rest of the body. So in the spiritual life, why not separate from any influence that would harm or possibly destroy it?

In the Epistle to the Galatians we read, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness: considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." The Apostle says, "ye which are spiritual," assuming that those who have erred, have temporarily lost their spirituality. When repentant sinners are entreated according to this Scripture, they are deeply humbled to think that they could have deviated from the narrow way of life as it is in Christ. They are grateful, realizing that they have been rescued through love; in the words of Jude they have been pulled out of the fire. This love in the human heart could be manifest only through the greater love of Christ implanted in the souls of those who perform such deeds of mercy. We can never be too grateful to our loving Savior who provided such a means of restoration for erring humanity.

We need not be unduly discouraged, even though we have committed errors in the past, for the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews encourages us to lay aside "every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us," and look unto Jesus who endured much for our sake. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." "But no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Our most subtle temptation when overcome by sin is that of self-justification. If we allow bitterness to overcome us, we may be as Esau, of whom it was said, "He found no place

of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

But now "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 5:1. And "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. 8:1. The fruit of the Spirit will now be manifest such as "love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness." And we will desire to follow Jude's counsel, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Our Savior has declared, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent," and thus sought to comfort His disciples, "Be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."

Waynesboro, Penna.

B. F. M.

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#### AHAB, KING OF ISRAEL

Ahab, the son of Omri, seemed to be entirely under the influence of his wife, Jezebel, who was the daughter of the king of Zidonia, an idolatrous king. The gods of other nations were introduced into Israel and were worshipped openly. The King built a temple and erected an image to Baal, the god of the Zidonians. Jezebel, who was earnest in promoting the worship of her idols, maintained a multitude of priests and prophets of Baal. She also persecuted and put to death the prophets and priests of God with relentless cruelty. As if it was a light thing to walk in sin, Ahab did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. It seemed as though the true knowledge of God was lost to Israel.

But it was at this time the prophet Elijah appeared unto Ahab. He was called Elijah the Tishbite by the inhabi-

tants of Gilead and was the prophet of Israel. The Bible introduces him abruptly, but he must have met and counseled Ahab, since he said, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." The word of the Lord then came to Elijah saying, "Get thee hence and turn thee eastward and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan and it shall be that thou shalt drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there." No doubt after his declaration to the King, his life would have been in danger had Ahab and Jezebel known where he was. Elijah went as directed by the Lord and dwelt at the brook Cherith. He drank of its water and the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and again in the evening. After a while the brook dried up because there had been no rain and the word of the Lord came unto Elijah saying, "Arise, get thee to Zarephath and dwell there. I have commanded a widow there to sustain thee." He went as directed and at the gate of the city met the widow gathering sticks for fuel. He asked her to bring him a drink of water and a morsel of bread to eat. She replied, "As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and behold I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die." But Elijah told her not to fear, but first make a cake and bring it to him and then bake for herself and son, for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, "the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth." She did as Elijah told her and the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail according to the word of the Lord.

The son of the widow became very ill and he died. The mother, in great distress, said unto Elijah, "What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance and to slay my son?" Elijah then said, "Give me thy son." He took him and carried him into the room where he abode and laid the child upon his own bed. He then called upon the Lord and stretched himself three times upon the child's body and said, "O Lord, my God, I pray Thee let this child's soul come into him again." The Lord heard his prayer, the soul of the child came into him again and the child revived. Elijah brought him to his mother and said, "See, thy son liveth." The woman replied, "Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth."

After many days in the third year of Elijah's sojourn in Zarephath the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "Go, show thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth."

Obadiah was governor over the house of Ahab and he feared the Lord greatly, for when Jezebel sought to destroy all the Lord's prophets Obadiah took one hundred prophets and hid them by fifty in a cave and fed them with bread and water.

Ahab had been diligently seeking for Elijah but as this search was fruitless, the attention of the king was now directed to searching for a supply of water. He himself went in one direction and sent Obadiah in another to visit all the fountains and brooks and see if enough grass could be found that the horses and mules might be kept alive, for the famine was very sore for want of rain.

While on this journey Obadiah met Elijah and, knowing him, fell upon his face and said "art thou that my lord

Elijah?" He answered, "I am: go, tell thy lord, behold Elijah is here." But Obadiah said that the king had sought the prophet in his own and in other nations and had taken an oath of them that they found him not, and he feared to tell the king that Elijah was there, lest "it shall come to pass as soon as I am gone from thee that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me." Elijah said "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto Ahab to-day."

So Obadiah told Ahab and the king came to meet Elijah and said to him, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Elijah replied, "I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim."

Elijah was only God's ministering servant sent to carry out His judgment upon Israel for their disobedience.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

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## A CHILD'S STORY

### THE STORY OF PHILIP, ONE OF THE DISCIPLES

My dear little children:

Philip was of Bethsaida and we read of Jesus seeing him and saying to him, "Follow Me." He was one of the chosen twelve disciples of Jesus. Soon after this we read that Philip found Nathanael and said to him: "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law and prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael answered, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" His answer leads us to infer that Nazareth was a town from which nothing of great importance was expected. Philip replied, "Come and see."

At one time a great company came to hear Jesus. It was in a desert place, and Jesus said to Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" Philip seemed to have some thought as to the amount it would require to feed such a multitude, for he replied, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little." A lad was found who had five barley loaves, and two small fishes. After Jesus had given thanks He distributed it to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and after all were filled, they gathered up the fragments and there remained twelve baskets. Jesus may have intended to prove Philip's faith and also show him of His Divine power in feeding the vast multitude with so small an amount of food.

We read of certain Greeks who came to worship at the feast. They came to Philip saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." Philip and Andrew told Jesus of the Greeks' request, and brought them to Him.

Philip was one of the number with Jesus that last night, when He took bread and broke it. He tried to tell His disciples of His going to the Father, and what would happen later. Philip did not seem able to understand and he said, "Lord show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." We read of him being with the disciples after Christ had risen and again at Pentecost.

We are not told much of the history of Philip, he seems to have been a quiet man who gathered up facts, and reached conclusions without many words. History tells us that he preached some years in Scythia, where he planted many churches. Finally he came to an idolatrous city where they refused to hear him and at last arrested him, tied him to a post and stoned him to death.

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A. S. F.