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Ancient Brides And Bridegrooms (Jan 1955)

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The history of the Book of Genesis revolves around seven great men; Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. In the measure that the image of Christ was formed in them, to that degree they are typical men. All these were married men. We are not told how three of them got their wives, but this we are told about the other four. Each of these four received his wife through suffering. Adam did not suffer actually, but typically, and he suffered in the capacity of a king. Jacob suffered as a servant, Isaac as the only begotten son of his father, and Joseph as a blameless man. How beautifully all this points to the four aspects of the sufferings of Christ, as presented in the Gospels. In Matthew we see our Lord suffer in the capacity of a King; in Mark, He suffers as a Servant; in Luke, as a perfectly sinless, and blameless man; and in John, He suffers as the Only Begotten Son of the Father. His own love dictated the path of toil and suffering, for willingly and lovingly He paid the price of our redemption, in His atoning death at Calvary. Christ loved the Church, and He gave Himself for her.

In the four brides of these four men, we have, typically, four progressive stages in the history of Christ's beloved bride. "The path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." In Eve, the bride is the object of electing love; in Rachel, the object of suffering love; in Rebecca, the object of sustaining love; and Asenath was the object of honouring love.

Every step in regard to the bride of Christ, from her election, until she reigns in millennial and eternal glory, is progressive, leading forward to her glorious destiny with her Beloved.

Let us look briefly at this lovely marriage scene in Eden, celebrated before sin had entered to mar its beauty. Adam had his ideal before him; in all creation there was not found a help meet for him, so God met and satisfied his longing, by the building of Eve out of a rib taken from his own side. On God's part there was the conception, the construction, and the completion, of this suitable help for Adam. How vividly this pictures the truth of the epistle to the Ephesians! In the first chapter, we have the conception of the Church; and in the second, we have her construction; while in the fifth, we have her completed as a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

There are five blessings that accrue o Eve as the result of Adam's typical sleep.

First, SHE SHARED THE BLESSING OF LIFE: Adam's deep sleep was typical of the vicarious death of Christ, and Eve, builded out of that rib taken from near the heart of Adam (Gen. 2:22, Marg.), is typical of the Church, deriving her very existence from the death of her Lord.

There are three things that characterize the man, in this first marriage in Eden, which picture the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the man that does all the loving, all the leaving, and all the cleaving, three things which suggest affection, sacrifice, and care. Christ loved the Church, and for her, He left His home in glory, and stooped down into the depths of Calvary's shame, in

order to bear her sins in His own body on the tree; now, having redeemed her to God by His blood, He will not let her go until she is safe with Him, the sharer of His glory (John 19:28-29).

“Bright the prospect soon that greets us

Of that longed-for nuptial day,

When our heavenly Bridegroom meets us

On His kingly conquering way;

In the glory,

Bride and Bridegroom reign for Aye!”

Second, SHE SHARED HIS NATURE: “This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh,” said Adam (Gen. 2:23). The very nature of Adam was in Eve, giving to her the same desires, and thus creating a mutual happiness. This same language is used concerning the Church in Ephesians, chapter five. The image of God, obliterated in man by the Fall, is regained through Christ, for the new man is said to be, “After the image of Him who created him” (Col. 3:10). We are thus brought into harmony with the desires of our Lord, “We love Him because He first loved us.”

Third, SHE SHARED HIS NAME. The Lord decreed; “She shall be called woman (Gen. 2:23).” Even so, the name of the Lord is called upon His beloved people; that precious name which is associated with at least five great truths in the Word of God. (Acts 11:26) It is first of all linked with our salvation (Acts 4:12), and then with our prayer life (John 16:24), our gathering together (Matt. 18:20), our unity (1 Cor. 1:10), and finally the subjection of the entire Universe (Phil. 2:9-11). What an honour to be called by His name! Adam and Eve were

together called Adam (Gen. 5:2); Christ and His Bride are together called “The Christ.” (1 Cor. 12:12).

Fourth, SHE SHARED HIS AUTHORITY: When Adam was crowned in Eden as king over God’s earthly creation (Psa. 8), there, standing beside him in all his dignity, was Eve his wife; similarly, we too shall share the authority of our Lord (1 Cor. 6:2-3). As David’s mighty men shared in the authority of His throne, even so, we that brave shared rejection with Christ during this present period, shall reign with Him hereafter. Paul uses this glorious truth in 1 Cor. 6 as an argument against the going to law brother with brother. If such dignity shall belong to us in the future, surely, it is part of our present training, to judge now, by His grace and wisdom, the difficulties which arise among us.

Fifth, SHE SHARED HIS COMPANIONSHIP AND HOME. In that fair Edenic scene where sin had not yet entered, where the curse had not yet blasted its beauty, where everything bloomed and blossomed for God’s delight, Adam and Eve walked and talked in holy familiarity. She had been created for him and presented to him. Holy bliss definitely characterized that first marriage on earth, but, O, what bliss and joy when we His Bride, created for Him, shall share His heavenly home in that fair land where sin will never enter to defile its holiness, nor will the curse ever blast its beauty, where everything will be in conformity to the holy character of God, and where we shall walk and talk with our beloved Lord in holy familiarity, as the, companion indeed meet for Him. Our Bible, as we have noticed, opens with a marriage, now let us remember that it also closes with a marriage. The first “I will” of our Bible is, “I will make him an help meet for him.” The

last “I will” of our Bible is, I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb’s wife.”

“Home, Oh, how soft and sweet it thrills upon the heart;

Home, where the brethren meet and never never part;

Home, where the Bridegroom takes the purchase of His love;

Home, where the Father waits to welcome us above.”

Gifts Principles and Responsibilities (Feb 1955)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 1 No. 2, Feb 1955.

Throughout the forepart of his first letter to the Corinthians, the apostle has been dealing with fleshly activities; now he turns the attention to spiritual abilities. He says, “Now concerning spiritual gifts (spiritualities), brethren, I would not have you ignorant” (12:1).

There are three positive evidences of carnality referred to in the stern rebuke of the early part of the epistle: divisions in the assembly (chaps. 1-4), sensuality in the individuals (chaps. 5-7), and undue licence in social and church relationships (chaps. 8-1 1).

The section of the epistle we are now considering; namely, chapters 12-14, presents a corrective ministry from the apostle Paul which, if accepted, would result in the proper adjustment of these evils. In the twelfth chapter, the unity of the Body of Christ is a rebuke to the spirit of schism in the Church. According to chapter thirteen, the purity of the love of Christ exposes the depravity of sensuality. The fourteenth chapter deals with Christian liberty in contrast to fleshly licence. It is in the first of these three important truths, that we are at present interested; namely, the oneness of the Body of Christ. Let us consider certain features of this matter:

The Blessedness Of Unity:

The unity of the Godhead, of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is set forth in the first part of chapter twelve

(1-11); whereas, the unity of the mystical Body of Christ, the result of the divine affinity which binds one member to the other, appears in the remainder of the chapter (12-31). Unity, expressed in this twofold manner, is mentioned by Christ in His high-priestly prayer (John 17), and by the apostle through the Spirit in his Ephesian letter (4:4-7). The unity of the Godhead is from Eternity; that of the Church, since Pentecost. The unity of the Godhead is fully revealed in heaven; that of the Body of Christ ought to be expressed on earth.

The Testimony Of Unity:

The ultimate source of all spiritual gift lies within the Godhead (4-6); in the same Spirit, the same Lord (Jesus), and in the same God (the Father). Every gift, imparted to man by God, has as its final objective, the acknowledging of Christ as Lord (3), At the same time, in a secondary way, the solemn duty of each gift is the profit and common welfare of every believer (7).

The heavenly endowments referred to in this Scripture, provide the equipment by which the Church edifies herself in love, and by which she proclaims the gospel entrusted to her. In the portion, vv. 4-6, mention is made of “gifts,” “administrations,” and “operations.” These may be defined thus; “gifts” in their variety, are the divinely imparted capabilities for service; “administrations,” the opportunities afforded the saints to serve God; “operations,” the different methods employed in Christian service. God, in His wisdom, fits men by personality, ability, and the grace of His Spirit, to perform the very work He has assigned to each one.

There are nine spiritual gifts contemplated in verses 8-10, and these are arranged in groups of three. The

first group of three is connected to the unfolding of the truth of God. “Wisdom” is the art of applying the truth. What blunders are made without it. “Knowledge” is the accumulation of truth in the mind and heart. “Faith” is confidence in the infallibility of divine truth. There may be a suggestion that the gift of the pastor is linked with “wisdom”; that of the teacher, with “knowledge”; and, that of the evangelist, with “faith.” The second group treats of the spectacular display of God’s power in “healings,” “miracles,” and “prophecies.” Power that is delegated to the Church is done so through the Holy Spirit, and such power may change its means of manifestation according to the necessity in the purpose of God. The last of these groups speaks of the divine enlightenment imparted to saints to discern both truth and error, and to differentiate between the work of the Spirit and the lustings of the flesh.

The Principles Of Unity:

There are four purposeful principles to control the relationship of the believer with all other believers. When these are fully acknowledged, there will be a clear expression of the unity of the Body of Christ.

(a). The first of these principles is the sense of responsibility devolving upon each gifted saint to function within the sphere that corresponds to his gift (15-16). The acceptance of this responsibility is a protection against negligence, and places upon all a particular ministry to discover and to perform.

(b). There is a blessed variety existing within the unity which characterizes the Church of Christ; This presents the second principle to be discussed. We read, “Now are they many members (foot, hand, or eye), yet but one

body." (17-20; 28-30). There is no gift that performs every function essential to the well being of the Body, but every function is executed by the combined action of every separate gift operating within its own sphere. The understanding of this second principle produces a rebuke to the spirit of jealousy.

(c). The third principle may be summed up thus: The organic oneness of the Body of Christ is such, that there is an interdependence among all the several members. Such is the divine cohesion, that each member functions within its own sphere; nevertheless, all the several functions are perfectly co-ordinated (21-25). In government, each local church stands independent the one from the other, wholly responsible to the Lord; in the fellowship of the body, the saints are so interdependent, that independency finally results in poverty of soul. When one member says to another, "I have no need of thee," (21) a schism is formed in the Body. Many of God's beloved saints are hidden behind human walls, nevertheless, there is a mysterious unity that reaches beyond these, so as to provide enrichment for each and to spread the gospel through them in the world. In this manner the Lord's prayer (John 17) is partly fulfilled. How poor would be the Church of the present time without the ministry of Luther, Calvin, Spurgeon, Darby, Kelly, Fanny Crosby, Donald Ross, and a host of others!

(d). The last of these principles embraces acts of sympathy and selflessness for, "If one member suffer, all members suffer with it; or if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (26). Suspicion affects the spirit of the Christian, destroying that mutual peace and joy which arise from the presence of mutual

confidence. Oh, for a larger heart to feel the sorrow of the saints in order that we may comfort them! (2 Cor. 1:14), a heart unselfish enough, to rejoice in the success and honour of another.

Although the apostle was particularly writing to the local church at Corinth, his vision included the whole Church of which the one at Corinth was in character a miniature (27-28). The presence of great gift demands the exercise of great grace in order that each of these principles operate to the desirable end -- the expulsion of the dreaded carnalities: indolence, jealousy, aloofness and suspicion.

* * *

We peer through the gloomy darkness of the night, between the confused masses of dense clouds, for the gleaming of The Morning Star; for there is nothing so sure as that He will come, save it be, that since He took our place upon the cross, He will give us His place upon the throne.

-S of M.

The More Excellent Way (Mar 1955)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 1 No. 3, Mar 1955.

The heart of first Corinthians is chapter thirteen, for it is here that the variety of gifts which are mentioned in chapter twelve are saturated with love in order that, in chapter fourteen thus penetrated they may function under the control of the Holy Spirit.

If in chapter twelve we have the sphere of ministry, in this passage, the thirteenth chapter, we have the spirit of ministry. Moreover, the impurity which is born of carnality, brought before us in chapters five to seven, is not seen here, for there is no impurity in love.

The Apostle, moved by the Spirit of Inspiration, gives us the most wonderful treatise on love, maintaining that it is the greatest virtue of the Christian character. Let us consider the subject under the three following headings, viz; “The Superiority of Love” (vs. 1-3), “The Sweetness of Love” (vs. 4-7), and “The Stability of Love” (vs. 8-13).

The Superiority Of Love (vs. 1-3):

In the work of evangelism the sweet sound of the gospel loses its harmony and song when love is lacking. Love is greater than eloquence (vs. 1). In the realm of teaching, gift is without value if not exercised in love, (vs. 2). Divine love in operation is greater than the gift of prophecy or the understanding of mysteries; greater than knowledge and greater than faith. In the discharge of pastoral duties or of shepherd care the most self-denying service is of no profit if love is wanting (vs. 3); it is greater than charity and greater than sacrifice.

Of what worth are the most flowery sermons, the greatest achievements in gift or talent, or the most self-denying efforts in the service of God, if deficient in love? The spirit that gives value to all ministry is missing, leaving us with a formality that is dead even though it may be correct. The love of Christ must be the motivating power in our lives, controlling the heart, the mind, and the will, to give effectiveness to all service.

The Sweetness Of Love (vs. 4-7):

Like Ezekiel's river, the love of Christ sweetens and heals where-ever it flows:

"Love suffereth long and is kind." It does not act impatiently to those whose failures grieve us.

"Love envieth not." It does not repine over another's success.

"Love vaunteth not itself." It does not parade its own importance, as did the Pharisees.

"Is not puffed up." It does not fall into the danger of which Paul warns the Corinthians four times in chapters four and five.

"Doth not behave itself unseemly." It does not act in a rude manner, but is always polite, courteous and gentlemanly.

"Seeketh not her own." It does not care for its own interests, but always those of other people.

"Is not easily provoked." It does not allow itself to become incensed over the un-Christlike behaviour of others.

“Thinketh no evil.” It does not gloat over the failures of others.

“Rejoiceth not in iniquity.” It does not extult over the sins of others.

“Rejoiceth in the truth.” It is always glad when the saints are walking in faith, hope and love.

“Beareth all things.” It is always ready to cover up the failures of saints when there is no Scriptural reason to expose them.

“Believeth all things.” It is always without that spirit of suspicion which is so deadly to fellowship among the saints.

“Hopeth all things.” It always hopes for the best in the fellow-saints and supports them till hope is realized in the formation of Christ in them.

“Endureth all things.” It always bears the rebuffs while waiting patiently for the reproducing of the Spirit’s best in the lives of the saints.

“Love never fails.” It always stands by the Lord’s people to the end, and endures to the uttermost.

The Stability of Love (vs. 8-13):

The Apostle here draws a contrast between that which was temporary in the church and that which is to be permanent within her during her earthly pilgrimage. The miraculous gifts which served the Church during her infancy were put away when maturity was reached (vs. 11). In the absence of the completed canon of Scripture the Church was served in part by special revelation of the mind of God without any written word (vs. 1O). These special unfoldings were ended by the

perfection or completion of the Written Word, The Bible. The Spirit here impresses upon us that though the external helps in the service of the Church may be removed, its testimony would remain unmarred (vs. 8). The internal virtues of character must abide, however, or the Church will cease to be a witness for God (vs. 13).

The ceasing of that which was temporary does not affect the character of the Church; faith, hope, and love, abide. In the service of the Church, teaching takes the place of prophecy, (Compare verse 8 with 2 Pet. 2:1); the world-wide witness of the Church takes the place of the gift of tongues, the sign to the Jewish nation of its imminent rejection by God, and of God's intention of embracing men of every nation and language with the gospel; the special gift of knowledge by which the mind of God was made known to the Church, gives place to the revelation of His mind permanently enshrined in the Written Word, and discerned by the spiritual of every generation.

Here is the more excellent way; the true spirit of Christian testimony. Let the river of His love flow into our hearts in all its fullness. It will enrich our lives, sweeten our disposition, and give value to all that we do for Christ. Let us follow after love, for it is the crowning virtue of Christian character. If, like Ephesus we leave it, we will be as Samson when he lost his crown of Nazariteship; we will go out as at other times and wist not that the Lord has departed from us in all His power and beauty.

The love of Christ claims our affection (Eph. 3:14), controls our activities (2 Cor. 5:15), and assures our victory (Rom. 8:35). His love is strong as death; it grips and constrains us in a life of service for Him. His love is

a jealous love, it will brook no rival. Christ will not be satisfied with anything less than our hearts. His love toward us cannot be quenched, nor can it be drowned in the waves of persecution, for “many waters cannot quench love, neither can the flood’s drown it,” (S. of S. 8:7). “Yea, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us,” (Rom. 8:35).

“O Love Divine, how sweet thou art!

When shall I find my longing heart

All taken up by Thee!

Oh, may I pant and thirst to prove

The greatness of redeeming love

The love of Christ to me!

He Gave Himself (Apr 1955)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 1 No. 4, Apr 1955.

The cross is the greatest fact of Christianity. Without it Christianity would be non-existent. From the Divine standpoint it was an absolute necessity and from the stand point of human need there was no other way by which man could be reconciled to God. It was the subject of the eternal counsels of God, the burden of Old Testament prophecy, and the substance of every type and shadow of atonement in the old economy. At the cross we see the greatest manifestation of human depravity, and there we see the greatest display of God's love.

Concerning Christ, the expression, "He gave Himself," is mentioned six times in the New Testament. As we ponder these, let us draw near by faith to the cross, and learn afresh that through Christ's offering, the giving of Himself, we are delivered from the bondage of sin, we have a perfect standing before God, we are cleansed from defilement, and have peace, justification, and reconciliation before God, as well as the means of sanctification before the world.

THE CROSS IS THE RESTING PLACE OF FAITH: "The Man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, (1 Tim. 2:6). Christ shed His blood that God's righteousness might not be violated in our salvation. The death of Christ was the ransom that God Himself provided and accepted on our behalf. In that vicarious death, God received the propitiation, and man receives the reconciliation, (Rom. 5:11 marg.). There is an interesting repetition of the word "all" in this passage

from Timothy. The ransom has been given for all (vs. 6); God wills the salvation of all (vs. 4); therefore, the intercession of the church is for all, (vs. 1).

THE CROSS IS THE MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world," (Gal. 1:4). What aimless lives we lived in this poor world. We squandered our affections pursuing objects which left a sense of disappointment and frustration. From all the evil of the world, its lawlessness, its philosophies, its systems, and its theories, Christ has separated us in His Cross. Moreover, through His work accomplished there, He has satisfied every yearning of our hearts. In Him we find the perfect object of delight. Both the negative and the positive sides of our sanctification by the cross, have been expressed for us in the prophetic language of Ephraim, "What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard Him, and observed Him."

THE CROSS IS THE SECRET OF SPIRITUAL VITALITY: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me," (Gal. 2:20). Christ gave Himself that He might live out His own beautiful life in the lives of His people. In this regard, four things are stated in this portion. First, I died in Christ. The sentence of death was executed on me in Christ at the cross. I now stand in the safety of resurrection ground. In second place, Christ lives in me, that is, by His Spirit Who forms the image of Christ in the growth of the "New Man." Christ has no eyes in this world, but ours with which to look with compassion on human need; no

hands but ours to do His noble work; no feet but ours to run errands of mercy; and no lips but ours to speak forth His message of pardon, peace, and love. His love demands the yielding of our all, in order that in very truth, we may be able to say, “For me to live is Christ.” In third place, relationship with the former “I” or “the old man” has been broken; that “I” is an intruder in this new sphere of life in Christ. We live not by his maxims; therefore, his deeds must be put off as having no place in our lives as the people of God. Finally, we live by a new principle, a vital energy in the life. It is the faith of the Son of God. In other words, that faith embodied in Christ, that was the rule and force of His life as a perfect man, is now the principle and energy of our lives. By it we live and move to the glory of God; we overcome in the conflict of life, and establish in heaven a record in view of the Day of Christ, (Heb. 11:2 and 39).

THE CROSS DEMANDS THE ABSOLUTE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST IN OUR LIVES: “Our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity (lawlessness) and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works,” (Titus 2:14). He bought us at highest cost, that He might take up the reins of government in order to supremely rule over us. The cross displays God’s wondrous grace. In this particular passage, we read of the grace that justifies (11), that sanctifies (12), and that glorifies (vs. 13), and, that even satisfies now (vs. 14). The grace of God is a great incentive to our yielding our all to Him, so also are the hope of the coming of Christ, and the eternal purpose of His cross. Let us ever remember that, “Christ both died and rose and revived that He might be Lord both of the dead and living.”

THE CROSS IS THE EXAMPLE OF LOVE: “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour,” (Eph. 5:1-2). Love is the greatest virtue of the Christian character. Christ unselfishly yielded His all that His people might learn to walk in happy fellowship with each other. The sacredness of Christian communion is learned only under the shadow of the cross. In life and in death Christ was the true Meal Offering and Peace Offering; for others He lived and died. He, the Peace Offering, in His perfect sacrifice has fixed the foundation for reconciliation both with God and man; consequently, He has established the only ground of fellowship with God, and with man. The racial enmity between the Jews and the Gentiles has been abolished by the cross; believers in Christ from both races are now fellow citizens in the heavenly Kingdom, and fellow-members of the body of Christ. In the light of the cross, we, therefore, are to walk in love the one toward the other. We are to be imitators of God and reflect His lovely character. Let us stand beneath the shadow of the cross till the very love that led Him to die for us warms and illuminates our whole being. In such an atmosphere the noxious weeds of corrupt human nature (bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, and malice) will wither, and in the soil of the new nature the tender plants of His own sowing (kindness, tenderheartedness, forgiveness, purity, love, and sacrifice) will bloom for His delight and glory, (Eph. 4:31-5:2).

THE CROSS IS THE ASSURANCE OF HEAVEN AND HOME: “Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself

for it … that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing," (Eph. 5:25-27). Each member of that Church is born with a heavenly calling, rejoicing in a heavenly citizenship, possessed with heavenly affection, endued with heavenly wisdom and power, and bound for a heavenly destiny.

"Unto Him who loved us, gave us

Every pledge that love could give;

Freely shed His blood to save us;

Gave His life that we might live;

Be the kingdom,

And dominion,

And the glory evermore!"

Spirit Controlled Ministry (May 1955)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 1 No. 5, May 1955.

In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, throughout chapters 8 to 11, he reveals the encroachments of carnality into their church; in this, chapter 14, he administers a specific rebuke to the evident license given by the saints at Corinth to the flesh, for here true Christian liberty is seen as the Divine control of the Holy Spirit. In this one chapter there are at least seven principles which constitute the Spirit's control in the assemblies of the saints. The influence of the Holy Spirit is seen to be, not only the power of ministry, but the restraint of ministry as well.

THE QUALITY OF MINISTRY: All oral ministry must be to edification, exhortation, and comfort (vs. 3). Edification is for the mind, exhortation for the conscience, and comfort for the heart. The first builds up the Church in right thinking, the second, to right acting, and the third aspect of ministry binds up the wounds of the discouraged and broken-hearted.

THE COMMUNICATION OF MINISTRY: All ministry must be in words easy to be understood, "Except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood how shall it be known what is spoken?" (vs. 9). The glory of God and the welfare of the saints must ever be before the speaker.

THE MEANS OF MINISTRY: The speaker must be conscious that he has a message from God. "That I may teach others also," (vs. 19). It is only in malice and humility that we are to be children. In understanding we

are to be men (vs. 20). We must ever guard against a waste of precious time by ten thousand words to no profit, and say as much as possible in as little time as possible.

THE POWER OF MINISTRY: Ministry in the Holy Ghost is convincing. It flows from heart to heart. Of the listener we read, “He is convinced of all, he is judged of all” (vs. 24). When the presence of God is felt in the midst of His people the consciences of all are gripped, there is indeed a holy atmosphere, and as the saints engage in their devotions the power of God is felt and known. It is according to the spiritual condition of the Lord’s people whether they bring that power and holiness with them or not when they come together in the Church.

THE APPRAISAL OF MINISTRY: Ministry is tested by the judgment of the saints (vs. 29). No man is the judge of his own ministry. There is a Divine liberty to minister, but only for those who are so gifted to minister by the Risen Head of the Church. The dignity of ministry is lowered when the assembly tolerates every one who feels that he has liberty to minister. Many a Christian conference and many a Gospel testimony has been ruined by an “every man” ministry. Verse 29 teaches that God-given gift should be acknowledged by the Church.

THE METHOD OF MINISTRY: God lays down principles, rather than rules and regulations, for the guidance of His people. Here an important principle is stated, “Let all things be done decently and in order” (vs. 40). We may, and do, adopt methods to carry out the principles of Holy Scripture, but these must be in keeping with the dignity and holiness of God’s testimony. Let us ever

remember that God has given no legislation for methods. He has given His people wisdom instead. Methods may change in every generation and in every country, but principles never change. Consequently, God never meant that we should look in the Scriptures to find methods, for the simple reason He never placed them there. The grace and ability to distinguish clearly between principles and methods would save the Lord's people from many a heartache and the Spirit of God from being grieved by vain wrangling.

THE PURPOSE OF MINISTRY: The aim of the Spirit in the assembly of the saints is to unveil Christ to every eye. In chapter 11, verses 10 to 16, the Spirit of God uses a simple exercise and custom to accomplish this end. Here He treats of the subject of Headship. "The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (vs. 3). Men appearing in assembly capacity uncover their heads. Why? Because the head of every man is Christ. He must not be covered. The unveiled head of the man teaches what the aim of the Spirit is, the unveiling of Christ so that His glory fills every vision. (vs. 7).

Women appear in the Church with their heads covered. Why? Because the head of every woman is the man, he must be covered; put out of sight. The woman is the glory of the man (vs. 7). That glory must be veiled. The glory of Christ must have no rival in the assembly of His people. Every act of the flesh has its rebuke in the covered heads of the sisters. Thus, our very deportment teaches angels and ourselves that all flesh should be silent before God, that reverence and Godly submission to the control of the Spirit becomes us lest we in some

way hinder His revealing of Christ in all His beauty to the hearts of His own.

We conclude by pointing to three verses that summarize these seven Divine principles:

“Let all things be done unto edifying,” (vs. 14:26).

“Let all things be done decently and in order,” (vs. 14:40).

“Let all your things be done with love,” (chap. 16:14).

The Final Triumph (Nov 1955)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 1 No. 11, Nov 1955.

In the final triumph of the Risen Christ as taught in chapter fifteen of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, we learn that complete conformity to Christ is the consummation of the Christian's calling. God has made Christ to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30). Wisdom is conformity to His mind, righteousness to His claims, sanctification to His will, and redemption to His image. Redemption is here viewed in its final and full stage (Rom. 8:23; Phil. 3.21). These four great truths form the subject matter of this first epistle to the Corinthians. Chapters 1-4 deal with wisdom, chapters 5-7 with righteousness, chapters 8-14 with sanctification, and chapters 15-16 with redemption.

