

GOOD TIDINGS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Editorial	65
The Good and the Evil	66
The Guilty Steward	68
What is Truth?	70
A Secure Foundation	71
The Thief on the Cross	72
An Exhortation to Trust and Obey God	74
The Months of the Year (Poem)	77
Brief Notes	77
Questions and Answers	79
Life's Seasons	80
The Parable of the Prodigal Son	81
The Two Covenants	82
Withdrawal from Popular Service	84
The Blessed Rest	86
True Riches	87
Nothing but Leaves (Poem)	88
Nothing but Leaves (Poem)	88
At Ease in Zion	90
Language	92
Time and Its Value	93
Elijah's Translation	94
A Child's Story	96

EDITORIAL

As we come to the close of another year our thoughts are turned to the multitude of good things, great and small, which have been so graciously bestowed upon us through the kind providence of God, the giver of every good and perfect gift. He has abundantly blessed us with food and raiment, house and home, and a beneficent government, under which we enjoy the privilege of religious liberty.

Our thoughts go back to the glad days of springtime, and the pleasant summer season with its warm sunshine and gentle showers. We remember the flowers with their varied and distinctive colors and sweet fragrance sent to cheer us; the bountiful crops of the fields and gardens; the delicious fruits of the vineyards and orchards; and how God has continued to send the waters of the springs and rivers of the earth from the hills into the valleys for the sustenance of man and beast, witnessing to the truth of the Scriptures that with Him "there is no variableness neither shadow of turning."

In pouring out His blessings, God shows no partiality. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the un-

just." The depth of the riches of God's wisdom and goodness cannot be fathomed or computed by the finite mind. "His ways are past finding out," but His providence ever reveals to us His tender love and parental care for mankind.

Throughout all ages God has demonstrated His power and ability to fulfil His promises in the temporal kingdom. In studying the book of nature, we observe the wonderful precision and accuracy of God's laws, and how they are constantly kept in action to the end that man's temporal needs are always supplied. But there is danger that we may forget too much the Giver, and accept these gifts as the regular order of nature and as the result of our own personal labors.

These manifestations of His love and goodness should awaken in us a disposition not only to thank Him for the temporal blessings, but to honor Him by accepting and obeying the teachings of Jesus Christ, his dear Son, whom He sent into the world to establish a kingdom which is spiritual and which will stand when all earthly things shall have passed away.

The coming of Christ and the peaceable nature of His kingdom was foretold many centuries before its fulfilment by the prophet Isaiah in the following beautiful language: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace; of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."

The goodness of God should ever lead man to repentance, and incite in us all love and obedience, thus rendering homage and adoration to Him.

It is with profound sorrow and regret that we record the death of one of our beloved ministers, Brother Ulrich Steiner, of Lima, Ohio (formerly of Waynesboro, Pennsylvania), who departed this life last January.

He was spared to serve in the capacity of minister only for several years. The summons of death came to him suddenly and at middle age, teaching us the wisdom of entering the service of the Lord early in life.

His example of faithfulness and the manifestation of sincerity of purpose in his desire to follow Christ should ever be an inspiration to us for a closer walk with God.

In consideration of the brevity and vanity of life, may we seek diligently to secure the crown that is incorruptible and fadeth not away.

THE GOOD AND THE EVIL

Text—Revelation xiv, 1-5.

The Revelation of St. John contains an outline of the Church of Christ from its founding until the time when Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God; when death, the last enemy, shall have been destroyed.

Much of the Revelation of St. John is highly symbolic and figurative yet without presuming beyond what is written, we can safely draw inferences from it promotive of our spiritual enlightenment. It is in harmony with all revelations given of God, viz.: that there are two agencies in the world seeking to control the actions of mankind, the good and the evil; the one contrary to the other, and therefore there can be no compromise between them. Under the Gospel dispensation the Church is presented as the house of God, as the pillar and ground of the truth, and as a means of

protection from the evil and destructive agency of sin.

The Lamb, standing upon Mount Zion, is an emblem of Christ; the Mount itself typifies the grace of God manifested through Christ, while the natural temple built upon Mount Zion figuratively represents the Church of Christ; 144,000 is a mystical number and may represent Christ's redeemed people, with Him in spirit, at any period of time during the Christian dispensation.

As the worshipers of the beast were marked with his name, either in their right hand or in their foreheads, whose actions testify to their subjection to their sinful nature and to the prince of darkness, so those of the mystical number, who are with the Lamb, have the name of their Father written in their foreheads, thus witnessing that they are partakers of the Divine nature and renewed to His image, of which their actions, which are prompted by love, give evidence.

"And they sung as it were a new song, . . . and no man could learn that song but the one hundred and forty-four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth." The song is new to the natural man. The declaration from the heavenly throne is, "Behold, I make all things new." The testimony of Jesus is, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." The Hebrews could only sing the song of triumph after their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt and their safe passage through the Red Sea; so the mystic number—the redeemed of the Lord—alone can sing the new song—the song of deliverance from the bondage of sin—the song of triumph over sin. The meaning of this part of the text is further emphasized by the testimony: "If any man has not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his;" for the obvious reason that no man can know

Christ in spirit, unless he is in possession of the Christ-spirit. As further evidence of the above we note that before Christ was glorified and the Holy Spirit given, the disciples could not comprehend Christ's mission; that of the restoration of the lost love and image to the soul, and the founding of the new spiritual kingdom established in the hearts of his people, characterized by the cessation of war and violence.

The fact that the song was new, and that no one could sing it except the elect number (who constitute those who admit the grace of God into their hearts and thus receive the Spirit of Christ, which is the election), is indisputable evidence of the unity of all God's people. The elect number are all virgins; that is, their hearts are purified through faith unto unfeigned love of the brethren. They are separated from the evil that prevails in the world. They have no pleasures in the follies and idle pastimes of the world, "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." The testimony of Christ is, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." "These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb." Through the atonement, they are consecrated to God as firstfruits, and as such there was no guile found in their mouths, for they are without fault before the throne of God."

Four thousand years passed away before this world witnessed a scene like that of our text, although such a manifestation of spiritual power was foretold by the prophets, symbolized by ceremonies, and looked for hopefully by prophets and the righteous during the centuries that preceded.

The beginning of the harvest of the first fruits in Israel was an annual occasion of rejoicing. The feast was insti-

tuted fifty days after the first passover, a fitting type of the firstfruit of the spiritual harvest of souls upon Pentecost, fifty days after Christ our passover was slain. This is the meaning of the "firstfruits" of our text. Angels rejoiced upon Pentecost and angels and saints yet rejoice over redeemed souls. They continue to be the firstfruits of the final harvest, the eternal ingathering.

The whole text is obviously a most striking and instructive representation of the Church of Christ. It sets a high standard, but not higher than all Gospel teaching does. The Church is God's witness to truth, under the Gospel dispensation. Faithful persons were God's witnesses during the antediluvian, patriarchal, and Mosaic periods of the world's history. St. John viewed the Church under the figure of a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. The sun is a figure of the righteousness of Christ, the crown of stars a figure of the apostolic doctrine, the moon a figure of the law and the prophets; the summary of which is, the ensign of the Church is the unbroken doctrine of Christ and the Apostles; the righteousness of the Church is the merit of Christ.

During the period of the unchecked open ascendancy of the dominant church, when all the world wondered after the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? there were two witnesses clothed in sackcloth, who represented God's people on earth and were his two olive trees and two golden candlesticks. What these two witnesses stand for has existed in one condition or another since Pentecost, and now exists. During a time of dire persecution the woman was threatened with destruction by the dragon, when

two wings of a great eagle were given her, which enabled her to escape his rage against her. This revelation is confirmatory of the testimony of Christ. "Upon this rock will I build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The woman a type of the Church, with two wings of faith and love, will triumph over death and hell by the power of God. It is wise to enter God's house by Christ, the only door, as he testifies, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved."

Chambersburg, Pa.

J. S. L.

THE GUILTY STEWARD

He said to His disciples, "There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods, etc." Luke 16: 1-10.

Parables are intended to display truth, which, aided by grace, we may understand. In the material life, application brings fruits. In the spiritual life, diligence promises increase. In the parable referred to we understand the "rich man" to mean God, and the steward to represent mankind who "wasted His goods." A steward is entrusted with his master's goods. Adam and Eve were entrusted with a free will, which they were taught to use in obedience to their Maker's command, but they wasted the knowledge given them, suffering in consequence both spiritual and natural death. Bodily death ends our stewardship here. The steward cited in the parable thought wisely in preparing himself for his future when he could "be no longer steward." Since our stewardship closes with this life we should think wisely in preparing ourselves for the state that is beyond.

While he yet held his office of trust "the steward said within himself, What shall I do?" He meditated—so we

should do. He was associated in his affairs with others of his master's servants. This relation gave him an opportunity to gain their friendship and to bring them under obligation to him that by compromise with them, he could arrange for a hopeful future.

Our situation is that God has entrusted us with faculties, which if rightly exercised will lead us away from levity to thoughts of sobriety. When one goes "within himself" the thought is that this life is a season fraught with immense responsibilities dependent upon our present actions. The veil is lifted to look ahead. Our present affairs become subservient to our future hope. We see that we belong to a class of beings who are fellow-servants in the great scheme of life. Our selfishness leaves us. We see that we do not live unto ourselves—that there is a Master over us who loves us all alike. We realize that we are His stewards, that all that we have, or can do, is by what He has given us. We learn to be just, considerate and merciful. We gain the confidence and goodwill of our fellow servants by our virtues in living rightly among them. These virtues fit us to be welcome in their houses. They cannot refuse their kindness to us because of our righteousness to them.

