

GOOD TIDINGS

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THE REFORMED MENNONITE CHURCH, FOR THE
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Business Notice	1
Editorial	1
Loving Our Neighbor	3
Bible Notes	4
Light will be Manifest	6
Reflections on Matthew Eighteenth	7
Faith	10
The Pearl of Great Price (Poem)	12
Freed From the Law	12
The Natural and the Spiritual	13
Brief Notes	13
Questions and Answers.....	15
To Him that Overcometh	17
The Law and the Gospel	18
The Parable of the Prodigal Son	20
Morality and Spirituality Contrasted.....	21
Our Stewardship	22
Cast Thy Bread upon the Waters	26
The Bible (Poem)	28
The Inner Life	28
Obedience	30
The Reign of King Ahab (Continued)	30
A Child's Story	32

BUSINESS NOTICE

Subscriptions to GOOD TIDINGS nearly all expire with this number. An Expiration Notice of all subscriptions ending with July will be found in that number. We trust that you find the paper interesting and shall be pleased to receive your renewal.

We should like to see GOOD TIDINGS reach many more homes for we are assured that a periodical of this kind, which advocates sound doctrine, will not fail to be promotive of good. To further the cause of truth, we suggest that all persons interested kindly endeavor to secure one or more new subscriptions, beginning with the October number. By so doing you will have contributed to a worthy cause.

It is due our subscribers to state here that it is not our object to derive profit or material benefit from the publishing of GOOD TIDINGS. The subscription price of fifty cents a year barely covers the cost of typing, printing and other expenditures incident to its publication.

EDITORIAL

There is spoken, written and in common practice at this time much that tends to create a restless, discontented

and rebellious disposition in the rising generation and which emboldens the conscience and takes away reverence for God. It seems as though the enticements of the world are becoming more and more attractive, and we fear that the cares and riches and pleasures of life may choke the good seed of God's word and cause the love of truth to grow cold.

The Apostle Paul, in his second Epistle to Timothy said, "In the last days perilous times shall come, men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof." That this condition exists to-day and that the world is in a chaotic state spiritually, few religious leaders will deny; and to help the cause of Christianity, many with good intentions openly criticize and condemn the sinful practices, but it is a singular fact that comparatively few attend to the practical duties of religion for there is a general failing to apply the remedial means given in the Scriptures for purging and purifying the church.

Although Paul in this Epistle boldly exposes the evils and describes the dangerous character of those persons who shall appear in the last days, he also very carefully outlines the means to counteract their pernicious influence so that the Church may be safeguarded and kept on the true foundation. "I charge thee therefore" he says "before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering the doctrine."

Calling upon God and the Lord Jesus Christ to witness this charge to Timothy is significant and should impress religious leaders that discipline is of first importance in preserving the unity, peace and purity of the Church. Neglect of this solemn obligation is more hazardous in its effect than one may on first thought realize. Disobedience and transgression is sin, and when a known sinner is tolerated in the Church, his conscience is hardened and seared and the Church defiled.

The lack of Church discipline does not only have a demoralizing effect in the Church, but it may be largely responsible for the present disregard of law and right.

Do we not recognize that in all well regulated worldly institutions, including the home, schools, business organizations, state and national governments, special attention is given to the execution of carefully formulated rules of discipline and laws for maintaining order? This practice is considered so essential that no rational person would expect to find good order preserved in these institutions without proper discipline.

In like manner those who have the oversight and care of the Church, if faithful to their trust, will feel constrained by love to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" that Gospel order may be maintained.

If the founders and leaders of worldly institutions recognize the necessity for disciplining their subjects to maintain good order, we should hardly expect that Gospel order could be preserved in the Church unless the rules of discipline as taught by Christ and His Holy Apostles are practiced.

Again if the heads of worldly institutions express disapproval and apprehension, exposing and criticising those who violate the disciplinary rules of such institutions, and at the same time fail to reprove and correct them, it would be considered a serious fault on the part of those in authority and a proof of their disqualification for the high trust conferred upon them.

If they who have the oversight of the Church fail to put into effect the commands of Christ and retain known sinners in the Church, they are censurable. Through laxity of discipline, they become guilty of disobedience, give encouragement to evil and thus comfort those who live in sin.

The Scriptures cannot be improved, they remain unalterable. A certain author has truly said: "The Church must stand in opposition to sin, and whenever it fails in discipline, it ceases to be the Church of Christ."

Whenever there has been, or is as now, such a growing tendency to disregard law and right, the more thoughtful and sober-minded become alarmed and naturally question the sincerity of those in authority as to whether they are faithfully performing their duty in reproof and penalizing the ungodly and lawless.

May we not justly attribute this growing disposition toward carelessness and indifference, in part at least, to the lack of Church discipline on which depends so much the shaping and molding of the conscience. Thousands are employed by the states and nations to restrain the ungodly and sinner and, while almost a countless number of persons are continually being held under reproof by the civil authorities, comparatively few are reproved by the churches, whereas reproof should begin in the Church for then the evil-minded would be conscience-stricken and thus be taught to fear God.

Let us search the Scriptures and endeavor to read such other literature as will direct our attention to the higher purpose and duties of life; that awakens in us a sense of guilt for wrongdoing; that teaches a conscientious regard for duty and advocates sound doctrine. In an age of spiritual decline and decay, may we be among those who place inestimable value upon and desire above all things the true and heavenly riches.

LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR

The nature and effect of the love of Christ—Jno. xiii, 34.

"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." The moral law enjoined the duty of loving our neighbor as ourselves, which embraced the duty of doing to our neighbor as we would have him do to us, in all the varied relations of life. Since the moral law enjoining the duty of loving one's neighbor, was promulgated nearly 1,500 years before Christ gave the command of our text, it is of interest to us why he called it a new commandment. Upon careful inquiry the reason will be obvious. The believer's position under the Gospel is in advance of that which was under the law. He is now a partaker of the divine nature and renewed to the divine image. He is the purchase of Christ's blood and the fruit of His love, "For ye are bought with a price." The love of our text is the effect of being born again, which impresses the mind with an unspeakable debt of gratitude to Him "who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God." Under the Gospel, believers are under a new obligation to love one another, illustrated by a new example.

It is a new commandment enforced by new motives. They are required to

love each other because they bear the image of Christ, which continually reminds them of His unfailing and compassionate love for them, which they recognize as being a wholly disinterested love. The new commandment, with greater clearness, new motives and a new example, enjoins the duty of brotherly service in instructing, correcting and reproving erring brethren for the purpose of their edification. Thus does the Spirit of Christ to all erring believers. The new commandment implies candor, faithfulness, forbearance and forgiveness without respect of person. It implies delight in each other's company, the encouragement of each other in good works, in benevolence, in exhortation, in reading and in prayer, sympathy in sorrow, and pleasure in health and spiritual comfort. In summary it implies children of the same spiritual Father, brethren of the same family, travellers to the same country, members of the same body, and heirs of the same inheritance.

Without the love of our text all other attainments and works will not avail, as it pertains to the salvation of the soul. The testimony of the Apostle Paul is evidence: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; and though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing; and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." The scriptural meaning of charity is love.

The above was written to the church at Corinth, the pastors of which were highly endowed with spiritual gifts.

Some had the gift of tongues, some of prophecy, some of discerning spirits, others the working of miracles, but with all these and many other spiritual gifts, and while the Apostle wrote them to covet earnestly the best gifts, he added these words: "And yet show I unto you a more excellent way," meaning something greater than all the gifts, *viz.*, charity (love) which abideth forever, while all the gifts possessed by them will end with this life. Notwithstanding the gifts possessed by the Corinthians, the Apostle was very solicitous for their spiritual safety, as his letters to them give evidence. He reminded them that "knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth."

The new commandment causes self-abasement, spiritual poverty, brotherly love and service, and true humility. It reaches to the forgiveness of enemies and love for the souls of all men. From the foregoing, the conclusion is reached that in the absence of love, founded upon the Gospel, all religion is but dead formalism, no matter how attractive it may be in appearance.

Chambersburg, Pa.

J. S. L.

BIBLE NOTES

Owing to famine in the land, Naomi's husband, Elimelech, with his wife and two sons went among the Moabites where the sons married daughters of that nation and where the father and sons died leaving all the women widows. When Naomi heard that God had again blessed her native land with fruitfulness she resolved to return, but advised her daughters-in-law to remain with their people; Orpah obeyed, but Ruth clave to her mother-in-law, saying, "Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge, thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

When Naomi came back she was warmly welcomed by her people, but she said they should not call her Naomi (which means pleasant), but they should call her Mara (which means bitter); "for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me."

Ruth gleaned in the wheat and barley harvest of Boaz along with other maidens, and was specially favored by Boaz, who later chose her for his wife, and she became the mother of Obed, who was the father of Jesse, David's father. Boaz was the great-grandfather of King David.