The great doctrine of the resurrection in chapter 15 revolves around the mention made of four "last" things, the last witness (v. 8), the last enemy (v. 26), the last Adam (v. 45), and the last trumpet (v. 52).

Let us now consider the fourfold division of this chapter.

The Fact Of The Resurrection (Vv. 1-11)

Linked with the proof of the resurrection is the last witness. The Lord is risen, such is the unanimous witness of the Scriptures (Vv. 3-4), and the testimony of living and chosen men (Vv. 5-11).

The founders of the great religions of earth are dead, and sepulchres enclose their dust to this present day, but yonder garden tomb near dark Golgotha's brow is empty; even the grave clothes have long since

disappeared. He Who was conceived in the virgin's womb, and slept in the virgin tomb now fills the throne above.

Christianity stands or falls on whether or not the resurrection of Christ is fact or fable. Like seven flashing facets the resurrection proclaims: 1. The declaration of His sonship (Rom. 1:4). 2. The seal of an accomplished redemption (Heb. 10:12, 13, and 20). 3. The vindication of His holy claims (1 Tim. 3:16). 4. The witness of His mighty victory (Acts 2:24). 5. The cause of our justification (Rom. 4:25). 6. The pledge of the saints' resurrection (1 Cor. 15:21-22). 7. The prelude to the judgment of the world (Acts 17:31).

The Power Of The Resurrection (Vv. 12-28)

Linked with this is the last enemy. If Christ be not raised the gospel loses its glory, and the claims of Christianity fall to the ground, and gloom and despair fill the heart. If the Lord Jesus did not arise, there are only four ultimate conclusions: 1. The work of Christ has no value (Vv. 13-14). 2. The message of the gospel has no meaning (Vv. 15). 3. The faith of the Christian has no object (V. 17). 4. The hope of the believer has no future (Vv. 18-19).

"But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that slept," (V. 20). Gloom and despair disappear, and horizons of bliss and glory open up before the soul's vision. The glory of the gospel is that it proclaims the Risen Christ, the Saviour Who has triumphed, and Who by virtue of His work and exalted station will put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. Such is the pledge of our resurrection. We shall share with Him eternal joy in

scenes where sin and death never will raise their ugly spectres again.

Referring again to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus as the pledge of the resurrection of all His saints, we now notice three things which are stated clearly regarding His own resurrection: It is first in time (Acts. 26:23), first in rank (Col. 1:18), and first in pattern (1 Cor. 15:23). The glorified body of the saint is to be conformed unto His own body of glory.

The Glory Of The Resurrection (Vv, 29 -1 49)

Linked with this we have the last Adam. This section is the answer to the questions, “How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?” (V. 35). God is a God of variety (Vv. 39-41), and this is seen in this declaration of the resurrection (V. 42). That which is sown in the death of the body, produces seed from which the new body will come after its likeness (Vv. 37-38). What a body! It is finally saved from all the old traits and infirmities that marked the old body.

We are now given a sevenfold contrast between that which is sown and that which is raised (Vv. 42-50). 1. Corruption gives place to incorruption; 2. dishonour to glory; 3. weakness to power; 4. the natural to the spiritual; 5. the infirm body, related to the first Adam, to the perfect body related to the second Adam; 6. the image of the earthy to the image of the heavenly; and, finally, the mortal to the immortal.

Who can bring about such a change ? Flesh and blood cannot compass the revelation of Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:16-17), and neither can they attain to the incorruptible inheritance of the saints (V. 50). The last

Adam, the Lord from heaven, alone can accomplish this. He is the quickening Spirit. He quickened us in salvation (Eph. 2:1), He quickens us through His Word unto sanctification (Psa. 110:40), and He will quicken us in resurrection unto full glorification (Rom. 8:11). “Saved by grace alone!” What familiar words to the Christian’s ear, but never will they be more heartily sung than when he stands on the golden strand and reviews life’s chequered way. It was grace that justified (Rom. 3:24), that sanctified (Tit. 2:11-12), that satisfied (2 Cor. 12:9), and it is grace that will finally glorify (1 Pet. 1:13). Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

The Triumph Of The Resurrection (Vv. 50-58)

Linked with this is the last trumpet. Soon the Church militant will be the Church at rest. The promise of her Lord then will be fulfilled, “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Down the road of time the great organizations of men are passing, only to be broken at the gates of hell. Those gates prevail over all of them, for beyond those gates there is no recognition of any former glory. The Church redeemed by the blood of the Lamb survives the shock of death, and rises by the power of her victorious Lord to glory and companionship with Him forever.

Let us consider the seven enemies before which the first Adam fell, and over which the last Adam (and we in Him) triumphed: sin, death, the grave, corruption, mortality, dishonour, and weakness (Vv. 51-55). Listen to the song of the victorious Church in heaven, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin… but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The final outcome of the struggle between light and darkness, affords every encouragement to the children of God, for of the issues there is absolutely no doubt. “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” (V. 58). Remember, your cause is the cause of truth; your Captain is the Lion of the tribe of Judah; your armour is impervious; all that you need in the field of battle is abundantly supplied (Psa. 23:5); your victory is certain, and your reward is sure.

The Song of Deborah (Jan 1956)

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There are five references to group singing in the Bible, and each reference tells of the singers expressing sweet harmony and deep joy before the Lord. The morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted the song of creation (Job 38:7); Israel sang the song of redemption (Exod. 15:1); Israel sang again, this time the song of restoration (Num. 21:17); Deborah and Barak joined in the song of acclamation {Judges 5:1); and the Bible closes with the redeemed from every nation singing the song of consummation (Rev. 15:1).

The harmonious song of creation was broken by sin, so that from the opening of Genesis where we read, “I will greatly multiply thy sorrow” (3:16) to its end where it closes with a coffin in Egypt, there is not one song.

Redeemed humanity sings for the first time on the shores of the Red Sea, and their song becomes the pattern of the perpetual song of praise, for God joins that first song and the last one in Revelation 15. Glorified saints will prolong the note of redemption throughout all Eternity, for “They sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.”

There are three features about this divine song which are very interesting: it is put in the mouth by the Lord, “He hath put a new song in my mouth” (Psa. 40:3); it is raised through devotion to Him, “When the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also” (2 Chron. 29:27); it is prolonged only through communion

with Him, “How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land” (Psa. 137:4)?

The song of Deborah, which celebrates a mighty victory in Israel, sets before us some divine principles which illustrate the way of recovery and revival among the Lord’s people. Inasmuch as there is a general longing in the Church of God for a recovery of lost power, and a revival of true spirituality, let us prayerfully consider these essentials:

A Returning To The Word

First, there must be a return to the authority of the Holy Scriptures. The name Deborah means, “The Word.” It was derived from “Debir” (Josh. 15:15) meaning “The living Oracle”. Recovery began when Israel came to Deborah to be judged (4:5). Deborah, The Word, however, had to express herself through an instrument, so she sends for Barak in Kadesh, which means “sanctuary”. Only there, in the sanctuary, does God find the instruments He can fill with His Word and His Spirit. Only when we appear empty before God, and learn of Him in the solitude, will He fit us to be vessels through which the Word can flow in the freshness and the power of the Holy Spirit to the blessing of others.

A Recalling of the Past

Secondly, there must be a remembrance of first love, first works, and first principles. “Lord, when Thou wentest out of Seir… the mountains melted from before the Lord” (5:4-5). They looked back to the time when the shout of the King was heard among them. The very thought of their first love and first works stirred up longings for a return to God, the God from Whom they

had drifted. Is it not so with us as individuals? We look back to better days when we would have gone anywhere with our Lord, when we would have given up anything for His glory, when we enjoyed the light of His countenance shining upon us, when we were warm in our love to Christ and fervent in our testimony to the world. Alas! The clouds of worldliness, carelessness, indifference, and carnality have shut out the light of His face, so that the consciousness of His presence is not felt and enjoyed as formerly.

Is it not so with us collectively. When godly men and women left the formalities of stereotype religion to meet in subjection to the One Head, the dew of youth was upon them. The impact of their testimony was felt in almost every country in the world. They attracted many thousands of the saints to share recovered truth with them, because they believed it to be the property of the whole Church. Alas! The blight of exclusivism, the bane of party-ism, the pride of ecclesiasticism, and the greed of self-aggrandizement have grieved the Spirit of God and marred our testimony before the world. Let us look back to better days, and let the contrast between the past and the present produce longings of heart for a return to first love, first works, and first principles. Then the shout of the King will again be heard, and the beauty of the Lord our God will be upon us.

A Repenting of Their Ruin

In the third place, they must honestly acknowledge their ruin which was so evident in:

THE CONFUSION OF PURPOSE: “The highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways.” In Galatians 5:12, Paul spoke of the teachers of legalism

who threw God's people into confusion, and who threatened to cut them off if they did not bring themselves under the legal yoke (Gal. 4:17). The saints, thus disturbed, had no clear perception of God's path for them, and were going around in circles instead of moving forward.

THE DISRUPTION OF FELLOWSHIP: "The inhabitants of the villages ceased." The lovely sight of holy concourse and happy communion was no more. The assemblies of saints, like the villages of Israel, were meant to be places of fraternal relationship and of mutual communion where the saints could share their joys and sorrows. Sadly, the enemy has crossed our borders, and has trampled on the inheritance of the Lord, for strife, bitterness, malice, and envy, those enemies of all good, have turned scenes of holy concord into scenes of unholy discord.

THE DISREGARD OF DEVOTIONS: "They chose new gods." The affections that should have found their centre in God were squandered on other objects. Loving the Lord with fervent heart will correct every phase of our lives, but departure therefrom will be the harbinger of many evils.

THE DETERIORATION OF LEADERSHIP: "Then was there war in the gates." That is, there was strife among their rulers who sat in the gates. The general spiritual tone of Israel could not rise higher than that of their leaders. Likewise, the spirituality of God's people today reflects that of the elders among them. Oh, that God would raise up men of character, principle, and piety to go before His people; "Men that have understanding of the times" (1 Chron. 12:32).

THE NEGLECT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE: “Was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?” Only as we put on the armour of light against the flesh (Rom. 13:12), the amour of righteousness against the world (2 Cor. 6:7), and the whole armour of God against the Devil (Eph. 6:13), will we be fitted for the good fight of faith and be saved from shameful defeat.

A Recognizing of Unity

Little Benjamin is as necessary as mighty Ephraim (v. 14). Here is a combining of talent and a linking of strength for the cause of victory. The people collectively and willingly identified themselves with God’s cause as an army of volunteers and not as conscripts (v. 9). The New Testament counterpart of this is taught in 1 Cor. 12, where we are warned that schism will appear in the Body, the Church, if independency is asserted. The Body is so organically joined together that the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of thee.” All that individually we have received from God must be contributed for the good of the whole assemblage of the saints, and we must learn to recognize and appreciate each other’s gifts and talents for the successful witness of the Church on earth.

God’s displeasure is seen toward those who refuse to contribute to victory. Distance and prosperity kept back Reuben (v. 16). He, although the firstborn, is true to his character, unstable as water. When he chose his inheritance on the other side of Jordan, he was wrongly separated from his brethren, for it placed him so far from them that he did not come to their aid. Let us never mistake the plea of isolation for the path of separation. Any position that keeps us back from helping our

brethren is unscriptural. Home comforts kept back Gilead, Dan, and Asher (v. 17), while indifference brought a curse upon Meroz (v. 23).

On the other hand, the weakness of a woman triumphs over the strength of a man of arms, for the pilgrim's weapon, a tent peg, was used with the skilful-ness of the workman's hammer (v. 26). This reminds us of 2 Tim. 2:15, where the use of the sword of the Spirit must be controlled by that heavenly wisdom which fills the saints who are instructed in the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Deborah's song closes with the expression, "Let all them that love Thee be as the sun." This is the secret of that victory which is within the grasp of all true lovers of Christ. As the sun rises at the behest of its Master, and moves with undeviating course to fulfil the divine purpose, let us put ourselves at God's disposal and move in the path of His will right to the end of our little day. As the sun, wherever it shines, sheds light, warmth and healing upon the earth, even so is our mission in life, for such is the ministry that constitutes the witness of the Church. No enemy can stay the progress of such a testimony. God help us to be like the sun.

Propitiation (May 1956)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 2 No. 5, May 1956.

The word propitiation is found three times in the New Testament (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2), and there it is the equivalent of the Old Testament word atonement.

The meaning of this interesting word is, “to cover,” in the sense of putting out of sight, “to appease,” or “to satisfy,” as in the case where a wrong has been inflicted. That which needed to be banished from the sight of God was sin; that which had to be appeased was the wrath of God against sin. Divine justice must be satisfied at no expense to God’s own righteousness before He can be a Saviour to sinners. In the divinely appointed sacrifice of Christ at Calvary every holy claim and every human need were met; the wrath of God was wholly spent upon the head of our beloved Saviour, for the sword of divine justice found a sheath in the bosom of the Son of God (Zech. 13:7). On that firm foundation sin was banished forever (John 1:29).

Justice previous to the cross had withstood the purposes of love,

“But justice now withstands no more

And mercy yields its boundless store.”

No explanation of the atonement is worthy of God which does not expound this doctrine as the plan of Divine wisdom, the gift of Divine love, and the provision of Divine grace. God, whose justice demands the punishment of sin and whose love yearned for the

salvation of the sinner, could only harmonize His own attributes by providing a sacrifice whose value would be as infinite as His own holy character, a sacrifice whose acceptance would satisfy the claims of infinite holiness and lay the foundation on which God could be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

It is interesting to note the setting in the three epistles where the word propitiation is found, Romans, Hebrews, and First John. Three great truths are expounded in these books, justification, sanctification, and spiritual relationship in the family of God. In Romans propitiation enables God to justify and Christ to become Saviour. In Hebrews propitiation enables God to sanctify and Christ to become Priest. In First John propitiation enables God to become Father, and Christ to become Advocate to maintain the enjoyment 6f that relationship. In Romans it is the sin-offering aspect of the propitiation that is prominent; in Hebrews it is the burnt-offering aspect, while in First John it is the peace-offering aspect reconciling God in a family relationship with all enmity destroyed.

Let us look briefly at this grand subject as presented in these books.

Propitiation In Romans:

Man is a depraved creature by birth and by practice. He is a rebel and incorrigibly guilty. In Rom. 1, he stands as a prisoner in the dock and under the evidences of creation (v. 20), history (vv. 21-23), and his own conscience (v. 32), he is condemned. Three times over we read, “God also gave them up,” first, as to their bodies (v. 24), second, as to their souls (v. 26), and, third, as to their spirits (v. 28). Weighed in the balances

of heaven man is found wanting. In chapter 3:9-19 the apostle sums up the argument of chapter 1, and confirms it by various quotations from the Old Testament. From these quotations four solemn conclusions are arrived at. First, “there is none righteous,” sin separates; second, “there is none that understandeth,” sin blinds; third, “there is none that seeketh after God,” sin destroys the affections of the heart for God; and, fourth, “there is none that doeth good,” sin destroys fruit for God in the life.

Who can bridge the mighty gulf, dispel the darkness of the mind, implant “the expulsive power of a new affection,” and produce fruit unto holiness in the life? God alone. He provides for Himself a satisfaction by which the puzzle of the ages is solved, How can a man be justified by God? God sets forth Christ as the propitiation and rests the justification of the believer on the solid rock of the work of the Divine Trinity, the grace of God (Rom. 3:24), the blood of Christ (Rom. 5:9), and the operation of the Holy Spirit turning the heart of the sinner to Christ (Rom. 5:1). Thus man who by nature and practice had come short of the glory of God (3:23), now, because of propitiation, rises by sovereign grace to reach that of which he had come short (Rom. 5:2; 7:9; 15:6).

The three results of sin that man has suffered ever since Eden, that is, a sense of condemnation, of guilt, and of separation, are all removed in Christ. There is now, for all who are in Christ, no condemnation (Rom. 8:1), no accusation (v. 33), and no separation (v. 35).

Propitiation In Hebrews:

(See chapter 2:17 New Translation) As the work of the Divine Trinity in Romans becomes the basis on which our justification rests, so in Hebrews the work of the Trinity becomes the basis on which our sanctification rests, the will of God (10:10), the blood of Christ (13:12), and the witness of the Holy Spirit (10:15-16).

In Hebrews 2 the humiliation and death of Christ are viewed as meeting four great necessities, they provide a perfect Saviour and Leader (v. 10), they despoil the devil (v. 14), they work propitiation (v. 17), and they enable Him as our Great High Priest to bear us safely home, through His succour (v. 18), His sympathy (chap. 4:15-16) and through His daily salvation (chap. 7:25). The path that He himself once trod as a man is the path by which He leads His people home. It is marked by praise (2:12), dependence (2:13), obedience (5:8), and holiness (7:24).

God has a house on earth and Christ is the High Priest over that house. On the ground of propitiation God is able to dwell in the midst of His sanctified people, and by the same atonement, Christ is our Priest to save to the uttermost, the uttermost length of time, a Saviour the whole way home.

The high priest of Israel as a beautiful type of Christ bore three things continually before the Lord. He bore the names of the children of Israel on his shoulders, (compare 2:18) on his breast (compare 4:15), and upon his mitre which he wore for the iniquity of holy things (compare 4:16). Every failure of the saints is met by the propitiation of Christ. His High priestly ministry functions on the basis of it.

Propitiation In First John:

As our justification in Romans and our sanctification in Hebrews rest upon the solid foundation of the work of the Trinity, so our relationship in the family of God in First John rests upon the same foundation, the grace of God (4:9-10), the atonement of Christ (2:2), and the operation of the Divine Spirit protecting us from all seduction (2:20-27). Christ is presented as Saviour in Romans, as Priest in Hebrews, and as Advocate in First John. Mark well that He is Advocate with the Father. How precious this is! It teaches us that though our failures affect our communion they do not affect our relationship. Let us also notice that the word for Advocate is the same as the word for Comforter. All three persons in the Godhead are Comforters to the people of God, the Father (2 Cor. 1:3-4), the Son (1 John 2:1), and the Holy Spirit (John 14:16).

Our security on the ground of atonement must never be taken as a licence to sin. We are warned against carelessness in walk. The epistle was written that we might be happy (1:4), holy (2:1), and sure (5:13).

The character of God as revealed in First John gives emphasis to the holiness of the sphere in which the children walk, God is Light (1:5), God is Righteous (2:29), and God is Love (4:8). The sphere in which the family walks therefore is marked by light, life, and love. The pattern to which all the children will be eventually conformed is Christ the Firstborn. Six times over in the epistle we read, “As He.” In the suggested sixfold identification with Christ we are made sharers of His position in the heavenlies (1:7), of His experience on earth (2:6), of the holiness of His nature (3:3), of the

righteousness of His character (3:7), of the love of His heart (4:17), and finally of the image of His glory (3:2).

Hallelujah to the Lamb! From His atonement we derive our justification, sanctification, and glorification.

“Jesus Thy blood and righteousness

My beauty are, my glorious dress;

Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed

With joy shall I lift up my head.”

“No man should ever speak against his brother until he has first spoken to his brother. To do so is a greater sin than any sin which the brother in question could himself have committed, because it is sin against the law of love.”

Sanctification (Oct 1956)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 2 No. 10, Oct 1956.

The words sanctification, holiness, and saint, come from the same Greek root. W. E. Vine defines ‘hagiasmos,’ translated holiness and sanctification in our A. V., as separation to God, and the resultant state and conduct befitting those so separated. Sanctification, therefore, is the state, predetermined by God for believers, into which He calls them in grace, and in which they begin and pursue their Christian course. Hence they are called saints. Dr. Vincent says that the word sanctify is constantly used in the Septuagint to express the entire dedication and consecration of both persons and things to God.

There are seven references to sanctification in the New Testament, which suggest its meaning. Our food is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer (1 Tim. 4:4, 5); it is set apart for our use and is not to be refused by ceremonial restrictions.

The unbeliever is sanctified by a Christian partner; consequently, their children are holy (1 Cor. 7:14). This does not mean the imparting of any spiritual virtue to the unbeliever, but, rather is an evidence of the contrast between law and grace. Under law the Israelite, if married to a heathen, had to put away the stranger if such a one was not truly proselytized to the Jewish religion. The children in such wedlock were considered unclean (Ezra 10:1-4; Neh. 13). Under grace the saint is to remain with the unsaved partner, for he or she is sanctified or set apart by the marriage vow as a spouse for life.

The Holy Spirit is the One Who sanctifies (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rom. 15:16). This act is connected with God's choice of us, and with our choice of Christ; it is the preparation of the soul by the Spirit of God for the reception of life.

God the Father also sanctifies the believing soul on the ground of the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10:10; Jude 1:1; Heb. 13:12), completing his standing in Christ. He stands before God in all the value of the atonement, and from this position no enemy can move him.

We also know that the Word of God sanctifies in a progressive manner resulting in the growth of the believer into likeness of Christ (1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Tim. 2:21).

Another remarkable act by which the Father sanctifies the Son is recorded in John 10:36. The Son of God, coming forth from the Godhead is sanctified to the purpose of bringing additional glory to God by displaying the attributes of God at the cross for the punishment of sin and the blessing of the sinner.

A final reference to the use of this word is seen in the act by which the Son sanctifies Himself. Here (John 17:19), the Son is going back to the Father by virtue of an accomplished redemption in order to minister to the need of His pilgrim people.

Let us now look at the subject in a little more detail under four headings.

PREPARATORY SANCTIFICATION. This is called the sanctification of the Spirit (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rom. 15:16). It is the work of the Spirit as He prepares the soul for salvation. This work is described in John

16:8-11, and is made effectual in us in three ways: through conviction of the conscience, through belief of the heart in a risen Christ, and through the illumination of the mind. When the soul is willing to be saved, the Spirit leads him to the initial step of believing in Christ (2 Thess. 2:13), and in acceptance of the atonement (1 Pet. 1:2).

POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION. (Heb. 10:10; 13:12; Jude 1). This is called the sanctification of the Father. Christ is made unto us sanctification (1 Cor. 1:13). God has set us apart in Christ for ever. The degree of our acceptance is measured by the blood of Christ; it is therefore, perfect and complete. By that blood our sins are gone for ever, we are clothed in the righteousness of God, and are accepted in Him Who has brought us nigh to God.

PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION. (John 17:17; Eph. 5:26; 2 Cor. 3:18). This is the sanctification of Christ by the Word in the power of the Spirit. It is a gradual process resulting in conformity to the image of Christ. Positional sanctification describes the work of Christ for us; practical sanctification the work of the Spirit in us. As we by the Spirit apply the Word of God daily to our hearts, its keen edge will produce self-judgment.

Illustrations of sanctification are provided in the history of Israel redeemed from Egypt.

Notice some:

Separate in their dress. (Lev. 19:19). Their clothing is typical of the spiritual attire of the saints. They are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, the seven lovely garments described in Col. 3:12-14. We can only serve God aright when we are clothed with Christ-like humility.

Separate in their food. (Lev. 11). Of animals they were to eat only those which parted the hoof and chewed the cud. These animals typify Christ, the food of His people, who are to be separate in their walk, and sweet in their thoughts and meditations, even as He was. In Psalm 1, the godly man is seen as with the parted hoof in verse one, and as if chewing the cud in verse two. These make him the beautiful man of verse three. The picture is one of life, health, and beauty.

They were to eat only fish that had fins and scales. Fins enable the fish to go against the current, to make movement in spite of resistance. Scales protect the fish against the force of the water. The propelling force of the Christian life is the love of Christ (2 Cor. 5:14).

The fowl that fed on flesh or crawled on the earth were unclean, and not to be eaten. We are to make no provision for the flesh. We are to starve the old nature and mortify its deeds. Certain flying creeping things that went upon all fours, which had legs above their feet, were allowed as food (Lev. 11:21).

Separate in their work. Israel was not to sow fields with divers seed (Deut. 22:9). The fruit of character is not to be a mixture of carnality and spirituality. Our joy is to be the pure joy of heaven and not that of the fool which is like the crackling of thorns under a pot. The nation was not to plow with an ox and an ass yoked together. All work for Christ is sacrificial and only what will ascend to Him as a sweet savour must be offered. The ass was unfit for sacrifice.

Separate in their company. (Num. 23:9). Separation from the world and devotion to God are the requirements of the sanctuary. These two aspects of

practical sanctification develop a well-balanced Christian. Destroy this balance and what have you? That separation which is not controlled by devotion to Christ, produces the hard, self-inflated Pharisee, devoid of all mercy, judgment, and faith. That emotionalism which is not controlled by the Word of God, produces the sentimentalist, who, unlike the tree of Psalm 1, lacks stability because his roots do not run deep into the soil of the Word of God.

PERFECTED SANCTIFICATION. (Rom. 8:29). Christ as the Firstborn is the image to which all the redeemed will be conformed. This is the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, and the glory that shall be revealed in us. That Blessed One, exalted upon the throne looks like a jasper stone, says John (Rev. 4:3). Clothed in the beauty of the Bridegroom, the bride displays the glory of God in the day of her glorification. Her light is like the jasper stone, clear as crystal, a vessel of glory to reflect the beauties of Christ for ever (Rev. 21:11). Thus, in nature, in conduct, and in body, the saints of all ages will be conformed to the image of the Son, and be forever sanctified.

Those who set themselves up to be too knowing to believe in the Bible are shallow fellows. They generally use big words, and bluster a great deal; but if they fancy they can overturn the faith of thinking people, who have tried and proved the power of the Grace of God, they must be very ignorant.

A wrong path and a strong will, worketh great ill. A weak will is a strong will if working in God’s will.

The Will of God (June 1957)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 3 No. 6, June 1957.

In the life of our Lord as a Man on earth, the will of God was of paramount importance. On four occasions, at least, we learn how the will of God regulated His whole life. According to John 6:38, He came down from heaven to do the will of Him that had sent Him; this was the supreme object of His life. In John 4:34, His meat was to do the will of Him that sent Him; here is intimated the satisfaction of His life. Once more in John, 5:30, He sought not to do His own will but the will of the Father, and here we have a revelation of that which was the secret motivating power of His life. Finally, in John 8:29, He did only those things that pleased the Father, for the will of God was a perpetual practice in His life.