The strait into which this steward was brought by the threatened dismissal from his office was: "I cannot dig: to beg I am ashamed." When we are awakened to a sense of our spiritual want we cannot meet it by digging, or by our moral works, and to beg for grace is so humiliating to us that we shrink from it. The humiliation of the Christian life is averse to our carnal desire. But in his difficulty the steward devised a plan looking to his future welfare. On this act of sagacity the Savior comments

that "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."

Observe, the worldly lord is said to have commended the unjust steward; the Savior did not, but He speaks of the wisdom of the worldly children. The unjust steward was called wise, but not just, for he used his lord's goods for his own benefit. Carnal people use shrewdness for themselves at the expense of others, which the conscientious will not do. In this respect some of the world "are in their generation wiser than the children of light," that is to devise means for selfish ends.

The conditions stated in the parable show that injustice was done by the steward to the "rich man," yet as the features of the parable illustrate our relation to God, whose goods we handle, the Savior uses the example to show how we shall by the discreet use of the "mammon of unrighteousness" make to ourselves friends. This world is classed under the rule of the unrighteous mammon, in contradistinction with the eternal state of glory. The Savior says, "If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" In this He clearly refers to this perishable world, including our perishable talents and abilities. By all the means afforded us we shall be so circumspect in their use that we gain the friendship and confidence of all in our integrity and love, that others will not justly "have any evil thing to say of you."

Such a circumspect life, directed by the Holy Spirit, is the passport "that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." That is, such virtues will qualify us for the eternal inheritance. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much."

Here a standard of conscientiousness is set for the redeemed to incite them to a faithful use of all their faculties, their time and means, to the advancement of themselves and others in the great cause of our existence. The intelligence, and the opportunities, conferred upon us are trusts which we shall not waste, as they are designed to fit us for an exalted destiny, for "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." We do not naturally love Him, because our sinful nature is at enmity with Him, but if we invite His Spirit we learn to love Him, and will cease to waste His mercies.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

The Savior said, "If you continue in my word * * * ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." John 8: 31, 32.

As we grow to years of understanding we are all convicted by the grace of God—a revelation that all is not well. We are under condemnation. It is the visitation of God's Spirit opposing our fallen human nature which holds us under bondage. In accepting the silent pleading of the Spirit of truth we repent and come to Christ.

By reading and obeying the word, we learn the truth, which shall make us free. Knowledge of the truth enables us to fulfil and obey Christ's sayings, and to continue therein. It is the result of regeneration, by which we are enabled to subdue the evils in our sinful nature, as pride, strife, hatred, emulation and everything that is contrary to the dictates of the Spirit and the counsel of the Lord.

When delivered from the bondage of sin we no more base our hope of salva-

tion upon moral works of kindness, charity and honesty in our dealings with our fellowmen. All now centers in Christ, who is received by faith, trusting in His merits, and promise of help, and led by His Spirit. Only then can we comprehend what truth is, and the evidence of the new life will be manifest to others. Christ said: "The tree is known by his fruit." If the heart is spiritually changed the Christ-life will appear in one and all. Now if we continue in His word, we go hand in hand and have the same mind. If there are divisions it is evident that we are not led by the same spirit, and the Word alone can determine who is right.

John in the first Epistle General says: "But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Without the fellowship that was experienced by the disciples when the Church, or kingdom of Christ was first established on earth, there is no evidence of truth. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." To that end Christ came "to gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad." They are led by one Spirit into one body. Only then are they fit subjects for water baptism to be received into the visible church. United and in fellowship, they are worthy of communing, and can preserve the love, unity and fellowship of the Church. Matt. 18. If any should not obey the teaching of Christ, such must be separated from the faithful, for without true fellowship they would, by communing, confess unity when it does not exist, and instead of receiving a blessing, the Lord would reject them, for they would be "eating and drinking unworthily." 1 Cor. 11.

May we all learn what truth is, and be made free. For it is written that in

the last day, it will be said of many zealous workers, "I never knew you." Zeal and good works will not deliver; truth must make us free.

Lancaster, Pa.

J. K.

A SECURE FOUNDATION

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened to a foolish man which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it." Matt. 7: 24-28.

In order that any undertaking in life be successful, it must be established on a good foundation, that is on honorable business principles, that confidence may be established, and every opportunity used to further the interests of the undertaking. With the best efforts sometimes the result may be a failure, and even the greatest success that can be attained is coupled with much uncertainty. "Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity." Psalms 39: 5.

Therefore whosoever heareth the sayings of Christ, and doeth them will not build on uncertainties, all that hear and obey are assured of victory—"they that hear shall live."

The Sermon on the Mount from which our text is taken opens with these beautiful and impressive words, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Further blessings are promised to those that mourn, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, and to those that hunger and thirst after righteousness. The principles underlying the beatitudes are the

very foundation stones with which to begin to build, and if adhered to, the structure built thereon will stand, for it is built upon the sayings of Christ. He who builds upon these principles will be able to endure persecution, to return good for evil, to love his enemies and could well be likened to a wise man who built his house upon a rock. This heavenly wisdom or power is so much greater than earthly wisdom that those who attain it are said to be the light of the world, a city set upon a hill. When the rain of adversity, the floods of disappointment, sickness and pain, or the storms of persecution beat upon them their light will shine, their faith will uphold them. When the subtle enemy assails them with false doctrine, trying through near and dear friends to influence them to take a broader, easier way, they will be able to discern the wily foe and through faith resist him.

Each individual under the divine influence may represent a house built upon a rock. The spiritual structure must be of tried material and securely constructed. Mercy, forbearance, long-suffering, kindness and forgiveness must prevail, all bound together by the strong bond of love. Since the foundation rock is Christ and all who come to Him receive His mind and spirit they naturally flow together. Those who love God will also love one another, they will seek the benefit and protection of the visible Church. Having received the baptism of the Holy Spirit they will desire the baptism with water as an open testimony to the world that they have been saved.

The Church, like its individual members built upon the rock, will be regulated and controlled by the spirit of love. A faithful ministry chosen and appointed by the Lord through His Church will lead the flock, and, guided by the Spirit, will always reprove those who

step aside and who by an irregular life or by false doctrine bring reproach upon the Church. When the erring become penitent and use every effort available to make amends for their wrong doing, the ministry are ready to forgive and to restore them in the visible church, but if they manifest a rebellious spirit and are unwilling to yield to the labor of love, the ministry are constrained to show by excommunication the separation which already has taken place. Thus by hearing the sayings of Christ and doing them the faithful will always be in fellowship, and because of this, can consistently break the bread and drink the cup in the communion service. They love to meet with those who teach and obey the sayings of Christ, and desire to edify one another.

A house built upon the sand may have a very good appearance. They who dwell therein may feel secure if they have considered only the appearance of the house and have not carefully examined the foundation, but when the storms and floods beat upon it and the sandy foundation yields to the elements, that house will fall. He who trusts in a structure, not taking the trouble to investigate the foundation, could indeed be compared to a foolish man. Spiritually we might erect a beautiful structure composed of almsgiving, morality, religious zeal, self-denial, church membership, or anything that man can do by his own efforts. In this structure we may feel very comfortable and secure, but if the foundation is a high type of morality, or good works, it will surely prove to be a sandy one that will be undermined when tried by that word which contains the sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Some of His sayings are, "Ye must be born again," "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that

believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." "Without me ye can do nothing," and many other plain scriptures give conclusive evidence that no other foundation can man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ. "Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;" this promise was an answer to Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Church built upon the Rock must be composed of believers who through faith have accepted Christ as the only means of salvation, and recognize all His sayings as applying to them. They cannot be divided into factions; Christ teaches, "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. John 17: 21. Impenitent sinners cannot be retained in the Church. Mat. 18: 15-17. "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." The faithful cannot worship with those who do not keep the sayings of Christ since He teaches them to "beware of false prophets" and says ye shall know them by their fruits.

Reader, there were always two classes of worshipers in the world, one building upon the rock, the other upon the sand; to which class do you belong?

Lancaster, Pa.

J. L. K.

THE THIEF ON THE CROSS

It is recorded that the Savior was crucified between two thieves, or malefactors, in fulfilment of the prophecy, "He hath poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors: and He bare the sin of many,

and made intercession for the transgressors." Is. 53: 12.

Among the Jews the method of putting evil-doers to death was usually stoning; but they were now under Roman rule, not allowed to put any man to death, and they appealed to the Roman governor, Pilate, to have this Man punished. The cruel, bloodthirsty mob, filled with rage against the innocent Lamb of God, could not endure His denunciation of their hypocrisies; but hated Him with the hatred that evil has for good, and darkness for light. They even preferred that the robber, Barabbas, should rather be released, and when Pilate asked, "What then shall I do with this Man?" the cry arose, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

The punishment of crucifixion was inflicted by the Romans only upon those guilty of what they considered the vilest crimes, such as treason, murder or robbery. The wretched victim was compelled to carry a large, wooden cross out to the place of execution. He was then fastened to the same by soldiers, who drove spikes through the hands and the feet, after which the cross was raised and dropped into a hole, so that it would remain upright. There were variations of this practice, but the result attained was the same—the poor creature, thus suspended, must hang in awful agony for many hours, until merciful insensibility came, and death followed.

