

GOOD TIDINGS

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EDITORIAL

In these balmy Autumn days the meditative mind is impressed. The inevitable passing of the year is in striking evidence in the fading of the flowers and the falling of the leaves. The wealth of green foliage which has clothed the trees and shrubs is turning to purple, crimson, and gold, as if to display a vanishing scene of splendor before falling to their earthly grave. The song birds have almost all left for a warmer clime. A feeling of sadness may steal over the mind in contemplating these changes, which mark the passing of glorious Summer and the gradual approach of Winter. Nevertheless the lover of nature and of the ways of God can yet rejoice, for Autumn is the crowning season; it is the time for harvesting the late fruits and cereals.

Harvest time should be a season of rejoicing, for God's goodness is manifested in thus providing for our sustenance and comfort. There would be cause for fear and perplexity if this suspension of nature's activities would be final; but we are reminded that it is only temporary and in accord with the great plan of creation, and the unfailing energy of God's immutable laws, which govern and continue the various proc-

esses of His marvelous works. It reminds us of God's faithful fulfilment of His promise made long ages ago: "That while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and Summer and Winter, and day and night, shall not cease." Gen. 8: 22. In this faith and hope we can rejoice for we know that springtime will come again and nature will be reanimated and resurrected, and the earth shall again become green and fruitful.

The four seasons may typify the periods of our natural life: Spring, exhilarating youth; Summer, vigorous, complete manhood; Autumn, approaching age, a gradual decline from a virile condition into the infirmity of old age, which Winter typifies.

It would not seem strange to dread somewhat the approach of old age when viewed in the light of the infirmities and oft afflictions incident to it. We can understand how it may be to some persons an anxious period of life. If, however, the aged have accepted the Lord Jesus as their Shepherd, and if they follow and obey all His commands, they can rejoice in hope, "Then our light afflictions, which are but for a moment will work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, * * * which are eternal." This blessed hope and faith in God will cheer and comfort them, for it promises a resurrection to glory and immortality. In that Heavenly Home there will be no changing seasons, no reckoning of time, for it will be eternity! Here we behold change and decay on every hand, and death as a somber pall hangs over everything earthly, and suggests the solemn thought, that nothing here will last! In that glorified state there will be security, rest, peace, and joy forever.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

UNREST THE RESULT OF TRANSGRESSION

Heb. iv, 4—From this Scripture we infer there are two conditions, both in this world and in the world to come, one of rest and the other of unrest. The rest of this Scripture is spiritual, involving the soul and body. Man in Eden enjoyed rest of soul so long as he remained in innocency and in the divine image, and very probably rest of body, being surrounded with trees pleasant to the sight and good for food. His labor was to dress and keep the garden. But as the seeds of mortality were not yet sown and being in the image of Him who is never wearied, we may conclude he knew nothing of being tired.

Unrest is the result of transgression and of the loss of the divine image. "The way of the transgressor is hard and the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest." All the unrest in the world to-day is the effect of the same cause. If the divine law was obeyed there would be humility of mind and gratitude of heart, and a seeking not only of one's own good but also the good of others; contention, labor strikes, and warring would end. There is no unrest in Heaven because love controls all its inhabitants. In all hearts where divine love is enthroned there is peace. Love, peace and rest go together. Where love is, there is peace, and where peace is there is rest—peace of mind, rest of soul. Paradise lost implies the loss of love, of peace and of rest. Christ's mission upon earth was to restore rest to the soul. It was prophesied of Christ that "His rest shall be glorious," because He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and that patriarchs and holy men of old by faith possessed their souls in patience and rested in the hope of the great redemption. Where sin is entertained there is guilt of conscience and unrest

of soul, which fact is confirmed by history, both sacred and profane. But where there is a good conscience there is rest of soul, although there is persecution, or sickness, or bereavement, or distress, whether of body or of mind. In order to enjoy the fullness of the soul's rest in heaven it is needful that we obtain rest in this time. We have noted an accepted fact that where love is not there is no peace, and where peace is not there is no rest. No one is eligible for Heaven without adaptation to the element of Heaven, which is love. Christ's world-wide proclamation and invitation is "Come unto me and I will give you rest." The only condition is that we realize the need of His service and are willing to separate from evil. His purpose is to fit us for Heaven and not for worldly advancement, hence his non-worldly doctrine and life.

Before the redemption was wrought by Christ a true rest of soul did not exist. "The way of peace they did not know; there was the confused noise of the warrior and the garments rolled in blood." This condition resulted from the loss of the soul's rest in Eden, the effect of which was and is an enfeebling of the moral powers of the soul and a hardening of the heart. Christ restored the loss and gave power to subject man's depraved nature to the Holy Spirit.

The context of Hebrew iv, 4, leads the mind to God's covenant with Abraham, promising the Land of Canaan to His posterity after a period of four hundred and thirty years, as a resting place. After leaving Egypt they journeyed in the wilderness forty years, during which time all who came out of Egypt died except Moses, Joshua, and Caleb. Moses, their leader, was a fitting type of the administration of law. He could only lead them to the borders of the Land of Canaan, which land is a fitting

type of the rest of soul in this life. The destruction and subjugation of the Canaanites is a figure of crucifying the evil nature. It was to the Hebrews a land of rest. Moses could not enter the promised land, so the law of Moses cannot save us, it can only bring us to the border of the heavenly Canaan on earth, the entrance into which makes us eligible for Heaven. Joshua and Caleb may represent faith and love, and only those born in the wilderness, the new generation, may represent the new birth, and those coming out of Egypt and dying in the wilderness may represent the crucifying of the old man.

Chambersburg, Pa.

J. S. L.

BIBLE NOTES

King David reigned forty years over the nation of Israel, and when he was old and feeble he appointed his son Solomon to reign in his stead. When the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and said to him, "Ask what shall I give thee," he answered: "I am but a little child," and he said, "Give thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people." Because he was modest in asking, God promised him also "riches and honor."

During the whole of Solomon's forty years' reign there was peace. In this reign of peace for forty years, (which period of "forty" often occurs in the Scriptures, seemingly to indicate a full time), we have a foreshadowing of the spiritual reign of peace for a full period in Christ. Solomon spoke three thousand proverbs, and wrote one thousand and five songs. The Temple at Jerusalem was built by Solomon, and was commenced 480 years after Israel left Egypt. The material for the Temple was so well prepared beforehand that in rearing the building "there was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of

iron heard in the house while it was building." It is said of the things which happened earlier, "They are written for our admonition." As God gave the full directions for the building of the house of worship, and as the Church also is called "the house of God," we are admonished that His directions shall govern us in building and keeping the Church. The noiseless manner in building the Temple should admonish us that the antitype shall be built by members of the Church who, under the rule of love, dwell together in quiet peace. When love tempers us there is no noisy disputation, no breach of fellowship.

The Temple was overlaid with pure gold and its floors were covered with gold. Does the costly covering of the Temple foreshadow the spiritual virtues that adorn the members of the church? There was a throne of ivory overlaid with "the best gold." The costly throne may prefigure the exalted office of Christ in our present worship.

But Solomon loved many strange wives who turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not perfect with the Lord, in consequence of which the kingdom was not to be continued in his family. When such strong characters waver, well may we weaker ones take warning! Solomon was seduced by his heathen wives which the Israelites were not to marry; in the revelation made to John, the Divine, an attractive woman is made typical of false doctrine; Paul says, Satan has his ministers, claiming to be righteous; the Savior says, "There shall arise false Christs and false prophets." The Apostle John says, "Many false prophets are gone out into the world." From whence are all these deceivers? They are from the same source as "the sin which does so easily beset us." How

shall we escape? "Abide in Me." John 15.

The idolatrous king Ahab had over 800 false prophets waiting on him, while we read of only the one true prophet, Elijah, among them. He lamented: "I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life." Ahab was not a heathen king, but a reprobate Israelite. So professing Christians may have the profession without the power of godliness.

Elijah proposed a test to king Ahab—that a bullock should be given to his prophets for an offering, and one for himself to offer, which was accepted. He was meek, as we all should be, and gave the others the first opportunity to sacrifice. They strove all day without receiving fire from heaven. In the evening the true prophet arranged his altar and immediately the sacrifice was consumed. Having signal evidence, the people proclaimed faith in the true God, and the false prophets were slain; but the idolatrous queen Jezebel made Elijah flee for his life, and in solitude an angel ministered unto him.

Elijah met Elisha and cast his mantle on him, after which he filled the prophetic office, and Elijah rode to Heaven in a chariot of fire.

The King of Israel and the King of Judah united their armies to take the city of Ramoth from the King of Syria, and as it was a custom for the kings to seek counsel from God through the prophets in important undertakings, the idolatrous Ahab inquired of his many false prophets, who spoke favorably; but they inquired also of Micaiah, a true prophet, who counseled unfavorably. His prophecy came true and Ahab lost his life. It is said that a lying spirit proposed to speak through the false prophets. The example teaches us that Satan then, as now, had his emissaries.

Naaman, the head of the Syrian army,

having leprosy was informed that Elisha could cure him. He went to him with a retinue and pomp. The prophet by his servant gave the great man word what he is to do. Naaman was disappointed in having the word only, without ceremony, and was ready to despise the word of the prophet, but he heeded the entreaty of his servant to obey and was healed. We have the word of promise to obey and shall not seek righteousness in ceremonies of our own conception. The prophet refused the gifts offered by Naaman, but his covetous servant, by lying, secretly obtained them, and incurred the plague of leprosy for life. When we do acts of mercy we should not expect a reward. It is sufficient to have an approving conscience. We are cheerfully to do all the good we can as a service we owe to others.