The apostle Paul, in the second chapter of the epistle to the Philippians, states three things that marked the dedication of Christ to His Father's will: He presented Himself, He emptied Himself, He humbled Himself. In presenting Himself, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation. This simply means that He would not stand upon His dignity as God and refuse incarnation; His language was, "Lo, I come (by way of incarnation) to do Thy will, O God." In the next step downward, He emptied Himself, not of Deity, for He never ceased to be God, but of the outward manifestations of Deity, which He veiled in the body of His flesh. In so doing He renounced the praise and the adoration of all heaven. Thus in the form of a Servant, He was obedient to the Father's will. The final act of His gracious descent is seen in that He humbled Himself,

even to the death of the cross; and, although, obedience to the Father's will meant a vicarious death on behalf of sinners, yet He delighted in it. Throughout, this, our Lord's dedication, we see His submission to the will of God, His obedience to it, and His delight in it. As the Author and Finisher of faith, He is the pattern for all His people. Oh, that we might aim at following His steps! Let us consider together several very important things:

WHAT THE WILL OF GOD DEMANDS: There comes a crisis, into all of our lives, when we stand face to face with the will of God. Shall we yield to His will, or do otherwise? When the followers of the rejected David went down to the cave, he became a captain over them. (1 Sam. 22:2) This meant that the will of their captain prevailed, for their will was lost in his; consequently, under his training these men of distress, of debt, and of discontentment, became mighty men. In love to Christ, let us make God's will the governing principle of our lives (John 14:15).

WHAT THE WILL OF GOD MEANS TO US: It will mean, in the first place, substance to our lives (Jas. 4:13). Life is a vapour without it; aimlessly we live, and time passes away leaving no permanent results for God. With this substance, His will, life will no longer be a vapour but a tangible testimony for the Lord. It also will mean food for our spirits (John 4:34). Like our Lord, although in a smaller measure, we will say, "My meat is to do the will of My Father." Complete satisfaction comes from doing the will of God. Life will be no disappointment, when we are thus wholly dedicated. Similarly, it will mean illumination for the mind. (John 7:17): "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine." What is the secret of knowing the will of God? Surely this, that we

do it. We are told of this secret in Romans 12:1-2, according to which, the good and acceptable and perfect will of God is known, only, when, in the light of God's mercies, we yield our bodies as living sacrifices to Him. There must be the complete surrender of our personalities to Him. Our bodies have been likened to an instrument of ten strings, upon which we may bless His holy name (Psa. 33:2). It has been said that we have two eyes to behold His glory, two ears to be tuned to His voice, two hands to be dedicated to His service, two feet to walk in His way, a mouth to praise Him, and a heart to love Him. Do our lives lack harmony, does discord fill us with pain and disappointment? Let us put the instrument of our lives into the hands of the Great Musician, and let Him, with His delicate fingers, sweep across the broken strings, and awaken the slumbering cords again. Moreover, it will mean a rest for our souls (Matt. 11:29). His yoke was His submission to the Father's will. He offers that yoke to us, and in our acceptance of it we will find His peace and rest.

WHAT THE WILL OF GOD WILL DO: First, it will give specific service (Isa. 6:8; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:1-7). It is profitable to notice some of the steps in Isa. 6, experienced by the soul in the acceptance of the will of God: a vision of Christ (vv 1-5), a consciousness of our own lowly estate (v. 5), a remembrance of Calvary (vv. 6-7), an ear sensitive to the language of heaven (v. 8), and a heart response to God's call, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I; Here am I; send me" (v. 8). Before us, Paul sets a vision of the same glory, and cries, "Seeing we have this ministry we faint not." It is the ministry of reflecting the beauties of Christ to others, the ministry of the radiant face. In the light of

that glory, he would walk uprightly, handle the Word of God honestly, and unveil Christ to all, so that, should the gospel be hid from any, it would only be from those who wished to be blinded by the devil (2 Cor. 4:1-7). God has a plan for every life, a place for each one of us to fill for Him; we can only fulfil that purpose by accepting His will, by yielding to the leading of the Spirit in order to do that which God has planned. In second place, it will sweeten our lives by a closer walk with God. During His life our Lord Jesus had three circles of friends; there was an outer circle of seventy, an inner circle of twelve, and an innermost circle of three. To that innermost group, the secrets of Christ were revealed, for an intimacy was enjoyed by them that was not known to the others; they beheld His compassion (Mark 5:37-43), His glory (Matt. 17:18) His agony and conflict (Mk. 14:32-42) as none of the others did. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that they became pillars in the Church, and a mighty force for God in the world. As we commune with Him, we shall assimilate His own beautiful character; as we daily take His yoke, we will learn, “That the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him,” and that nothing worth while is withheld from the friends of Christ (John 15:15). Finally it will give us assurance amid the perplexities of life. We will learn to trace each act of discipline to the wisdom of our Father, and in every sorrow we will see the evidence of His love.

WHAT THE WILL OF GOD DESIRES: Primarily, it desires our sanctification, “This is the will of God even your sanctification” (1 Thess. 4:3). This is more than mere separation; it is being set apart for holy uses. We are to purge ourselves from sin that we might be vessels unto honour, meet for the Master’s use. It matters little

whether we be vessels of gold or of silver which serve before the eye of the public, or vessels of wood or of earth that serve in obscurity. We must ever remember, that to serve Him at all, we must cleanse ourselves from all evil, completely emptying ourselves in reality in order to be filled with His divine fullness (2 Tim. 2:20-21). It likewise desires our appreciation, “In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you (1 Thess. 5:18). Our lives should be a continual thank-offering, and our appreciation should ever be expressed in whole-hearted devotion to Christ. Lastly it desires our submission. “Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him” (1 Pet. 4:19). He who permits the adversities that test faith, will preserve that faith in the trial, and every victory gained by His grace in the trial of faith, will be to our praise and honour and glory at His appearing (1 Pet. 1:7).

“O wonderful grand will of God.

With triumph now I make thee mine,

And faith shall cry a joyous yes.

To every dear command of thine.”

The Epistle of Jude (Aug 1957)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 3 No. 8, Aug 1957.

The Epistle of Jude has been well called a preface to the Book of the Revelation, for it describes the apostasy upon which the Anti-Christ will ride to power, the apostasy which climaxes in “The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth.”

It was written to assure the saints that, in spite of the dangers around them, they were eternally preserved by God (V. 1); and also to give them instructions as to how they could preserve themselves from spiritual damage in their conflict with the enemy (Vv. 20-21).

The intention of the writer was to write on another subject altogether, but the dangers confronting the Church forced him to give, instead, a timely warning to the Christians that they should not underestimate the power of the adversary.

Jude opens his Epistle with an assertion to the effect that the saints are made eternally safe through activities of the Divine Trinity; they are sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called (by the Holy Spirit). He closes it with their being presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Between the beginning and the end of the Epistle there is a record of a great fight of affliction against a ruthless enemy.

The multiplication of mercy, peace, and love (V. 2) forms a never-failing supply of Divine grace that replenishes the spiritual vitality that is so necessary in the maintenance of God’s testimony in the world.

We are given four views of the apostasy of Christendom through illustrations taken from ancient history. These reveal the paths that lead away from God and truth. They also reveal the spirit that leads men astray, the spirit of defiance and rebellion against God and His Word. These are the rejection of God's Word through the attraction of the world; the despising of His will through the deception of the devil; the ingratitude of the flesh for God's bounties; and, the utter disregard of His authority through a combination of all these forces of evil. Let us consider these four declining pathways.

The Pathway of Unbelief

In their denial of the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ there was a definite rejection of the Word of God (V. 4). This is illustrated by Israel when attracted back to Egypt (V. 5). The nation's whole declension is traced to unbelief.

The Pathway of Disobedience

Lawlessness is ever a mark of an apostate, from it the children of God are redeemed (Tit. 2:14). This is illustrated by the rebellion of fallen angels (V. 6) who kept not their first estate. They broke every restraint by crossing a forbidden boundary and by yielding allegiance to Satan.

The Pathway of Unthankfulness

Man's ingratitude to God's goodness reveals the depravity of his nature. This is illustrated by the cities of the plain (V. 7). Those plains were well watered and fertile as the Garden of Eden; moreover, God had recovered these cities through the victory of Abraham

over the kings that had defeated them. Yet they were unthankful and unholy. These two characteristics marked the apostates of Jude's day and in every other day.

The Pathway of Rebellion

In this there is an utter disregard of God's claims and supremacy. Let us look at seven features of the evil character of the men mentioned here. They are compared to hidden rocks upon which many a ship of testimony has foundered; to waterless clouds that yield nothing but disappointment; to fruitless trees that give no satisfaction to God or man; to raging waves of the sea, boisterous, threatening, and domineering among the Lord's people; to wandering stars that give neither light nor direction to men, stars that are not in the right hand of the Son of Man, and therefore none of His; to ungodly sinners who carry no savour of Christ, no fragrance of His love, humility, meekness, gentleness, or purity; to a clique who separates itself having not the Spirit, neither the Father, nor the Son.

There are three things which mark them morally: sensuality, rebellion, and evil speaking (V. 8). There are three things that mark them religiously: they despise the blood of Christ, they make gain of religion, and they reject the authority of the Lord. (V. 11).

In contrast to these who yield no glory to God no blessing to man, the Christians are exhorted to perform four solemn duties; the first, to the Scriptures; the second, to themselves; the third, to others; and the fourth, to the Lord.

Their Duties to the Scriptures

The first aspect of the apostasy was the departure from the Word of God. The first duty of the saints is to acknowledge its authority in every department of their lives. They are given a stewardship of truth for which to contend (V. 3). Note that “The faith,” the whole body of revealed truth, once for all has been delivered to the saints. The entire Canon of Scripture was completed in apostolic days and cannot be added to nor taken from. All are to remember that holy men of old lived in the midst of apostasy, and that their trumpet gave no uncertain sound (V. 14). The prophetic utterances of Holy Scripture are tested and proved genuine by their fulfilment. In verse 17 the writing of the apostles of our Lord are placed on a level with the Old Testament as being part of the Inspired Word of God, and their words are not to be forgotten. It is on this foundation alone that the saints are to edify themselves (V. 20). Character that is built upon the Word of God will be like a house standing upon a rock which cannot be moved (Matt. 7:24-25).

Their Duties to Themselves

The second aspect of the apostasy was the despising of God’s will. The second duty of the saints is that they should be guided and controlled by the Divine will. Let us observe the four things mentioned in this connection: building, praying, keeping, and looking. These reveal a definite growth in spiritual intelligence concerning the will of God.

The will of God is revealed in the Holy Scripture: therefore, Jude exhorts, “Beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith.” Conformity to His

will should take precedence over everything else. It is this alone that adorns the doctrine of God our Saviour. The ministry of the Word of God is to edification, exhortation, and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3). It instructs the mind in right thinking, it stirs the conscience to right acting, and keeps the heart in right relationship with God. It is a guide to lead us, a guardian to keep us, and a companion to talk with us (Prov. 6:22).

The will of God is discerned in the sanctuary. This is suggested by another statement, “Praying in the Holy Ghost.” He teaches us what to pray for and takes our groanings, the unutterable language of our hearts, and interprets it for us. Praying in the Spirit gives invincibility in our conflict with the enemy (Eph. 6:10-18). According to Jude it establishes our faith in the midst of ruin. Oh, for a greater intimacy with God in order that we may pray in fellowship with His Spirit, according to His promptings, His mind, and His will!

The will of God is desired only in fellowship with God: “Keep yourselves in the love of God.” The sun shines for everyone, but if one is content to walk in the shade, he cannot blame the sun. Let us bathe our souls in God’s wonderful love and behold the greatness of it (Eph. 2:4), the manner of it (1 John 3:1), the measure of it (1 John 3:16), and the individuality of it (Gal. 2:20).

Divine love passes all knowledge; its height cannot be scaled (John 3:16); its depth cannot be plumbed (John 13: 13); its breadth cannot be measured (1 John 4:10); moreover, its length cannot be estimated (John 13:1). May the Lord direct our hearts into the love of God, and may we, by His grace, keep ourselves in its light, its warmth, and under its healing rays.

The will of God is only acknowledged in its completeness as we look for His coming: “Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Spiritual men and women cry daily, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Discontented with everything here, they look for the day when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

Their Duties to Others

The third aspect of the apostasy is seen in the ingratitude of men to God’s gifts. They consume His goodness on their own lusts. In the third duty of the saints they are to share God’s bounties, spiritual and otherwise with others, for we read, “Of some have compassion, making a difference.” Here is the exercise of discerning love (V. 22). Pearls are not to be cast before swine; nevertheless, here we have the exercise of holy love (V. 23), a love that stoops, a love that touches, and yet a love that remains undefiled in the saving of the perishing and in the care of the dying.

Their Duty to the Lord

The fourth aspect of the apostasy is the utter disregard for the authority of God. The fourth duty of the saints is to bow with unquestioned fidelity to Divine authority. “Now unto Him be glory.” Here we take our true place before Him and yield Him the adoration of our hearts. We give Him glory when we suffer for Him in meekness and submission (1 Pet. 4:14-16); when we function in the assembly according to the measure of our gift (1 Pet. 4:11); when our glory is in the Lord (Gal. 6:14); when all that we do is done with a single eye to please Him (1 Cor. 10:31); when we receive one another (Rom. 15:7);

and, when we seek to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Rom. 15:5-6). Here we yield Him allegiance and ascribe to Him “glory” and “majesty,” for He is King of kings and Lord of lords. To His supremacy we gladly bow.

Accordingly the consecrated heart renders to Him the “dominion,” for it yields to Him subjection. When sin had dominion over us we were subject to its evil influences and obeyed its law. Paul, therefore, shrank from the carnality that imposes dominion over the faith of his brethren (1 Cor. 1:24). Would to God we all would shrink from such an act. Unto God alone be the dominion; He must rule in the conscience of His own without a rival.

In our weakness we acknowledge that “power” is His. We rest in Him knowing that He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. His gospel, at the first, reached us as the power of God unto our salvation. We now are kept by the power of God, and the very power that raised up Christ from the dead is to us for every duty in life. Eventually that mighty power will be demonstrated at our glorification, for He is able to subdue all things and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. There was exceeding joy at the birth of Christ when He came to redeem us, and there will be exceeding joy again when He comes to claim the fruit of His own toil and suffering, and to bring us into His home forever.

Angels (Part 1) (Jan 1958)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 4 No. 1, Jan 1958.

The Unfallen Hosts Of Heaven

Nearly three hundred times in our Bible God speaks of the angels. The word translated “Angel” in both the Old and New Testaments literally means “Messenger.” While in the large majority of these references the word is used to describe the hosts of heaven, in a few the appellation is applied to men (Matt. 11:10. Luke 7:24).

These spiritual and heavenly beings were so interested in the affairs of our earth that they sang at its birth (Job 38:7). They also sang at the birth of the Redeemer when He came to reclaim it from the ruin into which it had been plunged by sin (Luke 2:13-14). Apparently they will join in the universal song when the Lord comes to reign over a subdued earth, “Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (Rev. 19:6). Let us consider what the Scriptures teach about these heavenly beings. We shall look at the characteristics of their creation, the classification of their ranks, and the concepts of their ministry.

The Characteristics Of Their Creation

The Scriptures teach that angels are mighty, but not almighty (Psa. 103:20. Dan. 10:13); that they are intelligent, but not omniscient (2 Sam. 14:20. Mark 13:32); and, that they are swift, but not omnipresent (Dan. 1:13). They are sexless and therefore their number is the result of direct creation and not the consequence of successive generation (Matt. 22:30). In their nature

they are holy (Matt. 25:31), in their character humble, and in their service, swiftly obedient (Psa. 103:20-21. Isa. 6:2). They are spirit beings (Heb. 1:14), yet this does not rule out the possibility of their possessing bodies. In all probability they do possess celestial bodies which can be rendered visible or invisible at will (Judges 6:21; 13:20. Luke 2:13), as was our Lord's spiritual body after His resurrection, and as probably the spiritual bodies of the saints will be in a coming day (1 Cor. 15).

Although limited in their knowledge they are not limited in their capacities to enlarge their knowledge of God and their appreciation of Christ. Through the Church they are learning more of the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. 3:10), and with holy wonder and contemplation they study the great mystery of redemption (1 Pet. 1:12).

They share with us a common relationship to God as sons (Job 1:6), and we share with them the large fellowship of the family of God (Eph. 3:15), "for we are come unto mount Sion … to an innumerable company of angels" (Heb. 12:22). We shall share with angels the love and worship of God and join with them in a joyous and ceaseless service for God throughout Eternity.

They are not mediators between men and God. Christ alone is that (1 Tim. 2:5), and although they are superior to men in strength and intelligence yet men are forbidden by God to pray to them, even they themselves refuse such homage (Col. 2:18. Rev. 19:10; 22:9).

It appears from a reference in Jude that they have definite habitations in the heavens. This strengthens the belief that they possess spiritual bodies. Yet at the behest of God they visit, with divinely imparted capabilities, every part of the universe. When Satan fell

we are told that “his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven and did cast them to the earth” meaning that at least one third of the angelic host was affected by his rebellion. Is it not interesting to note, as Dr. Gaebelein points out, that the hosts of heaven mean both the stars and the angels. God is Lord of the stars and Lord of the angels (1 Kings 22:19. Luke 2:13. Gen. 2:1).

The Classification Of Their Ranks

There is a variety of orders in their organization such as principalities, powers, and dominions. There are other designations such as Archangel, Cherubim, Seraphim. The fact that Michael is called one of the chief princes is further proof that there are various orders of delegated authority among them.

Whether the Cherubim and the Seraphim are the same creatures, we do not know, but it seems plain that to the Cherubim is committed the guardianship of the Throne of God (Gen. 3:24. Exod. 25:20. Exek. 1. Rev. 4:6-8). This seems to have been the original assignment of Lucifer who forfeited his position by his fall. The four faces of the Cherubim would suggest God’s desire for the blessing of all creation, a desire that could only be realized when consistent with His own righteousness. Moreover, those four faces depict the features of the Eternal Son of God in Whom alone the attributes of God could be harmonized in the blessing of creation. In Matthew we see Him with the face of a lion for He alone, by virtue of His atonement, has the right to universal dominion. In Mark we see the face of the calf for He served both God and man sacrificially even unto death; He was ever bearing burdens. He bore the burden of our infirmities and sorrows in life, and the

awful burden of our sins in death, thus enabling God to be just and the justifier of everyone who believes in Jesus. In Luke we see the face of a man, the only perfect Man that ever walked this earth. How perfectly human He was! He was ever loving and always doing good; ever sympathizing with poor frail man in all his infirmities. He experienced life as we know it, sin apart, and in doing so He fitted Himself for His High Priestly ministry above, a ministry that meets all our need as saints along the way to glory. In John we see the face of the eagle with its aspirations heavenward. The Son of God, though on earth, was ever in the bosom of the Father.

Gabriel And Michael

These two are the only ones of the angelic host who are individually named, except for Lucifer, the fallen one. Gabriel means “The Mighty One,” or “The Man of God.” His work seems to consist in carrying important messages from God to man (Dan. 8:16. Luke 1:19-26). Other angels may appear at certain times in the presence of God (Job 1:6), but Gabriel stands there continually as God’s divine courtier (Luke 1:19). In the execution of his duty his path lies through enemy territory which involves him, and other angels, in conflict with evil principalities and powers (Dan. 10:13). What a revelation of how nations are affected by the invisible powers of the heavens and of the battles fought in the protection of God’s people on earth!

Michael is the only angel who is called the Archangel. His name means “Who is like God.” He is brought before us in four books of our Bible; Daniel, 1 Thessalonians, Jude, and the Revelation. He is described as one of the chief princes (Dan. 10:13); Israel’s guardian angel (Dan.

10:21), the guard of the body of Moses (Jude 9), the Commander-in-chief of the armies of heaven (Rev. 12:7), and as he who summons the angelic host to guard and conduct the Church into the heavens (1 Thess. 4).

Angels (Part 2) (Feb 1958)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 4 No. 2, Feb 1958.

The issue of this magazine for last month contained the first part of this examination Into the existence and service of angels. In it our attention was called to The Characteristics of Their Creation, and The Classification of Their Ranks. Mr. McClurkin also dealt with the only two angels who are individually named in the Bible/ Gabriel and Michael. This second article completes our brother's doctrinal statement on this sublect.—Ed.

Concepts of Their Ministry

There Are Two chief functions in the ministry of angels, the one a ministry of worship before God, the other a ministry of service among men (Psa. 148:1-3; 91:11-12).

It appears that the administration of material things needed by God's people, their food, their strength, and their protection, has been entrusted to these channels of good. At the very same time the Holy Spirit of God is engaged within them to impart spiritual truths and spiritual character.

They are called "Watchers" (Dan. 4:17) because they are the heavenly spectators of the affairs of earth and they serve in the protection of the saints, in the influencing of the nations, and in the execution of God's providential judgments in the world. It will be remembered that they viewed with holy wonder the advent of Christ to earth. It will also be recalled that they sang at His birth, that they ministered to Him in His temptation, strengthened Him in His agony in the garden, guarded His tomb, announced His resurrection, watched His ascension, and

from a comparison of Scriptures we know that they will accompany Christ on His return.

They are sharers of the joy in heaven over a sinner who repents and turns to God (Luke 15). Moreover, they are spectators of the saints' courageous witness for Christ in a hostile world (Luke 12:8-9), and of the Church met in local assembly capacity (1 Cor. 11:10; 1 Tim. 5:21). Why do we read, "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels" if it is not a suggestion that the modesty of these holy watchers, who veil themselves in the presence of God, is a rebuke to all immodesty in the Christian congregation? Is not their very presence a guard against all insubordination to God's holy order? If not, why are the saints charged to faithfulness before God and His elect angels?

In their ministry they have been known to bring a Christian worker and an anxious soul together, for we read, "The Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius." The background to this word of guidance was the preparation of the heart of Peter by angelic ministry: "He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius … Send men to Joppa and call for one Simon" (Acts 10:19-21 compared with Acts 10:3-4). Angels cheer, protect, and encourage God's people in the midst of Satanic opposition (1 Kings 19:5-8. Matt. 4:11. Acts 5:19; 12:7; 27:3. Moreover they are ministers of God's judgments both now and in the future (2 Kings 19:35. 1 Chron. 21:16. 2 Thess. 1:7).

As servants of the saints (Heb. 1:14) they are agents of God's keeping power, lest we stumble along the way (Psa. 91:11-12). They are God's umbrella of protection against all enemies. Two hosts of angels overshadowed Jacob, one to guard him from Laban and another to guard him from Esau (Gen. 32:1-2). To walk in the fear of God is to ensure ourselves of this protection and thus to be impregnable against the forces of evil men and friends. We read, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Psa. 34:7).

Angels are associated with answers to prayer (Dan. 10. Rev. 8:3). Little do we know the obstructions that the evil forces in the heavenlies exert against our entering into the holiest. What conflicts of faith are experienced by saints upon their knees! Our safety lies in walking in the fear of God. It is our sins, failures, and neglects which these evil beings use as weapons in their hands to accomplish our defeat.

When our prayers reach God and He gives answers in peace, what unknown conflicts result between these evil forces and the unfallen hosts of heaven before these, the servants to the saints, can deliver the answer. Daniel waited three weeks for an answer to prayer because of such a conflict (Dan. 10).

Our Lord warned against offending a little one who believes in Him, stating that his angel beholds the face of the Father in heaven (Matt. 18:10). Whatever the interpretation of this passage may be, we cannot be dogmatic, but we submit for consideration that it means his angel has ready access before God to lay a charge against anyone who offends the child-like saint of God.

Every believer is precious to the heart of Christ (V. 11); let there be nothing in our hand, our foot, or our eye that would do them injury (Vv. 8-10).

The Scriptures also teach that when our day here is finally closed, and our pilgrimage takes us to the side of the River of Death, angels will attend us. As the human spirit of the saint departs for the Better-land, the angels of God conduct that spirit through enemy territory to its heavenly abode (Luke 16:22).

From the dawn of regeneration in their souls till they reach their rest in heaven, the children of God are enriched by the services of these ministering spirits, the agents of God’s protection, the vessels of His care, and the chariots of His love by which they are carried to glory.

The Spirit of God (Mar 1958)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 4 No. 3, Mar 1958.

David McClurkin

This article should appeal in an extraordinary way to the Lambs of the Flock. It was written by our young brother especially for them while he was still studying for his Senior Matriculation. In the academic field it might well be considered an excellent example of constructive thinking and writing, but in the spiritual realm, which is vastly more important, it presents bibical doctrine that all should know. — Ed.

Before we engage in this study, we should determine in our minds that the Holy Spirit is not merely an influence or quality although His presence adds divine quality to the believer and His power does exert a tremendous influence. The Holy Spirit is as much a Divine Being as is the Father and the Son.

In Hebrew 9:14, He is called “The Eternal Spirit,” and as such His Person demands reverance because of His Deity for He is eternally God. His character is often referred to in the title “The Holy Spirit”; consequently, He is to be revered because of His holy character. In John 14:26 He is called the “Comforter,” so, again, reverence is due to Him because of His work. As we discuss this subject, we must be very careful not to minimise the value of the Person and the work of God the Spirit.

There are seven characteristic titles of the Spirit of God which may be connected to seven aspects of His work; these are: The Spirit of Wisdom (Eph. 1:17), The Spirit

of Truth (John 16:13), The Spirit of Life (Rom. 8:2), The Spirit of Grace (Heb. 10:29), The Spirit of Love (Col. 1:8), The Spirit of Promise (Eph. 1:13), and The Spirit of Holiness (Rom. 1:4).

The Spirit Of Wisdom

This title may be easily connected with the mighty work of the Spirit in Creation. “By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens” (Job 26:13). We read in Genesis chapter one that the Spirit moved upon the waters bringing order and beauty out of utter chaos. What a picture this is of His work in the New Creation! He moves on the vast multitudes of humanity in their darkness and spiritual chaos. It is interesting to note that the Spirit of God did His moving before God did His own work, even so is it in the heart of the individual. Before a sinner can receive the gift of God, the Holy Spirit must work upon him in order to bring him into the proper condition. Before salvation can take place, the Spirit must make very real to the unbeliever his need of a Saviour. When this is accomplished, what order He brings out of chaos, and what harmony out of discord! As God climaxed the first creation by making man in His own image, He will climax the new creation by conforming all the redeemed to the image of His Son.

The Spirit Of Truth

Let us associate this title with the work of the Spirit in the Holy Scriptures. The process of Inspiration is given to us in a passage from Peter’s second Epistle, “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (1:21). Holy men produced the Holy Scriptures because of the mysterious work of the Holy Spirit in

them. Three times Peter in this, his second Epistle, exhorts us to remember our responsibility to the Word of God. In chapter 1:13 the Word of God demands obedience because it declares the will of God; in chapter 1:15 it demands reverance because of its infallibility, it is God-breathed; and in chapter 3:1 it demands our attention in the light of the dangers of the last days.

