

THE WORD AND WORK

(Volume XL, December, 1946)

THE MIDNIGHT CRY

Behold the Bridegroom cometh in the middle of the night,
And blest is he whose loins are girt, whose lamp is burning bright.
But woe to that dull servant whom the Master shall surprise
With lamp untrimmed, unburning, and with slumber in his eyes.

Beware my soul, beware, beware, lest thou in slumber lie,
And like the five remain without, and knock, and vainly cry;
But watch and bear thy lamp undimmed, and Christ shall gird
thee on

His own bright wedding-robe of light—the glory of the Son.

—Ancient Greek Hymn

WORDS IN SEASON

R. H. B.

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

The "unity of the Spirit" is that unity which is due to the presence of the Holy Spirit in all who are Christ's thus making them one body. The members of the human body are one not only because physically bound together, but because one spirit and life pervades them all. That is obvious. It is not much harder to grasp the idea of the oneness of things which are not visibly joined together by physical contact, but held together by a common force—as for example the sun and its planets in the solar system, which are held together by the sun's attraction; or the units of an army which are consolidated by the laws and the authority of its head. We are able to see that if the same spirit could operate and control parts that are distant one from another, and one and the same life pervaded all these separate parts, they would constitute a unity, a living whole. So it is with the church. From its one Head one life goes forth and animates every member, and one Spirit dwells in each and all. Thus the church is not only an organization (an aggregation of individuals, artificially bound together by outward ties) but an *organism* vitally united by an inward life and indwelling Spirit. "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit." (1 Cor. 12:13.)

Dr. Brents (Gospel Plan, p. 166) quotes the following from "Smith's Bible Dictionary":

"The day of Pentecost is the birthday of the Christian church. The Spirit, who was then sent by the Son from the Father, and rested on each of the disciples, combined them once more into a whole—combined them as they never had been before combined, by an in-

ternal and spiritual bond of cohesion. Before, they had been individual followers of Jesus; now they became his mystical body animated by his Spirit."

To this one living Body, of which Jesus Christ is the Head, belong all the saved of this dispensation. For the Lord adds now as He did then, to this body all who are saved. (Acts 2:47.) If they have *life* at all (and "he that hath the Son hath the life," 1 John 5:12) and if they have the Spirit at all (and "if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his," Rom. 8:9)—it is the one life that they possess in common with all who have been made alive in Christ Jesus, the same life with the Head, the life derived from Him who is the Head; and the Spirit they have is the one Spirit which, coming forth from the Head, permeates and dwells in all the members of the body and in it alone. Thus the very *bodies* are members of Christ, and being joined unto the Lord they are of one Spirit with Him. (1 Cor. 6:15, 17.) This is "the unity of the Spirit."

KEEPING THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

The unity of the Spirit is to be kept by God's people with earnest care. "Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The unity that exists among all that are Christ's by virtue of the one Spirit that inwardly and invisibly binds them all into one living Body, must also be outwardly maintained and diligently fostered. Among those who are one in Christ there may be (though there ought not be) outward division. Such a situation existed in Corinth, for example. Begotten by the same seed (1 Cor. 4:15), baptized by the same baptism (Acts 18:8), participators in the same Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), they had nevertheless begun to separate outwardly. "Each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and, I of Apollos; and, I of Cephas; and, I of Christ. Is Christ *divided*?" (1 Cor. 1:12, 13.) Since Christ is not divided, but is One; and since they were redeemed by the one Savior, and were not baptized by various baptisms, and in the names of various leaders, but in one and the same baptism, and all were made to drink into one Spirit thus constituting one body—ought they not therefore take earnest heed to maintain in outward manifestation what is in itself spiritually true? When those who are one in Christ are outwardly divided it is dishonoring and displeasing to God and a practical denial of the truth. For "there is one body and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is above all, and through all, and in all." (Eph. 4:4-6.)