In the reign of Josiah, King of Judah, the Book of the Law was found in the Temple, which the king had read to his people, and he had the places of false worship destroyed. They had "burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven." He restored the keeping of the Passover in its purity, so that there had not been such a Passover for many centuries.

As obedience to God's word had been neglected for centuries so, we are impressed, such neglect is now the sorrowful state of a great portion of worshippers. Owing to transgressions, Jerusalem was doomed for more than six centuries before the time of Christ. The Lord declared: "I will cast off this city, Jerusalem, which I have chosen and the house of which I said, 'My name shall be there.' " The utter destruction of the Temple took place seventy years after the birth of Christ; this He forcibly foretold during His ministry. The

place where the Holy Ghost filled the souls of believers with that love "whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" became the scene of deadly hatred against the Author of what now is true worship, namely, the worship of God in spirit and in truth. "The Father seeketh such to worship Him."

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

THE DANGER OF BEING DECEIVED

The fact that men everywhere are inclined to worship God confirms the truth of Paul's words, "The grace of God has appeared unto all men." It is evident that God would have all men turn from their evil, selfish ways so apt to lead to discord and often to the painful severing of friendly ties, accompanied—and rightly too—by remorse of conscience. God offers instead redemption in Christ with a hope of Heaven.

From the beginning man transgressed God's holy law. He may realize that he has failed to keep that law and may make many efforts to do good to please God and find favor with Him. When he offends his fellowman he may deal kindly with him and his efforts to make amends will have a soothing effect, and time too will help to heal all wounded feelings. But with God only humble repentance for past sins and a prayerful heart desiring to be obedient to His will can find acceptance.

For the humble penitent, Christ is Savior and intercessor. He came to infuse His Good Spirit into every one who will ask for it feeling the great need. Self-knowledge will create an anxious desire to renounce the old selfish spirit of pride, envy, hatred, and all evil that brought with it remorse of conscience. Love will rule the heart and mind which

have been renewed by the Spirit of Christ. This is the new birth or conversion.

To the carnal mind the new birth is a mystery. But to the spiritual, it is simply accepting with a willing heart God's word in confidence and faith. Many souls are deceived by carnal reason into a service of works and seek comfort from spiritual advisors without carefully and prayerfully reading God's Word. They are often counselled to live correctly, believe on Jesus, be baptized and observe the ordinances, with the promise that the Lord will accept them. They may find comfort in following this counsel and may rejoice and feel assured in their faith just as those do who have a living faith in the Gospel. But there must be a sure ground for faith, and that is God's Word. It is the guide. When it speaks one free then only is he free, and then only has he the sure word of promise.

Solomon well knew the danger of being deceived. In Proverbs he wrote, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Prov. 14: 12. The Savior points out two ways; the strait gate and narrow way with few to travel thereon, the wide gate and broad way with many to travel on it. The wide gate opens on the way of carnal reason, that which seemeth right but the end thereof is death. The narrow way is the way of self-denial which leads unto eternal life. The popular profession of religion does not include the cross of self-denial. It finds no harm in many pleasures, idle pastimes and amusements. It may well be called the broad and easy way. It is no wonder that many travel there. If they would compare this easy way with the self-sacrificing doctrine of Christ and believe that the word which Christ has spoken shall

be the judge in the last day, they would become fearful and seek the strait gate.

The true religion of Christ calls not only for faith in Christ, but an open confession of Him before the world. Any one who enters the gate of Christ Jesus on the narrow way is ready and willing to make amends for his past wrong-doing, to deny himself of the many gratifications of the natural mind, to reject pride, envy and hatred and to bear the possible scorn of former associates. He knows the value of a conscience void of offense, and a consequent peace that passes understanding. Such peace was the comfort that Paul enjoyed nearing the end of life. He could fittingly say, "O death where is thy sting?" He had surrendered all, felt he was pardoned through faith in Christ, was willing to obey His Spirit and walk in agreement with His Gospel. The promise of heaven for him after this life, removed the sting of fear in death. He could well exclaim too, "O grave where is thy victory?" for by faith he knew that the grave was only a resting place for the body and at the final call the spirit would be clothed with a body immortal and he would hear the plaudit, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

The foolish virgins in our Lord's parable were deceived for they had lamps without oil. May no one be so deceived as to have a hope without a change of heart. A change from self-love to a love for God and His Word is the test. His Spirit will teach all who are willing to obey, to strive to overcome self; and it creates unity of heart and mind among His followers. Born of the same Spirit they become a true brotherhood in Christ. The bond of union is stronger than death. They are no more their own; they are bought with a price; they are Christ's. His Spirit rules them and prompts them to obey His com-

mands. By receiving the ordinance of baptism they give testimony to their entrance into the visible Church, that peaceable Kingdom on earth foretold by the prophets. They confess to the unity of the Spirit by partaking of the communion as Christ commanded.

Without a labor of love and a practice of the precepts that Christ and His Apostles gave, the very elect could be deceived and led into a false communion. Christ came to restore unity and peace, and prayed for perfect oneness among His followers. St. John 17. He outlines the plan to be followed when there are trespasses and failings in the brotherhood. St. Math. 18. The Church must be preserved pure and united. Paul teaches that the many are made one in Christ and are "one bread and one body." He further wrote to the Corinthian church that if they were not united and would observe the communion they would be partakers of the devil's table. It would be only a mockery and pretense of unity. It might seem reasonable to some that no one is responsible for his brother's wrongdoing, and that when he communes he communes with his God. But according to God's Word all are responsible in the Church of Christ to help preserve its unity, peace, and purity. All must be obedient to Christ's Spirit and teaching else they are none of His.

Lancaster, Pa.

J. K.

THE TRUE PURPOSE OF LIFE

No doubt every intelligent person will agree with the Savior's reply to the question,—“Which is the first commandment of all?” “Master thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but He: And to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all

burnt offerings and sacrifices.” Mark 12: 32, 33.

There was significance in burnt offerings, or God would not have required them. The people from whom they were required were a literal people, their inheritance was natural, their reward was natural, their weapons were natural, their offerings were natural. Had all understood the significance of the offerings, they would have unitedly accepted Christ when He came. They all looked for a Messiah, and hoped for a Redeemer, and this was an inspiration to their service. Had they rightly understood the design of these ceremonies, or been under the influence of the right spirit, they would all have accepted Him when He came, but only a very few did. As it is written,—“He came unto His own, and His own received Him not, but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.”

Being a literal people, they observed these ordinances in a legal sense, and in the hope that this service would make them acceptable to God; but the sacrifices commanded were designed to impress them with the need of a Savior, with the need of an offering much higher. Had they comprehended their design, they would have realized their inability to save themselves, and that these sacrifices were only a figure, shadow or a symbol of the Savior. With the hope of being saved by their works, and being void of faith, they could not accept Christ when He came, as the aged Simeon received Him.

Mankind were incapacitated to measure up to the high standard set forth by Christ to the scribe, but there was always a consciousness of right and wrong, and had they always heeded what was right, Christ's message would have been more acceptable. Then it can be said that the requirement of these services was a reflection of God's love

and mercy toward man by continually holding in view the relation existing between the creature and the Creator who is worthy of honor.

The true purpose of life always has been, and ever will be, to honor God supreme, and it can only be accomplished by obedience. While the faithful observer of the sacrifices under the law was a fruit of faith, yet they were only a figure or type of the true sacrifice of Christ which would change man's relation to God.

Prior to Christ's sacrifice all mankind stood in the same relation to God. They were dead in trespasses and sins, and no sacrifice except the offering of Christ could change their condition.

Here is manifest the condescending love of God in providing a means that would satisfy the just demands of the law, and restore the lost love and image.

If the *promise of restoration* was sufficient ground to demand literal sacrifices as a witness to their faith, how much more responsible are mankind since the promise has been fulfilled. Before Christ's coming into the world, the faithful ones could only look forward in hope to what Christ would do, and since He was here, the faithful ones look back and rejoice in what He did. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Cor. 6: 11.

Since by His blood we are cleansed, and by His stripes we are healed, truly we are debtors to Him, and now the true purpose of life is to honor Him by obedience to what He has taught. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." The Apostle says,—His commandments are not grievous. It was through love that He gave Himself for the Church, and through love the commandments were given for the preservation of the

Church, so that it can be presented to Him a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Appreciating the true purpose of life, the believer will desire to have the same love for the Church as its Author has. As the Church is the bride of Christ, it naturally is one united body, hence it cannot be divided into sects. The Apostle commanded to withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly. Divisions among professed Christians is disorder. If it is a duty to withdraw from a disorderly brother, it surely is a duty to withdraw from all disorder, which proves why Christians withdraw from all worship which is not in agreement with the doctrine of Christ.

Lemoyne, Pa.

J. I. M.

SACRIFICE

The first sacrifice mentioned in the Bible is that which Cain and Abel offered to God. Although there is no record of a law commanding them to engage in such service, it seems that God implanted a disposition in man to reverence Him and to offer something to Him in the way of worship and thanksgiving.

Cain was a tiller of the soil and brought the fruit of the ground as an offering. Abel was a keeper of sheep and "brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof." It is said the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering, but to Cain and his offering He had no respect. It seems at that early day as now, the spirit in which an ordinance or a duty was performed determined either its acceptance or rejection by God. The Apostle says, "By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous." Abel believed God and had faith in the promised Re-

deemer, or the "woman's seed that should bruise the serpent's head." The lamb he slew and offered prefigured the Lamb, Christ Jesus, who eventually was slain to take away the sin of the world. Faith in this promise, at that age of the world, was counted for righteousness. Cain's offering consisted of the fruit of the ground and his tillage, representing his own labor and emblematic of the carnal mind. It was not offered by faith, and was therefore rejected. This led him into such a hateful and malicious spirit that he slew his brother Abel; and he became the first murderer in the annals of history.