Such a person as a thief, or a murderer, would probably go to this torment with shrieks and cursings; others might try to meet it with stolid indifference. The Blessed Jesus came as a lamb to the slaughter: He opened not His mouth; He reviled not His captors, nor plead for mercy. He now meekly submitted to the final demand of the Father's will.

Perhaps His patience impressed the witnesses: it may have been the revela-

tion of the Divine Presence in His countenance: virtue may have gone out from Him, as it did to the woman who only touched the hem of His garment. Whatever it was, the effect was lost on one of the thieves, who, writhing in anguish, railed on Him, "If thou be the Son of God, save thyself and us!"

But the other rebuked his fellow, saying, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly: for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss." Then he spoke to Jesus: "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." The Blessed Savior, still concerned for every hungry heart made that wonderful reply. "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise!"

Little did this hardened criminal think that he would go to Golgotha to know his Redeemer! Doubtful it is that he ever gave much thought to the life beyond the grave. If so, he had hardened his heart and continued in sin. We can only conjecture what his life had been, but this we can see: here at the very close of his career, the light of truth shone brightly upon him, just as the sun may burst into view beneath the black cloud, before it drops below the horizon.

He sought mercy and found it. Though the Son of Man had been deserted by His followers, disowned by those who had trusted in His greatness, here was a human outcast, condemned to suffer with Him, who could manifest faith at this trying hour. How unreasonable that the Son of God could thus be brought to nought, and yet here was a man who believed in Him!

"To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." O, let us look upon the dying thief, to see what he possessed that made him worthy of this promise. If we lack what he had, let us seek it quickly.

Do we not behold here a wonderful, quickening *faith*? By what other power could he accept that this despised Jesus was indeed the Savior of mankind? There was no evidence of His power now. Gone were the great miracles He had performed; no angels were summoned to deliver Him: His God had forsaken Him. "He saved others: Himself He could not save." Only "faith that works by love" could have revealed to the thief that this was truly the Son of God.

Now in this faith we see, first, that the thief realized that this world held nothing for him. There was nothing here to which he could cling: only death awaited him, and eternity beyond. Secondly, he believed that Jesus was the Christ, and was ready to confess Him openly, seeing his great need. Thirdly, he saw that the Savior's kingdom is not of this world, hence his plea, "when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom."

"To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." That very day, before the sun had set, the Savior had lain down His life, and the soldiers had completed the work of execution of the thieves. Both Jesus and the eleventh hour convert had gone to that place of rest, the tomb, under the promise of dwelling eternally in Heaven. Jesus arose and ascended to the Heavenly Father, and there shall the penitent thief join Him, when all that are in the graves shall come forth.

Those who follow not the example of the thief, but flee from the cross of Christ, shall be judged by him. Like the Queen of the south, and the men of Nineveh, who shall arise in judgment with this generation and condemn it, Matt. 12: 41, this lowly witness of the truth will come forth, with all who have surrendered themselves to Christ; and the wicked, proud, arrogant and ungodly shall be irretrievably lost. He felt the impulse of God's grace and immediately accepted—thousands have felt it, but

have refused to yield. He saw his need of Jesus and asked for aid—many see this need but stubbornly refuse to humble themselves. And many profess to see the need and yield to its promptings, and yet fail to see that the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is not of this world, and that they must forsake this world if they would enter His fold. Not that we can go out of the world, but we must needs forsake the spirit of the world, deny its friendships, separate from evil, malice, hatred and strife, and from all unfaithful worship.

If we truly embrace a hope in Christ, through faith and obedience to His Word, then we will trust alone in Him. Those who lay great stress upon baptism will note that the thief was not baptized, yet had the promise. So we cannot build upon the keeping of any ordinances, nor can we feel justified in observing any, unless we first come into possession of that faith, hope and charity which the thief manifested. These qualifications will alone entitle us to come under the blessing, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

Stevensville, Ont.

W. I. T.

AN EXHORTATION TO TRUST AND OBEY GOD

[Extracts from a letter written in the sixteenth century by Jerome Segers to his brethren.]

The eternal joy, peace and grace of God, the Father; and the unfathomable mercy, favor, and love of the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who has been sent through grace by God the Father, to the salvation of all those that are born again with him, through his imperishable word or gospel, and do his will; and the deep and unspeakable consolation, power, strength, and communion of the Holy Ghost, who is sent by both from heaven, to the everlasting consolation, joy, and gladness of all true, penitent and obedi-

ent children of God, who have amended their life, and thus have risen with Christ, through his gospel, into newness of life. May this only God strengthen you in all his eternal truth, and uphold you with the mighty word of his grace in all righteousness, holiness and truth unto the end, and keep your understanding, and your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. To him be praise, honor, glory, might, power, and strength forever and ever. Amen.

My dearly beloved and chosen brethren and sisters, and all lovers of the unfeigned and eternal truth, I wish you the true, penitent faith, which works by love, and avails before God, and a pure, chaste and holy conversation and walk in the fear of God, and an ardent love to God our heavenly Father, and your neighbor, and to his eternal, clear and unchangeable truth. And I pray the Lord for you day and night without ceasing that he will open the eyes of your understanding, and enlighten your hearts with knowledge, that you may know that it is the truth, and that he will strengthen you with his divine word, and confirm you in the faith, that you may walk in this truth, in all humility and meekness, being a light to all men, and may continue steadfast unto the end. I also pray the Lord, that he will keep you from all ravening wolves, that have gone out from us, and will yet rise up among you, who will not spare the flock, and from all false, heretical and satanic teachers, who rise up under the name of Christ, and come forth in a semblance of holiness, as though they were sent by Christ, while they have proceeded from and are sent by the devil. Acts 20: 29; 2 Cor. 11: 15.

Therefore, my dear brethren, be vigilant, watch and pray; for it is very necessary; and remember after my departure, that I warned you from prison against false prophets. Thus, with the help of

God, I have briefly written to you, and with Peter exhorted you, well knowing that shortly I must put off my mortal clothing and sleep with my brethren and sisters in Christ. Though you are yourselves taught and strengthened in this present truth, I nevertheless deem it profitable to admonish you yet a little more, if haply thereby some one may be bettered, edified and strengthened, the name of the Lord be praised and thanked, and I be remembered, how I have been an example unto you in that which the Lord gave me, and have walked among you in all humility. Tit. 2: 7.

Hence I admonish you now, my dearly beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord, and beseech you with Paul, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this evil, wicked and perverse world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Rom. 12: 1, 2; Eph. 5: 17.

O my dear brethren, I earnestly beseech you, that you will all amend your lives, and forsake the world and its lusts, and will look to the life of Christ, how he walked before us; for John says: "He that would boast of Christ ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." 1 John 2: 6.

Behold, my dear friends, it is not enough that we are baptized in the name of Christ, that we are called brethren or sisters of Christ, and bear the name of Christians. O no, all this cannot save; for John says: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil." John 3: 7, 8, 10. And Christ says: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." John

15: 14. Again: If a man love me, he will keep my words and commandments; and he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. John 14: 23, 21. For John says: "He that saith he loveth God, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 1 John 2: 4. And you know that a liar has no part in the kingdom of God. Rev. 21: 8. Therefore, be not Christians with the mouth, nor with the tongue, but in deed and in truth. 1 John 3: 18. For it is utterly in vain to bear the name of Christ, so long as we are not conformed to him in word, work and thought; for Paul says: "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." Rom. 8: 29. If he then has called and predestinated you, use diligence that you become conformed to him, so that you may be found true Christians in deed when you come into the tribulation in which we now are; for though we are in it now, to-morrow you may also be in it. Therefore watch and pray; for you know neither the day nor the hour; and be diligent to please the Lord; for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. 1 Thess. 4: 1; 2 Cor. 5: 10.

Therefore, my dearly beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord, all who desire to offer up an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord, take us for an example (James 5: 10) and be followers of us, and be no longer so slothful or lukewarm in love; so that, when you are also imprisoned, you will not sorrow because you did not lead a better life; for with this the devil tempts us night and day. Hence I warn you, out of brotherly love, to take heed to yourselves while you have time; for Paul says: "The grace of God that

bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Tit. 2: 11-14; Eph. 5: 2.

Behold, my dear friends, such a people Christ has chosen, who are not vain or light-minded, but who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for eternal life; heretofore he has called and chosen us, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; for such a holy church he has chosen, which has not spot or wrinkle, but that should walk holily and unblamably before him in love. Rom. 2: 7; Eph. 1: 4; 5: 27. Therefore be holy in all your conversation; since it is written: "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy." Lev. 11: 45. O see my dear brethren, it is time for you to take heed; for the axe is now laid at the root of the trees; every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire. Matt. 3: 10. "For not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 7: 21. For, being dead unto sin, and purified by the knowledge of the truth, you must not be empty, lest the devil take with him the seven spirits and return into you, and the last state be worse than the first." Rom. 8: 11; Matt. 12: 45.

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. Greet one another with a holy kiss of peace. Jude 21, 24, 25; 1 Cor. 16: 20.