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Not only is the Holy Spirit the actual Unifier of the body by virtue of the fact that He dwells in all and each, but it is by the Spirit also that the unity is outwardly manifested. The unity of the Spirit exists not only as a spiritual fact but also practically in life and conduct. For look over the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23)—"love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control"—are not these precisely the virtues that make for

unity among brethren? Whereas of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5: 19-21) eight named, unfailingly spell division and alienation. It is an indisputable fact that at the bottom of every instance of division you will find some one (or more) walking not by the Spirit but after the flesh, on the one side or on the other, *most generally on both*. "If we *live* by the Spirit [and we do] by the Spirit let us also *walk*. Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another." (Gal. 5:25, 26.) The "bond of peace" may indeed be broken while the higher unity in Christ may yet persist; but the Lord lays it upon us to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." And this we can do only by walking by the Spirit.

"FATHER, KEEP THEM"

This is the Father's keeping of us — that He has sent forth the Spirit into our hearts, that thus the fruit of the Spirit may be borne. "Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me," prayed our Lord for His disciples, "that they may be one even as we are." The Lord Jesus was leaving the world, and His few disciples were left in the world, exposed to the assaults of Satan. "While I was with them, I kept them in thy name," the Lord Jesus prayed. Had He not? One cannot follow the story without noting the childish ways and fleshly weakness of His disciples — their tendency to selfish ambition, envy, jealousy, self-seeking. Time and again an open disruption might have resulted. But each time, gently, kindly, and altogether effectively, the Lord Jesus settled their difficulty for them in a very few minutes. The question "Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven," for example, would not down. The Lord settled it for them once (Matt. 18) and they raised it again at the last supper, where the Lord struck it a death blow by His foot-washing (Luke 22:24-27 with John 13). The two sons of Zebedee tried in an underhanded way to cut the other apostles out and appropriate to themselves the chief places and honors of the kingdom. When the ten heard it they were much wrought up over it — and what could have been more natural? There was all the fuel and flame necessary for a big fire — the setting for all sorts of trouble — enmity, strife, alienation, disruption. Many a big church-fuss, resulting in faction and division, began over a smaller matter than that. *But the Lord Jesus was there*. With Him in the midst they were still one, and how wisely and gently He unified their hearts once more! (Matt. 20.) "*While I was with them I kept them in thy name . . .* But now I come to thee." "And I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name . . . that they may be one as we are." "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one . . . that the world may believe that thou didst send me." (John 17: 11-20.)

The Holy Spirit was that "other comforter" which the Father sent in Christ's name, and in answer to Christ's prayer — the Comforter who should take the place of the Lord Jesus during His absence, and who should abide with us for ever. This is the Spirit

that makes us one and keeps us one by powerful influence — though not without our own will and choice — in Christ Jesus. The Spirit is the answer to Christ's prayer for unity; and the Spirit is the Father's keeping of us on Jesus' behalf while He is absent and until He come. Let us therefore give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace!

NOT CHURCH FEDERATION

When we urge unity we do not mean "union" nor "federation." Great as are the evils of religious division, immeasurably worse would it be if the sects and denominations of Christendom were consolidated into a huge religious trust, a Babylonish tree in whose shadow and branches every vile and hateful bird would roost. There is a sense in which the division of Christendom is the will of God—not indeed as He would have wished it from the first, but as the best thing under the circumstances. It is God's method of preserving a bit of salt in the earth. It is the safeguard of the truth. If professing Christendom had been a unit all along, it would long since have become one great mass of corruption. It was a bad day for Israel politically, but a good day spiritually, when the ten tribes seceded from Judah. Had their union remained unbroken the overwhelming influence of the northern tribes would have stamped out the remnant of faithfulness in Judah, and the nation would then have perished. The good king Jehoshaphat of Judah never made a bigger blunder (though in all good intent) than when, hoping to heal the breach, he allied himself with Ahab, king of Israel, and obtained Ahab's daughter for his son to wife. Judah hardly recovered from that blow and the disaster that ensued. The consequences of a wrong union are far worse than those of division. Manifestly no right and scriptural union of the sects of Christendom is possible or ever will be. Nor would we attempt it. The modernist element, the infidel Sadducees of our day, are busily working to bring about such a federation — for no good end, you may be sure. But our one desire and prayer would be that those who are truly Christ's may be drawn together in the one Spirit, unto a visible unity of the Spirit, in faith and love and spiritual understanding in Christ Jesus our Lord.