During the succeeding years the righteous lineage continued to offer sacrifices to God—Noah and his descendants, Abraham and his posterity, Job, Melchisedec and many others. The patriarchs were very zealous in performing the service which showed their abiding faith in God. Abraham did not falter or ask any questions, nor did he consider filial love, when God asked him to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac. His faith, no doubt, may have been severely tested, but it remained firm and he was called the "father of the faithful" and "the friend of God."

Finally God gave the law to Moses, which contained not only the Ten Commandments, but numerous other commands; and also a wonderful system of sacrifices and gifts which they were commanded to offer in remembrance of their fallen state, to show their faith in the promise of God, and to secure, through obedience, His blessing. The priesthood was also established, and the priests were ordained of God, not only to teach the people and pray for them, but also to offer sacrifices for their own sins, and for those of the people. Lev. 4, 5, 6. These sacrifices which were commanded and the office and service of

the Priesthood were all typical of the supreme sacrifice of Jesus in offering His sinless body for the sins of the world, and of His becoming an "High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec."

Israel did not continue to offer sacrifices to God in faith and sincerity. Many of them became idolaters and perverted the purpose of sacrifice by offering to the idols which they worshiped. Many of their kings led the way, and even Solomon, seduced by his heathen wives, disobeyed God and prostituted his great wisdom and talents in offering sacrifices to their false gods. In their sacrilegious zeal they even became murderers by offering their innocent children to Moloch. It seems lamentable that God's chosen people should so utterly forsake Him and choose to sacrifice to dumb idols!

Now we are under the spiritual dispensation, for Christ fulfilled the law with all its holy requirements, its carnal commandments, its sacrifices and ceremonies, its types and shadows. By His death and resurrection "He brought in a better hope by which we draw nigh unto God." "He abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." 2 Tim. 1: 10. All are now invited to come and obtain eternal life; but we are called upon to "offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

In order to be qualified to engage in this service we must first become spiritually minded; we must be born again through faith in the sacrifice that Jesus offered for us. We now become a fruitful tree and bear the fruit of the Spirit: "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance." Gal. 5: 22, 23. These are spiritual sacrifices which will be acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. The

Apostle says, "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." Truly it is a reasonable service, for we receive all from God, and by His grace, love and mercy we have been saved, so why should we not cheerfully sacrifice and dedicate all to Him? The Apostle further says, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own." 1 Cor. 6: 19. It was not a temple of the Holy Ghost when we were dead in trespasses and sin; we had to awake and arise from the dead; the heart had to be purged by the fan of God's righteousness, and purified by the fire of His love. Then only could we offer up acceptable sacrifices.

How vain and presumptuous it would be to offer sacrifices to God, and expect His favor or conciliation if our heart is not thus sanctified! Though we might bring an offering of good works, an honest upright life, works of charity and kindness—it would only be a carnal sacrifice and would not be acceptable. Again, if we would offer in a self-righteous spirit, through a false zeal or a vain hope, minus obedience to the word and devoid of "faith that worketh by love," neither we nor our offering would be acceptable to God. We would be sacrificing to idols and not to God. We would be no better off than idolatrous Israel.

Since sacrifice also signifies giving up something or suffering loss for the sake of obtaining something else, it follows that we must make self-sacrifices continually; not only on our own behalf, but also for our brethren and all men. Since love and sacrifice are closely allied, when we love God we are willing to give up all for Christ's and the Gospel's

sake, to be His disciples. We are willing to deny ourselves, and take up our cross and follow Him. To love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them which despitefully use and persecute us, we must invariably make sacrifices, but our reward is that we are "the children of our Father which is in heaven." By thus making sacrifices we receive the approval of an enlightened conscience, and secure peace and rest for the soul. We have the promise of receiving "manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." Let us then through faith, do good, and to communicate forget not; "for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Heb. 13: 16.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED

"Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in Me." John 14: 1.

These words were spoken by Jesus, to comfort His disciples who were troubled by what He had told them of His being betrayed, of His death, and of His leaving them. He told them, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know and the way ye know."

Thomas then said, "Lord we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" Jesus then replied, "I am the way, and the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." The disciples had not yet received that Spirit which was promised, that would lead them into all truth and

bring to their remembrance what He had told them.

We to whom the light has been more fully revealed and who are blessed with understanding hearts may become discouraged or troubled as we journey Zionward; when we consider the purity and holiness of God, and compare our frail humanity with the same, we realize how often we come short. We become troubled, and fear we may not stand before Him. Those who have not yet fully yielded their wills to God may become discouraged. It is only after we resign our will unreservedly to the Lord and feel the power of His atoning grace that we can understand. We can then feel and realize the depths of His amazing love, and the merits of His atoning blood which was shed on Mount Calvary for you and for me.

Christ pleads with all men to come unto Him and heed His call. Those who learn of Him realize they have no righteousness of their own to merit salvation, but Christ through His atoning blood, becomes their righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Our Savior pronounced woes upon those of the Scribes and Pharisees who boasted of their own righteousness, and loved to be seen and rewarded of men for their good works. He said, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven." They observed the letter of the law, and felt justified in themselves.

The Savior said that He came not to judge the world, but to save it, and the words that He spoke will be our judge—the word that is sharper than any two edged sword * * * and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Again He says, "I stand at the door and knock, if any man will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with Me." "He that cometh unto Me I will in no wise

cast out." The way is open for all, but only those who repent of their sins, and are willing to renounce the world with its allurements, obey His voice, and follow Him can have hope in His promises which are "Yea and Amen." The prophet in Isaiah 66:2 says, "But to this man will I look, even to Him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word."

Faith is essential. Thomas was not with the disciples when Jesus first appeared unto them after His resurrection. He was doubtful when they told Him that Jesus had arisen and that they had seen Him. Thomas said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." After eight days Jesus again appeared to them and Thomas was with them. Jesus then said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy fingers and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless but believing." Thomas then said, "My Lord and my God." Jesus said, "Thomas, because thou hast seen, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." We read in Hebrews, 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that cometh to Him must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

Why should we become discouraged or troubled when we have such precious promises? Let us look forward by faith, the promise is that we shall reap if we faint not. The promise to the faithful should inspire us all to strive to do His will and walk in obedience.

The Apostle in Rev. 21 gives a beautiful description of the Heavenly Jerusalem. Of its walls of jasper, its streets of gold and its gates of pearl. The city had no need of the sun to shine in it,

the glory of God did lighten it, the Lamb was the light thereof. "The gates of the city shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there."

New Hamburg, Ont.

A. H.

LIFE'S JOURNEY

Our life may be compared to a journey that begins when we are born into the world and ends when we pass into the grave. With some the journey is brief, while others attain to the full allotted time of man or longer. Through the fall of our first parents in the Garden of Eden, God's decree to man was, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." Gen. 3:19. Because of this, self-preservation is enjoined upon the whole human family. God provides the means for this, as man must depend upon and use His creation for sustenance of life and upon His promise of seed-time and harvest.

Life, however, also brings a spiritual obligation which none can evade as we are eternal debtors to God who gave us life. Man, being a dual creature, possesses an immortal soul which must return to its Maker. Our opportunity is that we can attain to peace in this world and rest for the soul beyond the grave. God commands us, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" promising that if we seek, we shall find and possess treasures of a more enduring nature which will be laid up in heaven for us. He wills that all shall seek salvation, and in love, provides for us a way and a highway. The former through the medium of His only begotten Son, the latter lighted by His revealed and Holy Word; for our Savior declares, "He that followeth Me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

By nature, many of us are imitators or followers, a strong characteristic of the child appearing in maturity, unconsciously affecting us in many ways. But the child of God is called to be a follower of the meek and lowly Savior and to desire to walk in His footsteps and to be led by His Spirit. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God." Rom. 8:14.

It is undeniable that, if our spiritual journey has promise of attaining unto eternal life there must be proper preparation and a consistent walk enduring unto the end. True repentance, conversion and regeneration constitute the sure foundation, resulting in the newborn creature. And nothing short of this is acceptable before God, as Jesus answered and said unto Nicodemus, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3.

By the power of regeneration through the Spirit, we become willing to sacrifice our carnal affections and sinful lives, bear the cross, fight the good fight of faith, and strive to bring forth the acceptable fruits of righteousness. All this Christ came to give us power to accomplish. He says, "Come unto Me," graciously and lovingly inviting us; but He also says, "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." Matt. 11:28, 29, 30.

We are now no longer under the condemnation of God's Holy Law but under grace. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." Rom. 8:1.

Life is promised through the Spirit of Him who calls all by His grace and has said, "The words that I speak unto

you they are spirit and they are life." God's righteous law is declared to be a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ; but what promise have we if it fails in its intended purpose? Then Christ would have died in vain. There can be no true spiritual life outside of Christ, neither can we learn of Him or be taught by His Spirit of Truth unless we have yielded our will fully unto the whole counsel of God. He that hears His word and obeys it journeys wisely, "having the promise of the life that now is and that which is to come." Do we recognize the importance of a proper preparation that we be accounted worthy to receive the gift of eternal life?

Williamsville, N. Y. W. A. K.

LOOKING TO OURSELVES

"Look to yourselves that we lose not those things which we have wrought but that we receive a full reward." 2 John 18.

The aged Apostle reminded the faithful to be diligent in their calling so that they might attain to a full reward. He was in the Master's service a long time when he thus counseled and reminded the followers of Christ that to gain the victory they must strive lawfully. He included himself in giving the counsel saying that "*we* lose not those things which *we* have wrought."