THE MONTHS OF THE YEAR

There is beauty and joy in each month of the
year,
We welcome them all as they're wont to appear.
Now nature is dormant, the earth brown and
bare
Is hiding the rootlets of flowers so fair.

The month that comes second is shorter we
know;
The earth is made fruitful by a blanket of
snow.
Then March comes along with its health laden
winds,
From the storm to the breeze that of melody
sings.

We all welcome April; it tells us of spring
With its sunshine and showers fresh beauty to
bring.
Then May comes apace, 'tis the children's de-
light,
Their happiness makes all around them more
bright.

Perhaps it is June with its most perfect days
That wakes in our souls the spirit of praise.
But we're needing the warmth of the sun in
July,
Without this our crops would wither and die.

In the two months that follow great blessings
are found,
When fruitage and foods so richly abound.
While the summer is waning we can truthfully
say
No season can equal a fine autumn day.

October's the month that by nature is blest
In colors so varied the finest and best,
The beautiful trees robed in crimson and gold,
A vision of loveliness then we behold.

When the cold wintry blasts of November are
here,
We welcome the warmth of our homes with
their cheer.

In the long winter evenings with pleasure we
find
In the best of all books a feast for the mind.

O! month of December, the last of the year—
You wake in us memories sacred and dear;
The birth of our Savior we celebrate now,
May our hearts be receptive, with reverence
bow.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

BRIEF NOTES

Christian living requires a constant sense of dependence upon God for direction and guidance in all we contemplate or do. Paul said, "In everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto the Lord." The more fully we heed this counsel the deeper will be our inward peace and rest.

* * * *

There is a Proverb: "Where there is no vision the people perish." May we have a clearer vision of ourselves to enable us to exercise charity toward the weakness of others and to have a fuller appreciation of their virtues; to realize our own weakness and to seek divine guidance and direction in the unselfish discharge of every duty we owe to our God, to our fellow-man and to ourselves.

* * * *

It has been asked, "Why does not God, being omnipotent, abolish sin?" Sin may be described as an attitude of the will of man, which God, or omnipotence, can change only when man allows Him to do so. Man is not under a compulsory service, and the whole economy of heaven is based on love. It is by the giving of Christ as the supreme expression of God's love, that He seeks to win our will to Himself. When we repent of sin and it becomes our whole purpose to do His will, then, really, sin or its consequences are abolished, as far as we are concerned.

* * * *

The closing in of winter brings anxiety, suffering and want to many who may not have availed themselves of opportunities to provide, or others who may have been unfortunately situated so they could not. Our sympathy may find practical expression in helpfulness, but it is ever a feeble expression in con-

trast with God's love, reaching out to all alike.

Adverse conditions in life and sometimes suffering may be means through which we are given, not what we may want but what we most need. Given what we desire we may still find it as "Apples that turn to ashes on the lips." The wholesome effect under such exercises may be to inspire yearnings for holiness and the desire to be "Nearer my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee."

* * * *

We stand amazed at the wonderful changes that have come into the lives, affairs and minds of men and their manner of life. Deep research work, and mysteries explored, cause many to conclude, that "Nothing happens today that cannot be explained by practical forces of nature," thus in reality becoming worshippers of nature, and not of nature's God.

It is Satan's purpose to thus divert honor from God, the Creator and Sustaining Power in the universe, by blinding men to the fact that all which the progress of education and the depth of research has revealed is utterly insignificant when compared with the unexplored and unexplainable. What a vast realm of thought that reaches out beyond the comprehension of the human mind, into infinity and eternity.

* * * *

"On earth peace, good will toward men." That is still the interesting theme to engage the minds of men at this Christmas season. The anguish of heart, the suffering, sorrows and heartache that follow in the wake of war, always bring thoughts too inconsistent to associate with the happy theme which the herald angels proclaimed at the Savior's birth.

The hope of many is that the present efforts toward new and better interna-

tional understandings will lead to world conditions under which war shall be no more.

This new order is in keeping with higher moral standards, and though it may find its culmination in Tennyson's vision of "The federation of the world," it is far short of expressing the peace proclaimed by the herald angels at the Savior's birth. That is not merely organic peace,—“peace the world giveth”—but it is peace as the Savior declared to His disciples,—“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.” That is heavenly peace, centered in the individual heart and extending far beyond the bounds of the affairs of men and time. When that peace possesses the heart, as it must in Christian living, war, strife and contention automatically cease. Then is ushered in with us the happy conditions foretold by the Prophet, when “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.”

* * * *

The Psalmist said: “Be still and know that I am God.” Not in earthquake, wind nor fire did Elijah have the assurance; but in the still, small voice did he discern, “It is the Lord.”

Silence may be golden and enriching, bringing the assurance of unseen things when we ponder in silence, meditate upon, and are disposed to obey the teaching of that “Still, small voice.”

It has been said, “Golden truths drop anchor in the harbor of the heart that waits in silence on the Lord.” Under such exercises we may well exclaim, with the poet, “Compared with utter silence, What are words tonight?”

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What is meant by a "bruised reed" and a "smoking flax?"

A. It may represent the stricken conscience, the broken heart, spiritual distress, and a contrite and humble spirit.

Q. What is the difference between John's baptism and the Lord Jesus' baptism?

A. John baptized with water unto repentance, which was a confirmation or approval of a moral, upright life. His mission pointed forward to Christ; he prepared the way for Him. He said: "But He that cometh after me is mightier than I * * * He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." The baptism commanded by Christ, and observed to initiate believers into the visible Church, is only an outward sign or seal of the inward or spiritual work wrought by the Holy Spirit.

Q. How can I understand the Bible?

A. The Bible is the word of God and makes known to man his accountability to God, the necessity of repentance, and outlines the duties necessary to preserve communion with God, and unity and fellowship with one another. But to understand its spiritual meaning one must come into possession of God's Spirit, which Christ imparts to all who believe, which Spirit reveals the hidden mysteries of the word: "For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God." 1 Cor. 2: 10.

Q. What did Jesus mean when He said: "Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him?" Matt. 5: 25.

A. Our adversary is one with whom we differ, or he may be one who brings a charge against us. Jesus taught that we should suffer wrong, therefore He would say, agree with thine adversary quickly while thou art in the way with him. Do not contend and argue until

his wrath is enkindled against you and your way closed to become reconciled to him.

Spiritually God is our adversary as long as we are sinners and disobey His word. While we live in the day of grace, we are in the way with Him. We agree with Him when we repent and receive Jesus. Then Jesus instead of being our Judge will set us free.

Q. Why are there so many different churches?

A. The true church was established on the day of Pentecost, when the disciples were "endued with power from on high." They received the Holy Ghost which united them in faith and doctrine. They then taught repentance and faith in Jesus, and 5,000 were added to the church by water baptism. And it was said, "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 2: 47.

This was the only church for a period of time, but Antichrist finally appeared. John testifies "that many false prophets are gone out into the world." 1 John 4: 1. Paul also said: "Of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw disciples after them." Acts 20: 30. These false prophets founded a church and as they did not possess the Spirit of the Lord which unites and harmonizes, they soon differed in doctrine, and the leaders separated and organized another church; and, being "men of many minds," and not having the mind of Christ, they continued to differ, and divided and subdivided into numerous sects and churches until in our day there are many denominations. There can be only one *true church*, for Christ upon the confession of Peter said: upon this Rock I will build *My Church* (not churches); and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matt. 16: 18.

LIFE'S SEASONS

Again we have entered the closing cycle of the seasons. The season of life and growth is past, the last fruits of the harvest are gathered. A Creator's bounteous food is provided not only for man but for all His creatures. "The fowls of the air sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them."

We enjoyed the beautiful autumn season and marveled at the beauty of the gorgeous coloring of crimson, yellow and gold on tree and shrub. The crowning glory of nature's closing activities appears as a token of promise of the recurrence of life. Nature's gorgeous coloring has faded; the withered leaf has fallen to the earth. Winter is here; the earth is barren and unfruitful.

Our minds are drawn to the likeness of the cycle of human life and that of the order of the seasons. Childhood is the joyous springtime of life. The years of activity and growth may be compared to summer. The mature and ripening years are the autumn of life; and, when the day of life is shortening, the season of the winter of life is approaching, when man goeth to his long home. When "the silver cord is loosed . . . then shall the dust return to the earth as it was and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Our mortal frame shall perish since natural life is but a vapor which appeareth for a little season. Life's brief day is a time most precious given unto man to live to the honor and praise of his Creator, that the soul of man may dwell in His presence evermore.

God the Creator formed man of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. Thus God created man in His own image and daily communed with him. But through dis-

obedience man lost the sweet communion and the divine image, or the spiritual life was lost. After man's fall there was spiritual winter. Man was dead in trespass and sin. This cold barren condition remained until the coming of the Sun of Righteousness who brought healing in His wings.

In due time the promised Redeemer came to earth. The angel of the Lord announced the glad tidings of the Savior's birth to the humble shepherds watching their flocks by night. It was most fitting that the multitude of the heavenly host joined in the refrain praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men."

The humble birth, its announcement to the lowly shepherds, the simple and unassuming manner of entering upon His mission to redeem man, all point to that humility and lowliness of mind which lead away from earthly power and glory.

The Savior's message is, "I am come that ye might have life." His pleading call is, "Come unto me." To those dead in sin who heed the call, it is the springtime of the soul. "Awake thou that sleepest, arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light." He is not willing that any shall perish but that all might come to the knowledge of the truth and live. He will bring spiritual springtime where winter reigns.