Hannah was the mother of Samuel, who became priest and judge in the nation of Israel. She brought him up to be a Nazarite given to the Lord's service in Shiloh under the priest Eli. Samuel was God-fearing and the Lord revealed His will to him in a vision in certain matters, "and the word of Samuel came to all Israel."

Because of the disobedience of the Israelites their enemies prevailed against them with much slaughter and took the ark of the Lord, holding it seven months, but its presence among them caused so much bodily affliction, and destruction in the temples of their idols where they had placed it, that they finally sent it back to the Israelites.

In the days of Samuel the people defiled themselves with idol-worship of which he had them to purge themselves, when prosperity returned to them. When Samuel was old he set his sons to be judges, but they were not faithful and the people desired to have a king as other nations had. As they refused God to be their sole Ruler He granted their request giving them the prediction of the sufferings and sacrifices they would have to endure under the reign of kings.

Saul was directed to Samuel by the Lord, that he should anoint him to be

the first king. When Samuel announced the Lord's choice to Saul he replied, "Am I not of the least of all the families of Benjamin? Wherefore then speakest thou so to me?" He was anointed, but the first king was disobedient and God did not prosper him and he lost his life in war. As he did not strictly obey the commandment of the Lord his kingdom was taken from him, and the prophet Samuel was led to anoint David to succeed him, but not to have the reign while Saul lived. With God there is no difference, whether king or subject, all will be rewarded according to their deeds.

Goliath the champion among the Philistines challenged the army of Saul to meet any one in single combat, and David who visited his brethren in the army was willing to accept the challenge, but when the matter came before the king he reminded David that he was but a youth, and Goliath was always a man of war. David answered the king how in keeping the sheep he had slain a lion and a bear, and argued that the man had defied the army of the living God; whereupon the king yielded to his faith and courage and allowed the valiant youth to go forth equipped with only a sling and five smooth stones in a Shepherd's bag, and getting near Goliath he slung a stone deep into the giant's head, felling him to the ground so that with his own huge sword he could behead him, when the Philistines fled, giving an easy victory to the army of the Lord.

The king had offered his daughter in marriage to the person who would slay the noted chieftain, of which honor David said: "Who am I? and what is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?" Although David was his son-in-law the king envied him because of the honor he had obtained among the people. "Jeal-

ousy is cruel as the grave." David kept away from Saul in his lifetime. By means of the witch at Endor, Saul called from the grave the spirit of the prophet Samuel who then foretold his death by the Philistines. His life was ended in battle with the Philistines after having reigned thirty years.

Absalom arose in rebellion with a large following against his father David to wrest from him the kingdom, but perished in battle, which caused the father to express very great sorrow for his wayward son. His mourning was taken unkindly by some of his loyal subjects, and caused a rupture with some who were near him in his reign.

Without being commanded by the Lord, David numbered his numerous people, which displeased the Lord, as the act was likely done through the prompting of pride. As a punishment for his sin the Lord offered David the choice of three afflictions: Seven years of famine; to flee three months before his enemies; or three days of pestilence in the land. David said unto the prophet that brought this message, "I am in great strait: let us fall now into the hands of the Lord; for His mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man." The pestilence destroyed seventy thousand men. "The law of the wise is a fountain of life, . . . but the way of transgressors is hard."

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

LIGHT WILL BE MANIFEST

Man was created in the image of God and his happiness was complete. He possessed spiritual life until he heeded the voice of the tempter, after which he fell into spiritual darkness. The Prophet Isaiah declared, "That darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people, but the Lord shall arise upon

thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee." Isaiah 60: 2.

Again the prophet said, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear you." Isaiah 59: 2.

This was a doleful message since God's help was their only hope of relief. But the promise that the Lord would arise, and His glory be seen upon them, gave a prospective and comforting hope. This promise pointed to Christ in whom the glory would be revealed. Jesus Christ, the Son of God made in the form of man, is the true light. Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world, he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness."

Darkness typified man's fallen condition when he turned away from the light in which he was created. To all those who heed the light, the prophecy is fulfilled, since they no longer walk in darkness. Disobedience and vain selfishness came as the result of man's darkened condition.

It was said, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness." So a marvelous change must be wrought when His glory shall be revealed. Man was not able of himself to be influenced by the spirit of love, hence our Saviour said, "Ye must be born again." This new birth will take place in all who feel their disability and ask help, and who become willing to obey the counsel and will of the Lord; the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses such from all sin. It is God's will that all should come to Him and be converted into His marvelous light. This change will enable them to overcome the evil promptings—the fruit of sin, and enable them to love their enemies, pray for them, and be willing to suffer wrong and injustice patiently. Peace will fill the heart, and love to God

will hold His children near to Him. Love will move them to obey His word. This change of heart is the true witness of the new birth. His children will cheerfully sacrifice the love of self which formerly was their chief delight; and this inborn principle of love begets unity of spirit. A life of obedience to God's word is the fruit of the spirit of love. To love is to obey.

Man would seek to honor God by being obedient to the letter, but if he fails to show evidence of an humble spirit, God is not honored. There are many who claim they have been redeemed, but if such follow the course of the world in the pride of life, seek gratification in its idle pastimes, speak evil of one another, sue at the law and justify war, or allow that Christ's followers can take part therein, they do not show the fruit of God's love.

It is painful to think that darkness yet reigns as of old in the hearts of multitudes of mankind. Christ said "I came not to judge the world, but the Word that I have spoken shall be your judge at the last and coming day." He declared, if ye obey not my word ye are none of Mine.

The glory of Christ is revealed when man walks in obedience, and the fruits of the glorious Gospel of light must follow. Let each one be interested in reading the Word, to see if his life will accord with the words of the Savior. Being called out of the world, God's children are termed the children of the light, and the light of love must characterize them. Christ's prayer in St. John 17, is impressive. Unity must exist among His followers. In Matthew 18, an outline is given, showing how to preserve fellowship and keep the Church pure. The glory of God can only be manifested by those who walk in the light and have fellowship one with the other.

Lancaster, Pa.

J. K.

REFLECTIONS ON MATTHEW EIGHTEENTH

The first great lesson taught by our Savior in this chapter both by example and precept is humility, exemplified by a little child set in the midst of His disciples. The evidence of pride and ambition manifested, as they reasoned among themselves as to whom should be the greatest in the kingdom, is what led to this example.

Many offences spring from pride or a lack of humility. Special mention is made of three ways that they may affect us. First, offences by us to others, second, offences by us to ourselves, and third, offences by others to us, all of which must be overcome by the spirit of humility, if overcome at all. Offence signifies anything that a man finds in his way that may occasion him to stumble or fall. Moses taught that a stumbling-block must not be put before the blind, Lev. 19: 14. It was prophesied that Jesus Christ should be for a stone of stumbling and rock of offence. It is clear that He will only be an offence to a blind world who continue to stumble at His word; but to those who desire sight, and become the humble, obedient children of God, a blessing is promised—"Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." St. Matt. 11: 6. "Woe unto the world because of offences!" St. Matt. 18: 7. The Savior was careful to warn His children against every kind of offence lest they should stumble and fall and a woe be pronounced against them also.

Believers should earnestly pray for humility, and endeavor to be an example in word and deed so that no one can bring a just charge against them. We may offend others by taking liberties that would not adorn the Christian profession. We may offend by reflecting unkindly upon a friend or a fellow-believer. We may do so by showing

partiality in entertaining those whom we admire, and perhaps neglecting those who are not so congenial to us, causing them to be unhappy. There will be little danger of offending others if we do not allow ourselves to be carried away by our own evil promptings. "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee." The hand may offend by reaching out into the world, grasping for such things that would be a hindrance to the spiritual life, as riches, honor, or the friendship of the world. The foot may carry us from the narrow path, and lead us away from simplicity into the snare of the evil one. The eye may lust after evil things and if not plucked out and cast from us may lead into everlasting destruction. If the body is kept in subjection and carnal lusts subdued and every thought taken captive to the obedience of Christ, power will be given His followers to cut off evil promptings, and they *become* and, if faithful, *remain* the little ones in Christ.

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones." No one will despise one whom they esteem better than themselves, therefore it is evident that self-love must first enter the heart, before one will offend or despise one of Christ's little ones. Through sin and disobedience all men have become estranged from God and are without a shepherd on the mountain of this sinful world. Jesus the great Shepherd left the ninety-nine in heaven to seek the lost sheep that had gone astray. A thing is lost when it is consumed or mislaid, and we have no further use of it. When our friends die, we lose them, we enjoy their society no longer. So all men are lost, being dead in sin; they, when penitent, are saved by Christ, who gave His own life a ransom, and shed his blood on the cross for their salvation. "Now see that

ye despise not one of these little ones, but rejoice that the lost sheep has been found and cared for." "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."