All who enter upon the narrow way are in full accord with the Apostle's counsel because they realize that there is an influence within and without that tends to lead them astray. The Apostle John was anxious about the one thing needful which the Savior said shall never be taken away. Truly it shall never be taken away as long as we are "looking to ourselves."

Thus we realize that this is a probationary state and that our faith is to be

tried. The Apostle Peter makes use of the illustration that as gold is tried in the fire and each time is freed from dross so also our faith is being tried. Each trial of life serves to fit us for the good fight of faith which we must valiantly wage if we would attain the full reward. As the Apostle Peter further wrote for our benefit: "That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

In this age of the world there is so much that is interesting to the natural mind. The wonderful progress that is being made in the arts and sciences claims attention. Probably there never was a time when so many opportunities were offered to gratify the natural senses. Countless forms of amusement have been invented and the youth of this day is seemingly more than ever exposed to temptation. We are often moved to pity those who are to "save themselves from this untoward generation."

But the life of this world with its follies and pastimes is manifest to us when we "come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, * * * but speaking the truth in love may grow up into Him in all things which is the head even Christ." Such a condition as set forth by the Apostle Paul to the Ephesians was the joy of the aged Apostle John for he said, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in truth." It is this "oneness" or unity of spirit that the Savior emphasized in His high priestly prayer and that is the standing testimony of dis-

cipleship,—“That the world may believe that thou hast sent me and the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one.”

In the parable of the ten virgins we are cautioned against formalism. We might have that which is typified by the lamp—the outward form of godliness—but lacking the oil or true spirit of light and love we could not be admitted to the marriage supper of the Lamb. So without the true spirit of unity and peace we cannot commune with God.

Shortly before His crucifixion the Savior said, “I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine till that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of God.” He no doubt referred to the time when the communion service would be established among His followers—those who were born again, born of the incorruptible seed of the word of God which abideth forever.

Well did the Apostle Paul know human nature, its failings and shortcomings, when he warned the Corinthian brethren before partaking of the communion: “Let a man examine himself and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.” In his second letter to the Corinthians he counseled them to examine themselves whether they be in the faith and prove themselves.

The importance of self-examination is frequently brought to our attention in the New Testament, and we would call to mind the admonition to the Hebrews, “See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh, for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven;” and again in the verse following our text, “Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God. He that abideth in the

doctrine of Christ he hath both the Father and the Son.”

May we at all times be impressed with the Apostle’s counsel, “Look to yourselves that we lose not the things which we have wrought but that we receive a full reward.”

Lima, Ohio.

U. S.

STILL LEARNING

Learning, learning, every day
As the year’s glide fast away.
Small the knowledge we have known
When the unexplored is shown.

Learning not alone from books,
Often from the singing brooks;
Works of nature are so vast,
And in such profusion cast.

Learning by experience too
What is best and what is true;
Bringing us the fruit and flower
Of a life-time study hour.

Learning that the mind of man,
In God’s great creative plan,
Is a gift from Him above,
Teaching us to seek His love.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

THE SABBATH DAY

It is recorded that in six days God created the world, and all that is thereon, the elements, the firmament and all His mighty works. “And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made: and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he rested from all His work which God created and made.” (Gen. 2: 2-3.)

From that time forth man was commanded to respect the seventh day as a day of rest, in which he should withdraw his mind from earthly interests, and meditate upon his relation toward God. When the children of Israel were upon

their long journey to the promised land, they were sustained forty years in the wilderness by gathering and eating manna, which was sent daily; but they were to gather each day for that day only, except on the sixth day when they laid by enough for the sixth and seventh days. No manna could be found upon the seventh day, but the double supply did not spoil, because God ordained that the people should not labor on this day, although recognizing that the needs of the body should be cared for.

Then came the Law, given to Moses upon Mount Sinai, under which the keeping of the Sabbath was strictly enjoined. Ex. 20: 10. The penalty for disobedience was death, Ex. 31: 14, no work being permitted, and none being allowed to go from home more than a Sabbath Day's journey (about a mile). They could not so much as kindle a fire in their dwellings. The people were to engage themselves in solemn meditation, in study of the Law, and in assembling in the service of the Lord. The seventh year was a Sabbatical year, or holy year, in which the land and its inhabitants were to rest; and the year following the seventh Sabbatical year was the year of Jubilee, in which special feasts were held, debts were forgiven, and servants freed.

In due season the Savior came, fulfilled his earthly mission, and was crucified on the sixth day of the week, which corresponds to our Friday. It will be observed that, at this time, the Sabbath day was the seventh or last day of the week. In the Jewish reckoning of time the day began at sunset. Our Savior expired about the ninth hour (three o'clock), so the brief time between His burial and sunset was counted as the first day He remained in the earth. The second day was the Sabbath Day, or our Saturday. When the women went to the sepulchre early the following morn-

ing, He had already risen, this now being the third day since His crucifixion.

Although the day of the Savior's resurrection was the first day of the week, or the day following the Sabbath, it soon became recognized as a day of even greater importance than the Sabbath Day. Its weekly return was heralded as the Lord's Day, marking the time when God re-created man, or made possible the re-establishment of the lost principle in his heart. Finally the Lord's Day was adopted permanently as the first day of the week, and all the sanctity of the Jewish Sabbath was transferred to this day.

The Jews, who still look for the Messiah, continue to hold our Saturday as the Sabbath Day, and there are people other than Jews, who lay great stress upon the observance of the Sabbath Day, insisting that we ought to keep the seventh, and not the first day of the week.

We would point out, as the Savior did, that "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." When we attempt to keep any of the precepts of the Law, without understanding the underlying principle, we are actuated by a spirit of legalism. In attempting to fulfill the Law, we come under its curse, Gal. 3: 10, and it becomes a savor of death unto death.

The Apostle Paul warns against the keeping of holy days, new moons or sabbath days. Why? Because of the danger of our trusting in the observance of these days as meriting the favor of God, and thus making idols of them. One believer may be more impressed in conscience than another in such matters; one being inclined to regard a certain day "to the Lord," another esteeming every day alike. Each should be "fully persuaded in his own mind," but not contentious in his views, lest he put a stumbling block in his brother's way. Paul would have us to understand that

these things are not essential to salvation, but rather than to offend one another we should remember the weak brother, as he himself says, "If meat cause my brother to offend I will eat no meat."

The believer in Christ is no longer under the Law, but under Grace; hence, in a Gospel sense, we are not obligated to keep the Sabbath any more than to practice circumcision, or the offering of sacrifices. The objection might be raised, "Are we not obligated to keep the other commands of the Law—thou shalt not kill, steal, or commit adultery? If not one jot or tittle of the Law shall pass away, how can we be free?"

We answer, that love is the fulfilling of the Law, Rom. 13: 10. If we have the true love of God in our hearts, we need not be restrained by laws, because we will be harmless, kind, non-resistant, and will shrink from violating any Gospel precept, much more from transgressing the laws of God or of man.

The law is necessary in the world to keep order and to punish evil-doers. Since the laws of our countries forbid laboring on Sunday or the Lord's Day, except under certain conditions, we will respect those laws for conscience' sake. Moreover, we appreciate Sunday, as a day in which we can cease from toil, and refresh our souls with the means God has provided for our comfort.

It is sad to observe that, among many thousands in the world, Sunday has come to be a day of recreation, of pleasure, and even of business; so that they fail to use the day according to God's design. We should not be "Sunday Christians" only, nevertheless when we become so absorbed in the gaieties of this life that we do not take even one day out of the seven to reflect soberly, we are certainly drifting farther from God.

Jesus Christ, the sinner's Friend, is the Lord of the Sabbath, who has ush-

ered in that rest for the soul, of which the Jewish Sabbath was typical. Those who accept Him in faith, and obey His teachings, will finally enter that blessed rest which is prepared for the people of God.

Stevensville, Ont.

W. I. T.

BRIEF NOTES

The passing of time brings many changes into every human life; and with these changes come problems, in the solution of which there is a constant need of the guiding influence of the Divine Spirit. But its influence is always preceded by self-abasement, self-denial, meekness and lowliness of heart. Its effect then is gentle, soothing, and inspiring in all conditions of life, and it becomes the source of an ever-abiding and enduring peace.

* * * *

The desire of the Psalmist was, "Search me, O God, and know my heart," and "lead me in the way everlasting"; and, in deeper prayer, "From the end of the earth will I cry to thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

This is the expression of a prayerful frame of mind, which in Christian living requires constant self-examination to ascertain and know our motives and the sincerity of our desires; whether we are willing to make every sacrifice required so that we may do the will of our heavenly Father, and be led by His Spirit in "the way everlasting." Otherwise our prayer, however zealously rendered, is inconsistent and unavailing.

* * * *

The question has been asked, "What is living?" and many answers given, all involving the idea of "service before self," as briefly expressed. But the service we may render to our fellow man and to God is the result of living, rather

than living itself; and the nature of the service we render or fail to render, may indicate the manner of life we live or lack.

Living may more properly consist in acquiring the power to render this unselfish service, which is made possible when the love of God—divine life, lost by transgression, is restored, and dominates the heart, resulting in a more abundant expression in act. It is in fulfilment of the Savior's declaration, "I came that ye may have life and have it more abundantly."

* * * *

In business and social contact with our fellow men we sometimes meet those who, having fine natural traits and pleasing dispositions, impress us as almost angelic. Why not when man was created only a little lower than the angels?