But man is left a free agent. If he refuses a Savior's tender message of salvation he cannot come forth rejoicing, there will be no resurrection of the soul to newness of life.

A soul may hear the call and not become fully awakened, and may not realize that our Savior requires full obedience to His word as a test of faithfulness. The soul who heeds the call and is truly awakened becomes a new crea-

ture. A new life is implanted and spiritual growth will bring forth the virtues of the Christ life. That soul will be one with Christ and will manifest humility, a spirit of non-worldliness, with a desire to do His commands and to walk in true obedience to His word. Spiritual growth will continue and the fruits of peace, joy, love and obedience will never fail. This is the spiritual summer, the season of growth and of daily labor to nourish the life of the spirit.

The spiritual life has enemies, since the evil one ever tries to sow tares. They may be carnal reason, lack of faith or an indifference to heeding His daily grace. There may be many destructive enemies, but our Savior anticipates these attacks from the enemy of the soul. He warns us to "Watch and pray." He heeds our call and the assurance is that needed help will be given, and the growth of grace will continue and shall be as "a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season, his leaf shall not wither."

Would any one reject the priceless gift of salvation? May the desire and prayer of every soul be to live to the honor of God, that in the autumn of life's brief day we may rejoice in His loving kindness. "Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Hagerstown, Md.

E. S. L.

THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

"A certain man had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father, Father give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living." Luke 15: 11-32.

The Savior often spoke to the people in parables. There are some parables

in the New Testament which are supposed to be true histories; there are others in which the Savior seems to allude to some particular events of those times. It is an allegorical method of conveying instruction, which should create serious meditation of the underlying principle involved therein.

This parable teaches us that, when we come to years of accountability, knowing good from evil, we are inclined to evade the grace of God which strives with us. We want our own way and, as we are free agents, the Father grants our wish. So we gather all we have—carnal pleasures and worldly desires, and go into a far country, into the sinful world, far away from the Father in heaven, living in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of this life. Here we forget the dear Father because all is swallowed up with the pleasures of this world. But when perhaps affliction, sorrow and trouble overtake us, or death overshadows us, we are brought to reflect upon our condition. The soul here must famish; truly it is a famine in a far country, far away from God, the Heavenly Father. But as we come to ourselves, like the Prodigal, there is no other way but to return home to God, the Father, and say, "Father I have sinned against heaven and before Thee, and I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."

The Father loves such a penitent sorrowing sinner, and meets him in the midst of this sorrow and distress, receives him in His arms of mercy, clothes him with the robe of righteousness, puts the ring of love upon his hand, and the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace on his feet. He makes a joyful heavenly feast, by shedding forth the Holy Spirit into his heart through which he can rejoice, with exceeding joy. For

the poor sinner was lost, but now is found; he was dead in sin, but now is made alive in Christ. For Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, which every returning soul will experience. When the question was asked, "what must I do to be saved," the answer was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

The Prodigal found no comfort until he turned from evil and confessed faith in the Father. Likewise no one can find true comfort of soul except in obedience to the will of the Heavenly Father. We should take the lesson home to ourselves, Are we willing to sacrifice all for Jesus sake? Our sinful flesh, the friendship of the world, earthly possessions, and our own lives, if it should be required. Sooner or later we must leave all in death.

In this parable the prodigal son may represent the Publicans and the elder son the Pharisees. The Pharisees disowned and greatly despised the Publicans. The Savior said to them, "that the Publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." The Pharisees took their name from a Hebrew word which signifies division or separation, because they distinguished themselves from the other Israelites by a profession of a moral and strict manner of life. They made a great show of religion in outward things, but were proud, covetous, unjust. They found fault with Jesus because He testified against their evil works. When the Savior relieved the afflicted and suffering one, on the Sabbath, they protested against it, saying, it is not lawful.

This same spirit seemed to prevail in the elder son. When he returned from the field, the father is said to have gone out to entreat him to come in, but he answered with boastings and complaints.

He had done the work of a servant for many years, and had never at any time disobeyed his father's commandments.

The two influences working in man are manifest in this parable, the good and the evil. They maintain an irreconcilable warfare with each other, each one contending for the mastery. No human being that has arrived at the age of reason is exempt from this warfare. The good strives to elevate the soul to God, and lead it to act in obedience to the divine will. The evil influence brings hatred, malice, intemperance. The flesh against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, for these are contrary one to the other. Our happiness depends entirely on ourselves. May we have grace to lay off this sinful flesh and strive to obtain eternal life.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. J. T.

THE TWO COVENANTS

"For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory." 2 Cor. 3: 9.

The ministration of condemnation was the law, as embodied in the ten commandments, the ministration of righteousness is the Gospel. The law demanded a perfect life—first of all to love God with all the heart, soul and strength; Deut. 6: 5, 10: 12, Matt. 22: 37, Mark 12: 30, Luke 10: 27. Man being unable to do this, sacrifices were required, "But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." Heb. 10: 3, 4. "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God." Heb. 7: 19.

The temple where the sacrifices were brought was a magnificent structure, well suited to inspire one with a feeling

of reverence and awe; a fitting place for so sacred a service. It attracted the admiration of the disciples, Matt. 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, who called the attention of Jesus to it; He told them that not one stone should be left upon another that should not be thrown down. While this actually did come to pass, the ministration also ceased, and the old covenant gave way to the new.

Under the law every transgression was to receive a just recompense of reward. Heb. 2: 2. The man who defrauded his neighbor was required to make restitution. "And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbor; as he hath done so shall it be done to him; Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again." Lev. 24: 19, 20. In this manner evil was held in restraint and order was kept among the people.

In reflecting on the manner in which the law was given (Ex. 19) and contemplating the fruits of obedience thereto, even as far as man was able to obey, it was indeed glorious, but it was not perfect. "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." Heb. 8: 7. It was glorious in the manner in which it was given, and in the manner in which it was administered; the sacrifices and ceremonies could not fail to be impressive, so much so that many of the Jews could not get away from them and accept the meek and quiet life as taught by the Savior.

We see much of that spirit to-day in the building of imposing edifices, large churches, imitating the splendor of the temple to an extent; but even the temple was defiled by using it as a house of merchandise, when it was intended strictly as a place for solemn worship. Matt. 21: 13. Our heart might be com-

pared to the temple of God; intended to glorify Him, we are swayed by carnal reason, the light of the Spirit is lost, and there is no means to restore it except the power of Christ and His Holy Spirit. Thereby violence and strife are done away. The conflict is in the heart, the evil is kept in subjection there; Paul says, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." 1 Cor. 9: 27.

The heart being cleansed, we are "built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2: 5. Then the ministration of righteousness comes into effect, and its fruits are manifest: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Gal. 4: 22, 23. Nor is the law necessary to control such, as they do not wilfully offend against it; its ceremonies are no longer required, a remembrance for sin is not needed, continually, but Christ has become their Passover, and "was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9: 28.

There is a change in the life and example of those who come under the "ministration of righteousness." There is no longer that desire to follow after the vain worldly life with its empty pleasures, which only satisfy for a time and have no real worth; there is a deep-seated comfort which cannot always be convincingly expressed to those who have not experienced it. There is indeed still the carnal nature which cannot be converted, and which will assert itself, but there is power given to keep it in subjection. When mistakes and transgressions do occur among believers due to the old Adamic nature, there is a willingness to make restitution with-

out being compelled to do so, but constrained by love for God, for Christ, and for the souls of others, that by such example there might be a witness to the power of the Holy Spirit which will lead in the way of truth to a happy end in Christ Jesus.

The civil law is based on the same principles as the law of Moses which requires the transgressor to suffer the penalty for his deeds, and is still needed to keep order in the world; but it is not the duty of those under the new covenant to take part in it, inasmuch as they are chosen out of the world; yet they are obedient to its requirements, submissively but not actively. "Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake." Rom. 13: 5. "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God." 1 Cor. 10: 32.

The new dispensation was never intended to conflict with the old. Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." Matt. 3: 17. While this may refer to the spiritual law which demanded a perfect life, which no man could attain, it is also applicable to the moral law, and the civil law, with which the Gospel in no wise interferes, except that the Gospel believer takes no part in enforcing it as Jesus says, "Resist not evil." For the same reason he cannot give into the hands of others the power which he himself can not use. Paul says, "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. 5: 25, 27.

In Eph. 5: 11 he says, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Therefore the Church of Christ must stand aloof not only from the law and the administration of justice, but also from all worship that is not in accord with the Gospel teaching of unity, and which does not uphold the same separation from all worldly affairs. God wants the whole heart, and will not be satisfied with divided affections. Idolatry was always a grievous sin, and Jesus says, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." Matt. 10: 37, 38. It might seem like a strong statement to compare the worship of God with idolatry, yet if we reserve for ourselves any thing to which we are more strongly attached than to Christ, the idolatrous spirit is there, and God cannot accept us.

Finally, the ministration of righteousness far exceeds in glory the ministration of condemnation, and serves a more sacred purpose; it is manifest in a change of heart and a different life.

Landisville, Pa.

C. S. N.

WITHDRAWAL FROM POPULAR SERVICE

The true followers of Christ have always been under worldly censure and disrepute, even to this day, and they will always remain so. Christ's doctrine is not in accord with the desires of the world, hence it is discarded; the letter, in part, is accepted, but the spirit is rejected. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. 8: 9.