The Savior having taught the disciples how to avoid offences against themselves and others, now directs them what to do when they are offended by others. "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." v. 15. Evil promptings from within must be subdued and true humility cherished in order to avoid offences to others. We are so constituted that we love the esteem of our fellowmen and all will be esteemed when their walk, conversation and life in general is so directed that it will not offend others; unless we fully realize that all power to overcome and to avoid offending others is alone a gift of God we may not be as considerate as we should be to the erring brother, and may hold him too hard for his fault. When one is fully sensible that sometime he too may need the same reminding, he will, out of love, tell his brother his fault privately. If he hears him, both will rejoice and the offence will be removed. "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." Under the law one witness was not sufficient to convict a man for any sin or iniquity, "at the mouth of two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses shall the matter be established." Deut. 19: 15. If the matter can be reconciled by these witnesses, then peace is again restored.

"And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church." v. 17. Every reflecting mind will conclude that in order to carry out this plain command there must be a united church, as it

would be impossible to practice this course if the good in all religious bodies constitute the Church. It is also clear that where offence is given and the offending one becomes obstinate and unyielding to all the appeals of his brethren made in love, such person has broken the fellowship which must exist in the Church. A united church with a faithful ministry who are in full agreement with the spirit and letter of the New Testament have the authority to separate all who have broken the fellowship and are unwilling to yield to counsel. "But if he neglect to hear the Church" of which Christ is the head and by whom this command is given, "let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." As the Jews at that time dealt with heathen men and publicans so the Church is taught to treat an apostate who through false doctrine, irregular conduct, or an obstinate life, has rejected all the appeals of the Church. They are to have no dealings with him and avoid his company in daily intercourse to remind him of his fallen condition. This agrees with the words of Paul: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." 2 Thes. 3: 14. "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." These keys can only be used where there is unity of action as the promise of a blessing is to all who meet in His name, no matter how few if their course is based on the unchangeable word of God. The very life of the Church depends upon the faithful obedience of this plain command, for where it is neglected and known sinners are retained in the Church, there will soon be evidence of decay and, unless the evil is removed, the whole body will become defiled.

Evidently Peter was impressed that we ought to have great forbearance toward the transgressor—"Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee until seven time, but until seventy-times seven." Intimating that there is no limit to forgiveness where penitence is manifested. The ground to separate one from the Church is not based upon how often one offends (or sins) against another, but upon his neglecting to hear or appreciate the labor of love bestowed upon him by the Church. Where the true Christian spirit rules all reproof will be given and received in love and will never lead to separation. It is only when we allow the proud, obstinate spirit of self to control that our communion with God and His Church will be severed.

The chapter closes with the parable of the unmerciful servant who was forgiven the ten thousand talents by his lord and then went out and found one of his fellow servants which owed him an hundred pence: and who laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, pay me that thou owest. Have patience with me and I will pay thee all, was the plea of this helpless debtor. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison until he should pay the debt. His lord said, "O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me! Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?" And he was delivered to the tormentors.

Our Savior in this parable designed most clearly to exhibit one great truth—the duty of forgiving our brethren; and also the great evil of professing that our sins have been forgiven, when we refuse to forgive our brethren their trespasses.

Awful judgments are declared against all such hypocrisy, and we should earnestly pray for humble hearts that we may always be ready to forgive, and thus escape the righteous judgments of God. "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." v. 35.

Lancaster, Pa.

J. L. K.

FAITH

When Noah, after the deluge, found favor in the sight of God through the sweet smelling savor of his burnt offerings, God said that he would no more destroy every living thing but while the earth remaineth seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. Gen. 8: 22. Man evidently has faith in this natural promise, for we notice that more or less preparation for the approaching seasons is made. In winter when there is no evidence of growth, preparations are made for seed-time, relying upon the truth of God's promise. God would that all should have this same faith in His truth as revealed through His dear Son and in His spiritual promises, but the Apostle declares "that all men have not faith."

In the present age the progress of man toward perfection is much talked of. It is claimed that man when thus perfected will need no law nor restraint but will do right naturally. We have no clear light to prove, nor facts to warrant the belief that mankind as a class is on the way to perfection, but we see deterioration rather than improvement. Eminent men who are in a position to know state that crime is on the increase. Man does not refrain from indulging in extremes, and divisions appear without end; all in agreement with Christ's

prophesies, "Upon earth distress of nations with perplexity . . . men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Luke 21: 25, 26.

The above theory, although acknowledging the existence of God and heaven, rejects Christ as the means of redeeming man from his fallen state. That this belief is encouraged by many is not strange since they profess a living faith but the fruits are not manifest, and because it leaves a broad and unrestrained path for the carnal mind.

The Apostle James says, "Thou believest that there is one God, the devils also believe and tremble." James 2: 19. Such faith the Apostle refers to when he says, "Faith if it hath not works is dead, being alone." James 2: 17. Even though we believe in God and His Son as our Redeemer, if we have not received the Spirit of Christ through regeneration which qualifies and empowers us to keep His precepts as taught in the Sermon on the Mount, and are by that same Spirit baptized into one body, our faith is but a nominal and dead faith.

Faith may be centered upon some personal experience, the power of healing or on miracles and still be void of the divine principle of love. Jesus said, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place and it shall remove." Matt. 17: 20. He made this statement on an occasion when His disciples could not cast out the devil of one that was sorely vexed; but He also said, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then I will profess unto them I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity." Matt.

7: 22, 23. The Apostle Paul affirms this by saying, "Though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains and have not charity I am nothing." 1 Cor. 13: 2. The seventy whom the Lord appointed and gave power to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, returned with joy saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us." He said unto them "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."

The power of darkness was also capable of accomplishing many wonderful works in the form of miracles, healing, preaching and the like, leaving the impression upon many that these works are from heaven. The Lord told the disciples, "Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject to you but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven." Luke 10: 17.

In the Savior's parable of the sower we discover a temporary faith. "He that received the seed in stony places received it with joy." Matt. 13: 20. He hears it gladly, understands it, considers and approves of it, "yet hath he not root in himself for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." He has some good purposes and desires, but they are soon overpowered by the unmortified desires of the flesh and the force of temptation.

The Apostle to the Hebrews says, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Heb. 11: 1. It assures us of the reality and worth of eternal, invisible things, and produces a satisfied and assured confidence that God will infallibly perform what He has promised. For through a living and justifying faith, saving grace is created in the heart by the Spirit of God whereby we receive Christ and His word as revealed through the Gospel. He is our Teacher, Priest, King, and

Redeemer, and we trust and rely upon Him as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

A living faith begets within the heart of the believer the principle of love and a fervent desire to do the Heavenly Father's will; to love our enemies and pray for them which despitefully use us and persecute us. Those who possess this living faith believe without doubt that the purpose for which the Savior came into the world has been and is being accomplished—that he died for the sins of the world and will gather together into one the children of God that were scattered abroad. John 11: 52. That they all may be one as the Father and Son are one, John 17: 21, one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is above all and through all and in you all. Eph. 4: 4. There are no divisions among them and all speak the same thing. 1 Cor. 1: 10.

The Apostle Paul writing to the Hebrews, chapter 11, refers to the remarkable faith of Noah, Abraham, Moses, and all the holy men of old, and concludes that "these all having obtained a good report through faith received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us that they without us should not be made perfect." The time of deliverance had not yet been fulfilled, therefore they, through the hardness of their hearts, were permitted to wage wars and to hate their enemies. Although the children of Israel were a separated people, still they were divided into tribes, and did not receive the promise of heavenly peace, love, fellowship and unity which His Church enjoys in this Gospel age. Nevertheless God promised them deliverance if they in faith looked forward to the Redeemer who in the fulfilment of time would deliver them from the bondage they were

under, even after their death. As it is declared, He that ascended on high took captivity captive (in other words, released a multitude of captives); He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth. Therefore a saving means has been provided for the whole human family who have accepted, and who yet will accept Christ in faith.

Baden, Ontario.

H. G.

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

There's a pearl of great price that is offered today

More enduring than treasures of earth,
So precious it is, that those holding it may
Be unable to tell you its worth.

This wonderful treasure is offered today,
It comes from the Father above:
The source so Divine all doubt will allay,
For it's bearing the seal of His love.

Not found in the tumult of noise or display,
Unknown to the prudent and wise;
In a still quiet voice it often is heard,
Revealing the worth of the prize.

To the sin-burdened soul it assures a sweet rest,
The pardon and gift of God's love;
This comfort and peace is a precious bequest
Given us from the Father above.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

FREED FROM THE LAW

"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?" Col. 2: 20-22.

There is always danger that we might leave truly spiritual works and return to, or follow after customs and doctrines of men. The Savior reproved the Pharisees and Scribes for this very thing, as they were too much occupied with outward works, such as washing their hands often.—"And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not.

And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables." Mark 7: 4.

There are certain customs which the Church has adopted, believing them to be edifying and in order; but if we base our hope of salvation on outward works, we fail to recognize Christ as our deliverer and Savior. Then His mission has failed—He has died in vain; and we are not dead with Him from the rudiments of the world. We are still subjecting ourselves to the Law. We are not entirely free from the covenant of works. In this situation we can not fully understand and appreciate the great plan of salvation.