A "CASE IN POINT"

The Moravians, once sadly divided, and in danger of disintegrating found a happy unity by closer approach to God. 'Differences of opinion and heated controversy on doctrinal questions threatened to disrupt the congregation. Questions of predestination, holiness, etc., seemed likely to divide the believers into a number of small belligerent sects. Then the more earnest and spiritual souls among them began to cry mightily unto the Lord for deliverance. A new vision of Christ and the Cross dawned upon them. They were overwhelmed with a sense of their sinfulness and with His more abounding grace. Hushed were their controversies and quarrels; crucified were their passion and pride as they gazed upon the cross of Calvary.*

* This is a loose quotation from an account of the Moravians and

The Scotch hymn-writer, James Montgomery, told the story of their experience in beautiful words:

“They walked with God in Peace and Love
But failed with one another;
While sternly for the faith they strove,
Brother fell out with brother;
But He in whom they put their trust,
Who knew their frames that they were dust,
Pitied and healed their weakness.

“He found them in His House of Prayer,
With one accord assembled;
And so revealed His presence there,
They wept with joy and trembled:
One cup they drank, one bread they brake,
One baptism shared, one language spake,
Forgiving and forgiven.

“Then forth they went with tongues of flame
In one blest theme delighting;
The Love of Jesus and His Name,
God’s children all uniting;
That Love our theme and watchword still,
The law of love may we fulfill,
And love as we are loved.”

* * *

A GOOD LETTER

In answer to my inquiry as to what in his judgment would be a profitable line of preaching and teaching for the forthcoming series of meetings at the Seventh and Camp Street Church in New Orleans, Brother Mullins sent the following suggestions — which are a sermon in themselves, and applicable to the churches of the Lord in most places.

“Am glad to get your letter and request for suggested line of teaching. We need a new vision of the value of lost souls, of the vastness of the field, of the mission of the church, of individual responsibility, of the sufficiency of God’s grace, and to be delivered from a fatalistic attitude that since these are the last days there is little we can do about it but break bread and wait . . . ‘alright to pray but no use expecting a revival’ (exact quotation). We need the love of God shed abroad in our hearts till we are moved with compassion for the lost and motivated to lay our bodies and all that we have on God’s altar so that He might work in us both to will and to

their astonishing missionary passion. However we may differ with that remarkable people, and however faulty their understanding of the scriptures, on some points may have been, we can have no doubt but they pointed the right way and principle to achievement of true Christian unity, and the tremendous missionary-effort of that people.

work for His good pleasure. We need the faith to claim the power and resources of God to accomplish what the love of God motivates us to do. We need a spirit of prayer and supplication that will bring us to praying instead of just believing in prayer. We need the hope of the coming of Christ *set in our hearts*, — not our heads just as one of “our doctrines,” — set in our hearts so that it will purify our lives until we have put away all defilement of both flesh and spirit. We need to be made to realize anew that we are strangers and pilgrims here; that we are in the world but not of it; that our citizenship is in heaven and that we are here on business for our King, and to be made to realize that His business comes first. We need to be made hungry for the “milk of the word” so that we shall long for it. Especially is this need critical among the men who “have outgrown the desire or need to attend Bible School on Sunday, and who think it is only for women and children. We need someone to diagnose the condition in the church — and having diagnosed the case give the medicine needed regardless of who it is that has to take it. We need the gospel preached to the lost who attend occasionally so that they will be brought to Jesus as their personal Savior. We need the whole counsel of God taught to denominational people so that they will be just Christians and give to Christ the pre-eminence in all things. And we in the church of Christ here need some of their zeal and love for the Lord and for the souls of men and need to be more unashamed to speak for Christ as they do. We need to bring them to an understanding of some things taught in the Word without destroying that zeal and without committing them to anything but a closer walk with Jesus Christ.

These are but a few of the things we need, and I suggest that you teach the things suited to meet these needs plus what you will observe to be our need when you arrive, and I am confident the Lord will gloriously bless your stay with us and bring about a real revival in our midst. I am confident you are a child of God, and God will give you the wisdom and grace to so arrange the lessons and studies to bring the greatest glory to His name and the greatest blessing to all who hear, for the Holy Spirit knows how to use and guide the yielded vessel. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” We anticipate with great joy the manifold blessings God will bring to us through you.”