As taught in the Scriptures, the way to eternal life is strait and narrow and there are but few that find it. This is demonstrated continually by the daily lives of those about us. We may lead a truly moral life and do many good deeds to our fellow men, but still be outside of the spiritual kingdom of Christ. We may obey nearly all of the commandments, and yet if we fail in a few, we are guilty, for it is written, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James 2: 10. Thus we can plainly see, how easy it is for mortals to walk on the broad way, with its natural ease and pleasures, but which does not hold the promise of eternal life.

In order to gain that heavenly rest we have duties to perform while in this earthly tabernacle, and the cross must be borne. The spiritual guide, showing what our duties are, is so plain and easy to understand, that "wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." Isa. 35: 8. If we have a desire and are willing to obey God's word in all things commanded, He will give us strength to overcome and comply with His will, but without His help we are not able to accomplish anything.

Among the various commands given in the word, there are some requiring withdrawal from false teaching. 2 Cor. 6: 15; 2 John 10: 11. Ordinarily it is no great hardship to absent oneself from unfaithful worship. But when it comes to the funeral service of a relative or close friend the cross may seem heavy to bear. Love for Christ constrains us to obey New Testament teaching. Love for our friends and for all mankind impels us to give evidence of true faith by obedience, that they may have cause to reflect upon the requirements of the Gospel in order to have a sure hope of the promise of eternal life.

"For men shall be lovers of their own selves . . . having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." 2 Tim. 3: 2-5. "Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them." Matt. 7: 20. It is well understood that all religious denominations claim to have the true doctrine, but how can this be true? Some will go to war, or will use the law in a suit against his brother, or those of the world; there are those who have strife and enmity, who follow after worldly pastimes and pleasures and are yet retained in the church in full standing, contrary to the word of God. If we are partakers with such, in their service and worship, we are a party to all of their practices and can not have "a hope that maketh not ashamed." Truly, the way is narrow and the flesh weak, and though often we come short, yet we have the comfort of His promise that He will be with us, even unto the end, if we have a desire and a willingness to obey His commandments.

Christ's followers teach by example as well as by precept. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 7: 21. Thus by doing the will of our Father which is in heaven, we set an example that is far reaching in its effect. It is the light reflected by our life, which is easily discerned and can be fully understood by all who come within its influence and wish to learn. If, however, our friends do not accept the truth, as taught in the Scriptures and exemplified in the act of withdrawing from the popular services of to-day, the fault is with them and leaves us with "a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men."

New Carlisle, Ohio.

G. L. O.

THE BLESSED REST

“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” Heb. 4: 9.

Rest signifies a condition of peace and repose; a cessation from burdensome toil, either physical or mental. It is a happy and pleasing experience to the weary and exhausted laborer in a natural sense. But this rest is only temporary and therefore does not remain.

What a blessed and consoling rest is that which remaineth to the people of God—it is constant and enduring. How then can we attain this rest? for we all desire and are seeking for happiness, and rest is one of the principal attributes of happiness. Jesus said: “Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” Matt. 11: 28. It is evident that we must come to Jesus to secure this blessed spiritual rest.

When the grace of God is heeded, it convicts the soul of sin, and we become heavy laden, and burdened with a sense of condemnation. We begin to labor and become anxious to obtain relief, and we may offer moral works to conciliate the wrath and judgment of God. This, however, would only be a self-righteous offering or personal work and would not relieve the burdened soul. Sincere seekers will accept Christ’s loving invitation and come to Him; they renounce their sins and carnal life, and accept Him as their Savior and Redeemer. He fulfilled the broken law and atoned for sin. He not only remits their sins but by His ministration of love and mercy empowers them to overcome, relieves them of the burden of fear, unrest and anxiety, and imparts the *blessed rest*. This rest brings peace, consolation and joy to their souls. They now have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, which witnesses their reconciliation, justification, and adoption, so

that they can “rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”

This rest is not, however, passive, inactive or indolent. It requires faith and work to maintain it in the soul. Though the Apostle says it *remaineth*, yet it may not remain with us, for it can be lost through lack of vigilance. It is possessed in an earthen vessel subject to infirmity and temptation. It is preserved not by a work of our own, (“for they have ceased from their own works”) but by believing in Jesus and obeying all His commands. When Jesus was asked, “What shall we do that we might work the works of God?” He answered, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.”

If believers fail to fulfil all the obligations and duties of the high and holy calling, if they are enticed to take liberties not sanctioned by the Gospel, if they again compromise with the carnal, worldly life—then rest is seriously disturbed. The only way it can be restored is by humbly and penitently appealing to Jesus, who said: “Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” The self-denying doctrine, the restraining of fleshly emotions, the severing of carnal associations, is a yoke that the service of God imposes upon His children; but it must be borne if they would receive the blessed rest. The yoke, however, is easy and the burden light to the faithful, because the will is strengthened and sanctified, and in union with Jesus, who helps us to bear it.

There is a great deal of unrest in the world, causing excesses, discontentment and much crime. This lamentable condition is all the result of sin. The Prophet said of old: “But the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

There is no peace, saith my God to the wicked." All who live in sin and in a carnal, worldly life are, in the Scripture sense, wicked and have no true soul rest.

Multitudes are apparently seeking for this rest. Yet it is possible to be deceived and to become comforted by a selfish, natural rest. If persons are not willing to bear the yoke of Christ, if they persist in unbelief and self-righteousness, "receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved," they may finally be lulled to sleep in delusion's arms and imagine they are at rest. This would be only a natural rest superinduced by self-righteous works.

The rest that remaineth to the people of God is a precious treasure in this life, and it will be a glorious inheritance in the world to come. For there it will be enjoyed to perfection, nothing to mar or disturb its sweet harmony in the soul forever. A glorious prospect to the children of God! A perfect rest and peace, associating with the angel throng, in that "building of God, and house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

TRUE RICHES

"What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" This question the rich young man asked Jesus. He answered: "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor; and come take up the cross and follow Me." Mark 10: 21. When we meditate upon this Scripture we come to the conclusion that if we have our affections centered on earthly treasures or riches, we cannot follow the Savior or enter His kingdom. This evidently was a worthy, moral young man, for he observed the commandments. Jesus, however, knew his thoughts and the emotions of his heart, "for He knew what was in man." John 2: 25. Jesus

perceived that his heart was where his treasure was, and that he cherished a selfish, exalted spirit. He commended himself in saying, "all these have I kept from my youth up, what lack I yet?" This self-righteous spirit the Savior wanted to rebuke and discourage, and to test his sincerity He told him to "sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven." To have consented to this, he would have manifested a humble, self-sacrificing spirit, which condition is absolutely essential in order to follow the Savior. Jesus then said unto him, "And come, take up the cross and follow Me." Not having been willing to humble himself he went away grieved. He rather would enjoy the pleasures of sin and his riches for a season than like Moses to suffer affliction with the people of God. How short-sighted and vain this young man was; for all the riches and pleasures of this world are only for a few days, while the true riches which he rejected would have been an everlasting treasure in Heaven.

The Disciples were astonished when Jesus said: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." They said: "Who then can be saved?" He answered: "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible." We do not think that this Scripture applies as much to natural riches as to the sinful intemperate condition of man—to a self-righteous spirit of the carnal mind; the spirit that is in opposition to humility and obedience to God's word. It is truly impossible for man to change his condition and enter the Kingdom of God; for he is under the curse and disability of sin. *But with God it is possible; for by obeying His convicting grace, accepting Jesus and becoming re-*

generated or born again, man becomes a new creature, and he receives power from on high to overcome his proud, selfish nature, and is qualified to enter the Kingdom of God and receive the true riches.

The idea of the Savior was to impress His followers that they could not be true to Him and have their affections set on any personal treasure or riches. The Prophet said of old: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm." On the other hand, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is." Jer. 17: 5, 7. This is the "blessed hope that maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart." These redeemed ones will be as a tree planted by the waters. They will be nourished by the fruit therefrom, "and not know when drought cometh." They will be sustained under all trials, persecution and hatred; for Christ came into the world not only to give eternal life, but to preserve that life in all those who believe and trust in Him. He is the "merciful High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of their infirmities." He is the Advocate with the Father and He is the propitiation for our sins.

Therefore the *true riches* is only found in Christ, and by accepting Him we can lay up "treasures in Heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and thieves do not break through nor steal." Matt. 6: 20. All earthly riches and all our natural gifts and attainments, are vain and perishable and at best only serve us in this mortal life. We must go and leave all here below; the Apostle says: "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." 1 Tim. 6: 7.

Williamsville, N. Y.

A. M.

NOTHING BUT LEAVES

St. Mark 11: 12, 14.—20, 22.

From Bethany the Master came
Hungry, in sorest need;
All day for others He had toiled
Their wayward lives to lead.

His faithful few had followed Him
Till eventide, that day,
Helping to soften someone's woes—
To turn those gone astray.

Nearing Jerusalem, they spied
A tree of beauty, rare,
So full of leaves it seemed to them
Ripe figs were hidden there.

Fainting with hunger, Jesus came—
(O, disappointment grieves!)—
But when He reached the lovely tree
He found there naught but leaves.

O, tree! How blessed you might have been
Had fruit your boughs weighed low,—
How *curst* to fail the Master's need
And disappoint Him so!