"But like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Rom. 6: 4. Now the old ordinances are left behind, they perish with the using, and the new life will be manifest in our conversation, our conduct, and in our actions. The observance of ordinances and the practice of certain customs peculiar to Christ's followers will not be done in the hope that salvation lies in them, but it will be the fruit of love and the testimony of the new life, because we are dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world.

Under the law the sacrifices which were required to be observed by the Jews were offered as a remembrance of sin every year, and not with the view that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sin. Now since Christ has died and risen again, if we are risen with Him our observance of customs and ordinances will be in remembrance of what He has done for us, as well as a testimony to the world of a change of heart.

Landisville, Pa.

C. S. N.

THE NATURAL AND THE SPIRITUAL

Between the things which are natural and the things which are spiritual there is a dividing line. The natural world is adapted to the natural man and ministers to his needs; the spiritual, to the renewed spiritual nature. Since "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God," that which is natural, however beautiful, true, and good cannot reach to the spiritual realm. The visible is the transient; the invisible is the abiding. "All flesh is as grass and the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth forever."

From the world about us, the Savior drew many lessons to lead the minds of His hearers to spiritual truths. The things we see in earth and sky demonstrate the wisdom and power of God. We may see in them qualities which typify the Divine attributes. They awaken in us feelings of awe, of reverence, of gratitude.

Designed to reveal so much of the nature and character of God as would lead us to seek and glorify Him, we may frustrate their purpose. In our nature there is a tendency to associate too intimately nature and God, to make God and nature the same. This is the error of Pantheism. So appealing to our finer senses are things beautiful and sublime, and so fully do we respond to them that our minds may find rest and repose without looking beyond the things which are seen to the things which are not seen. There is a communing with nature, as well as with God; the one is natural, the other, spiritual.

The feelings or emotions which beauty in the visible world awakens, we may mistake for spiritual exercises, and, so regarding them, we may think it desir-

able to roam about in search of the beautiful, grand, and picturesque, or deem it a hardship when we are deprived of the opportunity to do so. As the senses are capable of being trained in the appreciation of beauty and harmony, these emotions in educated persons are called forth by works of art and music, as well as by nature. They are natural sentiments, common to mankind. Spiritual things are discerned spiritually, and are realized through a sense of the soul's need.

Unchecked, the things of earth, though useful and enjoyable in this life, engross the mind; so nature may but satisfy the senses, "and, making earth too great for heaven," hide from our view the things which are truly spiritual, unseen and eternal. Indeed, love for the temporal and things seen may overcome our love for God and His word.

Lancaster, Pa. R. 4

M. H. M.

BRIEF NOTES

When Philip said "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us," Jesus declared, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." The beloved Disciple also gives us this simple definition that "God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him."

* * * *

Luke spoke of the Bereans as "more noble than those of Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so." Here the nobility of an open mind was supplemented by the disposition to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good." Consequently, it was said, "Therefore many of them believed."

By cherishing this disposition and the nobility of an open mind may we not

also more fully know that "These things" are so, and then consecrate our powers to the service they require?

* * * *

"All these things will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." How presumptuous this offer of Satan's to give the glory of the whole world to Him who shared the Father's glory "before the world was"—glory reflected in more than ten thousand worlds. How significant the reply, "It is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

In our daily living we have similar temptations which must be similarly repulsed, and all the worship and service be given to God and voluntarily rendered, as with the angels "Before the throne and before the Lamb."

* * * *

Many hard conditions in living, baffled purposes and temptations that come to us may be divinely ordered so that the mellowing influence on our life may reach out to others in practical sympathy and helpfulness. The Savior Himself was spoken of as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Yet it is said, "For in that He suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted."

If we can face adversities and temptations as thus ordered for our good, they will make us more charitable toward others and promote a better understanding of ourselves.

* * * *

In studying and searching the mysteries of the nature world around and in us we find there is evidence everywhere of a controlling principle or law of order with which we must work in harmony would we attain to successful ends. In the spiritual life the underlying prin-

ciple is just as positive, and, in addition, is eternal and unchanging. Times and conditions change, and material things will go into dissolution, but the divine principle—an attribute of God Himself—*never*. Whether man be of high or low estate, learned or illiterate, rich or poor, the principle is applicable and effective with all alike, everywhere, always. What is it? Love.

* * * *

Look wherever we will and we will see men glorying in their ability and success, their power, treasure, valor or character. The Apostle Paul could likewise have gloried in his ancestry, education and training, his mental endowments and strength of character, his miraculous conversion and untiring efforts to spread the Gospel; but he declared: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world."

Christ's own declaration was "Whosoever will come after Me let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." Self-denial is always associated with and in reality constitutes the cross spoken of. It becomes to all believers the cross which His followers are constrained to bear, and by which the world is crucified to them and they to the world.

* * * *

Faith and conduct in a Christian life are only effects of the Spirit of God possessing the heart. "If a man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." At Christ's baptism the Holy Spirit descended as a dove and a voice from Heaven spoke, thenceforth transforming His life from comparative silence to the activity of His public ministry. The appeal was not only to

the evidence of His character, but still more to the source of His power: "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you." What He had done He acknowledged was done through the rich endowment and direction of the Spirit of God.

Jesus Himself realized that the personal contact of His disciples with Him would not take the place of the power of the Spirit which dwelt in its fulness in Him; therefore, He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away," and furthermore declared, "He that believeth in Me, the works that I do he shall do also; and greater works than these shall he do because I go to my father."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What did Paul mean when he said: "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Romans 11: 29.

A. This does not imply that repentance on our part is not essential; but repentance is here applied to God;—that when He imparts the blessing of salvation He never repents or changes. The election, or His gifts and calling, are based upon His constant and immutable love, and are without repentance.

Q. How can we reconcile with other Scriptures this saying of Christ: "If any man come to Me and *hate* not his father and mother, and wife and children and brethren and sisters."

A. The Savior evidently used the word hate in this Scripture in a modified sense—to indicate a *less degree* of love for the members of our household than for Him. We must be willing to "forsake all for Christ's and the Gospel's sake." It does not imply personal hatred, but rather a hatred of sin. Otherwise this Scripture would conflict with the Sermon on the Mount where Christ enjoins: "Love your enemies,

bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Matt. 5: 44.

Q. What is meant by the saying of Christ, "And ye shall be *hated* by all men for My name's sake."

A. This does not imply a personal hatred but it is on account of the doctrine of Christ which His followers believe and practice. This reproves the world of sin and self-righteousness, and leads to a separation from the carnal life of the world and even from false worship; thus testifying against their works. In this enlightened and tolerant age, God's people are not physically persecuted, yet we believe the doctrine continues to be hated and despised.

Q. How did man in the first creation bear the image of God?

A. "God said let us make man in our image, after our likeness." This evidently does not refer to anything natural or physical, for God is a Spirit, but it applies to man's spiritual endowments—the resemblance of His soul, His pure, undefiled nature in conformity to the character of God. In view of the foregoing, the Psalmist could well say, "man was made a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honor, and given dominion over the works of God's hands." Psalm 8: 5, 6.

Q. What did Paul mean when he said: "When I am weak then am I strong." 2 Cor. 12: 10.

A. He had previously besought the Lord thrice to remove the thorn in his flesh which he called the messenger of Satan to buffet him. The Lord answered: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness." This explains the paradox. When we realize our weakness and insufficiency and how incapable we are of overcoming,

we are in a proper attitude to trust in the Lord and accept His grace. He gives us strength, and, though we are weak in ourselves, we are strong, but only in the Lord. "Nay in all things we are more than conquerors through Him that loves us."

Q. Is there a Scriptural ground for praying at the table before and after meals?

A. The inquiry about praying at the table is not new. In the first place we recognize that we are under the Gospel, which is a spiritual dispensation and not a legal one. Under the Mosaic law every duty was plainly specified, but under the new spiritual dispensation the Holy Spirit is promised to be a guide in all things.

The Savior commanded prayer. "What I say unto you I say unto all: watch and pray." He set the example of prayer and thanksgiving for natural food upon the occasion when He miraculously fed five thousand people. Paul commands to give thanks to God for all things.

There is no command in the New Testament directing prayer, as to how many times in a day or whether a standing, sitting or kneeling posture is to be observed during prayer. It is not commanded to pray in the evening and in the morning, neither is it commanded to pray at the table.

Under the law they had their evening and morning sacrifice. The Jews knelt in prayer three times each day. Under the Gospel the Holy Spirit begets a prayerful mind. Therefore when we sit down to eat we are moved with feelings of gratitude to the Giver of the food. When we have eaten and are fed, filled and nourished, we have a conviction to thank the Lord for the opportunity and for the blessing, and also desire a bless-

ing upon the food eaten, that the strength derived therefrom may be devoted to the glory of God and that our souls may be nourished with the bread of life. When we are in the real spirit of thanksgiving we will look upon the matter of prayer before and after meals as a privilege rather than a duty.