While such fine traits, combined with charitable acts, are often referred to as Christian conduct, this is not necessarily so; for these are often acquired by inheritance, culture and training. On closer acquaintance we may always find that every one is marked with sin, and in need of a Savior and Redeemer. It is only when we become willing to take up the Cross of Christ, deny ourselves and follow Him in meekness and lowliness of heart, and are then subject to the promptings of His Spirit, that the resulting virtuous and righteous living really is Christian conduct.

* * * *

The passing of the pleasing summertime should be an incentive to greater homage and service to the great Creator, as the Psalmist in reverent acknowledgment declared: "Thou hast made the summer."

The Creator's glory is reflected in the sun shining in its strength; in the winds that blow; in the green verdure on the

hills and in the vales, and in the fruits and flowers which are still, in the language of the poet, "As fair as Eden had."

Murmuring streams, hurrying on over obstructions to their lower level, and there intermingling in peace and tranquillity, speak to us of humility and self-abasement, which must be characteristic in Christian living; while the glare of the lightning and the muttering of thunders convey to us a sense of the Creator's majesty and power.

Likewise autumn should solemnly impress us, for even, as it is said, "The fall of a leaf is a whisper to the living."

* * * *

It was Satan who, as a mighty angel, imbibing pride and insubordination to the divine plan and purpose, revolted in heaven, wrought folly in Paradise, and now so extensively holds mankind under his dominion and power. The result is manifest in the world about us, in pomp and vain display and in the instituting and following of the changing fashions of the world.

These testify to wrong desires cherished in the heart, calculated by this arch-enemy of all that is good, to frustrate or hinder God's purpose and the influence of His grace in the heart.

Upon a close analysis and serious contemplation are we not impressed by the awful havoc which this exalted spirit, cast out of heaven, has wrought among mankind?—havoc that is expressed in anguish and suffering, heart-ache, sorrows and regrets.

Our personal responsibility should be a serious thought; for we are created in the image of our Maker with high endowments and a lofty purpose and design in our lives, and the privilege of choosing to live our lives in fulfilment thereof, or to yield ourselves to the service of him who would make us partici-

pants with himself of his fallen estate and eternal condemnation.

Then why?—why, O why!—would we be “conformed to this world” when “the fashion of this world passeth away” so soon? How many are groaning, grievously burdened and heavy-laden while rest is freely offered: “Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me: for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

This spirit of exaltation so manifest in the world, and that of humility and abasement in Christian living ever stand in contrast and are eternally irreconcilable. As our choice of service is in this life so it will remain; yea, eternally so! Serious thought.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. How can I know the Bible is true?

A. By diligently reading its pages and obeying the grace of God which appears unto every one. Titus 2: 11.

Q. What is the greatest sin?

A. The sin for which there is no forgiveness is evidently the greatest sin. “Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” Matt. 12: 32.

Q. What is the first thing to do in becoming a Christian?

A. To obey the convicting grace of God and to repent. Jesus preached: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe the Gospel.” Mark 1: 15.

Q. Are dancing, card playing, and theater going wrong for Christians?

A. These diversions and carnal practices belong to the world. The Christian is chosen out of the world, and therefore no more indulges “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, for these are not of the Father, but are of the world.” 1 John 2: 16.

Christians crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. Gal. 5:24.

Q. How shall I overcome the world?

A. Only those who have been born again, and obey Jesus, can overcome the spirit of evil in the world. He gives them power to deny themselves, and take up their cross and follow Him, “For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.” 1 John 5: 4, 5.

Q. Must I join the church to become a Christian?

A. Christ said to Nicodemus: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3: 3. Repentance and conversion constitute the spiritual birth; this means believing in Jesus, as it is said, “and he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” These therefore are followers of Christ and are Christians, having been baptized with the Holy Ghost. They now are constrained through love and obedience to lay off an outward testimony by water baptism that Christ has redeemed and saved them, and they solemnly vow that they will obey and follow Him until death. This ordinance initiates them into the visible Church. The Church was ordained to preserve and maintain the spiritual life through the loving fellowship, unity, and cooperation of its members; but it was never intended to be a direct means of salvation.

Q. How is “Wisdom justified of her children?”

A. Wisdom in this Scripture may be applied to Christ Himself, “who of God is made unto us wisdom.” 1 Cor. 1: 30. This is the Wisdom that conceived and perfected the great plan of salvation for which Christ was ordained from eternity to accomplish. He performed many

miracles to convince the Jews that He was the Messiah. But many rejected Him and did not believe; they set at naught His counsel and ignored His marvelous works. When He was considering the evil treatment that He and John the Baptist received at the hands of the Jews, He yet could triumphantly say: "But Wisdom is justified of her children." This was equivalent to saying, "though I am denounced and evilly treated by the unbelieving Jews, yet I am, nevertheless, justified by the children, or those who have accepted Me." The children are justified by wisdom or faith in Jesus, and wisdom, or Jesus, is justified and proved to be the Messiah and Savior of the world by the children, or all regenerated souls.

Q. Is the Tree of Life a type of Christ?

A. After the transgression, Adam and Eve were debarred from access to the Tree of Life, "Lest they eat of the fruit and live forever." God "placed at the east end of the garden cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life." Gen. 3: 24. The transgression separated man from God and the way to eternal life was closed. In the fulness of time, according to promise, Christ came. "He brought life and immortality to light"—thus He opened the new and living way. He removed the flaming sword; "He blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." Col. 2: 14. Man could again, through repentance and conversion, have access to God and receive eternal life. Since eternal life can be obtained only through Christ, He may fitly be called the Spiritual Tree of Life. The following scriptures evidently refer to Christ: "To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the

Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Rev. 2: 7. "Blessed are they that do His commandments that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter through the gates into the City." Rev. 22: 14.

THE POWER OF FAITH

Many people came to hear Christ and followed Him from place to place. Some may have had faith as they heard His teachings and waited for His miracles, others not. It was then as it is now that only they who accepted what Christ taught received a lasting benefit. "To as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God." John 1: 12.

To be Christians we need living faith to keep us devoted to God, and to help us follow the Spirit and teaching of Jesus. This heart work often has a small beginning. In referring to the kingdom of God, Christ cited the small mustard seed that grew and became a tree in size where birds could lodge in the branches. This compares to the faith in us that like a seed sown in the heart takes root and grows into a life given to the Divine service.

When we think of the human heart and conditions in the world today, the harvest or work of the Lord seems very great. There is so much that should be done to change us all into obedient children of a merciful Heavenly Father. Truly we are in an age when men are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Entertainment is sought on every side and the spirit is left restless and tired. For many, day by day passes without time given to serious reflection. People are hungry for the higher life without knowing it. The enemy of the soul urges an indifference to things serious and sacred with the result that peace

is sought in pleasures that never satisfy. The Christian knows enough of this temptation to feel a constant need of watching and praying to offset the influence in his own life.

To the natural mind spiritual forces seem weak to combat present-day influences. It is not strange that true ministers of the Gospel feel themselves insufficient. It makes us think of Christ suggesting to the disciples that they feed the multitude before sending them away from the desert place where they were at nightfall. They said, "We have but five loaves and two fishes." With Christ's blessing that was enough and to spare. So it is in the work of God's ministers. If He is with them in their labors, that makes them sufficient for all that is required.

We might have considered it an annoying interruption if we had gone off to ourselves to rest and pray, and had been followed as Christ was on this occasion when He furnished natural food. The crowd was not likely made up of all disciples and sincere learners: no doubt the skeptics, the scoffers and the unbelievers were there too. But He had food for them, body and soul, if they were hungry. So today every need of man can be supplied by the Divine Spirit where there is a seeking heart. We have our temptations and besetments but there is grace enough no matter what our need if we come to Christ as eagerly in spirit as those Jewish people came to Him in person. He gives freely and graciously, and we have reason to believe there is a power in His blessing that is evident to ourselves and to others. If we have faith, He has the power to make us children of God in spite of our unworthiness.

None of us feel worthy of the calling of saints or any special usefulness in the Kingdom. Moses showed this humility

when God came to him at the burning bush with the request that he help rescue his people from Egyptian bondage. After having had courage to give up the luxury and honor of the king's court so that he could worship God with a clear conscience, he hesitated to accept the heavenly commission. He made excuses, saying, "Who am I?" God even gave him special signs to demonstrate that He would be with him but he still hung back because he was, as we would say, a poor talker. God said: "Who made man's mouth?" So Aaron was sent with him as spokesman. He was not a man of deep conviction like Moses. He showed this at Mt. Sinai while Moses was receiving the law, when he allowed the people to persuade him to make them an idol.

This is a lesson to us that it is not in ability to speak well but it is the spirit that rules the heart that counts with God. The Apostle Paul wrote the Corinthians, "Your faith should not stand in wisdom of men but in the power of God." We have our various gifts. Some are more fortunate than others but in this there is no credit. We may even train ourselves well, but no matter how beautiful the disposition and character, it is only the building of our hopes on Christ as a Savior that makes them secure. He said, "Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." If we have the "planting of the Lord" in our hearts it can be said of us in the words of the Prophet, "Thou shalt be as a watered garden." The source of every true Christian virtue and grace is the Good Spirit within acting as a "well of water springing up unto everlasting life."

We have many examples of the "faith of the fathers" in all ages. They are about us as a "cloud of witnesses" in-

spiring us to diligence in being found faithful in all that pertains to our lives. It was said that "out of weakness they were made strong." With God's help may it be the same with us. Christ is compared to a nobleman going to a far country who will return to receive what we owe Him. May we be found faithfully guarding and using what has been committed unto us. Those who confess by faith and life that they are His followers are the ones He will in the end confess before His Father.

Waynesboro, Pa.