CHRIST'S CLAIM ON US

If you crown Jesus Christ, He will demand implicit obedience. There is something more. He will expect you to seek daily orders from Him, and be in constant communication with Him through every day. It will mean total abstinence from all things which hinder your loyalty. I have known men and women who have agonized for weeks before they could do it. You say, “It is going to cost.” Yes! but it is infinitely worth while. Think of the joy, think of the gladness. If I had a thousand lives, Jesus Christ should be King of them all.—W. W. Martin.

NEWS AND NOTES

SUBSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

December and January mark a crisis time for the Word and Work. Hundreds of names expire with these issues. At this season our best clubbers rally to our support. One of our very best clubbers is Mrs. L. B. Holloway of Louisville. (Shall I tell her age?) She has a fruitful field, contacting mainly the Portland Ave., and Highland congregations. Friends, don't turn her down this year. The increase in paper and labor costs make the slight rise in our prices imperative. If you knew how reasonable our printer's salary is, and how the Word and Work struggles to keep even you would gladly grant this small increase. The more names we have the greater our ministry and the easier for us to carry on. Mrs. Holloway is only one of our many fine helpers. Robert Boyd is another who sends in a hundred or more names. Then we have those who send in fifty, twenty-five, ten, four, etc. You can easily keep your subscription price down to a dollar this year, or you can try for a free subscription by gathering a club of ten names at a dollar each. We feel that our new necessary rates will help rather than hinder.

OUR NEW PRICES

Single subscriptions, \$1.25.
Two subscriptions, \$2.25.
Four names or more, \$1.00 each.
For every ten names a free subscription will be given.

Dugger, Ind.: "Since my last report we have had two more baptisms, one a young lad of thirteen years and the other an aged man of seventy-seven years. The 'whosoever' of the Lord's invitation included both of them. The gospel is a message for all. How glad we were that Christ could be offered to both of them.

"I am now teaching two Bible classes a week at the high school. Twenty-six have enrolled. This affords great opportunity to implant the Word in the minds and hearts of our youth.

"We have had an appreciable increase in attendance at the Sunday night services since the young people have been given a part in the services. Messages to the young people have been from the lives and characters of the great men and women of the Bible.

"Another service for the young people of this and neighboring congregations has again been started. With Bro. Hoar of Linton as director, they meet once a week for song practice. This work was stopped during the war because of transportation and the absence of the young men. With the exception of a few, the group is made up of those who have not had any previous experience in these services."—Maurice Clymore.

Sellersburg, Ind.: "We, the Cherry Street Church at New Albany, were made happy when the Lord added His blessings to our efforts and gave us three souls born into the kingdom by primary obedience. There has also been one restoration. Our Sunday night audiences are about equal to the Sunday morning services. By the time this is printed we hope to have our baptistry completed. Our next undertaking will be our basement for more class rooms. We are praying that the Lord will enlarge our borders."—Edward E. Kranz, Minister.

Lexington, Ky.: "We had a great meeting with Bro. Hall C. Crowder preaching at Cramer and Hanover Ave. here in Lexington from October 22nd through November 3rd. Many of his old friends came to hear him from the Christian Church and he boldly, yet kindly, declared his position that he now occupies, showing that the change to the simplicity that is towards Christ is the only Scriptural and happy ground to occupy. Someone of the church here said that we had the largest crowds in the building since the Unity Meeting in 1940. There were five baptisms and fifteen or sixteen reconsecrations. Bro. Crowder is a most forceful preacher and evangelist and he is set to declare nothing short of the Whole Counsel of God. Any congregation would do well to

have him in evangelistic services."

"We are leaving for California next Monday to be away from Lexington about a month, in the interest of my wife's health. Please pray for us on this journey."—H. N. Rutherford.

Woodsfield, Ohio: "The work here is doing well, according to many of the members. Attendance and interest are good. We have recently started a men's training class which is proving helpful and interesting. The contributions are good. We have a good start on a Building Fund for a badly needed meeting house. Our present one is ninety years old—good for its age—but it is not at all adequate for any expansion, and successful class work.

"In addition to that the church recently bought a residence for the minister, paying \$1500.00 down—balance on easy terms. We finally got possession, and are now living at home, after being here for eleven and one-half months.