Since the Word of God is inspired by the Holy Spirit, whether we read it for correction, instruction or edification, or even for merely its historical value, it is infallible. No theories of man or any archeological research will ever dispose of a single word of Holy Writ. Since the Word of God is inspired, it is both complete and lasting. God has said that not one jot or one tittle of it will pass away. Even through the dark ages when Satan was doing his best to extinguish its flame, it survived. Today it is the best selling book in the world.

The Spirit of Life

Linked with this title is the unfathomable doctrine of the Incarnation of Christ. By Luke, the beloved physician, we are told the mysterious part played by the Holy Spirit in the virgin birth of Christ. He records the words of the angel to Mary, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall over-shadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (1:35). Our Lord was thus protected from any contamination from a fallen nature. Not only was He protected in His birth, but all through His life He enjoyed the encircling guardianship of the Holy Spirit. In chapter four of his Gospel, Luke records that before our Lord was subjected to the temptation in the hands of Satan, He was full of the Holy

Spirit. After the devil had been defeated, we read that Christ returned in the power of the Spirit. In every phase of His life, although exposed constantly to the sins of fallen humanity, Christ, Jehovah's perfect Servant, was empowered by the Holy Spirit, and, therefore, was able to prove Himself to be the eternal Son of God. At His baptism the Spirit marked Him out as Divine. On that occasion the Holy Trinity was in evidence to announce that the Messiah had come.

We learn from Matt. 12:28 that the Holy Spirit empowered Him, for Christ as a perfect Man, did all His miracles by the power of the Spirit. The erring people of that day accused Him of casting out devils by the prince of the devils. Little did they realize that the force at His disposal was far superior to that of any evil principality or power.

In His life and service, the Spirit always guided our Saviour (Luke 2:27), and in His trials the same Spirit constantly comforted Him (Luke 10:21).

The Spirit Of Grace

There seems no difficulty in linking this title with the Spirit's work in the world (John 16:8-11, Heb. 10:29). We are told that the Spirit is given first to the Church, "I will send Him unto you." The Church in turn has a grave responsibility in conveying His power to the world. Through the believers' witness the Spirit convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Men must feel their need of the Friend Who saves, the Friend Who comforts, and the Friend Who perfects; that Friend is Jesus.

The Spirit Of Love

We shall link this title with the work of the Spirit in the believer. He indwells every Christian as the Comforter (John 14:16-17), the Teacher (John 14:26-27), and as the Witness to the Lord Jesus (John 15:26-27). If He has His way with us, He will fill us with His own fulness, love, and power.

There are three things that would hinder the work of the Spirit in our souls: we may grieve Him (Eph. 4:30), quench Him (1 Thess. 5:19), or mistrust Him. Sin in the believer's life can spiritually demoralize him so that he cannot enjoy the fulness of the Spirit. Besides the sins of commission that grieve the Holy Spirit, there are the sins of ommission that quench Him. A neglect of spiritual things in the daily routine of life can drastically limit the enjoyment and happiness which should accompany the indwelling of the Spirit. Too often we mistrust Him, and refuse to use the power that God has placed at our disposal. It is interesting to count the many lovely things that mark the Spirit-filled life as they are listed in Ephesians chapter five.

The Spirit Of Holiness

Our minds immediately link this title with the Church's devotional life. Holiness ever becomes the House of God, and our worship is to be in the beauty of holiness. The believer who wishes to be engaged in this precious ministry must constantly examine himself (1 Cor. 11:28). The Spirit is Holy, therefore, just what He is; He wants us to be. As we yield to Him, He will mould our lives and enrich them with an intimate fellowship with God.

The Spirit Of Promise

The Spirit-controlled life would not be complete without the hope of Christ's return. As the Spirit of Promise He is the Author of that "blessed hope" of the Church, the realization of which will bring us into our eternal inheritance and our eternal home. For the return of our Lord we wait, and what the Holy Spirit has promised, and that of which He has given us the earnest in our hearts, will then be our happy portion ages without end.

Life That is Life Indeed (May 1958)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 4 No. 5, May 1958.

The Spirit of God is revealed prominently in Galatians 5 as a Power Who displaces the flesh in the people of God. We are made profoundly aware of the Spirit's presence in the believer's life by such thoughts as: the liberty of the Spirit (v. 1); the hope of the Spirit (v. 5); the walk in the Spirit (w. 16, 25); the opposition of the Spirit (v. 17); the leading of the Spirit (v. 18); the fruit of the Spirit (v. 22); the life in the Spirit fv. 25).

In this chapter, one of these expressions is repeated; namely, "walk in the Spirit" (vv. 16, 25). However, the word for "walk" is not the same in the two verses. In v. 16, the thought is that of walking around with a definite centre or occupation. It is the picture of the Christ-centred life, a life that has Christ alone as its object. The word for "walk" in v. 25 is a word that means to walk in step, to make progress in harmony with others. The Spirit-controlled life, therefore, will be a Christ-centred life, and a life that will be progressive and in holy concord with fellow-saints.

To thwart the purpose of the Spirit within us, the devil has a program: his aim is to stir up the flesh in each believer and thus to challenge the supremacy of God in the believer's life. God also has a program: His aim is not the eradication of the flesh or even its suppression, but rather its counteraction (v. 17) and our growth in the image of Christ. It is what Drummond has called "the expulsive power of a new affection." If we walk by the Spirit, we shall not fulfil the lusts of our flesh. The leading of the Spirit (v. 18) is for the mortifying of the

flesh. God has crucified the old man at Calvary; that is, the sentence of death which I deserved as a man in Adam has been executed upon me in Christ on the cross. I am to reckon that great fact to be true and to be at peace from every fear. But we ourselves are to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, as a thing unworthy of the dignity of the Christian life or the Christian society (v. 24).

In Galatians 5:19-21, Paul gives us three views of the flesh, that wicked principle of sin which we inherit from Adam:

The Works of the Flesh

1. The flesh affects us inwardly where unholy passions master the soul. This destroys the Spirit's work of holiness as He would lead to purity of thought, word, and deed. We read of fornication, uncleanness, and wantonness (Alford). Wantonness is defined as a "readiness for any sinful pleasurable indulgence". Many strong men have been brought down by this aspect of fallen nature. Only the cultivation of the holy spirit of meditation upon Christ will check this foul stream, and save us from an impure mind that would defile our whole being.

2. The flesh in its idolatry aims to destroy the supremacy of God in the heart. We read of idolatry, witchcraft, and heresies; this is the religious aspect of the flesh, or in other words, the sins of the spirit. Our evil nature is totally corrupt and absolutely incorrigible.

3. The flesh in its pride destroys the peace and well-being of others. We read of hatred, variance (strife), emulations (jealousies), wrath, strife (self-seeking),

seditions (divisions), envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.

Thus, the flesh works in three ways, to destroy inner spirituality, to spoil the joy of communion with God, and to mar the holy concord of Christian brethren.

We shall now look at the counteracting work of the Spirit of God within, as He seeks to adjust us to live properly, each one with his own conscience, in happy communion with God, and in brotherly relationship with fellow-saints.

The Fruit of the Spirit

The fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) stands out in happy contrast to the works of the flesh. In this, we discern three adjustments by the Spirit, which are intended to restore proper relationships where sin has disrupted them.

1. The first adjustment is the regaining of the supremacy of God in the soul. We read of love, joy, and peace. These are virtues of character that Christ calls His own: “my love,” “my joy”, and “my peace” (John 15:9, 11; 14:27). Here, the Spirit imparts the very character of Christ to the saints; some of the Saviour’s beauties are manifested in the cultivation of these virtues of the new man, “which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:24). Love is the entwining of the heart’s affections around the heart of our Father which is in heaven. Joy is the result of knowing Him, and of finding all our satisfaction in Him; we joy in God. Peace is the repose of the soul in God. Where there is love, joy, and peace in the soul, there is no room for idolatry, witchcraft, or heresy.

2. The second adjustment is the restoration of proper relationships with the family of God. We read of longsuffering, gentleness (kindness), and goodenss. These virtues describe the activities of the New Man in the family circle. The character of God is manifested in longsuffering (1 Pet. 3:20), in kindness (Titus 3:4), and in goodness (Mark 10:18). Godliness therefore is godlikeness. We are to be patient in trial, and longsuffering among our brethren. Our Lord loved to quote the text, “I will have mercy (kindness) and not sacrifice.” The kindly word and deed promote and maintain fellowship. Barnabas is thus displaced by longsuffering; cruelty, by kindness; unselfishness, by goodness. Where there is long-suffering, gentleness, and goodness, there can be no hatred, strife, jealousy, wrath, self-seeking, divisions, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.

3. The third adjustment is the placing of the human spirit in its dignity, over the soul and body, and the restoration of spirituality within. We read of faith or faithfulness, meekness, and temperance. These three virtues sum up the three proper attitudes of the Christian; faithfulness toward God; meekness toward our brethren; godly self-control within. When these are cultivated, there can be no fornication, uncleanness, or wantonness.

True holiness, therefore, is not merely an endeavour to conform to a pattern, no matter how perfect that pattern may be: but rather the inward work of the Holy Spirit moulding our character to the image of Christ. As we yield to the divine touch of the Master Hand, the soul is brought under His control. The yielded will allows the Spirit to do His work, producing the fruit of character

that will manifest the beauties of the Saviour in a life that is life indeed.

The Nation of Israel (July 1958)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 4 No. 7, July 1958.

Another has clearly pointed out that a review of Israel's history reveals that God is dealing with them in four cycles of time, each of approximately 490 years. Prom the call of Abraham unto the Exodus, is the first. Abraham was 75 years old when called to leave his country, his kindred, and his father's house. The law was 430 years later. Deduct about 15 years for Abraham's departure from the path of faith and you have a period of 490 years.

The second Is from the Exodus to the dedication of the temple. Solomon began building 480 years after the Exodus (1 Kings 6:1). He was seven years building it and perhaps three years at its official dedication. These together make the second cycle of 490 year. Mr. J. T. Mawson in his How to Overcome, says, "Actually, according to Acts 13, there are 93 years omitted from God's reckoning. These are accounted for by numbering the years that Israel was robbed of her sovereignty in the Book of Judges; 8 years under Mesopotamia (3:8), 18 years under Moab (3:14), 20 years under Canaan (4:3), 7 years under Midian (6:1), 40 years under Philistia (13:1)." The sum total of all these is 93 years.

Mr. Mawson also points out that the 18 years under the Amorites (Judges 10:8) took place on the other side of Jordan, and, therefore, do not affect the question at all.

From the dedication of the temple to the close of the Babylonish captivity, is approximately 560 years. Deduct

70 years for the captivity and you have the third cycle of 490 years.

From Artaxerxes' decree (Neh. 2), to the establishing of the Millennial reign of Christ, 70 weeks or 490 years were determined. Messiah was to be cut off at the end of the 69th week or 483 years. There are still 7 years of Jewish time to be reckoned. Israel is a rejected nation since her rejection of the Messiah. During her rejection, time is not reckoned to her, but instead the Church dispensation comes in, and continues between the 69th and the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 9). When the Church is called home, and the 7 years of Jewish time are finished, Messiah will return to earth with the 6 great blessings of Dan. 9:24. What a portion there will be for a restored Israel and a Millennial Earth!

The Meaning Of Their Calling

This calling was threefold; God needed a repository on earth in which He could preserve His Word among men, "Unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:2). He needed a channel through which the Redeemer could be brought into the world, "Of whom concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is over all, God blessed forever" (Rom. 9:5). Moreover, He needed a witness to men that could throw the light of testimony upon the path of all, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations" (Mark 11:17, Marg.)

The Marring Of Their Testimony

The sins that destroyed their witness could be classified in five groups; idolatry, disobedience, division, unfaithfulness, and isolation. Their idolatry destroyed the supremacy of God in their midst, their disobedience

rejected the authority of His Word, their division weakened their testimony before the nations. In their unfaithfulness, they refused the responsibilities that devolved upon them by virtue of their calling, and in their isolation the missionary spirit remained dormant and inactive.

The Measure Of Their Discipline

God's chastisement upon Israel was measured in proportion to their sins. We now shall look at three aspects of the judgment that fell upon them:

The captivities: Both the Assyrian and Babylonish captivities were the result of the exhaustion of divine patience by a wilful persistence in sin till there was no remedy (2 Chron. 36:16). Yet, in the three stages of the Babylonish captivity, under Jehoiakim, Jehoiakim his son, and Zedekiah, we see God's reluctance to give them up. Their captivity was a witness against their idolatry. The irony of punishment is seen in that the inventor of idolatry becomes the instrument of their destruction. They were carried back to the very place from which the God of Glory had brought their father Abraham. This act of discipline surely indicated that they had forfeited every promise made by God to His friend, Abraham. Sovereign grace alone would give them a new start in restoration. What a commentary on our Lord's words, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again!" It is most interesting to note that since their captivity, idolatry has been unknown in Israel. What does God want to teach us by this incident? Simply this, sin or sins that displace the Lordship of Christ in our lives, and which we refuse to judge, will become master of us to the destruction of our testimony.

Their captivity was also a witness against their disobedience (2 Chron. 36:21). Seventy years were allowed the land for rest, the rest they refused to give it during the 490 years from the dedication of the temple unto their captivity. Thus the land enjoyed its sabbaths while Israel languished in Babylon. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7).

In the third place, their captivity was a witness against their division. The animosity between the house of Saul and the house of David gradually led up to the parting of the tribes. The open break came as the result of the intolerance of Rehoboam with his whips, and the tendency of Jeroboam to idolatry. Extremists with unbending will and full of their own importance are an affliction to the saints at all times. When the seeds of discord are permitted to be sown unchecked, when the flesh with its malice, envy, bitterness and strife is unrestrained and unjudged, an open break is inevitable, and this always results in the dishonour of God and the shame of the testimony, “For if we judge ourselves, we should not be judged.” Now during Israel’s captivity, the Babylonish empire eats up the Assyrian empire and the ten tribes and the two are together again, but, alas, not under the supremacy of God, but under the power of Nebuchadnezzar.

The divine silence: From Malachi unto the coming of Christ, there is a period of silence in which Israel is left without a vision or a prophet. The grace of God had brought about their restoration from Babylon. This restoration had taken place in three stages; the first under Zerubbabel, the second under Ezra, and the last under Nehemiah. These three stages showed Israel’s

reluctance to return to the path of God's will. The descendants of this godly remnant degenerate into what is described in the Book of Malachi. God then leaves them alone to the punishment of a silent heaven. This was God's answer to their unfaithfulness. Since their voice of testimony was silent to the nations around them, God would be silent to them. That silence was broken in the voice of John the Baptist as he called them to repentance, and by the voice of the Messiah as He called them to be followers of Himself. Well might our prayer today be that of the Psalmist, "Be not silent to me: lest if Thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit" (Psa. 28:1)!

The scattering of Israel among the nations: For two thousand years the Jewish people have been scattered among the nations in the greatest dispersion of their history. It is the awful result of the greatest crime of their history, the crucifixion of Christ. The sin of isolationism finds its flower in the sects of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. In their ecclesiastical bigotry, they displaced judgment, mercy, and faith. In their pride, they despised the poor in spirit, while their self-centredness robbed them of compassion for the ignorant and them that are out of the way. When their degeneracy was exposed by the Lord Jesus Christ, their anger knew no bounds. Even Pilate knew that for envy they had delivered Him.

The eleventh chapter of Romans applies the lessons of their fall and punishment to the professing Church today. Are the branches of the olive tree broken off, and we the wild olive grafted in? "Boast not against the branches. … Be not highminded, but fear: For if God

spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee" (Rom. 11:18-21).

The Church like Israel is the repository of God's truth on earth (2 Tim. 1:14. Jude 3). Let us not reject the authority of that truth both for our individual lives and for the assemblies. The Church too is the vessel through which the Redeemer is brought to men. Let us yield to the Master's touch and become channels of blessing to others. We are the city set on a hill whose light cannot be hid. Let none of the sins that caused Israel's downfall be allowed to remain unjudged lest they mar our testimony for God. If we have failed, and who of us has not, let us repent and get back to God so that nothing may clog the seven pipes by which the golden oil is conveyed to the lamps of our testimony.

Their Millennial Blessing At Last

Israel will yet be restored as a nation. Two thirds of the nation will be destroyed in unbelief during tribulation days, one third will be brought through fires of the great tribulation and purified to look on Him Whom they pierced (Zech. 13:8-9). Israel, as the head of the nations and not the tail, will enjoy the great Millennial Kingdom of their Messiah. "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead" (Rom. 11:15)?

At the end of the last seven years of their history, which will complete the last cycle of 490 years, Messiah will come and the six great blessings of Daniel will be their portion as a restored people, and the portion of the Millennial world: "To finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconcilliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up

the vision of prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy" (Dan. 9:24).

A gentleman was distributing tracts near a sports stadium when a onetime friend came along. Handing him a tract the gentleman asked, "Where are you going?" "I'm going to pass an hour away inside here," he replied. "What are you doing?" "Oh," said the other, "I'm redeeming the time."

The Millenial Kingdom of God (Aug 1958)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 4 No. 8, Aug 1958.

When our Lord was on earth, Satan took Him up to an exceeding high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, but they had no charm for Him. There was no short-cut to universal dominion for our Lord; He knew that the challenge of sin had to be met first, and that the foundations of His Kingdom could be laid only at the cross. Let us rise to a higher mountain than that from which the kingdoms of the world were shown, the mountain of prophecy from whose lofty peak we may view, with supreme delight, the glorious reign of the Prince of Peace. On this holy mount, we may bathe in the glory of “things to come” and cry with renewed fervour, “Thy Kingdom come.”

The Scriptures leave us in no doubt that our Lord Jesus Christ will come back to earth to set up His Kingdom on a universal scale; righteousness will yet cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Our Great Melchisedec will minister blessings to all the earth, for as a priest upon His throne He is first, King of Righteousness as typified by David, and then, King of Peace as typified by Solomon. Let us look at five aspects of this wonderful Kingdom: its necessity, boundaries, nature, blessings, and purpose.

The Necessity

The Spirit of God emphatically has declared, “He must reign” (1 Cor. 15:25), and that for at least seven good reasons: (1) the Father’s decree (Psa. 2:5-9). Amid the insurrection of earthly kings, the Father made His voice heard, “Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.” (2) The demands of justice (Isa. 26:21); (3) the creatorial and redemptive rights of Christ (Rev. 5); (4) the cry of groaning creation whose deliverance is linked with His reign (Rom. 8:22-23); (5) the nature of His Kingdom which assures its perpetuity. All other kingdoms have the seeds of disintegration. Christ reigns over the minds of His subjects by truth, over their hearts by love, and their spirits by communion. These things we may enjoy in His spiritual Kingdom now, but the rule of Christ in the hearts of His own will yet expand to embrace the world when as King He comes back (Isa. 35): (6) The unity of all Scripture that puts Christ upon the vacant throne of David in Jerusalem (Rev. 19:10); (7) He alone is the remedy for the ills of a woe-begone world.

There are five conditions, however, which must be remedied before Christ can reign: the Church must be removed from earth, the Jew must be restored to the land of Palestine, the devil must be chained in the bottomless pit, the Lord Jesus must leave His Father’s throne in heaven and occupy His own throne in Jerusalem, and the enemies of Christ must be destroyed from the earth. There can be no Millenium while the Church is on earth, no Millenium while the Jew is scattered among the nations, no Millenium while the devil is at large in the world, no Millenium while Christ sits on His Father’s throne in heaven, and no Millenium

while rebellious man shakes a God-defying fist before His face. The coming of our Lord alone can effect the changes that will transform our earth into an Edenic Paradise.

The Boundaries

Every kingdom has its well defined boundaries. The Millennial Kingdom of our Lord is bounded by two resurrections, that of the just at its beginning, and that of the unjust at its close; by two thrones of judgment, one the judgment of the living and the other the judgment of the dead (Matt. 25:31-46. Rev. 20:11-15); by two great conflagrations (2 Thess. 1:5-10. Rev. 20:5-10); and, finally, by two new heavens and two new earths, the first partial, and the second final and complete (Rev. 6:12-14. 2 Pet. 3).

The Nature

The dominion of our Lord will extend over every sphere of rule that the world has ever known. First, He will control the physical creation as this is typified in Adam's threefold headship: over the creation, over the human family, and over the woman, Eve. Under the benign rule of the Son of Man, the curse will be removed from the earth, and this will result in the regeneration foretold by the Lord Jesus (Matt. 19:28).

Second, He will control all civil government as illustrated by Noah's stepping out of the ark into a new earth. Righteousness will reign, and every defiance of His divine government will immediately be suppressed.

Third, He will control religion in the world as suggested in Israel's history. The law of the Lord will go out from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. "All people that on

earth do dwell shall sing to the Lord with cheerful voice." As the glory of the Lord dwelt in the midst of Israel and shed its beams over the nation, so shall that glory return and shed its beams over all the world. "Blessed be His glorious Name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen and Amen." Our prayers will then be ended and give place to everlasting praise (Psa. 72).

Fourth, He will control the world universally as exemplified in the great empires of the earth. Nations have sought and fought for this, but the right is reserved for the Prince of Peace. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; and shall fall down before Him and serve Him. Men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed (Psa. 72). "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord" (Isa. 66:23).

The titles of our Lord Jesus Christ are indicative of the extent of His reign: as Son of David He will ascend the throne of Israel; as Son of Abraham He will take possession of the land of Palestine; as Son of Man He will rule over the entire world, and the Kingdom of Stone (Israel under Christ) will become a great mountain and fill the whole earth (Dan. 2:34-35); as Son of God He will have dominion over the complete universe.

The Blessings

The blessings of the Kingdom may be viewed in three categories: physical, social, and spiritual. In the physical realm the curse will be removed from the earth, and "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for

them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose…the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of our God… In the wilderness, shall waters break out, and streams in the desert" (Isa. 35).

Man and animal will undergo a physical change, "The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing … The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35).

In the animal kingdom, the ferocious nature of the beast will be unknown, "The wolf also will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together …And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp …They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11).

In the social realm, "He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth." "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Psa. 46. Isa. 2:4).

It will bring joy and gladness to a people scattered and peeled, a social outcast among the nations (Isa. 18). Though poor Israel has yet to pass through the Time of Jacob's Trouble when two thirds of the nation will perish in their sins (Zech. 13:8-9), yet God will refine the third

part in the fires of the Great Tribulation, and bring them forth to look on Him Whom they pierced, and set them at the head of the nations, not the tail (Zech. 12:10. Isa. 4:1-6).

The Righteousness of Christ the King will bring to an end all social injustices. The oppression of the poor shall cease. The Church, though now rejected with her Lord and the off-scouring of all things, will be glorified to reign with Him for one thousand years.

In the spiritual realm, idolatry will be banished by the universal knowledge of the Lord. He shall be praised and worshipped from one end of the earth to the other.

The Purpose

The reign of our Lord in its mediatorial aspect is for one thousand years, but for an undefined period beyond that, His reign will be extended until all things are subdued to the authority of God, “He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet” (1 Cor. 15:25).

What we have said about the blessed reign of Christ is true, yet we must not forget that sin will still be present in the world, and so also will death. Many will be born into the world at that time by natural generation. These will inherit Adam’s fallen nature which will involve the necessity of regeneration through a personal choice of Christ. The flesh, apart from the devil, will prove a sufficient evil to keep many away from Christ. Should any lift his hand against the authority of Christ, he immediately will be struck down in his sins (Isa. 65:20); consequently, many will feign obedience, remaining inwardly rebellious. These will be the victims of the

devil's deception when he is loosed for a little season at the end of the Millenium (Rev. 20:7-10).

How long after he is loosed it will take the devil to deceive the nations again we do not know, and how long our Lord will bear with them, and perhaps plead with them, we cannot say. Moreover, what other parts of the Universe are stained by sin, we are not told. We are told, however, that the stars are not clean in God's sight. What was it that defiled them? Is not defilement of the heavens linked with the fall of Satan and his hosts? All this requires the reconciliation of things in the heavens as well as things in the earth (Col. 1:20); of course, things are not beings. The infernal hosts headed by Satan will be cast forever unto the lake of fire. It is the spheres of their former habitations that will be brought back to their pristine beauty under the reign of the Son of God. We have no way of telling how long the period is between the end of the Millenium and the Eternal State. Dr. Trench has suggested in his book, "After the One Thousand Years," that this period is called in Scripture (Eph. 1:10), "The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times," and during this period Christ will gather together in one all things in Himself, both which are in the heavens, and which are on the earth. The reign of our Lord will gradually subdue all things unto God. When the last rebellion is subdued, when alienated territory is reclaimed, when the wicked dead are judged, when the last enemy is destroyed in the casting of death and hell into the lake of fire, "then cometh the end,'' the end of time, and of the resurrection. Then shall the Son deliver up the Kingdom to His Father, and God shall be all in all (1 Cor. 15:24-28). Thus ends the great drama of time and begins the great Day of God, the eighth day of the

Feast of Tabernacles, the new sabbath (Lev. 23:39) that will never again be disturbed by sin; the eternal repose of the redeemed creation of God.

* * * *

Where God's finger points, there God's hand will make the way.

* * * *

He tested me before He trusted me.—1 Tim. 1:12.

* * * *

God does not comfort us to make us comfortable, but to make us comforters.

* * * *

It is sad for a poor Christian to stand at the door of the promise, in the dark night of affliction, afraid to draw the latch, whereas he should then come boldly for shelter, as a child into his Father's home.—Gurnal.

* * * *

I was crushed, so much so that I despaired even of life; but that was to make me rely, not on myself, but on the God who raises the dead.— 2 Cor. 1:8-9.

From Glory to Glory (Jan 1959)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 5 No. 1, Jan 1959.

Introduction

A study of God's Divine standards of holiness reveals that there are, in both Testaments, ethical norms that are part of a great moral unity that is as immutable as God Himself. This could not be otherwise because the ethical teachings of our Bible are but a revelation of the unchangeable character of God Himself. This ethical unity is seen in creation when the moral law of God was written upon the conscience of man. It is seen in the Decalogue where it is written upon the tables of stone. It is also seen in the ethical teachings of the New Testament where it was written upon tables of redeemed hearts.

The moral law of God was never meant to impart life, but rather to enlighten and guide life. In both Testaments salvation is by grace alone, apart from works, and based upon the atonement of Christ. In the case of the unregenerate man it leads him to a knowledge of sin, to a realization of his own helplessness to save himself, and it prepares him for the reception of life through faith in Christ alone. In the case of the regenerate man the law is written upon the heart to impart the knowledge of the will of God.

The Sermon on the Mount is an illuminating commentary on the moral law of God. The ethical teachings of our Lord not only reveal the eternal and universal nature of God's moral law but they become the basis for the enlargement of Divine Revelation in the

epistles. God reveals that mere externals that do not touch the heart or character are but secondary things, and that outward conformity was never the real intent of the law. It is inward and, in the hand of the Spirit, moulds the character to the image of Christ.