There is no Gospel rule as to loud or silent prayer, neither is there a law in the Church regulating prayer as to whether silent or audible. The Savior commanded retirement and prayer in secret, but He did not counsel as to silent or loud prayer. It is not necessary to pray loud that God can hear it; He reads the thoughts of our heart. The main justification for loud prayer is the edification of those present. A prayer to be edifying to the hearer should be orderly and intelligent. Audible prayer is appropriate in public meetings and at public meals where a large number are present for the promotion of order.

TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH

"To him that overcometh" are impressive words, for upon them depend some of the most precious promises in the Scriptures; they promise victory to God's people. They indicate that there is a conflict, a warfare to engage in; for if there was no opposition in the Christian calling, there would be nothing to overcome. To gain the victory over the enemies of the soul, there is much to overcome. Our sinful flesh, the devil, and the world, are obstacles in our way and offer enticements and temptations.

In the affairs of men, to gain success or victory in any line of endeavor, there is also much to overcome. There are always forces contending against individual effort to attain success in any achievement. Victory is not obtained by

chance but by persistent effort; but in all natural undertakings man can do this by his own ability.

In the spiritual calling it is different; though man is addressed personally in the text: "to him that overcometh," he cannot overcome his spiritual foes by his own power. He must be "endued with power from on high." Through repentance and faith in Christ the Holy Ghost is bestowed upon him and this enables him to overcome. So the Christian warrior has a potent helper, for Christ Jesus is the Captain of his salvation and will lead him to victory.

Of course, he must do his part, he must put his talents to use and "fight the good fight of faith to lay hold on eternal life." He is equipped with "weapons that are not carnal but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. 10: 5. It is noteworthy that these "weapons are mighty through God," so it is mainly by divine power that the Christian overcomes.

The Apostle says: "Finally brethren be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might; put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil." Eph. 6: 10, 11. Christ vanquished the Devil and gained the victory over death and hell by His death and resurrection. He overcame. He comforted His disciples by saying: "Be of good cheer I have overcome the world." And most assuredly all His disciples shall overcome through Him.

What a glorious victory shall be won by all those that overcome! For when the last enemy which is death is overcome; "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal

shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory, O, death where is thy sting, O, grave where is thy victory. . . . For thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 15: 54, 55, 57.

Earthly victories when won do not yield lasting joy, and are often attended by much anxiety and trouble and at best are very unstable; but they that overcome and win the victory for the soul shall inherit eternal joy and happiness and join the angel throng in praising and glorifying God forever. "He that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with the Father on His throne." Rev. 3: 21. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. 7: 16, 17.

There are some deluded souls who want to evade the cross, and try to overcome with their own strength. They can overcome many evils and open sins, but they cannot overcome the spirit of inherited sin, and cleanse and purify their hearts; for the Prophet says: "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked who can know it." They are under the rule of Satan as long as they trust in the arm of the flesh. So long as they do not come to Christ and have their sins remitted by Him, they have not and cannot overcome in the Scripture sense. Instead of gaining the victory for the soul their hopes will be defeated in the great Day of Judgment, and we fear eternal remorse and despair will be their doom.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

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

After the Lord God had formed man of the dust of the earth and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils and man became a living soul, He took the man and put him into the garden of Eden, which he had planted, to dress it and to keep it.

The Lord had provided for the welfare of man; he was to dress and keep the garden and was privileged to eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden to sustain life. The Lord also placed other responsibility upon man by forbidding him to eat of the fruit of a certain tree in the garden.

The Lord God had given the man an help-meet, and the tempter tempted her to eat of the fruit of this tree and she yielded and did eat and gave to her husband and he did eat, thus they transgressed His word.

The effect of this transgression was the curse which the Lord God brought upon them. “Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return.”

And the Lord God said, “Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”

From this account it is plain that man brought upon himself a just recompense

for his unfaithfulness. He continued to disregard the word of God and became so evil it repented the Lord that he had made man; and He said He would destroy man from the face of the earth, but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and was saved from the flood of waters.

Abraham also found favor in the sight of God, who made a covenant with him, promising to care for him and to bless him and make of him a father of many nations, saying, “I will establish My covenant between thee and thy seed after thee, in their generations for an everlasting covenant.”

From time to time God promised to bless and care for those who would hear His voice and obey His commands. He called Moses, and said unto him, “Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel out of Egypt.”

After he had brought forth the people out of Egypt, from under the rule of Pharaoh, they came to the wilderness of Sinai, to Mt. Sinai where the Lord called Moses to come unto Him in the Mount where he gave him the law, the Ten Commandments.

God’s presence upon the Mount was fearful, and He said unto Moses, “Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”

We may understand from these promises which God made to them of old, that it was alone by obedience to His commands that they would obtain a blessing and inherit the goodly land flowing with milk and honey.

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him: for He is thy life, and the length of thy days; that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." Deut. 30: 19-20.

This law of God required perfect obedience, every jot and tittle were to be fulfilled; but no man could do this, even Moses the lawgiver. We understand that this law of God stood against every man and there was no way for man to escape its condemnation. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Rom. 3: 20. "Yet, What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Rom. 8: 3. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Rom. 10: 4.

Thus grace and truth came by Jesus Christ and we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved. Acts 15: 11. "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace which should come unto you." 1 Peter 1: 10. "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1: 14. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8: 32.

"Jesus saith unto him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh

unto the Father, but by Me.'" John 14: 6.

From these passages of Scripture we learn that grace and truth, which came by Jesus Christ, are indispensable to salvation; and we also learn that Jesus Christ is the only means of salvation. The aged Simeon came into the temple when the parents brought in the child Jesus. "Then took he Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.'" Luke 2: 28-32.

"For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." John 3: 17. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4: 12. "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Rom. 1: 16. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Rom. 10: 13.

We have the promises of God that salvation, through grace and truth coming into the world by Jesus Christ, has come unto man, and all who will may accept, for it is the free gift of God.

Thus we have the privilege of embracing truth, and we are reminded we should not neglect this privilege, for says the Apostle Paul, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

We may ask as did Pilate, "What is truth?" The Savior our Lord Jesus taught truth; in His Sermon on the Mount, He said, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them

which despitely use you, and persecute you; also, No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to the other." The Savior also taught unity, "There shall be one fold and one Shepherd." Therefore if there be divisions in the world and many different beliefs we may know from whence they are, for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are One, and to be a follower of the Lord, one must be in unity with all things whatsoever He has commanded.

"As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." John 15: 9-12.

Since God is love and grace and truth came by Jesus Christ that man may obtain eternal life, the vital question is: are we willing to say with the Apostle Paul, Lord what wilt thou have me to do?

Glen Elder, Kansas.

E. F. S.

THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Jesus Christ, the greatest teacher that the world has ever known, did not clothe

His ideas in rhetorical phrases; He taught his disciples simple truths in language that the dumbest mind could comprehend and understand His meaning. Many of His most valued lessons were told in parables. Stories are not forgotten so easily as solid discourse, and as they are recalled again and again, the lessons taught are also remembered.

One of Jesus' most beautiful parables, and one which teaches us various lessons, is that of the Prodigal Son. The father, so kind and so rich in goods, represents the Father of all, God.

The elder son, so zealous to obey, so self-confident in all that he did, so desirous of showing that he never broke a law, never did aught to offend, might represent the Pharisaical Jews, who had always been taught to believe that they were the "chosen seed of Israel," the favored people of God.

The younger son, who so wastefully spent his portion, who did not regard the law of God or the wishes of his father, who, so generously had given him his share, and who had allowed him to go away with it and to live his life as he might choose, could easily represent sinners and Gentiles, who neither cared for, nor heeded the law of God.

In our humanity, it is natural for us to accord sympathy to the obedient, elder son, who had worked so faithfully while his brother was "wasting his substance in riotous living"; and when, at last, the younger son, stripped of everything, gladly ate the husks given to the swine, we feel that a righteous judgment has been administered. He appears to be reaping his just deserts. Even when he became aware of his own nakedness, understands the enormous sins of which he has been guilty, when, in want and degradation he resolves to go to his father and beg forgiveness, when in hu-

mility he says, "Father, I am unworthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants," even after that, our humanity still asserts itself and we feel that he should be reprimanded and that the father would be justified in continuing the punishment.

Not so, the Divine Teacher. The father did not even wait for him to come, but when he saw him approaching afar off, he ran to meet him; he embraced him; he forgave everything; he showered honors upon him; he dressed him in fine garments and made him the guest of honor at a grand reception. Even so, our Heavenly Father rejoices over the sinner that repents.

It was but human for the elder son to feel unjustly treated. He had worked faithfully all his life for his father and yet had never been so honored as was his profligate brother.

How plainly this parable teaches us that self-righteousness avails us nothing. There is but one thing that God desires and that is love from the heart, which is born of a humble, contrite spirit.