"We are having fellowship with five different points in mission work and helping the orphans. Much more outside work, they tell me, we are doing now, than this church has ever done. We have had some additions to the work along through these months, and some better spirit is discernable—all-in-all good, considering the stormy sea through which the church has been sailing. Unless a sudden change takes place, not at all anticipated, I shall begin the second year here Dec. 1, with hopes for a better work."—E. Gaston Collins.

Tulsa, Okla.: "We have just closed a two weeks' meeting here with Brother F. S. Spaulding, of Borden, Indiana, preaching. One came for baptism and two for prayer and to rededicate their lives. Brother Spaulding spoke God's truth faithfully and with love. He was very kind and did us much good here at the mission. We are hopeful that more fruit will be borne of the sowing as time goes on, if the Lord delays His coming. We were encouraged by some who came from neighboring congregations several times during the meeting. On Oct. 27th we were refreshed by having Brother and Sister G. B. Dasher, their daughter Sarah of Siloam

Springs, Arkansas, and Sister Dasher's mother, Sister Howard, formerly of Sherman, Texas, with us for the worship service. They came all the way from Siloam Springs, a distance of about 85 miles. We are grateful to God for all who were praying for our meeting and ask that they continue to do so for our work here at the mission."—Leroy Yowell.

Amite, La.: "On the first Sunday morning of this month a young married woman came forward and confessed her faith in Christ Jesus and was baptized in the beautiful Tangipahoa river immediately after services. The interesting part of this story (to the public) is, that she is the youngest of eight children, all of whom were "Christened Catholic" and brought up, to some extent, in that faith. Some of them had made their first communion and were confirmed. All eight of this group have now been baptized into Christ, some of them being among our most dependable and helpful members. Brother Chambers baptized the oldest girl of the group and I baptized the other seven. All have been baptized since I came on this field in 1926. This could not have been accomplished by bitter attacks upon the religion of their youth. But by preaching the gospel of the Grace of God in love they were led, not to a system of religion, but to Christ Jesus the Savior of all who put their trust in Him.

"Bro. Fulton Curtis of Baywood preached at Big Creek on the afternoon of Nov. 10th. Bro. Odis Ford was there the 4th Sunday of October. Bro. O. D. Bixler visited our home over night on his way to the seaport to take a ship for Japan. Brother and Sister Shields, of Louisville, are expected here this week, and Bro. Kenney of DeRidder writes that he will spend the week-end with us. This field may not be able to support another man, but a good man could be used here."—A. K. Ramsey.

Glenmora, La.: "During October I was in Florida, first in a meeting at Maxville, where there were two baptisms. Brethren John H. Adams and Dan Richardson, of the Woodstock Park church in Jacksonville, gave much assistance. Brother

Richardson has been devoting much time to the Maxville work since I left there a year ago.

"Brother Adams and I (with Bro. Richardson assisting during the first week) then held a fifteen days' meeting in Ft. Lauderdale, where Brother Brady Green has been located since early in the year. There were no responses, but the interest exceeded expectations and it was felt that the meeting had by no means been in vain.

"The little group in Ft. Lauderdale faces many difficulties, but there are also some encouraging factors in the situation. They now own a good lot in a part of the city where there is no other church of any kind; and in Brother Green they have a zealous and efficient worker. A building of their own should be of great advantage and it is their desire to have one built as soon as possible. But they need help; anyone who desires to have fellowship with them in this undertaking should write Brady M. Green, General Delivery, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

"Also, if this should come to the attention of any brother who is a capable song leader and who is contemplating spending time in Florida, it will be well for him to consider Ft. Lauderdale—they have need of him there."—J. Edward Boyd.

Louisville, Ky.: "The revival at the South Louisville Church of Christ was a fruitful series in many respects. The crowds were good and the attendance steady. Brother Demus Friend conducted the song services, and was assisted by Brethren W. H. Allen, Jack Curry, and Buddy Clark. There were fifteen responses to the invitation, eight for membership and seven for confession and baptism. From memory we can recall visits by eighteen preachers and possibly that many churches whose members attended."—N. Wilson Burks.

Tell City, Ind.: "Attendance holds up fine here at Tell City. The crowd was some better at Lily Dale yesterday.

"We started our High School Bible class again three weeks ago, with twenty-five in attendance. We are making an effort to interest others.