Transfiguration is a word that is found only three times in the New Testament (Matt. 17:2, Rom. 12:2. 2 Cor. 3:18). It is descriptive of a moral glory within, inherent in Christ and developed in the believer by the power of the Spirit of God. This moral glory is seen in the beautiful character of Christ and His consecrated people and manifests itself in perfect love to God and to man. It is upon these two commandments of love to God and love to man that the whole moral law of our Bible rests (Matt. 22:37-40).

Scripture distinguishes between the ceremonial and the moral law of God. The former was a means to an end, the shadow of things to come, the substance of which is Christ and His accomplished atonement (Col. 2:17). The latter is permanent and abiding for it is a revelation of the holy character of God. Thus, nine of the ten commandments are quoted in the New Testament and applied to our every-day walk. We are not under the law, however, as a means of obtaining justification or even as a help in keeping our justification. The latter was the error of the Galatians. The moral law of God is meant to serve the saints in two ways: first, as a rebuke to unsanctified hearts (1 Tim. 1:7-11), and second, as a guide to a life well-pleasing to God (Rom. 13:8-10).

The new birth results in a “new man” created after the image of God in righteousness and holiness, giving to the believer “the expulsive power of a new affection.”

The new-born soul, in the beauty of first love seizes upon the commandments of God with supreme delight. The moral law of God, written upon the heart, is a revelation of the will of God, the doing of which becomes his meat and drink.

May these meditations be blessed of God to the spiritual enrichment of the Household of Faith.

* * *

From Glory to Glory or Meditations on the Sermon on The Mount

The Gospel according to Matthew may be divided into seven parts: In the first part we are introduced to King Messiah by seven chosen witnesses which leave us in no doubt that He was God manifest in human form. They are: (1) His geneology (1:1-17) which proved Him to be the Annointed of God; (2) the Angelic host (1:18-23) who announced Him Immanuel-God with us; (3) the star (2:1-11) which revealed Him to be the hope of the world; (4) the Holy Scriptures (1:22, 2:5, 15, 17, 23) which distinguished Him as the Object of the spirit of all prophecy; (5) the Forerunner, John the Baptist (3:12) who taught that His Kingdom was a new order, founded on the Atonement and entered by new birth; (6) the Father (3:13-17) Who, at His baptism, witnessed to His eternal Son-ship and declared Him to be the Object of His heart's delight; (7) the Holy Spirit at His temptation (4:1) where His moral supremacy over the devil was the proof of His absolute sinlessness.

The last part of Matthew describes His work of atonement on the cross. Then, between the introduction to His character and the description of His triumph over all the forces of evil at Calvary, there are five great

discourses, all of which end with nearly the same words, “And it came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings.” (7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 10:1, 26:1).

In these five discourses we have the teaching that builds character in His own likeness (Chs. 5, 6, 7), principles that guide Christian service (Ch. 10), instruction that imparts enlightenment as to the mysterious conflict between light and darkness (Ch. 13), maxims that regulate our Church life (Ch. 18), and prophecy that enables us to see the finality of the struggle between right and wrong in a Coming Triumphant Christ (Chs. 24-25). It is with our Lord’s first discourse in chapters 5-7 that we wish to deal.

Our Lord’s teaching is in perfect contrast with the teaching of the Pharisees. The Pharisees taught that God’s blessing rested on good conduct that was measured by obedience to ecclesiastical rites. Our Lord taught that God’s blessing rested on Moral conduct that had its roots in Christ-like character, the fruit of a new creation by the Spirit of God. A good Pharisee could be very religious and very wicked at the same time. Our Lord deals with what is basic, the foundation of character rather than the expression. He speaks of a condition of mind upon which good character depends, humility, mourning or a moral repugnance of all evil, meekness, mercifulness and purity.

In expounding the spirituality of the law, our Lord did not mean to set aside one jot or tittle of it. The people of His day knew the law only as it was taught by the scribes. But the scribes had mixed tradition with what had been inspired of God; hence our Lord seeks to separate the precious from the vile and reassert the

voice of inspiration again in the expressions, “ye have heard,” “but I say unto you.”

The Lord’s people have been deprived of much by a subtle interpretation of these lovely chapters. The system of ultra-dispensational-ism known as “Bullingerism” teaches that the fulfilment of our Lord’s teachings must await that period of time after the Church has been taken home. This has resulted in an attitude of carelessness toward these precepts. We emphatically reject such an interpretation, and write for the purpose of counteracting such teaching, and with a view to helping, in a measure, to re-establish the authority of the words of Christ in the Church which He is building.

Our Lord, in these chapters, anticipates His own absence from earth, and His people’s being persecuted for righteousness’ sake (5:10). He spoke to His own disciples, though multitudes stood around and listened (v. 12), and assured them that faithfulness here will bring reward in the heavens (v. 12). This statement could hardly apply to an earthly people. Moreover, everything that our Lord taught here is embraced in the Epistles. In fact, we are given the solemn warning by Paul that the words of our Lord Jesus Christ are wholesome words and doctrine according to godliness (1 Tim. 6:3-4). Our Lord’s teaching is germinal. The rest of the New Testament is but an exposition of all that He taught. A. T. Pierson has rightly stated that, “There is not only harmony but progress in doctrine; truths found in germ in the Gospels are historically illustrated in the Acts, doctrinally unfolded and applied in the Epistles and symbolically presented in the Apocalypse.”

From Glory to Glory (Feb 1959)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 5 No. 2, Feb 1959.

This is the second section of special studies in the sermon on the mount by Robert McClurkin. Our brother places emphasis upon its application to Christian behaviour. This surely is a timely consideration that ought to result in close introspection. —Ed.

Christian Character and Manner of Life

The manner of the Christian's life is described in the fifth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew in a fourfold way: the imparta-tion of the life of Christ, the moulding of character (Vv. 1-12); the influence of this life among men, the motivating power of character (Vv. 13-16); the interpretation of the law by that life, the manifestation of character (Vv. 17-37); the inspiration of that life, the measure of character (Vv. 38-48).

Moulding Character

The disciple sits at the feet of the Master (V. 1) and imbibes His spirit until the image of the Lord Jesus is formed within him. The seven virtues mentioned in the verses which immediately follow, find their perfection in the lovely manhood of Jesus.

Upon the one in whom the image of the Master is formed, rest nine great beatitudes. While the word "blessed" bears the thought of happiness, its meaning is much deeper. Happiness in this world is superficial. It endures while the things that produce it last, but the blessedness of the saints is inward and abiding. It is not

affected by circumstances. The word “blessed” describes the repose of a soul in God.

This blessedness is the result of three things: freedom from the domination of the flesh (Vv. 3-7), a deep settled communion with God (Vv. 8-9), and a zeal for righteousness because of a burden for the glory of God and the welfare of men (Vv. 10-12). Here again, as in the division of the three chapters already mentioned, we have what touches character, communion, and testimony.

It will be noticed that the first four of these are negative while the last three are positive. “As righteousness is the key-note of the first four, so grace is that which lies at the root of the latter three” (Wm. Kelly).

Let us now look at these seven virtues as they give to us the double picture of righteousness and grace, a righteousness that far exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, a grace that was lacking completely in the religion of the day.

The poor in spirit (V. 3): This is a spirit that feels the barrenness of a scene in which God is rejected, a spirit that is broken and contrite and willing to submit to the rule of God. Poverty of spirit stands out in contrast to the religion of the Pharisees which was marked by pride and self-sufficiency. Our Lord begins with this condition of heart because “lowliness is the beginning of holiness.” It is an immutable law of the Kingdom of Heaven that “Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Matt. 23:12). Greatness in the Kingdom is measured by poverty of spirit (Matt. 18:4) because true nobility is found in being like Him Who was meek and

lowly in heart. To such the Kingdom of Heaven belongs. Theirs is the spirit of that Kingdom. Its resources are at their disposal. They are citizens now and possess in hope the Kingdom of Glory to come.

The mourners (V. 4): “Mourning here is love’s judgment of the ruin around it” (F. W. Grant). It is descriptive of the one who partakes of the spirit of our Lord Jesus Who was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” It is godly sorrow over a scene where sin holds dominion instead of our blessed Saviour. Of these mourners we read, “They shall be comforted.” Comfort in this passage is more than consolation; it means strength given by the upholding hand of God which supports us in a scene where there is so much grief. The saints of old were mourners yet they walked in the comfort of the Holy Scriptures (Acts 9:31). The Church awaits the day when the rights of Christ will be universally acknowledged, and God shall wipe away all tears from her eyes.

The meek (V. 5): “Meekness is strength in subjection”, the fruit of a deeper knowledge of God’s ways. If mourning is sorrow because of opposition to God, meekness is calmness of spirit in the knowledge of God’s purposes. The child of God being assured that He does all things well patiently abides in the will of God. He knows that one day the supremacy of Christ will be acknowledged in all the earth and that God shall wipe away every tear. As is the experience of our Lord in chapter 11, so is the experience of the believer here, meekness is expressed by mourning over the ravishes of sin. It was after He had mourned over the Pharisees’ mockery and indifference and the utter rejection of His claims by the cities in which most of His mighty works were done that, in submissive calmness, He bowed to

His Father's will, and taught His own to learn of Him, the meek and lowly in heart. His meekness is demonstrated in His calm happy attitude in the presence of His Father amid seeming defeat. He knew the will of God was best and would triumph at last. The yoke referred to in verse 30 is not the yoke of service but of spiritual education. It is the picture of the student completely abandoned to the teacher whose teaching moulds the mind and character of the pupil.

Meekness will result in greater capacity for the Word of God in the soul (Jas. 1:21), and will lead to greater usefulness in the work of the Lord (Gal. 6:1). This blessed virtue also has its spiritual compensations. It will lead to divine contentment, for the meek shall be satisfied in a God-planned and Spirit-taught life (Psa. 25:9), and in a testimony that will beautify the salvation of God in the eyes of the world (Psa. 149:4).

The hungry and thirsty (V. 6): This condition of soul manifests a divine discontentment with everything that is not after God's order. The failure of human systems is felt in the soul, and the believer groans, in harmony with all creation, for the great deliverance to be wrought for the world under the rule of the Son of Man.

The merciful (V. 7): The last three virtues signified in this portion are positive and give us the activity of the new life in the sphere of suffering, devotion, and Christian brotherhood.

In the sphere of suffering our Lord says, "Blessed are the merciful." The merciful are those in whom the compassions of Christ are formed. They are thus affected by the sufferings of others, and, like our Lord Jesus, are disposed to go to the aid of those in need. The

very character of God is reflected in our showing mercy to others. He is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. His attitude toward all our devotions is seen in the statement, “I will have mercy and not sacrifice.” Mercy ever returns to the one who shows it. On the other hand, “He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment” (Jas. 2:13).

The pure in heart (V. 8): In the sphere of devotion, the vision of the face of God is reserved exclusively for the pure in heart, the heart that has been purified by faith. Since we know that the eyes of faith belong to the heart, the inner being of man, this vision will be blurred by sin. The pure in heart are those whose minds, motives, and principles are pure. The outwardly correct may be inwardly corrupt. The unclean heart is described by the Lord Jesus as the source of every foul thing that defiles the life and destroys the character (Matt. 15:19). David felt the loathsomeness of his evil nature after yielding to unclean thoughts when he cried, “Create in me a clean heart, O God” (Psa. 51:10). The truth of God can be carried only in a clean conscience (1 Tim. 3:9). Three times in the New Testament the pure heart is mentioned: first, as an essence of godliness. “The end of the commandment is charity (love) out of a pure heart” (1 Tim. 1:5). From the pure river of faith, all virtue flows (Rom. 14:23), and into the pure river of love, all virtue moves. Second, as an essential to communion with God “with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Tim. 2:22). David expressed the same sentiments in Psalm 24 when he said, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure

heart" (Vv. 3-4). Third, as an expression of brotherly relationship for we read, "Love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Pet. 1:22).

Purity of heart clears the spiritual vision of the saints. We read, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." God reveals Himself to all such. Visions of His character, His holiness, His grace, and His love unfold before the eyes of their souls. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3; 18). The unveiled face means a condition of heart in which there is nothing between it and God. The joys of heaven are summed up in these words, "They shall see His face." Even now by faith this is the supreme joy of the Christian life. In Romans chapter 5, where we have the ascending scale of Christian experience, we begin with the joy of salvation (Vv. 1-2). This is followed in verse three by the joy of victory over the forces of evil that are against us. The height of all experience is reached in verse 11 where "we joy in God." To see God in our circumstances, in our trials, and in every detail of our lives, and to see Him as the supreme object of our hearts is to move in the path of victory and in the current of His holy will.

The peacemakers (V. 9): In the sphere of Christian brotherhood, our Lord says, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the sons of God" (V. 9). Six times in the New Testament God is called "The God of Peace." An examination of these passages reveals that the Spirit of God uses this title in view of strife among brethren (Rom. 15:13; 16:20. 2 Cor. 13:11. Phil. 4:9. 1 Thess. 5:23. Heb. 13:20). Christ is the

Prince of Peace and the Prince of Peacemakers. He made peace at tremendous sacrifice, the blood of the cross (Col. 1:20). In doing so He reconciled man to God and man to man (redeemed man) in one Body (Eph. 2:12-22). Peacemaking demands sacrifice. They who engage in this work must pay the price in sacrificial living. It will mean a sacrifice of time, of energy, of pride, and of feelings. It will demand wisdom and tact with the glory of God and the welfare of the saints alone as the motive. Every assembly of saints possesses an invaluable treasure in godly men and women who by their wisdom and godly influence can bring opposing parties together. Such are called the sons of God because they have taken on this aspect of God's character and practically manifest it. James follows the order of The Beatitudes when describing the wisdom that is from above. It is first pure then peaceable, pure before God and peaceable toward others. The writer to the Hebrews (chap. 12) links both virtues and declares that seeing God depends upon the pursuit of peace and holiness. This is not peace at the expense of truth, but peace as an attitude that is inwrought by the indwelling Spirit. They who are pure in heart will be peaceable and peace-loving among the saints. Abraham yielded sacrificially to Lot when strife arose between their herdmen, "Let there be no strife between me and thee … for we be brethren," said Abraham to his nephew. Joseph the peacemaker, had his brethren's welfare at heart when he said, "See that ye fall not out by the way." David cried, "I am for peace," and then described the unity of brethren as that good and pleasant thing, so precious and sacred as to compare with the annointing oil, and so diffusive as to compare with the dew on Hermon, a sweet savour to God in the sanctuary and a

blessing to others in the fields of service (Psa. 133). “The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace” (Jas. 3:18)

In verses 10-12, we have a twofold persecution; first, for the sake of righteousness and then for the sake of the Lord Jesus. The first of these is linked with the first four virtues that we have noticed, (Vv. 3-6) in which righteousness is emphasized; the second is linked with the last three virtues in verse seven to nine, in which grace is emphasized. The first suggests suffering for the sake of character; the second, suffering for principle. The first is Christ formed in the character, the second is the life of Jesus active in the believer, pressing the claims of Christ upon men. The rejection of such claims is accompanied by the persecution of the vessels whom He uses. Peter speaks of this twofold persecution with its corresponding blessings (1 Pet. 3:14; 4:14). Happy is the one who suffers for righteousness’ sake, he has the priceless possession of a good conscience, and upon the one who is reproached for the name of Christ rests the Spirit of glory and of God.

“Happy reproach to bear,

Shame, for His sake, to share,

Since we the crown shall wear

When He shall come.”

From Glory to Glory (Part 3) (Mar 1959)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 5 No. 3, Mar 1959.

The Motivating Power of Christian Character—Matt. 5: 13-16

Salt and light are the symbols employed to illustrate the two outstanding characteristics of the saint's testimony. These are definitely linked to the seven virtues of verses three to nine. Salt is connected to the first four, and light to the last three. Righteousness and grace thus unite in a life to give a competent witness for God in the world. Salt, or the inward principle of righteousness, is a counteracting influence on the corruption of the world. Similarly, light, or the open confession of Christ by word and life, is the influence that scatters the moral and spiritual darkness of the world.

SALT, therefore, is the symbol of that inward principle of righteousness built into the believer's character which becomes a rebuke to sin wherever his lot is cast. It does not cure corruption, but becomes a hindrance to its spread. The presence of the Church on earth prevents the climax of the mystery of lawlessness in the manifestation of the Man of Sin. Once the Church has been taken out of the way, the world immediately will ripen for judgment (1 Thess. 2).

Our Lord said, "For everyone shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt … Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another" (Mark 9: 49-50). This is, undoubtedly, a reference to the meat offering that is brought before us in Leviticus chapter

two, and should be compared with Horn. 12:1. Salt symbolizes the power of truth in the soul. The fire symbolizes that which tests every man's work as to what sort it is (1 Cor. 3:13). Those eyes which are as a flame of fire reach into the motivating power of our lives, revealing the dross that is to be burned up. This may be done in the fiery trials of life. God wants no meat offering apart from salt. It must be holy and acceptable to Him. He not only wants lives that will be a power for Him in the midst of corruption, but lives whose witness will be palatable to men because of the salt of truth in the inward parts. There is nothing that the world detests more than hypocrisy in the children of God.

Three times, our Lord warns about the salt losing its savour (Matt. 5:13. Mark 9:50. Luke 14:34). In the first, it is related to our testimony before the world; in the second, it refers to our fellowship one with another as Christians; and, in the third, it points to the danger of a lack of self-discipline in our hearts. Savourless Christians are those in whom the Spirit's work is hindered by the activities of the flesh. The Christian graces that are to distinguish the children of God in the world, and which are to reflect the character of the Saviour, are missing. Lives that are not seasoned with salt are unpalatable to God and to man. The Apostle Paul described the yielded life as a sweet savour of Christ unto God, unto the Church. and unto the world around him (2 Cor. 2:15-16).

If salt speaks of that which is inward, light speaks of that which is outward. The light itself is Christ openly confessed before men. His life is still the light of men as it is reflected by the lives of His people. In 2 Cor 4, the light is the glad tidings of the glory of the Christ Who is

the image of God. God has put this treasure in earthen vessels, but like Gideon's pitchers, these vessels must be broken before the light can shine in all its brilliancy. What a value God puts upon broken things in our Bible (Psa. 51:17)! In 2 Cor. 4, the vessel is broken by persecution, but the results are blessed. Paul writes, "We which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest (or shine out) in our mortal flesh" (V. 11).

LIGHT, the second characteristic of the believer's testimony, is linked to the last three virtues of verses seven and nine. In these we see reflected the active life of our Lord Jesus in the sphere of suffering devotion in the household of faith. His mission was one of mercy to a suffering world; His vision of the face of God was never blurred by sin, and His benediction of peace to the brethren was ever upon His blessed lips. His life on earth is to be prolonged in the lives of His people. Ours is a mission of mercy to a suffering world. We must, at all costs, keep the vision of the face of God. Our message is the gospel of peace to a strife-torn world and our attitude in the Church always must be a spirit of peace.

Our Lord Jesus gives solemn warning that this light may be dimmed by three enemies of the soul, symbolized for us thus: "under a bushel" (V. 15), the sin of worldliness; "under a bed" (Luke 8:16), the sin of slothfulness; and, "in a secret place" (Luke 11:33), the sin of cowardliness. The first is illustrated by Demas (2 Tim. 4:10). The love of the world and the love of the Father cannot exist together in a believer's heart. The second is illustrated by David (2 Sam. 11:12). When he should have been fighting the Lord's battles he was lying upon his bed and

evil resulted. Diligence becomes all who serve the Best of Masters. Our Lord demands and deserves the very best we can give. “Not slothful in business (the Lord’s business); fervent in spirit; serving the Lord” is part of the savour of our living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1 and 11). The third is illustrated by Peter when his courage failed him (Matt. 26:69-75). Does this not teach that the very thing in which we are strongest may become the object of the devil’s attack? “Watch and pray” is our Lord’s watchword for us all.

“Sweet thought we have a Friend above,

Our weary faltering steps to guide,

Who follows with the eye of love

The little flock for which He died.”

* * *

When walking with fellow-Christians, while this is good, one is walking with frailty; when walking alone with God, should this become a necessity, one is walking with omnipotence.

From Glory to Glory (Part 4) (Apr 1959)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 5 No. 4, Apr 1959.

The Manifestation of Christian Character — Matt. 5:17-37.

“Our Lord is going to expand the great moral principles of the law onto commandments that flow from Himself and not merely from Moses” (Wm. Kelly). In so doing, He draws a clear contrast between the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees and the righteousness of the subjects of His kingdom. The first is outward, external, and ceremonial; the second is inward and flows from a new creation in the power of the indwelling Spirit (V. 20). He then gives four illustrations of the righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees.

This righteousness recognizes the eternal nature and sacredness of truth (Vv. 17-20).

The four examples of holiness given in these verses express their perfection in the person of Christ even as did the seven virtues of verses 3-9. He did not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil them. The word “fulfil” suggests that He during His life time was the actual embodiment of the ethical standards of God revealed in the Old Testament. In addition, it suggests that He was the substance of all their shadows, the antitype of all their types, and the fulfilment of every jot which was written concerning Him. The Christian, like His Lord acknowledges the unchangeableness of the

moral law of God. The Spirit of God in accord with the instincts of the new nature teaches that all in the Old Testament not connected with type and shadow is transferred to the New Testament, and there finds its fulfilment in them “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:4).

This Righteousness Recognizes the Sacredness of Life (Vv. 21-26).

“Thou shalt not kill,” saith the law, but the Lord Jesus looks right into the heart and sees there the sins that lead to this capital offence and teaches us its awful hideousness. In doing so, He interprets the inner meaning of the law by exposing the sins of the heart. “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Prov. 4:23).

The expressions “The Judgment,” “The Sanhedrin,” “Gehenna,” (V. 22) describe the courts of law existing then among the Jews. The first dealt with minor crimes; the second, with more serious crimes; and the third, with the outrageous crimes which brought execution and consignment to the valley of the sons of Hinnom. Because this valley was the scene of social abandonment and execution, it became the symbol of the eternal punishment of the wicked. “In Christ’s kingdom unwarranted anger is equivalent to the first; contempt, to the second; and vehement passion, to the third” (F. B. Meyer). Thus, our Lord searches out the sins that lead to the acts of anger, contempt aggravation, and grievance (Vv. 2224) and states that there should be no place for them in the lives and characters of His own. Here, too, we are taught that reconciliation with the Christian brother whom we may have wronged is more to the

heart of the Father than all the gifts we might place on the altar.

The nation of Israel apparently is indicated in verses 25-26. Her hatred and rebellion against her own Messiah resulted in His becoming her adversary. It is the truth of Isaiah 63:9-10 repeated. Consequently, she has been delivered to the Judge, the Father of the Messiah, with the sad result that her peoples have been cast into prison (rejected to be punished in their dispersion among the nations) where they will remain until the uttermost farthing is paid. Compare this passage with 1 Thess. 2:16.

This righteousness recognizes the sacredness of the home (Vv. 27-32).

"Thou shalt not commit adultery." In verses 21-26 our Lord deals with that which leads to violence; here He deals with that which leads to corruption. Violence and corruption are twin evils of human nature. They are the two evils that brought judgment in Noah's day (Gen. 6:12-13). Moreover, they will bring God's judgment again, but this time upon the entire world. The Christian must deal with both evils at their root in his thought life. Man interpreted the law to mean the act; our Lord interpreted the law to mean the condemnation of the thought behind the act.

The cutting off of the members of the body mentioned in verse 29-30 sets forth a heart thoroughly exercised in self-judgment. There must be the excision of everything that is hurtful to the soul (Wm. Kelly). It is our communings that make character; if we think of earthly things, we become like them; but if we think of the things of the Lord, we become like Christ.

It becomes obvious that the devil follows a well-planned attack on the human race. He distorts truth, cheapens life, destroys the home until violence and corruption permeate the whole of society. Thank God his conquests do not affect the Kingdom of our Lord! There the atmosphere is pure and love is the antithesis to all that marks the kingdom of darkness. Love is the great grace in the Household of Faith. When love, “fair, luminous and pure,” reigns in the heart, it sweetens the disposition, transforms a house into a home, and distinguishes the Church as a colony of Heaven upon earth.

This righteousness recognizes the sacredness of honesty (Vv. 33-37).

“Swear not at all.” This charge has no reference to the taking of an oath in a court of law; it refers to our communications with one another. Such should be our character that when we speak no doubt would be cast upon the veracity of our statement. It never should be necessary for the Christian to substantiate the truth of his words by an oath. “Words of truth and soberness” should mark the subjects of the Kingdom of God. The Lord makes reference here to the third and the ninth commandments and exposes the sin of lying. We are to have our loins girt about with truth, meaning that our strength in resisting the devil and his horde is in absolute honesty and sincerity. Lying is the sin of deception. The formation of the image of Christ in the soul will reflect itself in transparency of character. “Deceiving and being deceived” marked us as children of Adam; likeness to Christ distinguishes the children of the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Measure Of Christian Character - Matt. 5:38-48.

The question now arises, how far are we to go in our obligations to others? The answer to this portion of our chapter is much more extensive than the world expects. The spirit of retaliation is to be mortified (Vv. 3842). This means the putting to death of any vindictive feeling that might arise in the heart. The righteousness of the King's subjects is marked by two things: first, it exceeds anything that is produced by human nature; and, second, it induces motives which originate in the imparted nature of God which is love. Thus the turning of the other cheek and the yielding of the cloke are the disciplining of a spirit of vindictiveness within. The going of the second mile and the spirit of charity (Vv. 41-42) surpass in practical righteousness even the expectations of the world. All this can be done only by hearts that are living in the light of God's purposes. Persons who are walking under His conscious protection are sure that a day is coming for the vindication of all right and the punishment of all wrong by Him to Whom vengeance belongs. This spirit of the Kingdom must be manifested, not only toward our friends, but also toward our enemies. In its manifestation, we reveal the nature of God and fulfil the word, "That ye may be the sons of your Father." This follows the perfect pattern set by our Father in His dealings with His enemies (Vv. 43-48). To deal with our enemies as the Father deals with His; He does good to them that hate Him; He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and His rain falls upon the just and unjust. The law said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour," but the Scribes had added to this something God had not intended, "and hate thine enemy." Now the

Lord Jesus interprets the word neighbour to mean either friend or foe. He supports this by the parable of the Good Samaritan in which the priest and the Levite, the representatives of the law, are seen as coming short of the ethical requirements of the moral law of God (Luke 10). We only display our sonship with the Father when we act toward our enemies as He does. When we keep ourselves in the love of God (Jude 21), we are walking in fellowship with God, “For he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:16). We thus are brought back to what has already been stated that the two pillars upon which the whole ethical teaching of God depends are love to God and love to man. Love will not commit adultery; love is honest and will not lie; it is not vindictive, and it will bless in the midst of cursing and bitterness.