This wonderful parable also teaches us that no matter how far we have strayed, no matter how low we have sunk, while there is yet life, there is a chance for repentance. Even though it be the eleventh hour we may yet come and be received with rejoicing.

A thoughtful person once said, "Few that wander in the wrong way, mistake it for the right; they only find it more smooth and flowery and indulge in their own choice rather than approve it."

How true this seems. So many of our young people to-day, as well as many of our older friends, say that they realize that the path they are following leads away from God. They candidly tell us that they know the danger; they see the peril; they do not approve of their course and yet they continue in it.

The world has gone pleasure bent, it seems. New attractions daily supplant the old; there is left no time to stop and think seriously; they are borne along so rapidly in the maelstrom of idle pleasure that the occasional feeble effort to extricate themselves is useless.

If, like the Prodigal Son, they could but be brought to realize their lost estate, their sin and nakedness in the sight of God, they would come to Him humble, penitent, and ashamed. It is never too late until the tired heart ceases to beat. Our heavenly Father is watching and waiting. He is ever ready to meet the poor repentant soul. How gladly will He welcome those who were lost while the very angels of heaven sing for joy.

Are we not told that in heaven there is more joy over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons? Jesus said, "I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

Shippensburg, Pa.

M. E.

MORALITY AND SPIRITUALITY CONTRASTED

A very popular belief exists that spirituality is a mere development of the natural life of man, or evolution of character. This would mean that man may become better and better, finally attaining to eternal life.

The natural man seeking sanctification relies upon his own effort rather than on faith in God. He may attain to a high state of morality without this faith in God, by developing character, especially through emphasis of certain qualities, or by following certain lines of thought, even though he lack that spirit of Christ which so abounds in the New Testament. Why a virtuous man cannot grow better and better and then enter the Kingdom

of God is naturally hard for us to understand. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2: 14.

It is evident that no mental energy, no progress of civilization can endow any human being with spiritual life. Natural life and spiritual life are the gifts of God—both are mysterious. The origin of natural life remains unknown. Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the source of spiritual life. "He that hath the Son hath life."

Because of the theory (or) if man waits upon the theory, beautiful though it be, that at some distant day the world will be ready and able to accept *all* the teachings of Jesus Christ, he may lose the benefits of conviction, which only the message of Jesus Christ brings to the natural mind.

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." John 3: 7. Does this not mean that when we accept Jesus Christ we receive the spirit which will enable us to apply the teachings of Christ now? It has been inferred that the Christ spirit is premature; the masses are not ready for it; hence His teachings are applicable to the distant future. If we feel that the teachings of Christ do not apply to the present, it becomes easier for us to procrastinate in the matter of practicing these principles, and thereby we even lose the benefit of *conviction*.

The danger of encouraging church membership on the basis of morality irrespective of conversion cannot be discouraged too much. When the church offers salvation without evidence of spirituality, a very great responsibility arises. The fact that we are church members may mean very little even

though we accept the atonement of Jesus as a fundamental truth. We cannot be saved by creed or by anything we may do. There should be no glory in what we do, nor any occasion for boasting. It is well for us to remember that it is "God that giveth the increase." Not that spirituality means inactivity, but rather tranquility. A certain writer expresses it thus: "If God is adding to our spiritual stature, unfolding the new nature within us, it is a mistake to keep twitching at the petals with our coarse fingers."

We have but to preserve the attitude of true humility and whole obedience to God and our convictions, to be in a position to receive the life which comes with no visible outward signs.

Natural life to a newborn babe comes unknown to the new natural creature and no doubt the exact time of the spiritual birth may be unknown to the new spiritual creature, however manifest it may be in due time.

There are so many beautiful references in the New Testament to the birth of the Spirit in the soul of man, that it should be clear to all of us (whether we be spiritually alive or not) that moral and spiritual life are two distinct conditions.

When spiritual life was first revealed to Paul, he said, "Who art thou? . . . " the answer was, "I am Jesus."

Lancaster, Pa.

M. H. B.

OUR STEWARDSHIP

Do we possess, or are we only stewards? Does not the deed which I hold to my property clearly show that my property belongs to me? When I work and receive wages, are not those wages mine? When I buy goods or materials

and pay for them, am I not their owner? How is it that we are stewards?

It does seem as though what we call ours is really our own, yet, when we inquire into the matter we realize that it cannot be so. We see, and some of us have experienced, how soon what people think they have can be taken from them, as by death, world calamities, storm, fire, floods, earthquake, and there is no redress. There is evidence of a Power above us greater than we are.

If we wish to be enlightened on this subject, let us consult the Word of God, wherein is truth, and on which we can rely. The Psalmist David said, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein." Psalm 24: 1. And in Psalm 50: 12, God is represented as speaking to His disobedient people, Israel, and saying, "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof."

What does the Word teach us in regard to our relation to the things of this life? Christ, our Lord and Master, set us the example of not being attached to them. He said, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." St. Luke 9: 58. We do not read of Him having any possessions excepting the clothes He wore. He tells His followers, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." And again He said, "The life is more than meat." The higher life, the soul life, is of first importance, and its value is far above the value or price of material things."

We learn much from Christ's parable of the rich man who had such abundant crops that he had not room enough to store them, and who was about to tear

down his barns and build larger ones, and who felt great satisfaction in this that he was well fixed for many years to come. But God said to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God." St. Luke 12: 20, 21.

So, from the teachings of the New Testament throughout, and from our own observations on life in general, we cannot escape the conclusion that the things of this life belong to God, and that our relation to them is that of stewards.

What is a steward? Webster's first definition of a steward is "a household officer on a lord's estate." An officer is one appointed by an authority to whom he is responsible. The steward takes account of the possessions of this authority. He stores them away for safety, or sells them for gain, or distributes them for the needs of the household. He is required to give to his lord or employer a strict account of all the goods committed to his charge; none of them are his, but he is responsible for them. So it is with us. The words of St. Paul are daily verified. "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." 1 Tim. 6: 7.

This expression emphasizes the fact that we really possess nothing of this world's goods. Yet, how next to nature it is to speak of this or that as ours. And it is human nature for many of us to gather together as much as possible, and think of it as our own. Let us beware of falling under the power of *things*.

Yet, as stewards of God, we need to be faithful. We read in the Word, "Moreover it is required in stewards

that a man be found faithful." 1 Cor. 4: 2; and again we read, "If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" St. Luke 16: 12.

Here is a difficult matter or situation for weak human beings: to be faithful stewards of our Master's goods and yet not to become too much attached to them. We, who are trying to follow Christ, need to exercise ourselves daily in this line of thought: we thank God for what He gives us or permits us to have as ours, and pray that we may not think more of these than of Him who has allowed us to have them. This includes, besides goods and chattels, our dear ones, our parents, husbands, wives, children, friends, and all things that are near and dear to us in this life. In regard to them all, we should try to be able to say with Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1: 21.

Two texts from St. Luke, already quoted, give us a limit or foreshadowing of possessions greater in value than any of those which we have thus far considered. In the first text Christ refers to these possessions as "The true riches." In the second text, St. Luke 12: 21, He speaks of being "rich toward God." He instructs His followers to "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." St. Matthew 6: 20, 21. It appears evident that being rich toward God means the true riches; that is having those qualities that are highly prized by God. In the beatitudes Christ pronounces God's blessings on those dispositions of soul which are pleasing to God. In Psalms 51: 17, we

read, "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." St. Peter speaks of "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." These are the best gifts. Let us earnestly desire them and strive after them.

Some may say that if we are stewards, we should so carefully watch and guard the goods committed to our care that we would resist or fight if any one tried to take them from us. This may sound reasonable, but there is no Scripture support for this view. Our Lord and Master, whom we serve, has instructed His stewards otherwise. He has told us what to do in such a case: "I say unto you that ye resist not evil." St. Matthew 5: 39. "And of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again." St. Luke 6: 30. Not only are we not to resist the burglar, but when he has taken our goods from us, we are not to beg him to give them back to us again, much less to go after him in order to forcibly take them from him, no matter how much we may be attached to them, or how necessary they may seem to us. If the thought of revenge should come to us, as it might, we are again taught to have nothing to do with that, "For it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord." God's stewards are to be not only physically non-resistant, but mentally non-resistant as well.

Christ instructs His followers, His stewards, to be kind to those who have less than they have of this world's goods. He says, "The poor ye have always with you, and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good." St. Matthew 14: 6. When He said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth," He meant it. The best object lesson, or practical help in preventing ourselves from laying up treasure here, is not to *have* so much of

this world's goods. Should we, perchance, have inherited more than a temperate life is likely to need, may it not be that God has entrusted it to us so that we may help others who have real need? All of the household of faith, whether they have much or little of this world's goods are taught to be industrious. St. Paul says, "Study to be quiet, and to do your own business and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you. 1 Thess. 4: 11.

It is a pleasure to work so that one may have something, be it ever so little, to share with others; always remembering, however, that we are stewards, and hold our goods in trust. The gift we give is ours only in proportion as we, through love, *desire* to give it.