"We have been having as many as

fifty in our Wednesday night meeting. One reconsecrated her life to the Lord last Wednesday night."—Elmer C. Ringer.

Worthington, Ind.: "The work at Worthington is moving forward and results are attending the preaching of the Gospel. We have made a substantial payment on our building, and, Lord willing, we will soon have it paid for in full. One was baptized and one restored recently."—Paul Griffith.

Brother Paul Griffith is now accepting appointments and has open the first and third Lord's Days of the month,—J. R. C.

Camp Taylor, Ky.: "Brother Orell Overman of Lexington, just completed a meeting at Camp Taylor. Crowds were consistently good, with around twenty-five riding our bus each evening. Brother Overman brought strong, spiritual messages, which were well received. We did not have a large ingathering of souls this year as last, but one young lady was baptized into Christ and we feel that the meeting did us much good otherwise. Brother Joe Blansett led the singing in a very acceptable manner, arranging quartets from time to time."—J. R. Clark.

Louisville Thanksgiving Service

At the joint Thanksgiving meeting of Louisville churches, the East Jefferson church demonstrated the fact that it had outgrown its "mission" garments. The recently enlarged auditorium, now nearly double its former size, was packed to overflowing with a highly appreciative audience. The Golden Gospel Chorus rendered several fine selections. Brother N. Wilson Burks of the Fifth and M Streets Church gave the morning message, taking for his subject "The Dangers of Ingratitude." Brother D. H. Friend of the Highland Church acted as master of ceremonies. At the close of the service Brother Friend made a stirring appeal for the Portland Christian School enlargement venture and so touched the hearts of those present that the offering yielded the gratifying total of around \$1225. The little boy that gave the first dollar to start the school fund was introduced to the audience."—Mrs. L. B. Holloway.

Bernard Wright Now Home

Word has come that Bernard Wright, long-time missionary to China, has arrived home at Pekin, Indiana, and is now enjoying a visit with his people and home church. Brother Wilson Burks informs us that he is in good health and that his Sundays are about all taken for December. After that he will be available to speak at the churches as he is called. Brother Wright's last stay in China was a span of six years covering the war years. No doubt that experience will add interest to the message that he brings to the churches. Welcome home, Brother Wright!

Frankfort, Ky.: "Work here at Antioch is doing well with very good attendance. Three have been baptized since last report. I have recently preached five nights at Cat Creek Church and five nights at Upper Salt Lick Church with good attendance and interest. I had a splendid time with Christian friends of years gone by."—Asa Baber.

Harrodsburg, Ky.: "I enjoy the Word and Work more each year. May God bless each and every one that has part in it."—Mrs. Garnett Gabhart.

Augusta, Me.: "The Word and Work is a fine little paper. After we read it here—ever so often I send a bundle of them together with Missionary Messengers to a friend, who in turn pass them out to shut-ins in an infirmary where they do visitation work."—Olive Williams.

Sarah Ann Darland Parrott

Harrodsburg, Ky.: "Mrs. Sarah Ann Darland Parrott of Washington County, Ky., died at the home of her niece in Mercer County, on October 8, at the age of 82 years. She was the last of her immediate family and a sister of S. G. Darland, who passed away in February. She was a member of the church of Christ and for years a reader of the Word and Work. She prayed continually to go home as soon as her Lord was ready for her. Services were held at the Mackville Church of Christ by Brother R. R. Brooks."—Mrs. Roy Durr.

Bixler to Japan

O. D. Bixler has sailed for Japan to look over the field there in connection with a great mission pro-

gram that was launched several months ago to relieve suffering and take the Gospel to Japan. After making an investigation and doing some ground work he will return with a report.

New Jamieson, Faussett and Brown

We have ordered a set of the new six-volume edition of this fine commentary. This work is complete and unabridged, thus much more detailed than the one-volume edition. The set of six volumes comes at \$25. We are informed that this is our last chance to obtain this work at \$25. If it is a fine Christmas present you wish for the minister, this is it.

Bibles in Stock

The surest way to get a Bible before Christmas is to pick it up from our stock here at the office. We have several numbers on hand at regular retail prices.

A Christmas Gift for the Home

Those taking the lead in the Sellersburg Children's Home project are asking for a gift of \$2000 to clear all indebtedness. Interested churches are asked to take up special offerings on the Sunday before Christmas. Individuals also may wish to have a share in this gift. Send offerings to Church of Christ, Sellersburg, Indiana.