M. C. S.

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

We believe that the Son of the living God, the Lord Jesus Christ will descend in the clouds with power and great glory, attended by the holy angels. The Apostle says, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God." Then all shall come forth to judgment and receive irrevocable sentence. To those who have confessed Him and been faithful in love and obedience, He will say "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." To those who have done evil and have not accepted His word, He will say "I know you not." As a Shepherd divides the sheep from the goats, the Lord will separate them, setting those who have done good on His right hand, and those who have done evil on His left.

It is important that we strive while in this life, to so live that we may have a hope of acceptance. All who reach years of understanding are accountable for their deeds. We are here on probation. God's all-seeing eye overshadows us, and there is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed. When we come to the light, God's Spirit will dwell in us,

and if we are obedient, He will make His abode with us, and we will become partakers of His divine Kingdom, "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." We will be under the influence of His Holy Spirit and be led into all truth. We will then be risen with Christ to newness of life and have our affections set on things above. Our Savior said of His disciples, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

The Apostle John writes, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God; * * * it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." How needful that we watch and pray that we be preserved from the evil, and do not give way to a spirit of unbelief. That we do not love the world and the things that are therein. Our Savior reminds us that as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the coming of the Son of man, for as a thief it shall come when not expected. "All flesh is as grass and the glory of man as the flower of the grass, the grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away, but the word of the Lord endureth forever."

Knowing our frailty we should be led to make a close examination of ourselves, and strive to walk in love and obedience. The invitation to come and partake of the water of life is extended to all, a precious gift offered without money, and without price. God is no respecter of persons, but wills that all should come to a knowledge of the truth and be saved. We have conclusive evidence that Christ is the Mediator between God and man and will not remember the iniquities of those who come with upright hearts, and humble themselves, pleading for grace and mercy.

May we be of that number of whom the Apostle speaks, when he says, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Springfield, O.

M. R. M.

IN THE TWILIGHT

When the sun at eve is setting
And the shades of twilight fall,
On the day that's passed we ponder
And each incident recall.
For the twilight oft reminds us
Of the close of our career—
Could we feel that we are ready
Were our last hour to appear?
Have we kept our footsteps ever
In the "Strait and Narrow Way?"
Have we turned aside from folly
And from Satan's gilded sway?
Have we looked to our Redeemer
When temptations hovered 'round?
Have we begged for faith and guidance
And, so, peace and comfort found?
Every day we need the Savior:
He will cleanse us free from sin,
So that in the evening twilight
We may find sweet peace, within.
So, our journey through the "Valley"
Like the twilight on the shore,
Will be just a peaceful passing
To God's Light, forevermore.

Baden, Ont.

S. C. G.

THE WORD OF TRUTH

We are told that "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth." If we believe, then we are His disciples, or, as they were later called, Christians. A disciple is one who follows Christ and His teachings, seeking to love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his mind, all his strength and all his soul, and his neighbor as himself.

The question may arise in one's mind, "Am I a Christian?" Or one may ask, with Pilate, "What is truth?" Only those who do not have truth would ask

this question, because, of those who dwell in the Lord we read, "They shall know the Lord, from the least unto the greatest." Then those who do not have truth have not come under the quickening and renewing power of God's word for it is sharper than a two-edged sword, and with it all who have confessed and acknowledged the testimony of the truth, have overcome the enemy of God.

The word of God teaches us that He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit. If we are spiritually minded we know that we often err because the flesh is weak, and we will watch and pray lest the fiery darts of the evil one overcome us, and we fall again into darkness. If we are sincere, and wish to live in truth, we will come to the throne of grace and ask forgiveness. We will wish to make right our wrongs, and to forgive others their wrongs; and we will be thankful for our many blessings. Even in our prayers we may ask for that which is not best for us, but He that searcheth the hearts knows that we are sincere, and His Spirit, which dwelleth within, will make intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

The Word also teaches, and those who believe the Word is truth will agree, that many say Lord, Lord, and do not the things He has commanded. The question may be asked what are some of the things which so-called Christians do that are wrong according to truth. They may ask what is wrong with games, moving pictures, dances, and like diversions. We can arrive at only one conclusion, that they are all the pride of life and the lust of the flesh, and these, we are told, war against the Spirit, or proceed from the carnal mind: and to be carnally minded is death. Also they are conforming to the world. It is written if we sow to the flesh we shall of the flesh reap corruption, but if we sow to

the Spirit we shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

The professed followers of Christ who take part in litigation and strife, uphold war and bloodshed, practice eating and drinking to excess are doing contrary to the plain teachings of Christ. If they observe the Lord's Supper with divided hearts, living in contention and discord they are not guiltless. For this service represents union with Christ and with one another, as the Apostle Paul writes, "We being many are one bread and one body"; and he that partakes unworthily, he further says, "eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." 1 Cor. 11: 29.

May the Word of truth tend to the edification of the soul, and may all who read it, long for that desire to do the will of the Father which is in heaven.

Palmyra, Pa.

J. B. B.

THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD

Through the disobedience of our first parents man lost the divine image, and spiritual death resulted. God's mercy and love for man continued and was revealed by his covenants of promise of a coming Redeemer. The faithful ever trusted in His word and rejoiced in the promise of good things to come. They revered God's word and in their worship sacrifice was instituted to atone for transgression.

Moses, the servant of the Lord, was called to lead God's chosen people from the land of bondage. As the Lord commanded, the law was written upon tables of stone from Mt. Sinai. This is the basis of moral and civil law. By the word of the Lord Moses spoke every precept to all the people. The ceremonial law was instituted to remind them of their bondage of sin and continual need

of intercession. God directed the building of the Temple as a place of worship. He instituted and directed minutely its building, and the manner of its service of the priests and Levites before the altar, where atonement was made. "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." Once yearly the High Priest entered within the veil of the Temple to offer sacrifice to make intercession for the sins of the people. This day was called the day of atonement.

Every fiftieth year, on the tenth day of the seventh month, the day of atonement, the trumpet of the jubilee was to sound throughout the whole land. It was the year of jubilee and the trumpet proclaimed liberty throughout the land. It was a year of general release of debts and obligations, of bondmen and bondwomen, of lands and possessions which had been sold from the families and tribes to which they belonged.

For near fifteen hundred years this service continued, or until the coming of Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the New Testament, whom this service prefigured. Then was this service done away with, "Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle. . . . Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, . . . having obtained eternal redemption for us." God's revealed will throughout, prefigures and foreshadows the one great event, "foreordained from the foundation of the world," the slaying of the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

There is perfect agreement with His revealed will as foretold by the prophets and holy men of old. Seven hundred years before its fulfillment the prophet Isaiah foretells the coming of the Redeemer to Zion. Isa. 9:6. This event so long prefigured and foretold was couched in mystery, "which things the angels desire to look into."

In due time the wondrous event came to pass. An angel of the Lord announced the glad tidings and a multitude of the heavenly host sang the sweetest song ever heard upon earth. No wonder the angels rejoiced and joined in that rapturous refrain, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

The Child increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. Little is recorded of His early life, but that He was obedient unto His parents and that He abode in Nazareth until He entered upon His ministry, when about thirty years of age.

We read in St. Luke 4: 16-19, "He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up and as His custom was He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book He found the place where it was written, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. . . . And He began to say unto them this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

The beautiful words from the prophet Isaiah allude to the general release from bondage, on the day of atonement in the year of jubilee. It beautifully prefigures Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind. No longer is man under bondage of sin and death, it is the season of jubilee. All the types which prefigured and foreshadowed the coming of a Redeemer, met their fulfillment in Christ.

Our Savior "closed the book and gave it again to the minister and sat down." As was the Jewish custom they stood up

when reading the law and the prophets, but when teaching or commenting on the sacred Scriptures they sat. The book from which our Savior read the text was no doubt a roll of parchment.

"He began to say unto them this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." To the multitude He manifested His divine power in natural miracles. He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, restored the dead to life. All things were subject to Him. But the object of His mission was to redeem man, "for the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

"He hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

"I come to do Thy will, O God." God willed the restoring of the divine image to the soul. "The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Our Savior with convicting grace appeals to every soul. His grace strives to awaken and enter every heart. "I am come that they might have life." A loving Savior pleads entrance. He longs to give light, to restore life by the warmth of His love. He is the Great Physician sent to heal the broken-hearted and to restore sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

The broken-hearted who realize the depth of sin and feel their spiritual poverty gladly hear and heed the Savior's tender message, "Come unto Me." Heeding the call, such souls come forth rejoicing. No longer are they under the bondage of sin. It is the time of release, the year of jubilee. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation."

It is recorded that "the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him, and all bare Him witness and wondered at His gracious words." The pleading message of grace and truth no doubt convicted their hearts, for all they that were in the synagogue were filled with wrath and rose up and thrust Him out of the city.

It is lamentable and we cannot but grieve for the souls of those hearers. Our Savior tried to awaken in them a sense of their blindness and spiritual poverty. Perhaps among those hearers were the Pharisees who at another time asked, "Are we blind also?" Our Savior replied, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin, but now ye say we see; therefore your sin remaineth."

Since man is left a free agent to either accept or reject the Savior's pleading call, it is a most weighty consideration. It is yet the day of grace and the gracious invitation is extended. If we consider the price paid for the gift of salvation, can we refuse the pleading of Him who died for us? Should the gift of eternal life be lightly considered?

Those who turn away, not heeding His gracious call are like those to whom He said, "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life," and those who continue to refuse at the close of the day of grace "shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. S. L.

SPIRITUAL REST

"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."