If the love of God is in our hearts, can we say to our fellow-creature who has need, "Depart in peace, be thou warmed and filled," and yet give him nothing to supply his need? Love is active, and its fruits will appear. "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." James 2: 17.

As faithful stewards, then, we will regard our so-called possessions as God's. It is His will that we share them, and not only that we share them, but that we *enjoy* the sharing, because we enjoy being and acting in harmony with the will of our Lord and Master. He says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." St. Matthew 5: 16.

Besides our material possessions, those who have given their hearts to God, have received from Him the Holy Spirit by virtue of which they have had the new birth and are changed creatures. They have become "fellow-citizens with the saints, and are of the household of God." Eph. 2: 19. They are then stewards of

that highest and best of all gifts, the grace of God. St. Peter instructs us on this point: "As every man has received the gift, even so minister the same, one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." 2 Peter 4: 10.

To minister is to serve, to serve is to be helpful. In other words, St. Peter means that all of the members of the household of faith are to be helpful to one another in the Spirit. The chief stewards of the grace of God are the ordained ministers, and they have the greatest responsibility. But not even the least of the household can escape his or her duty, for St. Peter's words are, "As every man has received the gift, etc." St. Paul, also, has the same thought. He says, "To do good and to communicate, forget not." To *communicate* applies to both natural and spiritual concerns or matters. The natural we have already considered.

The duty in the spirit is just as great. So, if any of us has had a glimpse of the wisdom that cometh from above, or an especially refreshing taste of the peace that passeth understanding, or an impressive revelation of God's love and care for those that trust in Him, let us not keep it to ourselves, or hide it as did the man in the parable, who hid his talent, but let us, with joy, communicate it, tell others of it, and let us talk of these spiritual matters. It will be putting our talent to usury and may be the means of strengthening a faltering faith in some who have been especially tried. We all have our trying times, and all need much encouragement in the spiritual life.

Seeing, then, that in this life we are merely stewards, we know that our stewardship will end with our life. Christ himself said, "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day, for the night cometh, when no man can work."

St. John 9: 4. We understand Him to mean that death ends our ability to take part in the affairs of this life. The day of grace or opportunity for stewardship and giving an account thereof is ended. We know that when we are gone from earth, the material things over which we had stewardship pass into other hands. We believe that we pass into a wholly spiritual life. St. Paul beautifully expresses this transference of the existence of true believers. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," 2 Cor. 5: 1; and a number of paragraphs after it.

We ourselves are daily making the account or record of our stewardship. This is a very sobering thought. Life is a serious matter; really almost as serious as death. Our daily life is our record with God. He it is who has given us as stewards, everything we have, both natural and spiritual. We need to daily ask ourselves these questions: "What are we doing with the things God has entrusted to us?" "Are we doing the best we can for the body He has given us?" "Are we sharing His goods with those who have need?" "Are we giving Him the honor for all our gifts and for what we may be able to do with them?" "Do we humble ourselves under God's mighty hand, and pray Him to forgive us all our short-comings?" "Do we love Him as a father and reverence Him as God?"

Why should we daily ask ourselves these questions? Because the term or end of our stewardship is unknown to us. It may come at any time and very suddenly. How important that we try each day to clear our record. If we, through weakness, have done wrong, let us pray for grace to ask forgiveness of the one or ones affected by it. Let us ask God,

for Christ's sake, to forgive us. We have no assurance that we will be granted another day or another hour of life. Weak and imperfect as we are if our will is one with His, if we have striven with all our powers to overcome our weak human nature, we can sleep in peace, not fearing our Father's call, for we trust in the righteousness of our dear Savior Jesus Christ to make atonement for us. Let us heed His teaching, "Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning." St. Mark 13: 36.

Lancaster, Pa.

L. L. F.

CAST THY BREAD UPON THE WATERS

"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.

"Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth."—Ecclesiastes 11: 1, 2.

In this Scripture we are reminded not only of the good that can be afforded others by ministering to their needs, but also that which will revert to ourselves through such an act. If we do not selfishly hoard our material wealth when it can bring comfort and happiness to others, then we shall "find it after many days." Our Savior told His disciples, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." In the verse preceding this we read that "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." We would infer that they use more prudent means to effect their comfort and security in this life than do the "children of light" who look upon worldly ad-

vancement as secondary in importance as compared to things spiritual.

We do not know what the future will bring forth and therefore are here instructed to "give a portion to seven and also to eight." If we are wise, we will observe conditions in the world and in a time of plenty, so use our means that they will redound to the welfare of others as well as ourselves in the future. If our wealth is expended wisely, the good accomplished will remain even after we no longer have the means to continue such acts.

But this Scripture can be applied spiritually as well as materially. The Apostle Peter wrote to the believers in Christ, "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." There are times when we least expect it that we can be the means through which the light of truth will shine for others. This encourages us to cultivate spirituality of mind for we know not when the opportunity may arise to confess faith in Christ and thus cast our bread upon the waters. We may not see immediate results from an exemplary life or from words fitly spoken, but we can be assured that our living in the Lord will be time well spent, since our acts and speech are observed over long periods of time. It is not well for us to know the results. Were they good it might be a source of gratification to self. We must overcome the spirit of pride by humble and loving service to others. Whether we give of our material goods or service through love, we may take no credit to ourselves but must remember we are still only unprofitable servants.

The waters may carry the "bread" far away from the source, and again it may be recovered by some nearby. So

we should endeavor to serve God acceptably no matter whether we are called to do so near at home or in a larger sphere of action.

Our Savior counseled the people in His Sermon on the Mount, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" We are taught, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." "For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

We read further that "the very hairs of your head are all numbered." We know estimates have been made as to the number of hairs on the heads of persons of different types whose hair varies according to color and kind. Each hair grows from its individual cell through which it is nourished. In this way each one is "numbered" or cared for so as to provide for its growth. So the child of God is not neglected but given every opportunity for spiritual growth.

We can ill bear to see others suffer for want of the necessities of life. Can we be less sensitive in giving them spiritual food or in aiding them to be clothed with righteousness? Jesus asked, "What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?" The prophet Isaiah asked, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?" We are instructed, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

So may we be willing to give ourselves unto His service; cast our bread upon

the waters, not considering whether we shall "find it after many days" or benefit from it in this world, but honor Him who is "the bread which came down from heaven."

Waynesboro, Penna. B. F. M.

THE BIBLE

Inspired Word! Thy blessed page
Is manna for the soul;
Declared by prophet, seer and sage,
God's mercies to extol.

Thou treatest of Jehovah's might,
From Whom all blessings flow;
Who said, at first, "Let there be light,"
And it was even so.

The morning stars together sang
In that bright, far-off day,
The sons of God, their voices rang
In glad, melodious lay.

God's crowning work—His creature Man
Was placed in happy state;
But he, through sin, transgressed the plan,
Was barred from Eden's gate.

Thou tellest how God promised One,
Divine life to restore,—
To found a Kingdom, such as none
Had ever known before.

In season due the Saviour came,
Salvation free to bring;
The joyous news the heav'ns proclaim,
Sweet peace the angels sing.

The blessed Jesus showed the way
Which we to life may go;
He sealed it with His blood, to pay
The debt of sin we owe.

His promises, how sure they stand,
His words of love, how sweet!
We all can reach the Heavenly land,
And our Redeemer meet!

Oh, may Thy truths each heart incline,
While through this life we go,
To seek out God's all-wise design,
Eternal life to know.

Stevensville, Ont.

W. I. T.

THE INNER LIFE

"The kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17: 21. These are words spoken by Christ to the questioning Pharisees but no doubt were intended for His true followers. It is the testimony that the inner life comes first if we would be true children of God: that there is a change of heart that does not come by observation when men are saying "Lo here! or lo there!" but it is the fruit of a new birth well described at another place as "Righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Those who followed Christ during His earthly ministry were slow to understand the nature of the kingdom He came to establish. With all His teaching about the "spirit within," their minds would turn to the deliverance from Roman rulers, which freedom they hoped the Messiah would bring, and that the Jewish people would enjoy some of the old time splendor of earthly power. No wonder He told the disciples on the road to Emmaus after His resurrection that they were slow of heart to believe the prophets. The last recorded conversation before His ascension was an answer to their inquiry whether He would at that time restore the kingdom of Israel. So little they understood Christ's mission!

The Apostle Paul was always emphasizing the need of the indwelling Spirit. To the Corinthians he wrote that they could be troubled, perplexed, persecuted and even forsaken but at the same time need not be distressed or despair, or fear being destroyed. "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." 2 Cor. 4: 16. We do not have persecution of the natural body as did the early believers but many are the trials set to prove our faith; snares laid by a crafty enemy in the form of broader beliefs or flimsy excuses

for ignoring what is required of us by our Maker. Only by the guidance of the Holy Spirit are any of us safe.