Fort Lauderdale, Fla.: "Our two weeks' revival conducted here by brethren John Adams, J. Edward Boyd, and Dan Richardson closed Sunday night Oct. 27. We had a wonderful meeting. The preaching and singing were soul-stirring and heart-warming. The brethren really know how to sing the good old gospel songs, and preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. Attendance and interest were unusually good. There were no additions, but as a result of the meeting, we are looking forward with renewed zeal and determination to the work that lies ahead of us, if our Lord tarries."—Brady M. Green.

PLANS FOR 1947

"Let's make the Word and Work the very best possible for the coming year," says Brother Boll. Toward this end he promises another exposition on a Bible book, and there are other things we have in mind. Suggestions, including constructive criticism, are in order.

OLD AND NEW YEAR MEDITATIONS

Flavil Hall

The old year, with all its opportunities, shadows and sunshine, is passing, and the new year, with all its prospects and uncertainties, shall very soon be a reality. Those for whom it holds the greatest blessings are those who shall bravely meet its responsibilities and duties in relation to Christ and their fellow travelers to eternity's shore. Paul admonishes us as follows:

"See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, for the days are evil." (Eph. 5: 15, 16.)

Multitudes trifle away their time. They tamper with their golden hours like the man who stood on the deck of a vessel on the briny deep tossing a diamond upward, against warnings, and catching it as it descended, until it eluded his hand and dropped into the ocean's depth and was lost beyond recovery, leaving him to bewail his lack of prudence. The apostle's words mean that those who are thus careless with the precious moments of time lack wisdom, yea, that their song of life is that of a foolish one. It is sad so many so depreciate the value of time as to never rise above the realm of folly.

"*The Days are Evil.*" The activities of vast multitudes tend to drag humanity down to a state of moral corruptness, and many of the religious forces are averse to the Bible-revealed way of truth. Therefore the true servants of Christ have a gigantic struggle against moral pollution and religious perversity. But if they redeem the time for their souls and for Christ and His kingdom the struggle must be made. Unceasing vigilance in the name of Christ is the price.

"Redeeming the time" is from the Greek expression, *exagorazomenoi ton kairon*, which literally means "buying up for yourselves the season." Paying the price above mentioned means a glorious triumph over the darksome forces of satanic power and a crown bestowed by the King of righteousness. Are not the laurels of victory worth seeking?

How wise and how blest to secure every season, every year, every day and every hour for the glorification of the name of Christ! The last of each will come by and by, and "O, to be robed and ready!"

"Some year will be the last year,
Some day will be the last day,
Some hour will be the last hour
Of all the years of time!
Christ with His holy angels
Will come in clouds of glory,
'And ev'ry eye shall see Him,'
O, advent hour sublime!"

John Wesley wrote: "I also advise the elders to administer the supper of the Lord on every Lord's Day." (A History of Methodism by Holland N. McTyeire, page 343.)

GOD IGNORED

It is worthy of serious reflection that the "United Nations" began their meetings in New York without benefit of prayer. In fact, the name of God was mentioned by only one speaker. President Truman concluded his address with the expressed hope that Almighty God would bless the efforts of the delegates.

The excuse was made that UN members hold so many divergent religious ideas that it is impossible to settle on a satisfactory form of prayer. If these astute diplomats cannot get together on a simple form of prayer, one wonders how they can work out a satisfactory peace formula. It is assumed that these men qualify as experts in adjusting divergent view-points. Otherwise, they would scarcely be competent to undertake their delicate tasks of diplomacy.

So, in the supreme crises of mankind, apparently we must expect only human wisdom to be applied by the representatives of fifty-one nations. The only way we can compensate for this public ignoring of God, this cold-shouldering of spiritual values, is for us to make up the deficiency by redoubling our own individual prayers.

In these circumstances one thinks of Benjamin Franklin, one of the wisest men in American history. While not particularly a pious man in the usual sense of an orthodox church-goer, he was deeply concerned about the new nation that was being formed. At the Constitutional Convention in a solemn speech, he said ". . . God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow can not fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable an empire can rise without his aid?"