From Glory to Glory (Part 5) (May 1959)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 5 No. 5, May 1959.

The Motives of Life (Matthew Chapter Six)

Our Lord now deals with the devotional life of His people and the things that affect it. “Be sure that you do not your acts of piety or righteousness before men” (V. 1, Revised). There is only one motive behind acts of righteousness that makes them precious in heaven, and that is a life lived before the eye of God alone (V. 1). Our Lord is speaking of the righteousness which exceeds that of the hypocrite (Chap. 5:20), and contrasts it with the outward show of the Pharisee, enacted for the applause of men. In receiving that applause, he has his reward. The Saviour warns His own, “Take heed” that your lives are not lived in bondage to the opinions and the plaudits of men. Dare any of us say that we are free from this blight? Are we not governed, at times, more by the fear of men than by the fear of God? Do we not forget too often that at the Judgment Seat of Christ we shall be turned inside out and the very motives that impelled our acts of piety will be revealed (1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:10 R.V.)?

From verse 2 to 18 our Lord speaks of three acts of righteousness which flow from hearts that love Him. But there is a danger that these acts may be robbed of their preciousness by the intrusion of self. The first deals with the sacrificial life, and affects my relationship to others (Vv. 2-4); the second deals with the devotional life and affects my relationship to God (Vv. 5; 15); the third deals

with the disciplined life and affects my relationship to self (Vv. 16-18). There, undoubtedly, is a connection here with the three active virtues of chapter 5:7-9. Almsgiving is the activity of the merciful, communion is the blessed portion of the pure in heart, and fasting is that inward discipline of natural appetites in preparation for communion with God and service to men as Christ's ambassadors of peace. These are reversed in the order of our experience: fasting prepares for communion, and almsgiving flows from a life lived in fellowship with God (Acts 9:36).

Fasting is the practice of self-denial, the denial of everything that would hinder the soul's progress in communion with God. It is not only the abstinence from natural food at times, although that is included, but the denial of everything that would feed the Adamic nature. Abraham made no progress with God until the death of the old man (Gen. 11:32; 12:4), nor will we, until we learn to put the knife of self-judgment to our flesh. "Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). Fasting and prayer are usually linked because in seasons of spiritual crisis and deep exercise before God the soul will not want to be disturbed in the presence of God. Moreover, spiritual sluggishness may be avoided by the denial of natural appetite.

In the second act of piety, our Lord insists upon three things: sincerity of heart, secrecy of place, and simplicity of language (Vv. 5-7). This is the first of several progressive lessons on prayer that our Lord taught. It is devotion under the eye of God alone. Our

Lord did not mean this beautiful pattern prayer to be repeated in unison by whole congregations because it is intensely individual, and because it is to be made in the secrecy of the closet. It is given, rather, to teach us the elements of prayer and to reveal the principles which are to guide us in our devotional lives.

The prayer has seven petitions. The first three are related to the interests of the Father, the last four to the interests of the individual. This shows that true prayer is based upon relationship with God, and is maintained by holiness of life. “Hallowed be Thy name,” that is, in the lives of His own people. Moreover, it teaches the four great purposes of prayer: first, to cultivate a spirit of unselfishness by putting God’s interests first; second, to practise separation from the world as this is learned in the sanctuary. That which the soul is taught in the presence of God is a discontent with an age whose enjoyment arises from its expulsion of God. Third, to bring us into the current of the will of God. Fourth, to teach us our insufficiency and dependence upon God.

Let us look more closely at the prayer: “Our Father Who art in the heavens” (J. N. D.). Here we learn two things about God: first, His personality, He is our Father. Another had said, “Whose love wants the best for His children, Whose wisdom knows the best for His children, and Whose power does the best for His children” (G. King). Second, His omnipresence, “Who art in the heavens,” our Father is ever near us, His arm to support, His voice to cheer, His love to draw, and His never-failing mercy to strengthen in weakness and failure. Oh, how near He is to each! How accessible!

“No human voice may cheer thee no earthly listener hear thee,

But, oh, this Friend is near thee, the kindest and the best;

Whose smile can banish sadness, Whose presence fills with gladness

The solitary breast.”

In the first part of the prayer, we have what should be the interests of the children: the Father’s name, the Father’s kingdom, and the Father’s will. Their passion is that His name may be sanctified, His kingdom come and His will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Our Lord said, “I have declared unto them Thy name” (John 17). Now with holy jealousy the children pray that nothing may mar the existing intimacy, and they yearn for the day when that name will be hallowed in all the earth. The name of the Father is sanctified in the lives of His children when, the image of His own dear Son is reflected in them.

“Thy kingdom come.” For the larger fulfilment of this petition we must look even beyond the Millennium to the sabbath of God’s eternal rest. The kingdom for which He taught them to pray will come when all evil is subdued, and Christ delivers up His kingdom to the Father. The sabbath of God’s eternal rest will then begin (1 Cor. 15:24-28). In this present dispensation grace reigns through righteousness; in the kingdom of our Lord, righteousness will dwell forever. When the children of God are received into the Father’s house there will be an enjoyment of the Father’s kingdom even before it takes on its universal form (Matt. 13:43).

“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Doing the will of God is as food for our spirits (John 4:34), enlightenment for our minds (John 7:17), and rest for our souls (Matt. 11:29). Paul prayed that we might be complete in all the will of God. In the obedience of saints the angels behold a little of Heaven on Earth. In anticipation of coming perfection our prayer should be that even now the Lord God may be sanctified in our wills (1 Peter 3:15); that He may be acknowledged in our hearts, and that His will may be accomplished in our lives, as in the life of our Lord (Psa. 40:8).

The last part of the prayer deals with the Father’s interest in the needs of His children, Their needs are threefold: the need of the body, “Give us this day our daily bread;” the need of the spirit, “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors;” the need of the soul, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

The body needs sustenance hence the children are taught their dependence on the Father for food and raiment. His own loving hands meet this daily need, and in His unfailing care, He teaches them how precious they are to His own heart (V. 24).

The spirit needs communion. Since each of us possesses a fallen sinful nature which mars communion, how is this communion to be maintained? This results from forgiveness through the abiding efficacy of the Saviour’s work of atonement, and through His present ministry as priest upon the throne. This is not a question of the soul’s eternal happiness, but of daily fellowship with God. Parental forgiveness, however, is dependent on two things: first, confession when we are conscious of doing wrong, “Forgive us our debts” (See 1 John 1:9); second,

the possession of a forgiving spirit toward others, “As we forgive our debtors” (Vv. 12, 14, 15). Except these two conditions are met, our fellowship with God will be marred and broken, and our souls will become lean. Oh, that we may chasten our spirits and cultivate the holy joy of communion with the Father! “The pure in heart shall see God.”

The soul needs succour. “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” This means not merely the evil one, although victory over the devil is included. The noun is neuter, and means every form of evil into which we may be led. Does this mean that we are to ask God that we may live our lives free from all temptation and testing? Such a thing is far from the mind of the Father in His plans for His children. He has permitted temptation and testing to develop character and to train us for Heaven (Heb. 12:5-13). What, then, does it mean, “Lead us not into temptation”? It is a petition not to be overwhelmed by the temptation, but to be delivered from the evil to which it might lead. The soul in the midst of temptation feels its own weakness, and in the need of

“We look backward to the sufferings, and forward to the glory. The first advent of our Lord was to endure the sufferings; the second advent will be to bring the glory. The Church occupies the interval. Most blessed place wherein to rest, and wait, and watch until Jesus comes!” —Trotter.

divine help casts itself upon the faithfulness of God, thus experiencing the truth of 1 Cor. 10:13: “God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are

able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

"I need Thee every hour, stay Thou near by,

Temptations loose their power when Thou art nigh."

Almsgiving is the activity of the merciful. The Christian life is one of giving. In the midst of suffering the mercy of the Lord is reflected in the sacrificial lives of His people. The soul that has learned Christ is dedicated to giving his substance to the poor, sympathy to the fallen, comfort to the sorrowing, cheer to the sad, strength to the weak, and the gospel to all the world.

"Then ask thy God to give thee skill in comfort's art,

That thou mayest consecrated be, and set apart

Unto a life of sympathy, for heavy is the weight of ill in every breast,

And comforters are needed most of childlike touch."

* * *

Introspection

What are we inwardly ?

We may be technical. We may like to see the order of divine service pursued in a certain way. We may be strong upon these points. We may be rigid in ecclesiasticism. But, what if we can go home and do a sneaking action? We may be critical. We may say the preacher's grammar was not very exact; his teaching at a low level. Up to that point we are noble men. But, what if we oppress the hireling and lay a heavy hand on the weak? We are fond of traditions. We like to talk about those "dear old days of years ago"; and that "nice

old Christian friend" that used to do so many beautiful things. We have a great reverence for those men and their ways of doing things. But, what if tomorrow morning we speak a savage word to a lonely creature, and drive into despair some soul that would be thankful for one ray of light?

Let us beware lest we "strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel."

From Glory to Glory (June 1959)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 5 No. 6, June 1959.

The Life of Devotion

In this life of devotedness with its three acts of piety as they are outlined in Matthew chapter six, our Lord warns of three great hindrances to its progress, materialism (6:19-24), anxiety (6:25-34), and censoriousness (7:1-6). As a counteraction He places three holy exercises for the soul.

Depositing Treasure in Heaven

Over against materialism the Lord sets the aim of laying up treasure in heaven and being rich toward God. The treasures of earth are summed up in one word, “mammon” (V. 24). To serve mammon is to incur spiritual poverty, to serve God with a single eye for His glory results in spiritual wealth. Every kindness, every act of self-denial, every suffering endured for His name; yea, everything with which we enrich others will meet us on that day. Not only so, but our souls are enriched as we enrich others. Furthermore, thereby our fellowship with God is deepened and our satisfaction and joy in Christ are increased. The believer in Christ learns the secret of spiritual wealth when he learns to live with an eye single to the glory of God. The single eye is the eye that sees only one thing, the glory of God. The person with the single eye lives for only one thing, and concentrates upon attaining that one thing. The lamp of the body is the eye (V. 22). The eye here is not just one faculty of the soul such as perception or conscience, but is the combination of all the faculties which constitute

the vision of the heart. The eye, which is the vision of the soul, if single, that is, healthy and without hypocrisy, will be filled with heavenly light, the light of the Word and Spirit of God (Col. 3:16. Eph. 5:18). This light will guide us throughout our pilgrimage here. Oh, to be men and women of the single eye!

Paul was a saint with a single eye. He wrote, “Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13-14).

In contrast to what Paul was, James writes of “A double minded man unstable in all his ways” (Jas. 1:8). That unstable man receives nothing from God, that is, he has no treasure in heaven. The church in Smyrna was poor in the things of this world, yet, the Lord said, “Thou art rich.” The church in Laodicea was rich in the things of this world, yet, the Lord said, “Thou art poor.” True riches are imparted only to those who escape the snare of materialism (Luke 16:11-12).

Confiding in God

To neutralize anxiety our Lord places the aim of confiding in our Father’s care. Three times He warns us not to be over anxious (Vv. 25, 31, 34). Moreover, He gives us three reasons why we should trust in our heavenly Father. I. Because we have such a kind and loving Father Who knows and supplies the needs of all His children (Vv. 25-30). II. Because we are subjects of His glorious kingdom to which all the promises of God are vouchsafed in Christ (Vv. 31-33). III. Because over-anxiety hinders us in living a day at a time (V. 32), in

confiding in a Father's care (Vv. 26-28), a Father's knowledge (V. 32), and a Father's promise (V. 33).

Holy Self-Judgment

To counteract censoriousness, the Lord sets the aim of cultivating the holy habit of self-judgment (7:1-6). Here we are reminded that we are the subjects and not the rulers of the kingdom; therefore, when in doubt of any matter, we are not responsible to judge it. Our Lord, in verse one, is referring to what has not been perfectly revealed to His people. He is condemning a legalistic and suspicious spirit, and shows that where there is an eagerness to condemn others, when evidence is lacking, there is proof of unjudged evil in the critic's own heart. We are members one of another and responsible for each other's welfare. The best way to seek a brother's good is to apply the knife of God's Word to our own flesh.

William Kelly has well said, "We must not break that which is bruised by yielding to personal or party feelings. What a danger this is! The inevitable effect of a judging spirit is, we get judged ourselves. The soul whose habit is censorious is universally ill-spoken of." The Word of God says, "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." God will see that every unkind word and deed against our brethren will come back on the head of the guilty one. May the Lord save us from evil surmisings, and from the imputation of evil motives to our brethren whose consciences may be perfectly clear before the Lord.

There is, however, a judging which is according to truth, and which we are called upon to exercise (Vv. 5-6). This requires spiritual discernment, a discernment that is

only obtained by earnest prayer (V. 7). How may we live and act in order to cast the mote out of a brother's eye, to be preserved from casting our pearls before swine? The answer is, to live by divine power and wisdom. These God gives to all who seek them (Jas. 1:17). What a need there is in the Church today for men who have understanding in the visions of God (2 Chron. 26:5). Why are there so few? because there are few men of the sanctuary. The sanctuary is the place of help (Psa. 20:2), the place of power (Psa. 63:2), the place of vision (Psa. 68:24), the place of understanding (Psa. 73:17), the place of holiness (Psa. 74:7), the place of enlightenment (Psa. 77:13), and the place of praise (Psa. 134:2).

Our Lord had taught His disciples that they were the salt of the earth and the light of the world. These holy aims at which we have been looking, these principles of divine truth working in the heart, are like salt in the soul that preserves from corruption within and without.

For the sake of all who were standing listening, our Lord applies the plumbline of divine truth to all profession in verse 13. He speaks of the experience of true discipleship (Vv. 13-14), the test of true discipleship (Vv. 15-23), and the habit of true discipleship (Vv. 24-29).

The proper choice: He speaks of two gates, two roads, two classes, and two destinations. To enter the narrow gate which opens upon the road of life, requires a choice. It is the choice of an earnest honest heart that feels the plague of sin; a choice that entails repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. In this capitulation of the soul to Christ, the new birth into the kingdom is experienced and discipleship begins.

The new nature: Our Lord now speaks of three things in the world of religious profession which may deceive us, although they never could deceive God. They are outward appearance (V. 15), lip service (V. 21), and material success (V. 22). Consistency of life is the real proof that a new nature within has been planted (Vv. 17-20). The fruit is after its kind. If in Christ, as the branch in the vine, the fruit will be Christ-likeness. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.”

The new practice: The rock mentioned in chapter 16 represents Christ Himself, but the rock mentioned here in verse 24 is the word of Christ upon which we should build our lives and characters until we attain to His blessed image. The life that is built upon the teachings of Christ will be secure in every storm. The storms of temptation, of persecution, of trial, and of sorrow will certainly test us, but nothing will ever prevail to separate us from the love of Christ. As we build upon Him, our souls will be kept from falling.

Everything else is shifting sand. To build our lives upon the ideas of men, to shape them in any other mould than the Word of God (Rom. 6:18, N.T.), is to end destitute of comfort, succour, and assurance in the days of calamity and testing.

The Lord give us wisdom and grace to build our lives upon “The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture.”

The Epistles of Peter or a Study in Comparisons (Dec 1959)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 5 No. 12, Dec 1959.

Between the two Epistles of Peter there are many interesting comparisons. The first Epistle is based on the revelation given to Peter according to Matthew 16; the second is based on the glory unfolded to him according to Matthew 17. The first Epistle may be called the Epistle of the Wilderness; the second, that of the Kingdom. The first gives us the hope of God's people in the light of present sufferings; the second, indicates their knowledge in the light of surrounding dangers. In the first, we see the grace of God (to which reference is made nine times) as the sufficiency to meet all the needs of God's people; in the second, the grace of God as the sphere in which they ought to grow. Consequently, the first Epistle, in which Christians are seen to be a suffering people, ends with the statement, "This is the true grace of God"; whereas, the second, in which they are an enlightened people, ends with a complementary statement, "Grow in grace." With an increase of knowledge comes the necessity to grow in grace. In the first Epistle the devil is likened to a roaring lion, but in the second, he is unseen, yet working, nevertheless, as an angel of light in the apostasy.

Peter writes to converts saved through Paul, Silas, and others in order to confirm them in what they had been taught (1 Epistle 1:1, 12; 5:12), and to assure them that his own teaching was the same as that of Paul (2 Epistle 3:15-16). These assertions prove that the General

Epistles (those of James, Peter, John, and Jude) are for this present dispensation.

Let us consider certain characteristics of Peter's Epistles:

Seven times the word "precious" is used by Peter. Three times he applies this word to Christ as the Living Stone, the Corner Stone, and the object of the believer's faith (1 Epistle 2:4, 6, 7). Once he applies it to the blood of Christ (1 Epistle 1:18). Peter is the only writer in the Bible who uses an adjective to describe the blood shed by the Lord upon the cross. Twice Peter applies this word to the believer's faith; first, to the gift of faith; second, to the trial of faith (1 Epistle 1:7). The last time he uses it is in connection with the promises of God which sustain faith (2 Epistle 1:4).

The Spirit of God is mentioned seven times throughout these two Epistles. In six of these references He is associated with the Word of God (1 Epistle 4:14).

The word "conversation" which describes the believer's whole manner of life occurs eight times. Peter uses it to give us a fourfold view of the Christian's life:

His preconversion life: This refers to his life before it was touched by the grace of God. It was "vain" and "filthy." The word "vain" describes the religious side of his life; the word "filthy", the moral side (1 Epistle 1:18. 2 Epistle 2:7).

His postconversion life: This depicts his life before the eye of God after divine grace had changed it. It should be "holy" because God's character is imparted to him (1 Peter 1:15), and "holy" because of the hope that is set before him (2 Epistle 3:11).

His public life: The believer's life before the eye of the world should be "honest" so that others may be won to Christ (1 Epistle 2:12), and "good" in order that his persecutors may be ashamed (1 Epistle 3:16).

His domestic life: Life in the Christian home ought to be "attractive" and "chaste" so that unsaved relatives, who will not listen to the Word of God, may be won to Christ, apart even from speaking to them (1 Epistle 3:1-2).

Peter views the Lord's people as pilgrims on their journey to their inheritance; therefore, he compares the world to a wilderness through which they pass. He makes many comparisons between the Christian's pilgrimage and Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan as covered by the books of Exodus and Numbers. For example, we have in these Epistles the pilgrim starting on this journey under the security of the sprinkled blood (1 Epistle 1:2), under the guidance of the pillar cloud (1 Epistle 4:14, 2 Epistle 1:19), under supervision of their God-given leader, Moses (1 Epistle 2:21), dressed in suitable attire (1 Epistle 1:13), enjoying the tabernacle with its priesthood and sacrifices (1 Epistle 2:5), drinking of the water from the smitten rock (1 Epistle 2:8), fighting Amalek, the enemy in the way (1 Epistle 2:11), progressing in spite of false prophets like Balaam who were ready to curse them (2 Epistle 2:15-16), entering into their land of promise (2 Epistle 1:10-11), and possessing at long last their inheritance (1 Epistle 1:4-5; 2 Epistle 3:13).

The Epistles of Peter (Jan 1960)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 6 No. 1, Jan 1960.

In the five chapters of his first epistle, Peter describes the Lord Jesus as the Sacrificial Lamb (chap.1), the Smitten Rock (chap. 2), the Suffering Substitute (chap. 3). the Steadfast Example (chap. 4), and the Sympathetic Shepherd (chap. 5).

We have, then, in these five chapters five aspects of the sufferings of Christ. We also have, as the result of our identification with Him, five aspects of the sufferings of the saints. In chapter 1, He suffers atoningly for His people's sake in the light of the glory to follow. They, in the same chapter, are seen suffering for His sake in the light of the glory that awaits them. In chapter 2, He suffers for meekness' sake with a view to assuming a priesthood on behalf of His people. As the Holy Priest, He is the Antitype of Aaron; and as the Royal Priest, He is the Antitype of Melchisedec. His people too are seen suffering for their meekness with a view to the exercise of their priesthood. As a holy priesthood, in identification with Christ, they minister before God. As a royal priesthood, on behalf of Christ, they minister among men (vv. 7 and 9).

In chapter 3, He suffers for righteousness' sake. His holy character exposed the crookedness of human nature in the world. His people, reflecting in some measure the image of the Master, suffer because of their character from the same persecuting world. In chapter 4, He suffers for His obedience to the will of God. In this chapter "the will of God" and "the will of the Gentiles" are seen in absolute contrast to each other. The children

of God, ceasing from a life of sin, suffer in the flesh because they have been brought into the current of the will of God. In chapter 5, He suffers as the Great Shepherd of the sheep from the malice and hate of the devil. All of the saints with a shepherd's heart will suffer from the malice and hate of the devil.

The cares of God's people are to be cast upon Himself for He cares for them. The epistle thus teaches us that wherever there is a suffering saint there is a suffering Saviour. Wherever we are called upon to drink the bitter waters of Marah, there is always a tree to make those waters sweet.

Chapter 1 may be divided according to the five great words that are used to describe God's grace to His own; namely, election, salvation, sanctification, redemption and regeneration. Shall we briefly consider these together.

Election

Election and the purpose of God result in hope (vv. 1-5). The Divine Trinity begets souls unto a living hope (v. 3), unto an inheritance which in substance is incorruptible; in purity, undefiled; in beauty, unfading (v. 4); and unto salvation in all its completeness.

In election we have the Father's choice according to His foreknowledge. Here let us avoid the serious error of Calvinism which teaches that God's foreknowledge is His fore-determination or His will. This has resulted in a doctrine of fatalism which has deceived many of God's people. We may keep the biblical record clear if we keep in mind that election has nothing to do with our choice.

We also here have the Spirit's work in leading a soul to the obedience of faith. When the soul is brought into contact with Christ it is immediately rendered safe by the Blood of Atonement (v. 2). The same order as appears here is seen in 2 Thess. 2:13 where the thought of "obedience" in 1 Pet. 1:2 is described as "belief of the truth". In both of these portions the sanctification of the Spirit is preparatory to regeneration. The sanctification of the Father is positional and permanent (Jude 1. Heb. 10:10), but the sanctification of the Word is practical and progressive (John 17:17).

Salvation

Salvation appropriated by faith results in joy (6-12). This salvation is the hope of the future (3-5), the joy of the present (6-9), and the theme of the past (10-12). A salvation so great can surely uphold in their trials the saints who through faith endure because they see Him who is invisible (v. 8). For such endurance there will be rewards: even praise, honour, and glory at His appearing. Words of praise from our Lord, honour before all, and glory or the outshining of a life that has been purified in the furnace of affliction. Glory therefore, or true greatness is reached by the valley of humiliation here. Yet such a path is not without its compensations even now (vv. 8-9).

Here we learn that our joys find their springs in God, and that they manifest themselves in the various activities of the three Christian virtues: faith, hope, and love. Faith believes, rejoices in, and endures the trial which is precious in God's sight. Love entwines itself around our absent Lover, the Lord Jesus, while hope awaits the grand release at the coming of our Lord (v. 9).

Trials are sent only if we need them (v. 6), and in all suffering God points the saints to their future glory (v. 7), the example of Christ (2:21), and their future reward (1:6, 4:13).

Sanctification

Sanctification with its holy adjustments, results in holiness (13-16).

There are three adjustments mentioned in these verses: selfward, worldward, and Godward.

Selfward (v. 13): As the pilgrim's garments are gathered up and held in one place by the girdle, so our thoughts are to be concentrated and trained on one object, even Christ. It is our communings that make our character. To think of earth is to become carnal, to think of Christ is to become like Him.

Worldward (v. 14): We are not to model our lives after our former principles as when we lived in sin; yet, we must have some model before us. The model that God sets before us is Christ.

Godward (15-16): We have pointed out that the word "conversation" is found 8 times in these two epistles. The word pictures our whole manner of life as it should be for God: holy, honest, good, winning, and chaste. There are four incentives to holy living in Peter's writings which emphasize this; namely, the character of God (1:15), the work of Christ (1:18), the example of Christ (3:16-18), and the prospects that lie before us (2 Pet. 3:11). Practical sanctification therefore is wrought by the formative power of the indwelling Spirit. This power enables the believer to cultivate the holy desires

and virtues of the “New Man” which after God is “created in righteousness and true holiness.”

Redemption

Redemption and its cost result in godly fear (17-20). Life is but a sojourn for God’s people. As strangers they are away from home and as pilgrims they are going home. Their pilgrimage is to be marked by godly fear lest they grieve Him along the way. They are to fear in the light of the cross. Christ’s precious Blood was shed for our Redemption. He was foreordained before the world began for such a sacrifice. As the Lamb of God He was inwardly and outwardly pure. When Atonement was made God raised Him from the dead as the seal of the acceptance of the sacrifice that their faith and hope, based on Redemption, might be in the God of resurrection.

Regeneration

Regeneration and its purification, result in love (21-25). In verses 8 and 9 faith, hope, and love, the secrets of our joy, spring forth as the virtues of a new creation. Here in verses 21 and 22 faith, hope, and love are seen again. Faith and hope are centred in the God of resurrection, but love goes out to all the brethren. The new birth cleanses the soul of hate and pride, for it is a washing (Titus 3:5), and implants in it the nature of God which can only love. This love has three excellent marks: it is genuine, unfeigned love is love without hypocrisy; it is pure, it springs from a heart that has been purified by faith; and it is fervent, for there is no half-way measures in God’s nature.

In reviewing this chapter Mr. Samuel Ridout has said, “We have an incorruptible nature based on an incorruptible redemption and marked out for the enjoyment of an incorruptible inheritance.”

Before closing this chapter it seems only proper that attention should be drawn to the fact that the glory of God and the glory of man stand here in vivid contrast (vv. 24- 25). The first is an unfading glory, the second is a vanishing glory. In the latter we have a creation that will decay but in the former we have a quality that will abide forever.

Other Facts of Truth (Feb 1960)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 6 No. 2, Feb 1960.

R. McClurkin

Scripture reading: First Peter chapter two.

The five expressions found in verse nine suggest another division of Peter's first epistle. New Testament saints are "a chosen generation" according to chapter one; "a royal priesthood" according to chapter two; "an holy nation" in chapter three; "a peculiar people" in chapter four; and a people trained to show forth the excellencies of Christ in chapter five. The strangers scattered by persecution, Jewish Christians of the dispersion, had inherited what the nation of Israel had forfeited by unbelief. Moses had described that nation in the first five books of the Bible in exactly this same way. In Genesis 12:1-3 she was viewed as "a chosen generation"; in Exodus 19:6 as "a royal priesthood"; in Leviticus 10:10 as "an holy nation"; in Numbers 3:13 as God's "peculiar people"; and in Deuteronomy 4:6; 28:10 as a people trained to show forth the excellencies of their God.