When we consider that we are accountable beings in God's sight we feel that the possession of this inner life is the great concern of our existence, especially are we impressed since we know it is possible to have the form of godliness and lack the power thereof. How wise of us to diligently encourage its cultivation. The spirit of devotion and resignation that comes by faith and the hope that has its origin in the spiritual life, unswayed by human experience, are greatly desired by the true child of God. Happy are they who learn the source of true contentment and can with an humble, prayerful spirit turn away from the worldly life with its "cunningly devised fables" that are everywhere offered in place of the comforts of true religion.

There are many dangers besetting this higher life. We are human and when we would do good "evil is present." We need to watch and pray that evil may not have the ascendancy. For instance we must guard against making idols of what we like best while here in this life and thus forget our duty to truly worship God first. An idol is anything that is loved to excess. Even grief can be a shrine, and memories of the past—hallowed though they be—can unfit us for present duty; too much regard for our loving friends or even love of self in any form may crowd out God. "Love not the world neither the things that are in the world," for if we do "the love of the Father is not in us."

We need the trials that come to us to give us strength and establish us on the true foundation of right living; to teach us that it is not in our own strength but in the acceptance of Christ as our Savior that we may cherish the promise of sal-

vation. This life has many a valley of humiliation and we all know places that are in the very shadow of death. Our lives may begin like a lovely morning but the day of life cannot be wholly clear for anyone. There are clouds and storms to disturb, as well as sunshine and gentle rains to nourish the soul. We may have what in natural judgment may seem the best of life but there will always be an aching void if God does not fill the inner sanctuary. May we always strive to shut out the loud clamor of the natural life as much as is possible and cultivate an inward calm and silence where God can speak to us and live with us. Thus we will realize more of His gracious love and have a better appreciation of the constant descent of blessings that are always falling on us. This is having the kingdom of God within.

We have need of a full knowledge of the doctrine of Christ and His Church and must obey them, but first of all we need the inner life as a foundation to build upon. Through it our hearts are linked to God in faith and love and, since our fellow believers have the same experience, there is peace and unity among us. This forms the Church as was well illustrated at Jerusalem on Pentecost. We are a brotherhood and are willing to do and sacrifice for each other in any way that can be helpful to all of us.

When we are at peace with God the thought of His love and care is like a refrain singing low in our hearts no matter what our situation in life may be. With this in view how fitting the Apostle Paul's words to the Ephesians, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith: that ye being rooted and grounded in love, . . . be strengthened in the inner man, . . . be filled with all the fulness of God."

Waynesboro, Pa.

M. C. S.

OBEDIENCE

The first requirement of a Christian is obedience to God in all things. It is a fruit of the Christian life as clearly shown in the Gospel teachings. Jesus said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments."

Our eyes and ears should be closed to the wickedness of the world, and our mind and affections be centered upon God. Hindrances to spiritual growth will then be removed and our Master can use us as clay in the potter's hands.

The soul is as a city of many doorways through which Satan might enter. The Eye and the Ear are such doorways. Temptations may assail us through the "lust of the eye and the lust of the flesh"; and the mouth may be defiled with evil words. James calls the tongue the unruly member, and Jesus said, "That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of Judgment." There is, therefore, great danger of being deceived for Satan is constant in his attacks and a vile deceiver.

Every faithful soul will heed the voice that comes from Heaven—the voice of our loving Savior, standing at our door pleading for an entrance, ready to forgive us our sins, and carry our burdens. He says: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

All that are obedient to the commandments of our Savior, will become fully apparent, when, in rapturous delight, they shall awaken upon the other shore.

Sterling, Ill.

C. F. M.

The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Psalms 34: 18.

THE REIGN OF KING AHAB

(Continued)

Elijah then departed, as the Lord had commanded him to return to the wilderness of Damascus. He found Elisha plowing with twelve yoke of oxen and as he passed by he threw his mantle upon Elisha. This seemed to have been an intimation of a prophetic call, which Elisha must have understood as he ran after Elijah, asking permission to return and take leave of his parents, and he would then follow him. Elijah said, "Go back again, for what have I done to thee?" Elisha then turned back, slew two of his oxen and made a feast for his friends. He then followed Elijah, ministering unto him and ever after remaining with him.

Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, besieged Samaria and sent threatening letters making demands of King Ahab who seemed to yield obedience to his first demands. But when Ben-hadad was emboldened to make further demands, Ahab resisted and the Assyrian armies came to attack Israel. A prophet came to Ahab saying, "Thus sayeth the Lord, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? Behold I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord."

Ahab was told how to proceed, and being obedient he obtained a great victory, but King Ben-hadad escaped with the horsemen. The prophet told Ahab to strengthen himself and prepare for another attack from the Assyrians. And they did resume their attack later. The King of Syria thought he would pursue a wiser course and decided to attack Ahab's army on the open plain, saying the God of Israel was the god of the hills and more powerful there than if met on the plains.

The Assyrian army in great numbers came confident of victory. Their num-

ber was so great they seemed to fill the plain while the army of Israel in comparison was like "two small flocks of kids."

A man of God came to Ahab saying, "Because the Syrians have said, the Lord is God of the hills but He is not of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thy hand and ye shall know that I am the Lord." The army of Israel was again victorious and the greater part of the Syrians were slain. Ben-hadad with a number of his men took refuge in the city of Aphek, where a wall of the city fell upon and destroyed twenty-seven thousand of his men.

Ben-hadad being rendered defenceless resorted to artifice to deceive Ahab. He with his servants came before Ahab, pretending to be greatly humbled. They put on sackcloth and came with ropes on their heads asking mercy and that their lives be spared. Ahab received them kindly and made a covenant with them. This was displeasing to the Lord, who had delivered Ahab's army from destruction and had also delivered the king of Syria into Ahab's hands that he might be destroyed. A prophet appeared and reproved Ahab, saying, "Thus sayeth the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life and thy people for his people." Ahab felt heavy and displeased with this message and departed to his house.

King Ahab wished to enlarge his garden and longed to obtain a vineyard owned by Naboth which the latter had inherited from his father. Ahab offered to buy it, but Naboth considering it a religious duty to preserve his inheritance, refused to sell it. His reasoning should have satisfied Ahab, but instead

he took it amiss and lay upon his bed refusing to eat.

When his wife, Jezebel, learned the cause of his displeasure she said to him, "Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? Arise, eat bread and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth, the Jezreelite." She proclaimed a fast and had men testify falsely, accusing Naboth of blasphemy against God and the king. For this Naboth was stoned to death and then Ahab took possession of the vineyard. If Ahab did not suggest the crime of Naboth's murder he evidently sanctioned it and proceeded to claim the vineyard.

The word of the Lord came to Elijah asking him to meet Ahab in the vineyard and this he did and said to him, "Thus sayeth the Lord, hast thou killed and also taken possession? In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine." Ahab then said to Elijah, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Elijah answered, "I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord. Behold I will bring evil upon thee and will take away thy posterity." "And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, the dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel."

When Ahab heard these terrible predictions he rent his clothes, put sackcloth on his flesh, fasted and went softly, probably barefoot. The word of the Lord then came to Elijah, "Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? Because he humbleth himself before me I will not bring the evil in his days, but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house."

This seems to have been the last interview between Ahab and Elijah.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

A CHILD'S STORY

My dear little children:

Jesus saw a man named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He said unto him, "Follow Me," and he arose, and followed Him. Matthew was a tax collector, and in those days the Roman government gave this office or work to rather a low class of men. Sometimes they were shrewd and did not always act honestly; they would collect all the money they could, often keeping a portion of it as their own, instead of giving it where it belonged. For this reason they were a despised class of men, and were spoken of as "publicans and sinners."

We sometimes wonder why Jesus chose His disciples from men in the most common walks of life; some were fishermen. But it was still more of a wonder when He asked Matthew to follow Him. We can only explain this by knowing that Jesus knew what was in a man's heart, and He could change the heart. They doubtless had qualities that made them most useful workers in His kingdom.

Matthew was a man of experience, he was sitting at his place of business and attending strictly to it. He had a good house and plenty to eat. Perhaps he saw that the power of greed, and love of gain were leading him to all evil, and in

his own soul he was longing for something better. Now he was asked to leave all this and follow One who had nowhere to lay His head. His acceptance of Christ's call meant sacrifice, but he had the moral courage to accept and make the venture. When Matthew became a follower of Jesus, he made a great feast in his own house and invited his friends to come and meet Jesus there. This proved to be a great shock to the people, "That He eateth with publicans and sinners." When Jesus heard what they were saying, He said, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

In reading Matthew's Gospel we notice the effects of conversion, or the results of following the teachings of Jesus. Perhaps in none of the Gospels do we find as complete and clear-cut instructions for living the Christ life as Matthew has given.

If we are willing to follow Jesus as Matthew was, our past work will not need to hinder us. Business methods and honest work are useful in the Christian life, and in using well the talent we have we may better show our love to Christ, and it may be more effective. With the peace of God attending all our efforts, we surely can be a most happy and blessed people.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.