The words were spoken by Christ while on earth to the people who came

to hear Him, evidently those who were under the law of Moses: To-day they are spoken to all who are under the bondage of sin. We know from Bible history how the Israelites were under bondage in Egypt: how they labored, and as time went on their burdens became heavier, almost unbearable. They prayed earnestly to the Lord for deliverance, who in time sent Moses to deliver them out of their bondage. Just as unable as the Israelites were to deliver themselves, so little can we, who are all under the bondage of sin, deliver ourselves by our own efforts.

When we perform natural labor, we become tired. If, at the end of the day, we have accomplished that which we set out to do, we can rest; but if we put forth all of our energies and still accomplish nothing, we feel heavy-laden. The labor which Christ speaks of is spiritual. When we start out to do good deeds, or to live so that we may merit salvation, we find we can accomplish nothing, and we become heavy-laden. Such who become weary of the conflict, He invites to come to Him and receive rest from their own labors. He then says, "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me."

When animals were worked with a yoke, they were of the same kind. Different kinds could not be used together as the yoke would not fit. Being yoked together made the work light, as the burden was divided. The yoke is also a type of service; when we take Christ's yoke upon us, we enter His service. Being yoked with Christ, He bears the burden and does the work for us; we walk where he leads us. He says He is meek and lowly in heart. When we learn of Him, we labor to be like Him. To be meek is to become submissive and patient under trials and injuries. Being lowly in heart we do not aspire to nor strive for the high things or positions

in life. Then it is that we find rest to the soul.

Cain brought the fruits of his own labor as an offering, but Abel brought a sacrifice accompanied by faith. Cain's offering was rejected, Abel's was accepted, which teaches us that we can do nothing pleasing by our own efforts.

As little as the children of Israel could see beyond the pillar of cloud, so little can we see where this yoke of service will lead us; but He has promised to give strength for each day, and that no temptation shall overtake us, but we shall be given strength to bear it. Like the children of Israel, we often look too much into the future, which spoils our peace of mind and rest of soul. Try as we may we cannot fortify ourselves against the future. The manna gathered in the wilderness spoiled when laid by for more than one day; the rich man, in the parable, who built barns did not live to fill them.

We are not promised rest from sorrows and conflicts in this life. We may be tempted to wonder why heavy trials and disappointments come to us, but we should keep the lamp of faith burning, as the lamp in the tabernacle was to be kept burning always. We have the promise that the spiritual oil, which is the grace of God, flows continuously. In our conflicts, we should strive to remember that God is the Creator and we are the creatures. Job said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Paul said, "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known." Christ tells us that His yoke is easy and His burden light.

When we come into the service of Christ and love what He loves, the burden is not heavy. When we love, it is easy to serve. This service brings us

out from the world—away from the strife and vanity of life. Not that there is no conflict, else we would not be admonished to watch and pray. Christ's people are a separate and peculiar people, whom, He says, the world will not love, but He has promised to be unto them as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. We know what a comfort the shade of a great rock is from the glare of the natural sun, but we must seek it; so He says we must "come" to Him, and only when we seek Him are we promised that rest.

When we contemplate the rest which is promised to those who endure to the end, is it not worth while to search the Scriptures and truly learn of Christ, and to learn what the taking of His yoke means?

In this day of science and much literature, there is danger of being drawn away from the simplicity of Christ and from the cross. The Scriptures warn us of the danger of being deceived. Also of having the form of godliness and lacking the power thereof. We also read that the enemy appears as an angel of light. Do we not all need to learn of Christ so that we may know where we stand?

Chambersburg, Pa.

E. K. L.

CHRIST'S INVITATION

The kingdom of God is founded upon the principle of love. "God is love." Because of His love for man, God promised, and in the fulness of time, sent His Son, Jesus Christ, as a Savior and Redeemer of man. Christ suffered many things, even the death of the cross for our sake, and now invites all to come and partake of His goodness and mercy, which is freely given to all who are willing to endeavor to walk in His footsteps.

The way seems very difficult to those who are not willing to follow Him. Has He not reassured us that His yoke is easy and His burden light if we are willing to cast our cares upon Him—to come and learn of Him? Some feel that the burden is too great to bear, but He, through the Apostle Paul, has said that He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape. 1 Cor. 10: 13. He has also promised that those, who leave house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children for His sake will receive more in the present time and in the time to come everlasting life. Luke 18: 29, 30. How great was His sacrifice for man! However, mankind are inclined to be ashamed to confess Him before this sinful world, and are not willing to relinquish the pleasures of this life. What are the pleasures of this life when compared with the true pleasure of sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, with His followers?

When it is His will that not one soul should perish, and He so lovingly invites, "Come unto Me," why do we yet stand without the door? Are we still striving against His Spirit? Will we not have this Man to rule over us? He so plainly says, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Consider well! Where would we be if His Spirit should cease to strive with us? Would we be traveling on the broad way that leads to destruction or on the narrow way which leads unto life? We cannot stand still; we are either following one course or the other.

Let us pause for a moment, and consider our position. If we are fearful of what lies before us, then we have started on the path of wisdom. "Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." First comes fear, then love and faith—faith that God knows best, and that He will be our guide and stay if we put our

trust in Him. He will never leave nor forsake us if we do not first forsake Him. If we have faith, works will follow as a result of that faith. Since there is so little required of us as compared to what Christ has done for us, why should we hesitate to strive to follow wheresoever He leads us?

Take up the cross, now, and follow Him. It matters not whether it be in youth or old age, it is not too late to seize the opportunity; but it must be now, for we know not at what time the Son of man cometh. "Therefore, be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think' not, the Son of man cometh." Matt. 24: 44. Let us be prepared lest He come suddenly, and find us asleep in sin.

Chambersburg, Pa.,
R. No. 11.

S. S. R.

THE CEDARS OF LEBANON

"The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon which he has planted." Psalms 104: 16.

"Thus saith the Lord God: I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it . . ."

"In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it; and it shall bring forth boughs and bear fruit and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell." Ezek. 17: 22-23.

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." Psalms 92: 12.

In the north-western part of Palestine are the mountains of Lebanon. There, six thousand feet above sea-level, is a small grove of cedars, descendants of the wonderful forests planted by God.

From these trees King Solomon made himself a chariot. From these trees timber for Solomon's temple was cut.

From these trees beams were hewed to construct great cities.

There, where the Upper Jordan has its source, stands the remnant of those giant trees, famous in history and eulogized by the finest poetry of the Scriptures. Staunchly they stand at a height above that of general botanical vegetation covered by ice and snow, extolled by the prophet as "the cedars of Lebanon which He had planted."

A traveller once measured the spread of the boughs of one of these trees and found it extended one hundred and eleven feet from branch tip to branch tip; one of the Lebanon cedars, still standing, was found by its concentric circles to be thirty-five hundred years old; from sixty to eighty feet in height, the horizontal branches sweep from the pyramidal top with their burden of needle-shaped leaves white with snow, covering a large area of ground.

When the storms of winter terrify the earth and hurl the rocks and avalanche down the mountainside, the cedar of Lebanon grapples the hurricane of snow in triumph and leaves its spent fury at its feet.

As the lion is the monarch of the forest, the cedar of Lebanon is the monarch of trees. For this reason, the prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, and Zachariah use it in their sublimest similes and metaphors. Solomon said in botanical comparison, "from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall" and declared that the countenance of Christ is excellent as the cedars; while the Psalmist says, "The righteous shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon."

What a wonderful comparison "to grow like a cedar in Lebanon," to be deep rooted in faith, to be high and broad branched, able to bear up under trouble and affliction, and full of the Spirit.

All through the Bible we find the cedar glorified because we need more of its characteristics in our lives. We are too much like the willow—easily bent this way and that; we are too much like the aspen—trembling under every zephyr of assault—we are too much like the bramble tree—allowing our sharp points to sting and wound. Then let us strive instead to be like the cedar, wide branched, heaven aspiring, and tempest grappling.

The cedar is deep rooted. Its tendrils extend into the caverns of the mountain, and fasten themselves to the very foundations of the earth; they twist around and clinch the deepest layer of rock that can be reached. So the followers of Jesus must be "rooted and grounded in faith and love," holding fast to the "Rock of Ages."

The cedars of Lebanon could not grow in a mild climate. They need the storms, the midnight tempests, to develop them. They need the snows of many winters before their feet are rightly planted, their foreheads rightly lifted. So like the cedars of Lebanon we need the storms of trouble, the snows of sorrow, the hurricanes of opposition and persecution.

There is no *easy* way to develop a strong *Christian* character.

Let us call the roll of martyrs, call the roll of the prophets, call the roll of the apostles, and see which of them had an easy time. Which of these "cedars" grew in a sheltered valley? Not one of them.

If we would meet tribulation and disaster courageously, turning for strength to God who will never forsake us nor give us more than we can bear, we might well pattern our lives after the cedars of Lebanon, of which Christ is the perfect example. Planted in the "mountain of the height of Israel" this "goodly cedar" hovers beneath its bough "all fowl of every wing," for He is Savior

to the Greeks as well as the Jews, to the bond as well as the free; every nation upon earth is called by Him, to take refuge in the shadow of His branches, to stand by Him when adversity seeks to destroy.

Let us remember that the victor is he who endures to the end. Of such it shall be said: "These are they who came out of great tribulation and had their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb."

Shippensburg, Pa.