Furthermore, these Jewish converts to Christianity were taught that as "a chosen generation" they shared the life of Christ their Redeemer. As "a royal priesthood" they shared His ministry. As "an holy nation" they shared His nature. As "a peculiar people" they shared His obedience to the will of God. As a people trained to show forth His excellencies, they shared His victory.

The second chapter views the people of God in four different ways: as children growing in the likeness of

God (Vv. 1-3); as priests ministering in the sanctuary of God (Vv. 4-10); as pilgrims progressing in the will of God (Vv. 11-17); and as servants labouring in the work of God (Vv. 18-25).

The Children's Growth

They are to lay aside an insincere mind in order to receive the sincere milk of the Word. This is the principle of spiritual growth that is taught throughout all the Scriptures. The Psalmist could say that he loved the Word because he hated evil (Psa. 119:113). James says that we must lay aside all filthiness in order to receive with meekness the engrafted Word. Paul teaches that the mystery of the faith can only be carried in the casket of a pure conscience (1 Tim. 3:9). Growth in godliness entails a growth in a sensitiveness to sin. Another rendering of verse two reads, "That ye may grow unto salvation."

The five sins mentioned in verse one are sins against the love of the brethren, the love that is the fruit of the new nature (chap. 1:22). Malice is an inward wish for another's hurt. Envy is an inward repining at another's good. Guile is deceit, and hypocrisy is a mask. Guile puts duplicity in the heart while hypocrisy puts it in the tongue. Evil speaking usually takes the form of building up one's reputation on the ruins of the good names of others.

There are certain things which are necessary for healthy spiritual growth: the fresh air of God's holy sanctuary which we breathe in prayer; the sunshine of His love in which we are to abide (Jude 21), the good food of His Word which we are to assimilate, and by which we are to

be cleansed daily (Psa. 119:9), and a godly exercise to things that are pleasing to our Lord (1 Tim. 4:7-8).

The Priests' Ministry

Our Lord is declared precious three times in these few verses. According to verse four this preciousness of Christ draws forth our worship, in verse six it affects our walk, and in verses seven to nine it produces a noble witness for Christ.

Of our blessed Lord, we read, "To Whom coming …" Experimentally we are always coming to Him. We come daily for life, for sustenance, for love, for fellowship, for truth, for instruction. We cannot do without Him even for a moment.

God declares, "Behold, I lay in Sion a Chief Corner Stone." David took the stronghold of Zion, and on the place of that victory Solomon built the temple "that the Lord God may dwell among them." There the ark rested and all Israel rejoiced. This is the historical background of Psalms 24, 68, and 132. From the same background, Paul draws the picture of our Lord's victory on the cross (Eph. 4). In His mighty stoop to make atonement for sin, He descended from the highest heavens to the lowest parts of the earth. That is, He plumbed the depth of humiliation at the cross and in the grave. He came to grips with all the forces of evil, and triumphed over them, making a show of them openly. The true Ark of the Covenant, Christ, then began His ascent to the place of His rest at the right hand of God. From there He gave gifts for the enrichment of the House which He is building upon the Foundation Stone that was laid in Zion.

With this thought Hebrews 12:18-24 agrees perfectly, “But ye are come unto Mount Sion.” Along with the mount of the curse with its seven figures of the inaccessibility of God, comes into view the mount of grace with its seven figures of the accessibility of God. At the latter we see the blood of sprinkling as the basis of all our blessings. There we behold our right of entrance into the city of God, our fellowship with Him and with all the inhabitants of heaven. The same two mountains in the Epistle to the Galatians (4:21-31) are said to be an allegory of the two covenants. The one that gendereth to bondage and the other that speaks of liberty, joy, and fruit. It is in Zion, the sphere of grace, that we offer our priestly sacrifices and adorn the temple of God with our praises. We are both priests and temple. For the exercise of our priestly devotions there are needed: priestly fitness, purity, food, stability. Priestly stability is the result of always coming to Christ to be built up in Him. The New Testament believer enjoys a priestly status which is not of this world (Vv. 9-11). Moreover, his behaviour must be priestly (Vv. 12:20), and he must keep his eye on Christ, our perfect Example. (Vv. 21-25).

Other Facets of Truth (Mar 1960)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 6 No. 3, Mar 1960.

Through lack of space it was impossible to insert the complete exposition “Other Facets of Truth” in the February issue. “The Pilgrim’s Progress” and “The Servant’s Work” are sections necessary to cover the whole of chapter two. It is hoped that these will be read together in conjunction with the material in the former number so that the full benefit of this message may be received. — Ed.

The Epistles Of Peter

More Facets of Truth from the First Epistle —Chapter two

The Pilgrims’ Progress

There are three things which will impede our progress on the journey home: a soiled conscience (V. 11), a marred testimony (Vv. 12-14), and a lack of fellowship with the Lord (Vv. 15-17). We shall look at these briefly.

By the grace of God we are to master the passions of our wild nature that wars against the nobler faculties of the soul. If fleshly lusts are indulged in the heart, they will appear somewhere in the life. We can be blameless in life only when the heart within is pure. We must be right with our own conscience. The world has no accusation against the testimony of character. This is expressed in honesty and good works, in submission to civil authority, in well-doing, in honouring all men, in loving the brethren, in fearing God, and in enduring grief with

patience amidst misrepresentation (Vv. 2, 5, 11, 16, 25). We must be right with the world.

To fear God and obey Him is the whole duty of man (E cc. 12:13). The fear of the Lord should be the governing principle of our lives. It will affect our every relationship and produce proper attitudes toward ourselves, the world, and our brethren. The fear that should thus control us is the fear that, as a servant, one might misrepresent God.

Lives that are lived in the fear of God will produce two results in the world. They will put to silence the ignorance of foolish men (V. 15), and they will lead many to glorify God in the day of visitation (V. 12). The day of visitation may be the day in which God draws near to a man to urge upon him the claims of the gospel. Many who formerly were prejudiced against Christ, on their acceptance of Him, will glorify God that some lives reflected His character to the extent that prejudice was destroyed. The greatest hindrance to the progress of the gospel in an ungodly world is the un-Christlike lives of some who preach the Word.

The Servants' Work

Comparing verse one with verses 21 and 23, we see in Christ the very antithesis of those lives in which spirituality has been lost through the influence of five evils. There was no malice in Christ, He suffered to save and not to destroy. There was no guile in His mouth, no evil speaking; when He suffered He threatened not. There was no envy, when He was reviled He reviled not again. There was no hypocrisy, He did no sin, He was inwardly and outwardly pure.

In chapter 1:18 we have the blood of the Lamb shed for our security. In verses 21-25 we are shut in to feast upon the roast Lamb, to imbibe His holy character. We feed upon the Head, “He knew no sin,” here is food for the thought-life. We feed upon the legs, “He did no sin,” here is food for the active life of the servant. We feed upon the purtenance thereof, “In Him was no sin,” this is food for the heart. As we feed upon Christ as the Lamb of God, features of His character will be reproduced in us which will fit us for the service of God.

As wandering sheep, we have returned to the One Who feeds and rules us, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

Priceless Adornment (Mar 1960)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 6 No. 3, Mar 1960.

First Peter Chapter Three

There is another aspect of the sufferings of Christ and of Christians in this third chapter of Peter's first letter, suffering for righteousness sake.

The Christians of Peter's time were enduring great reproach for the Name of Christ, and, perhaps, when they compared how few their numbers were in contrast to those of their persecutors they became discouraged, and even got into doubts. Peter sought to strengthen their faith by reminding them that it was not the first time that Christ had suffered in His people. Believers have always suffered at the hands of a godless, persecuting world, and have always been, at the most, Christ's "little flock."

As an illustration of what he means, Peter points to the days before the flood when the Spirit of Christ preached in Noah repentance and remission of sins. That long period is the example of the waiting and the longsuffering of God. That the preaching of righteousness and of coming judgment failed then to turn men from their sins is, alas, true. Although Noah pled with them to repent and to turn to God, they perished in their disobedience. These self-same individuals now are spirits in prison, reserved unto the judgment of God.

How patient then should the Christian be in the midst of persecution! He is only a vessel of the Spirit of Christ

through whom God offers the gospel of repentance and remission to the world today.

For the encouragement of the saints, verse 20 shows that the very deluge which destroyed that wicked generation and banished the filth of the flesh from the earth was the same water that bore the inhabitants of the ark to safety. Baptism is a figure of a like judgment that descended on Christ at the Cross. There in Christ His people were borne through the judgment to the safety of resurrection ground (Gal. 2:20).

The judgment which Christ exhausted on behalf of His people at Calvary did not banish the filth of the flesh from the earth, that is reserved for a later date, but it did result in salvation and triumph for all who believe. It now produces in them a good conscience before the Lord. It is not the act of baptism that produces the good conscience, but that of which the ordinance speaks. The divine judgment that descended upon Christ and which procured salvation for all who believe, will one day descend in wrath upon all who reject Him. It will banish the filth of man from the earth in preparation for the glorious reign of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The practical righteousness for which saints suffer leaves a threefold mark for God: in the home (Vv. 1-7), in the Church (Vv. 8-12), and in the world (Vv. 13-18).

Righteousness in the Home

The conduct of love is pure in all things, and is characterized by a godly fear lest it should be defiled by speech, by walk, or by dress. God often uses the commendable life of a sister in the salvation of the

unsaved husband, even apart from the speaking to him the Word of God (V. 1).

God does not condemn the moderate use of adornment in verses three and four. He is a God of beauty, and His Universe is full of adornment. It is only proper, therefore, that Christian women dress so as to draw the respect and esteem of others. That the outward adornment is not to be the principle thing is the lesson taught here. The important thing in Christian living is the adornment of the inner man with that moral beauty that marked our Saviour while He was here on earth (Matt. 11:29-30).

This passage states that Sarah maintained strength of character in all circumstances where piety was exposed to danger and threats. The Christian woman, similarly, should continue to do well. She is not to be afraid, that is, not to be deterred by trial or threat. As the children of Abraham are those who partake of Abraham's faith, even so, the daughters of Sarah are those who partake of her spirit of subjection and hope.

Of physical adornment another has said, "Plaiting, wearing, putting on, suggest elaborate processes by which much time is wasted."

Husbands are to dwell with their wives according to knowledge; that is, with an intelligence as to what God teaches about such a relationship, and with a due respect for the claims of the weaker vessel. Love is to abound with all knowledge and to throw its softening light on all the relationships of life.

Both husband and wife are heirs together of the grace of life. They have been redeemed by blood to a life of holiness and fellowship with God. When the obligations

of wife to husband and husband to wife are assumed, their fellowship with God will be undisturbed and their united prayers will not be hindered or cut off. God expects the family altar to be maintained in every Christian home. Individual holiness leads to domestic holiness, and domestic holiness leads to holiness and dedication in Christian congregations.

Righteousness in the Church

There is a cluster of five virtues in verse eight the source of which is traced to Christ. Dr. Leighton says, “That which is in the middle as the stalk or root of the rest is love; and the others growing out of it, two on each side — unanimity and sympathy on the one, and pity and courtesy (or humility) on the other.” Love here is defined as brotherly love. We may love some because of certain virtues of character which appeal to us, others because of kindnesses received, still others because we may have common pursuits in life, but brotherly love is filial affection which embraces all who belong to the same heavenly Father.

Note the four virtues which grow out of “the love of brethren”: oneness of mind, compassion, pity, and courtesy. Oneness of mind is unity of thought; compassion, unity of feeling; pity, unity of action; courtesy (or humble-mindedness), unity of attitude. The first of these affects the thoughts; the second, the affections; the third, the emotions; and the fourth, the activities of life, the social life of the child of God. This is the responsibility of the Church to itself. Only as it meets its obligation to them that are within will it be able to meet its obligations to them that are without. Another has said, “By brotherly love we come nearest to

the spirit of the Father, the example of Christ, and the fulfilment of our mission as a Church." — C. New.

The word "contrariwise" in verse nine means that the believer is of a different spirit to that of the world. His attitude is seen in "not rendering evil for evil, nor reviling for reviling." This word "reviling" describes an unbecoming attitude in actions and in words. Instead of this un-Christlike resentment the Christian is to be the blesser. He who would receive heaven's blessing must himself scatter blessing all around. "The true grace of God softens the roughest natures, and produces a sweet and spritual refinement more beautiful and attractive than the superficial polish which comes through education and habit. The best Christian is ever the truest gentleman."

"He that will love life" (Vv. 10-13) must comply with the condition; that is, he who would so live as not to be weary of living, must learn to restrain himself. Sin brings a sourness into life; it dulls our spiritual senses, warps our minds, dwarfs our growth in the likeness of Christ, and creates a disposition that is at variance with our own conscience as well as with God and our fellow-saints. The "good days" mentioned here, are days of abundant spiritual life, days of fellowship with God, days of usefulness in His service. They may be days of adversity and trial, but what matters if we walk with God in the shadow as well as in the light.

To enjoy this abundant life, we must be righteous in speech (V. 10), in conduct (V. 11), and in our relationships with others (V. 11). In the sphere of the sunshine of His love the saints enjoy the things expressed in verse 12: the eye of the Lord, the ear of the

Lord, and the face of the Lord. The first suggests His protection, the second His care, and the third His fellowship.

Note how full Peter's epistles are of quotations from the Old Testament. In chapter one he quotes from the Law, in chapter two from the Prophets, and in chapter three from the Psalms. Such quotations form the acknowledgement of the New Testament to the inspiration of the Old.

Peter delights to indulge in reminiscences of our Lord's words in His sermon on the Mount, and to apply their holy precepts to the lives of God's people.

Righteousness in the World

Three things are to characterize the people of God in the world: a good conscience toward God (V. 16), a good conversation toward men (V. 16), and a good witness to the hope that is within them (V. 15). These are possible only when they sanctify Christ in their hearts. Such seems to be the meaning of verse 13, a probable quotation from Isaiah 8; 13. Would Peter not be afraid to substitute "the Christ" for "the Lord of Hosts" had he not believed in the Deity of Christ?

To encourage these suffering saints, Peter puts beside them a suffering Saviour. The bitter waters of any Marah are sweetened by the casting into them of the tree, the sorrows of Calvary. The Lord Jesus came into the world specifically to suffer. He suffered as the Innocent One. His whole mission of suffering was for others, and ended in absolute victory. Though put to death in the flesh by man, He was quickened by the Spirit of God in resurrection. In His death He became the Surety for our

sins, and in His resurrection He lives to minister to His own the benefits of His atonement. The same Spirit that raised up Christ from the dead, and who witnessed in the Old Testament prophets, indwells each believer in Christ. He is the power in the witness of the Church militant and the assurance of her final triumph, “The gates of hell shall not prevail against her.” Paul likewise asserts, “He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Rom. 8:11). The suffering Church of today, when her pilgrimage is ended, will be the Church victorious then.

Conflicting Wills (Apr 1960)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 6 No. 4, Apr 1960.

Scripture reading: First Peter chapter four

We now come to the fourth aspect of the sufferings of Christ and of His people, suffering for obedience to the will of God.

This chapter opens with an exhortation to dedicate our lives to the will of God, as did Christ. It closes with an appeal to commit our souls to His protection in the midst of the sufferings that result from doing the will of God. The first verse means that ceasing from sin results in a life of suffering for the Lord's sake.

"The will of God" and "the will of the Gentiles" are thrown into vivid contrast in verses two and three. The word "suffice" simply means we have wasted enough time living for the world, and that we should now yield ourselves wholly to God. The will of the Gentiles is described by the six sins mentioned in verse three. These are sins which defile body, soul, and spirit. The first two are sins of the soul; the second two, of the body; and the third two, of the spirit.

Life in the Will of God

Is a life of holiness (V. 4): "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1 Thess. 4:3). The fellowship of Christ's suffering is entered upon from both the positive and negative sides of the Christian life. Not only because of ceasing from a life of sin, but because of practical holiness which is contrary to the maxims of the Gentiles.

This has been the experience of God's people in all generations. It is nothing new that they should suffer for their obedience to God. For this very purpose, before Messiah came into the world, was the gospel preached to them that are dead (V. 6). It was preached to them while still alive that believing they might cease from a life of sin and live according to God in the spirit. Men in the flesh judged them unworthy of their society, and cast them out (Heb. 11:36-38). The world is the same today; doing the will of God results in one being ostracized by the world.

Is a life of fellowship (Vv. 7-11): It is fellowship with God (V. 7) and with His people (Vv. 8-11). The word "sober" makes reference to the mind, the thought life, and suggests "sound-mindedness." The word "watch" means "self-restraint." These verses exhort all to keep spiritually alert in regard to the practice of prayer.

Brotherly love is again emphasized in the light of Christian fellowship. Love is generous in its attitude to the failures of the saints. It covers a multitude of sins when there is no need to expose them. Love is the more excellent way. Ham would expose the shame of his father, but Shem and Japheth would cover it. How like Ham we become when religious flesh takes hold of us! It is no mark of spirituality to be always prating on the failures of fellow-saints. It brings a curse into our lives, and darkens our whole spiritual perception, destroying our usefulness for God.

Not only is love generous toward the saints in their weakness, but it is a grace ever acting for their comfort (Vv. 9:11). Furthermore, through love everything becomes available for the service of others: our homes,

our gifts, and our talents. It recognizes no party barriers. Its sphere of service within is the Household of Faith, and its scope of service without is the whole world. Love is the essence of true Christianity; it opens our homes for the comfort of others, our mouths for the edification of others, and our hearts for the enrichment of others. If our mouths are open to teach, they can only teach what the oracles of God permit. If we minister or serve, we engage all that we have received of the Lord. That truly is consecration. Our hands being filled with what He has given, we return it to the Lord to be dedicated to His service.

Not only do we behold the generosity of love and the service of love here, but we also see the motive of love, "That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Where brotherly love is known, and enjoyed, the spirit of God is pleased to dwell and work, and the Gentiles are compelled to glorify God. Where brotherly love is influenced by jealousy and bitterness, the Spirit of God withdraws His gracious operation and leaves us impotent before the face of our enemies.

Is a life of reproach (Vv. 12-14): The believer is not to think it strange that persecution follows a life of holiness (V. 12). Such suffering is for the Name of Christ (V. 14). It is, first, because he is a Christian (V. 16); second, it is according to the will of God (V. 19); furthermore, it is the cause of joy, for it is fellowship in the sufferings of Christ (V. 13). He is enduring from a godless world hostility and hatred similar to that endured by his Lord.

In these verses Peter recalls the words of the Master in Matthew 5:10-12.

Suffering for His Name and suffering for sin are in contrast in verse 14 and 15. In the first, God is glorified and the Spirit of Glory rests upon the sufferer, but the second dishonors God and brings His Name into reproach.

There are four sins of which a Christian should not be guilty: murder, theft, evildoing, and meddling in the affairs of others. The murderer strikes at the life of another, the thief at the property of another, the evildoer at the rights of another, and the meddler or busybody at the affairs of another. Compare these with the four enemies of the sheep in the tenth chapter of John's Gospel, and notice by contrast the gentle, unselfish, compassionate character of the True Shepherd in whose image we are to grow.

It has been pointed out that the phrase, "A busybody in other men's matters," suggests an inspector or overseer. This is "oversight" in an evil sense. The Lord's dear people have been afflicted with too much of this type of oversight.

Is a life of spiritual development (Vv. 17-19): God tests us to develop character and to train us for the future. It is a purifying judgment that begins at the House of God. The fiery trials are only meant to burn up the dross, and to produce the image of the Master in our lives.

In the midst of suffering the soul finds its refuge in God (V. 19). The word "Creator" describes God in His greatness, and the word "faithful" describes Him in His goodness. The soul finds its comfort in God, and commits itself to Him in well-doing. To trust in the Lord is not acting in indolence. No trial or suffering is to hinder us from living victoriously. The soul draws its

encouragement from God who “fainteth not” and “faileth not”, and who “changeth not.”

The Shepherd and the Lion (May 1960)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 6 No. 5, May 1960.

1 Peter chapter five

The last aspect of the sufferings of Christ and of His people as dealt with by Peter arises from the malice and hatred of the devil as a roaring lion.

This, the closing chapter of Peter's first epistle, opens with an exhortation to the under-shepherds over the flock of God, and it closes with the perfect triumph of the grace of God in His flock. Let us consider the type of men the Lord appoints to leadership in the churches of the saints. We shall examine their character, spirit, work, danger, and reward.

Their character: The elders among the people of God are to be men who are matured in godly experience. The word "elder" may be used interchangeably with the word "bishop" or "overseer," words which describe the ministry of a pastor or shepherd.

Such leaders should not only be elders in name, but men who live under the shadow of the cross. Peter speaking as an elder says, "I … am … a witness of the sufferings of Christ." It is before the cross that Christians learn how valuable the flock is to the heart of the Lord Jesus.

Men acting among the Lord's people as elders must be matured in godly experience, mellowed under the shadow of Calvary, and made meet for their service by a glorious transformation. The glory of their character will

be revealed in the future, but in the present it is to be expressed in their conduct.

Their spirit: The elders are to serve the Lord's people willingly, that is "not by constraint": unselfishly, "not for filthy lucre"; and humbly, "neither as being lords over God's heritage." Notice, any remuneration becomes filthy lucre when it becomes the motive of Christian service. His flock is so precious to the heart of Christ that only shepherds that breathe the same spirit as the Chief Shepherd are fitted for such a charge.

Their work: There are at least five words which are used in the New Testament to describe the work of elder brethren in the assemblies of the saints. The first of these is "care." Overseers are to care for the church of God (1 Tim. 3:5). This word is used only one other time in the New Testament; that is, in Luke 10:35 where the wounded Samaritan was to be cared for by the inn-keeper. The care of godly elders is as a healing to the wounds among the people of the Lord.

The second word is "rule" (1 Tim. 5:17). This word expresses the idea of leadership. It is going before the saints through the influence of a spiritual example.

The third word is, "feed." The amplified meaning of this word embraces the ideas of feeding, leading, and protecting the sheep. Peter never forgot the words of the Lord Jesus by the sea-side at the time He, the blessed Master, questioned him, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" It will be recalled that Peter's answer was, "Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee." On receiving that assurance the Lord said to Peter, "Feed My sheep." Only to those who love Him does the Master entrust the sheep of His pasture.

Still another important word is used, the word "watch" (Heb. 13:17). Watching actually is the work of overseeing. True elders watch over God's people to meet their needs as these arise. They guard them against danger, guide them in the right channels, and take account of the welfare of each one in the flock.

The final word that we shall consider is the word "guard" (Tit. 1:9). The truth of God has been deposited with the elder and he guards it as sacred. By means of it he convinces, corrects, and reproves in regard to that which is wrong; furthermore, through it he leads the sheep in paths of righteousness.

Their danger: The Apostle Peter points out three dangers to which elders may become exposed. The first is heartlessness. There is to be so much heart in the things of the Lord that elders serve "not by constraint." What a discouragement to the Lord's people when men have to be forced into service for them! Such an attitude frequently results in friction among the saints, and it grieves the Spirit of God.

In the second place there is the danger of selfishness, "Not for filthy lucre." A position in the church must never be used for personal advantage. Godly men will not monopolize either the oral ministry or the general work of God within the church; they will encourage each member to function in the place for which God has fitted him.

Finally, there is the danger of officialism, "Neither as being lords over God's heritage." No one man or any body of men has ever been given dictatorial powers by the Risen Head of the Church. Under-shepherds rule by

leadership, a leadership characterized by exemplary living.

Their reward: What an encouragement is found in the promise made through Peter: “When the Chief Shepherd shall appear ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” Peter does not refer to a kingly crown, but to the victor’s wreath. The wreath of amaranth flowers worn by the victors in the ancient sport games is an illustration of this award.

Peter, having made several interesting and instructive remarks about the elders, now considers the Lord’s people as servants, soldiers, and pilgrims (Vv. 5-9). Linked to these three aspects of the believer’s life are three graces: humility, vigilance, and patience. Peter would teach the servant the lessons of John 13:4-17. He would also remind the soldier of the need of vigilance. In this respect Dr. Leighton says, “Faith sets the stronger Lion of the tribe of Judah against this roaring lion of the bottomless pit; that delivering Lion against this devouring lion.” In the pathway of life the child of God must learn to be patient, for reproach on behalf of Christ is common to all the saints. These three graces: humility, vigilance, and patience are provided by the God of all grace. They constitute the power that overcomes the devil. God will give grace to subdue the flesh, resist Satan, and to bear reproach for Christ. The expression, “all grace,” intimates the great variety of divine grace and succour. When our service is finished, the battle over, and our race run, we shall discover that our victory is His victory, and shall declare with Peter, “This is the true grace of God.” “To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

The final triumph of the God of all grace in His people will be manifest in their eternal perfection.

There is no doubt that the four verbs used in this great statement, “God … make you perfect, stablish strengthen, settle you,” refer to the final activities of the Lord in accomplishing our glorification. Let us look at these four aspects of divine perfection.

Defects of character will be healed: The verb “to perfect” occuring here is a commercial term. It is used for the repairing of the net of the fisherman (Mk. 1:19). It likewise is an ethical term, and is used in the restoration of a fallen brother (Gal. 6:1). It is also a medical term indicating the setting of a dislocated bone (1 Cor. 1:10). The God of all grace will bring the broken threads of our lives together again; He will heal the wounds that were caused by our many defections; and adjust what has been wrong in our lives in order that they redound to His glory throughout eternal ages.

Deviation from truth will cease: There is a very close connection between the verb “to establish” and the verb “to be steadfast” in verse nine. How often we have fallen before the assaults of the evil one! What vacillations we experience when contrary winds blow upon us! The devil attacks the mind with doubts; he weakens our best endeavours with appeals to our baser nature. He would turn us aside with discouragements. At such times the God of all grace steadies us; He keeps us by His power, and guides us toward the desired haven where no variations will ever be known. If we trust Him, He will hold us fast. If we open our hearts, the river of His grace will flow in. When our journey is over here, He will, in the words of Dr. Maclaren, “Make us partakers of an

inviolable and unshaken evenness of soul, which is a faint shadow of God's own unchangeableness."

Decrepitude will be overcome: Sin has a weakening influence on every part of our being. Apart from His grace we are impotent to meet the demands of life for work, warfare, or trial. "He giveth power to the faint."