The fruitless tree a lesson brings:
We, each, are as a tree
Planted by God and bade to grow
And bring forth plenteously.

Our fruits are hope and joy and peace,
Long suffering and love,
Patience and kindness, honor, truth,
And faith in God, above.

How can we, then, in heedless ease
These precious moments spend?
For folly, strife, and unkept vows
In bitterness will end.

To love not as our Savior loved,
Sorely the Spirit grieves—
No fruit matures—and when He comes
He'll find there naught but leaves.

Shippensburg, Pa.

M. E.

SAVED BY GRACE

"By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph. 2: 8, 9.

The human family has sought by many ways to find salvation. By gods of their own creation, by great systems of human philosophy, by culture and education, by seeking to draw inspiration from their own goodness, they have endeavored to obtain righteousness. And not content with seeking salvation for themselves in ways of their own appointing, they have endeavored not only to persuade, but to force others to follow the same methods. We see great efforts put forth to make men righteous by legislation, but all these human and man-made efforts have been unavailing.

“Only One Way.” There is but one avenue open by which man can obtain salvation, and that is God’s own appointed way. When sin entered into this world and Adam and his posterity were brought under its dominion; not one ray of light pierced the gloom and darkness of their despair, until God in His infinite mercy promised a way of escape. A star of hope appears on the horizon. The seed of the woman is given to bruise the head of the serpent. Gen. 3: 15. Jesus Christ offers Himself as a substitute to die in man’s stead. Though Himself without sin, He purposes to receive in his own person the penalty of the violated law. The substitute is accepted, and Christ appears as the Savior of man. To all the world He gives the invitation, “Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God and there is none else.”

In recognition of this one salvation through Christ alone, the Apostle declares, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” His power to save lies in the fact that He is God. He saves not in sin but from sin. The angel said to Joseph, “Thou shalt call His name

Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins.”

The means having been provided, how may the sinner obtain salvation? By complying with two simple conditions, asking and receiving. In this is manifest the love of God for His poor, weak children. If salvation could be obtained only through education, wealth, or influence, how few of earth’s multitudes could come to God! The great unnumbered masses would be shut out from all hope of the life beyond. But God has made the conditions so simple that the poorest and the humblest and the most illiterate may come to Him equally with the mightiest and most learned of the human family. The conditions apply to the king on his throne and the serf in the field. The Lord in His tender mercy not only pleads with his people to come; but frames for them the very words they may employ in coming. The invitation is: “O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: saying unto Him, ‘Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.’” To this appeal which the Lord puts in the mouth of the sinner, He Himself responds: “I will heal their back-sliding, I will love them freely; for Mine anger is turned away from him.” How could the great God be more gracious? How could He more signally multiply His mercies and magnify His love for the children of men? He holds out the cup of salvation, He offers it to every soul, and all He asks is that each come and drink.

The repentant sinner accepts the invitation, and follows the good impulses of the Spirit of God upon his heart. Entirely unable to find salvation elsewhere, he throws himself upon the mercy of his Creator. He confesses his sins,

and asks for pardon. By simple, child-like faith he believes that God hears his cry; this brings to him peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. The Apostle Paul says, "Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith"; and John writes, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

This is the easy and simple way chosen of God by which we may come to Him. It is not by whippings and scourgings, nor by any man-made methods; but by simple, childlike asking and faith in receiving. Having thus come to the Lord Jesus and having accepted of the divine pardon, the disciple will desire to confess his Lord before men and proclaim his allegiance to Him.

The Riches of His Grace. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." It is in contemplation of this wonderful mercy that Paul exclaimed, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God: how unsearchable are His judgments, and his ways past finding out!" And prays that we "may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

Dear reader, will we not accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our perfect Savior; as one who will save us from sin now, and give to us everlasting salvation in the kingdom of God? He is merciful, He is gracious; He pleads with us to turn unto Him. Through His grace He has made the way of escape from sin and death so plain and simple that if upright we cannot miss the path or fail of success. "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

Springfield, Ohio.

M. R. M.

AT EASE IN ZION

The prophet Amos says, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion." Amos 6: 1. One cannot escape the impression of these words nor the influence of the thought they convey.

What and where was Zion? Why was it dangerous or liable to bring woe to live at ease there? Bible historians tell us that Zion was a part of Jerusalem. A little review of its annals is interesting:

Jerusalem was in existence when the children of Israel entered Canaan. It was then, and had been for many years, occupied by the Jebusites and was called "Jebus." The highest part of the city had a fortress which was considered impregnable. But in 1046 B. C. David, through the strength and agility of his general, Joab, conquered it and the Jebusites and took possession of the whole city. He called the hill, "Mt. Zion," and that part of the city, "The city of David." He made extensive repairs to the fortress he had captured, and soon deposited there the ark of the Lord. The entire city was called "the Holy City." So Jerusalem, the holy city, included Mt. Zion, which was the city of David.

Mt. Zion was very strongly fortified. This was necessary then, for outside the holy city were many enemies, fierce and cruel—eager to conquer the city, if possible—and it was conquered in time.

The prophet Amos, who lived and spoke about 783 years before Christ, was a thinking man. He was familiar with the history of God's people. He knew what had occurred to them in earlier times. How God helped His people to overcome their enemies when they honored Him and were obedient, and how He punished His people for carelessness and indifference. The prophet also had prophetic insight into what was to follow.

God's Spirit directed him to say, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion." Zion then meant "The City of David." "God's holy hill." Surrounded by high, strong walls, those living within the city must have relaxed their vigilance and ceased to watch, thinking that no enemies could climb over those walls or beat them down. But walls will crumble, and they need looking after and repairing.

"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion" said the prophet Amos. To be at ease means to have no care, to be "off guard," to enjoy oneself without thought of danger. The prophet knew the history of two of God's chosen people—David and Solomon, who, though they lived three hundred years before him, had left a deep impression on his mind. Indeed in the fifth paragraph of the same chapter he refers to those who were at ease in Zion, saying, "That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music like David." The prophet evidently did not approve of the use of musical instruments in Divine worship.

Solomon who rose to worldly greatness and prosperity was in his youth a devout worshiper of God. Let us note how he was spoiled by prosperity and the praise of men and women. He must have become at ease in Zion, or this could not have occurred to him. The luxuries of a king's court were pleasing to the flesh. As is the effect of all luxuries, they weakened body, mind and soul; many besides Solomon yielded to this influence and fell away from Jehovah.

Going back in history from Amos, we read in 2 Kings 3 that in a dream, God appeared to Solomon, soon after he was made king, and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." Solomon did not ask for honor, or riches, or power, but only for an understanding heart that he might rightly judge God's people. His inten-

tions were good. But alas, how soon did he become corrupted! Through the weakness of the flesh he chose many "strange wives," and allowed them to continue their idolatrous worship and even himself became an idolater. How distressing! This lesson of Solomon teaches us that the most to be dreaded enemies of Zion—the weaknesses of human nature—were within the walls of the Holy City: yes, even in Mt. Zion itself.

The term Zion or Mt. Zion is used in the Scriptures as figurative of God's people, and the Church of Christ. All through the Psalms we find this comparison and also in the writings of other prophets besides Amos. In the New Testament St. Paul also makes this clear in Hebrews 12: 22, 24. So the warning of Amos the prophet applies to-day: "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion and who trust in the mountain of Samaria."

Woe to them who have joined a church and who trust in the church and its ordinances to protect them, as those of old trusted in the walls of Mt. Zion and not in God.

We must be willing to face the truth. Are we at ease in Zion? Do we daily watch and pray? Do we handle every case on its merits, and test our actions by the Word? Do we take men and women as our guides or patterns instead of Christ and His word?

Our enemies are just as real as were those of God's people from the beginning, and we are no better than they. The world, the flesh and the devil are as strong and active as ever they were. Christ Jesus our Savior and teacher said, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation, the spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak." St. Mark 14: 38.

Let us take this to heart, we are only human as Eve, and David and Solomon

were. Let us beware of prosperity, and of the ever-present danger of seeking too many bodily comforts. Are our eyes and ears open to the needs of our fellow-creatures? Do we daily thank God for all our blessings, and trust Him when His will is not ours? Are we watchful of our words and our actions? Are we too much "at ease" to go to the trouble of finding out whether a statement is correct before we circulate it? If there are certain matters or liberties about which I am doubtful, let me not take the easy course, and indulge in them. It is my duty, as a follower of Christ, to weigh matters carefully, and, in prayer to consult our Heavenly Master for light and guidance.

Let us pray for one another that we may never become "at ease in Zion." Whether we have just begun to follow Christ, or whether we have been fifty or sixty or more years on the way, let us not trust in ourselves, nor in others, but in Christ, who alone can keep us from the snares of the enemy.

Lancaster, Pa.

L. L. F.

LANGUAGE

In this world we know we cannot understandingly communicate with a citizen of another nation unless we first learn his language or else employ an interpreter. To converse fluently in a language other than our own requires much study and an ear which is sensitive to the slightest change in the inflection of the voice.

We are told in the Scriptures that after the flood, "the whole earth was of one language and of one speech." According to the common experience of man, the people were not content with the even tenor of their lives and aspired to fame and honor so that their names would not be forgotten by their poster-

ity. In order to accomplish this end they decided to build a city and a tower whose top should reach to heaven. As it was displeasing to the Lord they were checked in this course by His confounding their language. In the confusion of tongues they were scattered "abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel." The Lord had said, "Now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." The Christian is taught to cast "down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God."