M. E.

BELIEF IN THE BIBLE

An aged and experienced Minister was calling upon a certain lady of his acquaintance; in the course of their conversation she told him that some one had asked her what her reason was for believing the Bible; she said the question embarrassed her somewhat. He replied, "A simple answer would be: the Bible gives a true description of man; of his principles and practices. Such an analysis of human nature man could not give without the Bible. It also demonstrates man's inability to change himself from a sinful being to a holy one. I believe the Bible because it gives such a faithful description of myself, the portrait is drawn so very true to life. I believe the New Testament because it confirms the testimony of the Old Testament, and supplies the only remedy for the cure of the evil with which man is afflicted. One among the first declarations of the New Testament is confirmatory of its Divine character: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit.' The attainment of which state would banish strife, litigation, and war from the earth. The only way to attain the good that is attainable in this world of sin and suffering is to encourage faith and resignation, and cultivate the virtues of peace and love, as the Bible directs."

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

SPIRITUAL INDIFFERENCE

Neglect of duty is a fatal crime, laden with present and eternal sorrows. Both Isaiah and Ezekiel were made of God to prophesy against the people who wilfully closed their eyes and ears to the offer of Divine knowledge. Isa. 6: 9; Ezekiel 2: 2. The Savior applied this prophecy personally to the people among whom He labored. Mark 4: 12; Luke 8: 10; John 12: 40. Paul, when in chains at Rome, called his countrymen into conference, and when they disagreed among themselves he applied this severe prophecy to them. Acts 28: 27. In writing to the Church at Rome he applied it to the Israelites in general. He charged some of the Corinthians with wilful darkness. 2 Cor. 3: 14-16. To the Thessalonians he lamented that some who will not "receive the love of the truth" court delusion to believe lies. 2 Thess. 2: 10-12.

The alarming conclusion forces upon us the warning not to trifle with conscience for its tenderness may be hardened and may bring upon us destruction. The many appeals of God's love may be unheeded to end in unceasing regret. Is our intelligence given us to be spent upon this material life only? If in material things we were moving steadily to a higher goal we might think so, but history proves that the most advanced ancient nations left their attainments among the ruins from which are now being taken relics of their past greatness.

The temporal life has its unrest and its woes, the experience of which should teach us to direct our aim to a higher purpose. Everything that is good needs cultivation for its improvement, so our spiritual life needs thought, attention, effort, for the fullest development and to show glory to its Author. There is constant opposition to the spiritual life, in fleshly promptings, in worldly enticements, and in the wiles of Satan, all of

which call for watchfulness and pleading for Divine aid to resist them.

The life which fits us for a blissful eternity does not consist in religious forms; they are only a reminding of the reality that is more excellent. Proper natural association is for social advancement; proper spiritual association is to "consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." Heb. 10: 24.

The character of the spiritual discipline is well delineated in the parable of the sower in which we note the progress made by the seed fallen into good ground. It has strength to produce that which is good; but good ground also produces harmful weeds, which the diligent husbandman labors to destroy, thus making the illustration plain that the spiritual husbandman has to combat evil in different forms to accomplish the good which shall adorn his high calling.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

THE CLOSE OF KING AHAB'S REIGN

After the Assyrians were defeated and Ahab had made a treaty with Ben-hadad, the Israelites seemed to have rest. But Ahab had not yet recovered possession of all the cities that the Assyrians had at different times taken from him. The most important of these was Ramoth, in Gilead, and this city he was anxious to regain.

Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and Ahab, king of Israel, seemed to be friends, since Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, had married Athaliah, daughter of Ahab. When Ahab invited Jehoshaphat to a feast and lavishly entertaining him and all who came with him he took occasion to ask him to help to recover possession of Ramoth-Gilead. Jehoshaphat at once consented but asked Ahab to inquire of the Lord whether they

should undertake to go to battle. This readiness to aid Ahab who was an idolatrous king showed a defect in Jehoshaphat's character, but was doubtless due to their friendly relationship.

Ahab gathered four hundred prophets, doubtless some of Jezebel's prophets, asking them if he should go to recover Ramoth-Gilead. They replied he should go, for the Lord would deliver the city into his hands. Jehoshaphat then asked, "Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him?" Ahab replied, "There is yet one man, Micaiah, the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him for he doth not prophesy good concerning me but evil." It is supposed that Micaiah was the prophet who had reproved Ahab for letting Ben-hadad escape, and whose threatened judgments against Ahab caused him to cherish a feeling of anger against the prophet. Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the King say so," and Micaiah was called.

The two kings, Jehoshaphat and Ahab sat upon thrones with the prophets before them. The messenger who brought Micaiah told him that good had been prophesied by Ahab's prophets, that one Zedekiah, had made horns of iron and told Ahab, thus saith the Lord, "Thou shalt push Syria until they be consumed." The messenger advised Micaiah to say the same but he replied, saying, "As the Lord liveth, what the Lord sayeth unto me, that will I speak."

When asked if they should go against Ramoth-Gilead he said, "Go and prosper for the Lord shall deliver it into the hands of the king." This reply seemed evasive, as it could have meant promise of success to the king of Israel, or the king of Syria. Ahab evidently felt the prophet was not telling all he knew but was repeating the prophecy in the exact words of Ahab's prophets. Ahab then

said, "How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true, in the name of the Lord."

Micaiah then said, "I say all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd and the Lord said, 'These have no master, let them return every man to his house in peace.' " Ahab then said, "Did I not tell thee he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?"

Micaiah then said, "Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord, I saw the Lord sitting on His throne and all the hosts of heaven standing on His right hand and on His left, and the Lord said, 'Who shall entice Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead?' One said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And then came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord and said, 'I will entice him.' And the Lord said, 'wherewith?' He said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' The Lord said, 'Thou shalt entice him and prevail also, go out and do even so.' Now therefore behold the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil against thee."

This account gives proof that the Lord often permits circumstances to occur in order that His designs may be carried out. This seems to have been fulfilled in Ahab's case.

After Micaiah had finished speaking, Zedekiah, one of Ahab's prophets went near and smote Micaiah on the cheek and asked, "Which way went the spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto thee?" Micaiah replied, "Behold thou shalt see in that day when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself."

Ahab was angered and ordered them to "Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with the bread of affliction, and with the water of affliction, until I come in peace." Micaiah said, "If thou re-

turn at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me."

The two kings then went forth to battle with the Syrians. Ben-hadad seemed to have forgotten the misplaced kindness which Ahab had earlier shown him, as he gave strict orders that the destruction or death of Ahab was his principal object. Ahab seemed to have a premonition of this and went in disguise, but Jehoshaphat wore his royal robes, and was mistaken for Ahab. He came very near to losing his life but his assailants perceived their mistake, and turned away from pursuing him. But a Syrian archer sent a random arrow which struck Ahab between the joints of his armor and he received a mortal wound. That arrow seemed guided by an unseen power which had numbered the days of Ahab. He asked that his chariot be driven away, but he was held therein and animated his men until evening, when he died. The army was then told to disperse and Ahab's body was taken to Samaria.

To mark the literal fulfilment of the prophecy of Elijah, the chariot was washed and his armor rinsed in the pool of Samaria where the dogs licked up the blood.

By the word of the Lord Elijah had earlier foretold how Ahab would meet his death in Samaria. Micaiah's prophecy of Ahab's death at Ramoth-Gilead was also fulfilled. Thus the two prophecies which seemed discordant were literally fulfilled.

The whole history of Ahab is a sad one, almost a continuous record of guilt and disobedience. He reigned twenty-two years and built many cities and a palace called the ivory house, of which the prophet Amos speaks.

Ahab was succeeded by his son Ahaziah, whose reign was short. He fell through a lattice in his house and was seriously injured. He sent messen-

gers to the god of Ekron asking if he should recover. The angel of the Lord sent Elijah to meet the king's messenger and Elijah said, "Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron?" Thus saith the Lord, "Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt die." The messenger did not know Elijah but when his message was told to Ahaziah and he was told how the prophet was dressed, Ahaziah knew him to be Elijah.

Ahaziah then sent a captain with fifty men to apprehend him. Elijah sat upon the top of a hill. The captain called to him, "Thou man of God, the King hath said, 'Come down.'"

Elijah replied, "If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume thee and thy fifty men." Immediately fire fell and they were destroyed. The king sent another fifty men with the same result. The third company was sent but the captain besought Elijah, falling upon his knees and asking that their lives be spared.

The angel of the Lord then told Elijah not to fear but go down to the king and Elijah obeyed.

Elijah repeated his message that as the king had sent to inquire of the god of Ekron therefore he should die.

Ahaziah died according to God's word, and having no son his brother Jehoram reigned in his stead.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

A CHILD'S STORY

My dear little children:

I have read a touching story that might interest you. It is about a man who was dependent on his earnings to

support his family. His family was his wife and a little son. By hard work and economy he had been able to lay by a small sum of money, but he took sick and, after months of suffering, he was told that he could live only a short time. The small sum of money had dwindled to almost nothing. His parting words to his little son are so beautiful. I believe you would like the story better if it was told in verse.

A DYING MAN'S HERITAGE

The boy stood waiting at the door
Awaked from dreamy sleep,
His little gown scarce reached the floor
Whence two small feet did peep.

A dying man lay on his bed;
"Come here, my son," said he,
"Kiss but my cheek while o'er your head
I breathe a prayer for thee."

"My father," coo'd the little one
As nestling close he lay,
"Ah, little son when I am gone
Will you know what I say?"

The father smiled and said, "I go
To home that's far away,
Some time you'll understand and know,
Remembering what I say.

"My son, of drink, I pray beware,
Keep pure within and out.
I leave your mother to your care—
Be honest, fair, devout."

The wife and mother turned away
To hide her blinding tears.
"Dear wife, what I leave him today,
Small, small to me appears."

"O, no!" replied the weeping wife,
"What you bequeathed this night
To gain this heritage in life
Exceeds all wealth and might.

"If he proves true to your bequest
T'will bless his orphanage."
The father smiled, "I die content,
God bless his heritage."

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.