The Spirit is the Comforter who comes alongside to strengthen. We may be "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." The weakest saint may repeat the exploits of those noble men and women of faith of whom it is recorded, "Out of weakness were made strong, waxed valient in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

Doubts will be banished: We shall be settled or fixed as on a firm foundation. It is true that, as the Church of Christ, we are built upon the Rock and the gates of hell shall not prevail against us. It is also true that as individuals, we are to build our lives on the solid foundation of Holy Scriptures (Matt. 7:24-29). How neglectful we are in this duty! When the storms burst and the winds of adversity blow, we fail to discern the mind and the will of God, and we are tossed to and fro with doubts and fears.

In that day we shall be firmly fixed. The mind and will of God will be known perfectly and the doubts and fears will never again disturb the repose of the soul in God.

In closing his epistle Peter associates Silas and Mark with him. These were his co-labourers as they had been of Paul. These two formed the link between the two great apostles; they manifest the unity and harmony that existed among the fellow-workers of those early days of Church history.

“She that is at Babylon … saluteth you.” Was this a sister church? Was this a reference to Peter’s own wife whom Paul says was his frequent companion? Whatever the expression means, we know from it that the Lord knows exactly where all of His own are, and that not one of His elect will be missing on the Day of Christ.

The last verse pronounces a benediction and peace upon all the saints.

The Inspiration of the Scriptures (Nov 1960)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 6 No. 11, Nov 1960.

The revelation of God is given through three channels: creation, the Holy Bible, and the Son Incarnate. In creation we see God's power, His omnipotence; in the Holy Bible we see His purpose, His omniscience; in the Son Incarnate we see His personality, His omnipresence. Let us consider the central one, the Holy Bible, as the channel of the revelation of God's purpose.

Its Dependability

In the Bible we see the faithfulness of God, it cannot be broken (John 10:35); the foresight of God, it cannot be mistaken (Gal. 3:80); the finality of God, its verdict is conclusive (Gal. 3:22).

The Spirit of God as the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation bears a threefold relationship to the truth: revelation, inspiration, and illumination. The first embodies the choosing of the vessels through which the truth may be conveyed infallibly (2 Tim. 3:16); the second, the preservation of the truth (Neh. 8:8); third, the impartation of divine capacity to understand truth (Luke 24:45).

Its dependability is proved by the following facts: It has an origin that is divine (2 Pet. 1:21); an existence that is miraculous (1 Pet. 1:25); a depth that is unfathomable (Matt. 13:52); a unity that is magnificent (2 Pet. 3:16); a fulfilment that is amazing (Matt. 5:17-18); an influence

that is unbounded (Acts 2:8); and a spirituality that is unique (John 6:63).

The unique spirituality of the Holy Bible is seen to be vital in its nature (Heb. 4:12), powerful in its operation(Acts 19:20), assuring in its statements (1 John 5:11-13), saving in its reception (1 Thess. 1:8-10, 2 Tim. 3:15), sanctifying in its work (John 17:17), and perfecting in its accomplishments (2 Tim. 3:17).

Its Purpose

Several things might be noted here; for example, the Bible was given by God

To reveal Christ. Christ is revealed in picture from Genesis to Esther; in poetry from Job to the Song of Solomon; in prophecy from Isaiah to Malachi; in person from Matthew to John; in preaching in the Book of Acts; in preeminence from Romans to Jude; and In power in the Book of the Revelation.

In the Book of the Revelation Christ is manifested in a twofold way; first, as the Lamb; second, as the Lion. As the Lamb He accomplishes atonement to the satisfaction of the Father's heart; as the Lion, He executes the will of God upon the throne. In the first, we recall the sufferings of Christ; in the second, we anticipate the glory that is His eternally. The cross of Christ is the centre and base of every operation of divine grace.

To reveal the Father. The Father's heart is made bare (John 3:16, 4:23). Christ came down from Heaven to tell us of the love of God, of the Father's home (John 14:1-6), the Father's power and wisdom (1 Cor. 1:24), and the Father's purpose to make Christ the Head of a new order (Eph. 1:10), that in the future all things will be

subjected by Christ and God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15:28).

To reveal the final outcome of the conflict between righteousness and unrighteousness. This may be seen readily by a comparison of the Book of Revelation with that of Genesis. Genesis records historical facts such as the creation of the heavens and the earth; the loss by man of Paradise and of access to the tree of life; the first man, Adam and his wife, Eve, set over creation; the serpent in the

Garden of Eden; the first sacrificial offering; the first murderer, drunkard, rebel, and polygamist; the rise of Babel; and the curse of sorrow, death, pain, and tears upon humanity. The Book of the Revelation predicts the new heavens and the new earth; Paradise regained by man along with access to the tree of life; the reign of the Lamb of God and His Bride over the new creation; the serpent in the lake of fire; the glory of the Lamb who had been slain; the banishment of all wickedness; the fall of Babylon; no more death neither sorrow, pain nor tears.

One has written concerning the men whom God used to give us the Bible:

“Whence but from Heaven could men unskilled in arts,

In several ages born, in several parts,

Weave such agreeing truths;

Or how or why should all conspire to cheat us with a lie;

Unasked their pains, ungrateful their advice,

Starving their gain and martyrdom their price.”

—Drydon.

The Ineffable Gift (Dec 1960)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 6 No. 12, Dec 1960.

The magic word “gift” is on almost every tongue at this season of the year, and not without very good reason.

On a quiet starlight night long, long ago the weary shepherds of Bethlehem kept vigil over their flocks. As the shades of evening fell and night gathered around them, there was nothing to mark that night as an unusual night, distinct from the nights of all the years since man first kept sheep. But that night was different, so different that the world remembers it nearly two thousand years later.

Upon the ears of those startled shepherds fell a voice from Heaven: “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11). That night God gave the world His Gift! His only begotten Son was born into this world.

Some 30 years later to an earnest seeker after the light of God’s truth, the Saviour declared in detail the story of this wonderful birth, He said: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Let us now consider this wonderful gift:

It is a divine gift: No matter who the donor may be of any gift, whether of exalted station or of low status, he is

a mere human. This gift comes from God, and all its characteristics are heavenly.

It is a love gift: Some gifts express relationship, some express appreciation, while some may even express a hope of reciprocity. As we have seen already, God's great Gift expresses,

"Love that no thought can reach,

Love that no tongue can teach,

No love like His:

God is its blessed source,

Death ne'er can stop its course,

Nothing can stay its force,

Matchless it is!"

It is a priceless gift: It is priceless for it is the expression of love; it is timeless for its value extends into Eternity; it is universal for it is offered to all men; it is free for it is without money and without works.

It is an accepted gift: Thousands in our land rejoice for Christ indwells their hearts. There was no room for Him when He was born, but these redeemed ones sing: "O, come into my heart, Lord Jesus, There is room in my heart for Thee."

It is a rejected gift: Thousands, sad to say, have room for every thing but Christ. "Not a place that He can enter in the heart for which He died." No present is actually a gift until one possesses it. May you this day be able to say in sincerity and in truth:

"I know He's mine — this friend so dear,

He lives with me — He's ever near;

Ten thousand charms around Him shine,

But best of all, I know He’s mine.”

Fellowship (Apr 1962)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 8 No. 4, Apr 1962.

Our God is not like the gods of the Heathen, an impersonal God, detached from His creatures and dwelling in solitary loneliness. The heart of our God yearns for the fellowship of the redeemed. The Father in the Old Testament came down to walk with men as the history of Enoch and Noah proves. In the New Testament the Son came down to dwell with men and declare the heart of the Father. He chose His disciples that they might be with Him. The Holy Spirit came down to dwell in men and make them partners with Himself in the work of God.

Through the work of the Cross we are brought nigh to God in a righteousness that enables Him to enjoy us, and endowed with a new nature that enables us to enjoy God. So near are we to Him that the Word of God says we are in His hand for security (Deut. 32:2); on His shoulders for succour (Luke 15:6); at His feet for training (Luke 10:39), and on His bosom for communion (Isa. 40:11). Thus we are called unto the fellowship of the Father and His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3) as well as to the communion or fellowship of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14).

The place of this fellowship is in the light (1 John 1:7). All believers have been translated into His marvellous light and are therefore walking in the light, albeit not all believers walk according to the light.

The atmosphere of this fellowship is love (1 John 4). The one who hates his brother is in the line of Cain with no

claim on God whatsoever. The instinct of the new nature is to love the brethren (1 Thess. 4-:9-10). He who is devoid of this instinct is outside the family of God.

The law of this fellowship is truth (1 John 4:1-6). Not only doctrinal truth but moral truth — truth in the inward parts, manifesting itself in absolute honesty and integrity of character.

The principle of this fellowship is faith (1 John 5). The faith of God's elect is expressed in three ways in this chapter: in God who is Supreme and worthy of our trust; in Christ who is eternally Son. God bears witness to this fact in three ways: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; or His birth, His baptism, and His crucifixion where Heaven acknowledged Him as the Son of God. Then it is also seen in the infallibility of the Word of God. Four times over in the Epistle we read, "These things have I written unto you," … that we might be satisfied (1:5), sanctified (2:1), secure (2:26) and sure (5:13).

Out of this fellowship with the Divine Trinity springs fellowship with one another. Christians are not independent units. They are children in one family, members of one Body, sheep in one flock, stones in one building, branches in one Vine and sentences in one Epistle. The cry of the Bride is but the echo of God's dear people in every generation, "Tell me, O Thou whom my soul lovest, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon, for why should I be as one that turneth aside (or be isolated)?" God has made us for fellowship. It is the instinct of the new nature to seek our brethren, whom we need as they need us.

The thought of fellowship is that of partnership or joint-participation. Those jointly sharing are said to be

partners (Luke 5:7). It is rendered communion in 1 Corinthians, 10, partakers in 2 Corinthians 1:7; and companions in Hebrews 10:33.

Ours is a fellowship of life, light and love. It is manifested both in the sanctuary and in the field of service. Both these aspects of fellowship are seen in Psalm 133 where it is called both good and pleasant. Good, like the oil that descended from the head of Israel's high priest to the skirts of his garments, filling the sanctuary with the odour of a sweet smell; and pleasant, like the dew that was wafted from Hermon's lofty peaks to the lesser hills of Zion beneath, resulting in precious fruits in abundance. Good is this fellowship of saints for like the anointing oil on the head of Aaron it is sacred, precious, fragrant and diffusive, and pleasant too, for like the dew of Hermon it is refreshing, invigorating and productive.

Unity in the sanctuary is not only desirable but obligatory so that we may with one mind and one mouth glorify God (Rom. 15:6). Unity in the field of service is no less important for there the Lord commands the blessing even life for evermore.

A quarrelsome and unsubdued spirit inserts a discordant note in the volume of praise, and robs God of that which is His due. Petty jealousies and a lust for power and pre-eminence have cursed many a testimony for God and robbed both saints and sinners of blessings God meant to flow to them.

There are many aspects of this one fellowship. We are fellow-communicants in the worship of God (1 Cor. 10); fellow-labourers in the field of service (Phil. 1:27); fellow-soldiers in the field of battle (Philemon 2); fellow-

sufferers in a world of reproach (Philemon 23); fellow-givers in the support of the work of God (2 Corinthians 8:4).

Individual believers are to maintain the joy of this fellowship by endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. This can only be done by the cultivation of lowliness, meekness, long-suffering and forebearance which is the formation of the Christ-life (Ephesians 4:1-3).

The churches of the saints are to maintain the joy of this fellowship by the acknowledging of each other, not in any formal confederacy, but as God's beloved people (1 Corinthians 16:19); by receiving one another to the glory of God the Father (Romans 15:7), and by the recognition of God-given gifts that go in and out among the saints for their mutual edification and profit.

The opposite of all this is pictured for us in the melancholy scene in Third John where the ungodly were within and the godly were without. Rather, let us beware of such a possibility among us and give heed to John's exhortation, "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good."

The Gift of Tongues (Nov 1963)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 9 No. 11, Nov 1963.

What Saith The Scriptures?

There are many honest Christians who wonder if they are not missing much of God's best by not seeking after the gift of tongues. There is no doubt that many have fallen into error through a sincere desire to possess God's best. We have known some godly persons who have sought this gift with the concentration of all their powers, and who have suffered a nervous breakdown, Honesty alone is not enough.

It ever must be linked with intelligence in the Word of God if the soul is to be preserved from irreparable damage. James exhorts that God be asked for wisdom in order that one in trial may glorify the Lord. He then exhorts that one receive with meekness the engrafted Word which is able to save the soul; that is, from any damage in the trial. The wisdom of God is enshrined in His Word. We need the light of that Word, not only to solve the problems of life, but also to meet the confusion of thought in our day.

It behoves us therefore to try and shed the light of the Word of God on this most serious and difficult matter.

A knowledge of the ways and the works of God will very often reveal that God is not in the earthquake, figuratively speaking, nor in the fire but in the still small voice (1 Kings 19).

His gracious dealings with His people are seen, not so much in earthquakes as in heartbreaks and silent tears;

not so much in the fury of the fire or the noise of the wind as in His quiet operations within us which are like the silent dew that revives the parched ground, or as the creeping dawn that dispels the darkness of the night. Characters are moulded into His image under the pressure of adverse circumstances, through the silent moments spent in the sanctuary, and in quiet submission to the will of God. The greatest weapon in the hand of God against the enemy is the silent witness of a godly, submissive saint whose life speaks more than words could express.

When Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 12:31, of coveting earnestly the best gifts, he certainly makes it plain that the best gift is not the gift of tongues; the best gift is that which edifies others. This is the very essence of true Christianity. The gift of tongues edifies only the person who may possess it. It is for this reason that the Spirit of God put it in the lowest place in the scale of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 14).

Temporary or Permanent?

Was the gift of tongues among the sign gifts that were of temporary duration or was it permanent for the entire Church era? Was the testimony of the Church to be one of supernatural display, or one of Christ-like character? 1 Corinthians 13 was written to draw a distinction, not between earth and Heaven, but between those gifts that served the Church in its infant stage and those virtues of character that must constitute its testimony until the return of her Lord, namely, faith, hope, and love (V. 13).

We are plainly told in verse eight that the gift of tongues would cease. Then in verse ten we are told when it would cease: “When that which is perfect is come.” This

reference to a concluded thing is undoubtedly to the entire Canon of Holy Scripture. Verses nine and ten in the Verkuyl Translation reads, “For our knowledge is fragmentary but when the total ensues then the fragmentary becomes antiquated.” The miraculous or sing gifts, therefore, served the Church during the absence of the perfected New Testament. Until the New Testament was completed the Old Testament was like a darkened mirror in which one could not see his own face clearly (V. 12). But with the completion of the New Testament the vision in that mirror is no longer blurred. The Old Testament revealed the mind and will of God in part. The saints could only know in part. Now we look into the undarkened mirror of truth. James cats this glass or mirror, “The perfect law of liberty.” Just as we are known by God in all the perfections of His Son and sustained by the high-priestly ministry of Christ until we enter the inheritance reserved for us in Heaven, so in the light of the New Testament only, shall we know the love of our God in its fulness, the grace of our Saviour in its sweetness, and the work of the Divine Spirit both in us and for us. Only as we walk in the assurance and the enjoyment of our riches in Christ shall we reflect His own gracious character of faith, hope, and love.

The revelation of the mind and will of God is given in its entirety in the New Testament. There is now no necessity for the prophetic message that was given by direct revelation to the prophets: nor for that special knowledge that was imparted to chosen vessels in the early Church. The gift of tongues served as a sign to the Jewish nation of its imminent rejection by God. The prophetic gift gave way to the teaching gift (2 Pet. 2:1);

and the gift of tongues to the universal mission of the Church, that of evangelizing the nations.

Moreover, in the same chapter (1 Cor. 13:11) the Spirit of God makes it clear that these miraculous gifts were educational toys for the infant Church to lead her on to maturity: “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” When the Church reached maturity on the completion of the full revelation of the truth of God, she settled down to the witness of the character adequately expressed at the close of the chapter, “And now abideth (when the miraculous is withdrawn) faith, hope, and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

The Gift of Tongues, Why Given?

The purpose of the gift of tongues is stated in 1 Corinthians 14:21, “In the law it is written (Isaiah 28:11), with men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people (the Jewish nation); and yet for all that will they not hear Me, said the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign.”

God had chosen that nation to be a witness to all nations. The Jewish nation failed in this responsibility; that magnanimity that should have marked her as God’s witness was dwarfed by an hierarchal pride and a narrowness of vision. Jonah is indeed a true picture of that nation in its unfaithfulness.

After Israel’s failure God gave the gift of tongues to the infant Church. It was a sign to the Jews of their guilt in failing to share the knowledge of God with “the men of other tongues.” The olive tree had refused to shed its

benefits abroad; consequently, the branches from the wild olive were grafted on as the natural ones were broken off. The Church thenceforth stood responsible to God to shed the light of the glorious Gospel to men of all languages. Paul prayed that the hearts of the saints be directed into the love of God. What an all-embracing love! God's plan is that all men should hear the message of His love: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

But the languages of the nations must be learned. Were the gift of tongues permanent this would not be necessary; yet, that in which the Church has excelled is the learning of languages. At the present time the Word of God is translated into hundreds of languages, and through them it sheds its beams upon the darkened and benighted strongholds of Satan.

It is the devil's purpose to divert God's people from the true lesson of the gift of tongues to an occupation with the gift itself. If the gift could be received, it would be a pleasure only to the one who possessed it; all others would be forgotten in a selfish ecstasy, the spirit of which is the antithesis of genuine Christianity.

Babylon or Jerusalem (Apr 1965)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 11 No. 4, Apr 1965.

As the apostasy of the professing Church gathers momentum and prepares the way for the manifestation of the Antichrist, the assemblies of God's people cannot remain immune from its deadly influence. Their only safeguard is to keep, by His grace, their Nazarite character, complete separation from the evil and a whole-hearted dedication to God.

When the Hebrew children were carried captive, Babylon sought to change their diet, their names, their dress and their worship. By their love to God and strength of character they resisted every Babylonish approach and God was with them and honoured them.

The great false Church is in the making. The ecumenical spirit, like leaven, permeates the whole of Christendom. By fair speeches and plausible arguments the leaders of this movement would almost deceive the very elect. But it is a Babel of tongues with a false foundation, the superstructure of which will fall and bury all in its ruins. An old servant of Christ has said, "No doubt there is spiritual wealth in Babylon at the present time and many precious vessels that really belong to the House of God, but they are enriching and adorning the wrong city." God says to such, "Come out of her (Babylon) My people and be not partakers of her sins."

The role of the assemblies of God's beloved people is to remain separated from it all and loyal to their rejected Lord. Only as they do so, will they be a beacon of truth

and love to which seeking saints may come and find rest for their weary souls.

To maintain the dignity of a testimony for God on earth we must be true to the biblical and ethical standards of God. We must be true to the Pattern of the House and we must be true to the Law of the House (Ezek. 43:10-12). To handle the holy things of God in a flippant and worldly manner is to lose our sense of values and grieve the Spirit of God.

Let us emphasize these two things in this day of declension: the Pattern of the House and the Law of the House.

The Pattern of the House

In contrast to Jerusalem which is from above and which is the mother of all believers, is Babylon the great. It embraces within its fold every religious voice in Christendom and aims at embracing the other religions of the world. It is a confused mixture of ritualism, modernism and fundamentalism. The National Council of Churches, in co-operation with Rome, is determined to create one universal Church. Modern Babylon, true to its character, seeks to change the diet, the dress, the names and the worship of God's people. With its high ecclesiastical claims, its great religious pretensions, and its priestly hierarchy, it seeks to silence the voice of truth within its fold.

Jerusalem was the city where God had placed His Name. The New Testament counterpart is, "Jerusalem above which is the mother of us all." Each New Testament church is to be the local expression of the whole. To this God has linked the holiness of His Name, the love of His

heart and the wisdom of His mind (Matt. 18:20, 1 Cor. 5:4, 11:20, 23, 14:23-24).

The pattern of the House is clearly discernible in the Word of God. Each local assembly is composed of believers only, baptized by immersion in public confession of their faith in Christ (Acts 18:8). They meet in the Lord's Name alone, rejecting all denominational names as contrary to the pattern. They acknowledge, in truth and practice, the priesthood of all believers, the liberty for the development of spiritual gift and the divine sovereignty of the Holy Spirit to use that variety of gift as He pleases. Each assembly rejects clericalism, with its claims and titles, as contrary to "what is written."

In government, each assembly has godly overseers to shepherd and guide the saints in godly order and discipline. Each has a special ministry or deaconship to meet other needs of the saints. This latter is appointed by the church to meet the material needs of the assembly (Acts 6:3), the former is appointed by the Risen Head of the Church to meet the spiritual needs of the saints (Eph. 3:7-8, Col. 1:25).

In government, each local church is independent and autonomous, responsible to the Lord alone. In fellowship, each is interdependent, being part of one great whole.

Each is to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ, the authority of the Word of God, and to move forward in fellowship with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31, 16:5-10).

In the planting of these indigenous churches of the saints, God has three great purposes: first, the collective worship of God, when the saints meet on the first day of

the week, the Lord's day, to partake of the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7); second, to engage in prayer and the edification of the saints (1 Cor. 12-14); and third, to act as outposts for the evangelization of the world.

For many centuries God's people languished in the captivity of spiritual Babylon. But over one hundred years ago there was a movement of the Spirit of God that opened the door of liberty for a return to first principles. Many of God's dear people came out to meet simply in the Lord's Name alone. Godly men and women, like Nehemiah of old, surveyed the ruins from "the valley gate" (in humility of soul). The repairing of the walls began at "the sheep gate," for all recovery must begin at the Cross. "The dung gate," through which the refuse was removed, was not neglected. Thus, the ethical standards of God's centre were clearly discerned and the injunction of 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 was humbly obeyed, resulting in a purity of life and walk. The Word of God was read at "The water gate" and the sense given thereof. God raised up men who could teach and expound the Scriptures in the wisdom and power of the Spirit of God. "The horse gate" also is mentioned as being repaired for truth can only be recovered and maintained in spiritual conflict that will go down in "the book of the wars of the Lord." "The east gate," through which the glory departed from Israel and through which it will return (Ezek. 10:19, 43:1-2), was also repaired. The truth of the Lord's coming was recovered in those days and the hope of the Church restored. Truly, they were men sent by God.

Alas, through the constant assault of the enemy, breaches have been made in the walls again, and Babylonish tendencies are creeping in. But instead of

the saints standing shoulder to shoulder in defence of recovered truth, some have resorted to building walls inside Jerusalem. The folly of this is seen in the history of the Exclusive and Needed Truth movements. The climax of such folly is seen in the Raven Party, who, in substituting the word of their leaders for the Word of the Living God, now wallow in the quagmire of mystic confusion. Their present practices have led to the truth of God being evil spoken of.

Our safety lies in loyalty to Christ in an evil day and a humble submission to the authority of the Word of God alone. Let us repair the breaches by re-emphasizing those truths that are most surely believed among us.

The Law of the House

We must not only view the Pattern of the House, but we should be fully acquainted with the Law of the House as well. “Holiness becometh Thy House, Of God for ever.” God has very high standards for the leaders in the House. These test a man, inwardly, domestically, and before the world (1 Tim. 3, Titus 1). Morally and doctrinally he must be sound. The moral standards of the House are high for all saints (1 Cor. 5-7). Everything that is low and mean and unworthy of the name of our Lord must be judged, if the Spirit of Holiness is to remain ungrieved among us.

The Law of the House deals with the deportment of saints as they meet in assembly capacity. The Word of God distinguishes between the sexes, in dress, manner and position. Men meet with uncovered head, because the Head of every man is Christ, and He must never be covered. Women meet with covered head, for the head of every woman is the man, and he must be put out of

sight. The vision of the saints must be filled with Christ alone. All fleshly intrusions are rebuked by the covered head of the sisters. Such intrusions mar the Spirit's aim of unveiling Christ to every heart. The double covering of the sisters should be jealously guarded because of the angels. Shorn hair is strictly forbidden to Christian women by the Word of God. It is an insult to the Spirit of God. Godly elders are responsible to see that the Law of the House is respected (1 Cor. 11).

Modesty is to mark our dress. Compromising fashions in the world are not to be copied by Christian women. The emphasis, for both brethren and sisters, is to be on the adornment of the inward man (1 Pet. 3). Dress can be with dignity and attractiveness without the gaudiness and make up of Babylon. Christian deportment forbids the imitating of the Jezebels of this world.

Women are to be silent in the Church while men are to assume the responsibilities of oversight and public ministry.

Two women are brought before us in the Word of God as the examples of the obedient and the disobedient woman. The one is Sarah, the example of obedience and subjection (1 Pet. 3:6); the other is Eve, the example of disobedience and insubjection. Eve acted in the absence of her head, Adam, and by doing so left her place and was involved in the transgression. If sisters continue in faith, love, and holiness, they will be saved in childbearing. That is, by a quiet submission to the dispensation of God, to keep their place in the home and bring up children for God. They will be saved from dishonouring the Lord's name and from a life lived outside the current of the will of God (1 Tim. 2).

John Trew Dickson (Oct 1968)

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A zealous evangelist and a tender shepherd, John Trew Dickson, was called home to be with the Lord on August 25, 1968, at Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A. He had devoted some 65 years of his long life to the ministry of the Word of God on both sides of the Atlantic.

John Dickson was born at Market Hill, Ulster, Northern Ireland, 1881, and was saved in 1901 through the preaching of Mr. Shields, a Baptist parson, but associated himself with those who gather simply in the name of the Lord. In a comparatively short time three of the Christian assemblies in Belfast commended him to full-time service for the Lord.

In 1910 he came to the United States and spent two years here in the preaching of the gospel. He returned again to this country in 1916 and established permanent residence in the Eastern States.

Faithfully he laboured in the gospel. Beginning in Ireland, his parish spread to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, the New England States, Central Canada, and over the entire continent. God used him much in the salvation of souls and in the founding of local churches. Many of his fellow-labourers have predeceased him. Among these were W. J. McClure, John Knox McEwen, William Glasgow, Robert McCrory, Benjamin Bradford, Samuel and Hugh McEwen, Isaac McMullen, and others.

Our brother prepared two biographies, one of W. J. McClure and the other of John Knox McEwen; this latter is still in the hands of the printers.

He was a source of encouragement to younger servants of Christ, and before them and all others an example to the believers. Consequently, he was highly esteemed by those who knew him.

The funeral services were held at Petersburg, Virginia, where he formerly had lived for several years. They were well attended by many friends from different parts of the United States and Canada. Those who participated in the services were his own son, Joseph Dickson, Herbert Marshall, Gordon Reager, Robert McClurkin and Roger Greer.

Brother Dickson is survived by his wife, a true helper during his long and active career for the Lord and His people; also by five children, three girls and two boys, all in Christ.