In the words of the Psalmist, "The heavens declare the glory of God," and "there is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard." The various creations of God speak to us of His power and wisdom. When we think of these things, we are conscious of how limited we are in our ability to accomplish anything and in humility we recognize His supreme knowledge.

There is also a language of the Spirit. When we are willing to obey Its teachings It speaks to us in many experiences. The Apostle Paul says, "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope." Hope destroys the shame we naturally feel in confessing faith in our Saviour before the world, since we can say with Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Through the love of God which "is shed abroad in our hearts" we experience "joy and peace in believing." Since the enemy of our souls is ever going about "seeking whom he may devour" we earnestly strive to be awake and alert that we are not tempted to turn "again to the weak and beggarly elements." How can we despise "the riches of His

goodness and forbearance and longsuffering?" The Spirit speaks to us to cherish truth, honesty, justice, purity, humility, meekness, mercy, peace, and faith, without which it is impossible to please God.

When we open our hearts and minds to receive these perfect gifts, we are watchful for the Spirit's promptings that we may show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. We can speak to others who wish to learn of Him through the Spirit as interpreter which "helpeth our infirmities" and "maketh intercession for us." We understand each other because of our endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

The language of the Spirit and that of the world differ widely. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The worldly minded cannot understand the language of the Spirit for they are like the citizens of the nobleman mentioned in the parable spoken by Jesus, "because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." For when the nobleman was about to go "into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return," "he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." We must first be willing to come under the rule of God's good Spirit before we can fully understand His gracious words of promise and hope.

When Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, at the gate of the temple which

is called Beautiful a lame man above forty years old was healed through the medium of Peter who said, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." This gave them opportunity to teach the people and preach "through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." But the priests and captain of the temple and the Sadducees were grieved with them and "put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide." At this time about five thousand men believed. On the morrow "their rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem." Peter and John were now given permission to testify as to the cause of their actions. "When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Is it not our desire that in word and spirit we might testify to the world that we, like Peter and John have been with Jesus? And is this not an indication that we are teachable in the language of the Spirit?

Waynesboro, Pa.

B. F. M.

TIME AND ITS VALUE

Time is such a wonderful theme and it covers such a vast field that it is hardly possible for us to estimate its value.

Webster defines time, "As the present life, existence in this world as contrasted with immortal life."

To the young in years, time, apparently has no limit; they look forward to a long period of years which the future may hold for them. It is impressive how often those precious hours are spent in a manner that seemingly brings no return to benefit them, or good to any one.

We recall the words of Byron, "Time is the warp of life; O tell the young, the fair, the gay, to weave it well."

As we advance in years we notice how rapidly time passes, and its value becomes more enhanced in our minds when we think of how much there is to be achieved, and the time so short. The Psalmist would impress us with the brevity and value of time: "Remember how short my time is. . . . What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?"

May God in mercy grant us grace, and "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

ELIJAH'S TRANSLATION

It would appear that the Lord had revealed unto Elijah the fact that he would be translated by a whirlwind. Elisha and the schools of prophets both at Jericho and at Bethel had knowledge of this solemn event.

Elijah said to Elisha, "Tarry here I pray thee, for the Lord hath sent me to Bethel." But Elisha replied, "as the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth I will not leave thee," so they went together to Bethel. The sons of the prophets met them and asked Elisha, "knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy Master from thy head today?" Elisha replied, "Yea I know it, hold ye your peace."

Elijah then asked Elisha to remain there, as the Lord had sent him to Jericho. But Elisha answered as before and they went together to Jericho. The sons of the prophets at Jericho asked Elisha the same questions as the prophets of Bethel had asked and received from Elisha the same answer.

Elijah asked Elisha to remain at Jericho, as the Lord wished him to go to

the river Jordan. But Elisha refused and went with him. Elijah took his mantle, wrapped it together and smote the waters of the Jordan that they parted and the two went over on dry ground. And it came to pass when they were gone over that Elijah said unto Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee." Elisha said, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." Elijah said, "Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee, but if not, it shall not be so."

It came to pass as they still went on and talked, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire and parted them asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

Elisha saw it and cried, "My father, My father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." The Chaldean interpretation of these words of Elisha's was, "My master, my master, who by thy intercession wert of more use to Israel than horses and chariots."

Elisha rent his own clothing into two pieces, no doubt in grief for his loss. He took up the mantle which had fallen from Elijah and went and stood by the river. He smote the water with the mantle and said, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" and the water parted hither and thither and Elisha went over.

The sons of the prophets who saw it said, "The spirit of Elijah rests upon Elisha." They seemed to yield obedience to him and bowed before him as they had done to Elijah.

Of the prophets there were fifty men who asked permission to go and search for Elijah, lest the spirit of the Lord had taken him up and cast him upon some mountain or in some valley. Elisha refused their request, but at their insis-

tence he allowed them to go. They searched for three days but found him not and returned to Elisha who said, "Did I not say unto you, 'Go not?'"

While these sons of the prophets were away on their search Elisha remained at Jericho. The people living there said to Elisha, "Behold I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth, but the water is naught, and the ground barren." Elisha said, "Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein." They brought it to him and he cast the contents into the spring of water and said, "Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death nor barren land." So the waters were permanently made sweet and wholesome. By this occurrence the spirit and power of Elijah were made manifest in Elisha.

Elisha returned from Jericho to Samaria, where Jehoram, the son of Ahab, reigned as king of Israel. Jehoram followed in the evil ways of his father but not to so great an extent, for he put away the image of Baal, which his father had set up.

After the death of Ahab the king of Moab rebelled against Jehoram, and the latter sent word to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, asking help to subdue Moab. Jehoshaphat willingly consented, and the king of Edom also went with him. Their journey was not well planned and they came to a place where it was not possible to get water for their own use and for their cattle. Jehoram was greatly alarmed, and felt the Lord had called them together to deliver them into the hands of Moab.

Jehoshaphat said, "Is there here not a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire of the Lord by him?" One of king Jehoram's servants said, "Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, who has been

the companion of Elijah." Jehoshaphat replied, "The word of the Lord is with him."

The three kings then went to meet Elisha, who spoke with severity to king Jehoram, saying, "What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother." The king of Israel then said, "Nay, but the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab." Elisha replied, "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee." Elisha asked for a minstrel and when he played, it seemed to soften the heart of Elisha, and the spirit of the Lord directed him to say, "Make this valley full of ditches, ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain, yet the valley shall be filled with water, that ye may have in abundance and the Lord shall deliver the Moabites into your hand."

They saw no rain and heard no wind but water was brought miraculously and the land was filled with water. When the Moabites rose early and saw the sun shine upon the water it looked red, and they concluded the three kings had fought and destroyed each other and they came hurriedly to gather the spoil. When they came to the camp the Israelites rose up and smote them and they fled.

They were pursued by Israel into their own land and the king of Moab seeing his way of escape cut off became desperate, and sacrificed his eldest son upon the wall of the city as a propitiation to their god.

The Israelites were horrified by this act and returned from the siege.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

A CHILD'S STORY

My dear little Children:

It is probable that when this letter reaches you the happy Christmas day will be past but I believe you will not think it wrong for me to tell you a Christmas story. The story that I would like to tell you dates back over nineteen hundred years.

At that time the Jews had a king named Herod. He was a wicked and cruel man. The people feared him and were unhappy. They had one hope, and that was that it was just about the time when God had promised to send a Holy One into the world to set them free and they were expecting a great king like David who would conquer Herod and drive away the Romans.

About this time an angel was sent from God to the little town of Nazareth where there lived a young woman named Mary. She was a descendant of the great King David; she was a good woman but was quite poor. The angel told her that she was highly favored, that she would have a Son. He was to be named Jesus, which means the Lord our Savior, because He should save His people from their sins.

While Mary's home was at Nazareth, for some reason it seems to have been decreed that Jesus should be born at Bethlehem, the little town where David lived and kept his sheep. Perhaps that this decree might be fulfilled it also happened that the rulers sent out orders that every one must go to his home town to register his name and pay a tax, so Mary and Joseph, her husband, set out for Bethlehem. Such a great number of people had gathered there that there was no room for Mary and Joseph in the inn

and so they had to go to a stable, a cavern under ground where oxen were kept. It was there that Jesus was born and Mary wrapped Him in babyclothes and laid Him in a manger.

One of the most wonderful events that happened at this time, is told by some shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks by night. An angel appeared to them and told them, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord." And soon a multitude of angels began to sing that most beautiful song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." So the angels and then the shepherds announced the Savior's birth, and this is our reason for giving gifts on His birthday, for God gave His dear Son to the world on the first Christmas Day.

As you grow older and study the life and teachings of Jesus as I hope you will all want to do, then only, will you begin to see how wonderful Jesus was. All that is lovely in our human lives comes from His example and words; and greatest of all is our having His Spirit, and this He has promised to give to all who seek Him. He was not a king like the kings in this world, but His Spirit rules in the hearts of His followers.

While you are young in years you will be reminded that He is still the same Jesus who once said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not." He does not intrude Himself but says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock." To all those who will hear and obey Him, He will be a father, and they shall be His sons and daughters.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.