He concluded that address by making the following motion: "I therefore beg leave to move that henceforth prayers, imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business; and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service."

If prayer was important in the birth of one nation (especially considering what that nation became), it would seem that prayer would also help to create One World.

Despite our many faults we Americans have always held to faith in God as the directing force of our country. We believe that God has a powerful place in the affairs of men. The tradition of our Forefathers who founded this nation on a religious basis, is still treasured by modern Americans.

Recently I visited my friend Dr. Frederick Brown Harris, Chaplain of the United States Senate. Every day at noon he opens the Senate session with prayer. He accompanies the Vice-President (or, as it now is, the President pro tempore) to the Senate chamber. The Chaplain mounts to the dais, while the presiding officer stands, with head bowed, one step lower than the Chaplain. After the prayer the Chaplain comes down and the presiding officer steps up to the dais. The symbolism is significant. The representative of God takes the highest place, while the representative of the people stands

humbly below awaiting God's judgment and guidance.

Perhaps it is for this reason that despite all our fumbling and our wrongdoing, God still blesses us with manifold and great mercies.
—Dr. Peale Vincent Peale.

THE WHOLE WAY

J. H. McCaleb

A great many of you have been in the armed forces of the country. You know what it is to do things because you have to. Every movement seems to be performed by the clock. Getting up, eating and sleeping follow the same routine. One follows the rules whether he likes them or not. Infractions bring corresponding punishment. Some get enjoyment at times from the discipline. Others do not. I have never yet seen a soldier who did not complain.

I never did like any work about the kitchen. I still don't. Nevertheless, I worked a lot on "kitchen police" and peeled potatoes by hundreds. Guard duty was never too much fun either. The "black watch" will never be forgotten. Perhaps some even liked that.

And so goes military life. Much of it is distasteful. The whole military machine depends upon its discipline. It rises to its greatest heights, however, when men are inspired to perform their duties because they want to.

Too often we treat God's will as if it were merely an army command. Certain duties are performed perfunctorily and as a matter of form. A few "musts" are picked out and we feel that we may have a right to sing "Onward Christian Soldiers." Some of us emphasize one set of rules, while others emphasize something else. Perhaps all the rules are good as far as they go.

It is my conviction that no man can do God's will unless he really wants to. It is true that he can perform certain acts of seeming obedience and perhaps receive the acclaim of his fellow man. But God looks upon, and knows, the heart. No half measure is sufficient. We must be all God's, and His Spirit must dwell in us.

We have the command to love our neighbor as ourself. Consider that statement carefully. No superficial acceptance will avail anything. Self naturally comes first. It is our natural man, and the one which we must overcome. People around us do not suit us. Their actions are not always lovely. And yet we are told to seek their good always. Also, we cannot pick our neighbors. Every man is our neighbor.

You realize with me how greatly we all fail. Excuse is piled upon excuse. We continually justify ourselves. But deep down in our hearts we know we have failed. Self has come first and, in reality, our neighbor has counted very little. We have not really wanted to do God's will. We have wanted to do our own more.

Most of us need to repent and turn again. If we are honest in seeking God's will, we will want to do it all. It will cost us everything — ourselves. We know what is in our hearts,

THE JEWISH SABBATH

J. R. Clark

THE SABBATH WAS PURELY A JEWISH INSTITUTION. In **Genesis 2: 1-3** it is said that God, having finished His six days' creation, blessed and hallowed the seventh day and rested from His work. But it does not say that He then told man to rest on the seventh day: in fact, the sabbath is not even mentioned thereafter for 2500 years. After all these years had elapsed Jehovah gave the sabbath as a day of solemn rest to the children of Israel (**Exodus 16: 23-30**): note verse 29, "See, for that Jehovah hath given you the sabbath . . ." A few weeks later this day was set apart as a regular rest day for Israel, as is seen in the ten commandments of **Exodus 20**. These ten commandments were plainly addressed to the nation of Israel, for in introducing them God says, "I am Jehovah, thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." (**Ex. 20: 2**.) They were not addressed to Christians or to any nation other than Israel. If the ten commandments, as such, including the sabbath, are enjoined upon Christians we most certainly will need to find the instructions elsewhere in the Bible.

God plainly said that the sabbath was a sign between Him and Israel. "Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am Jehovah that sanctifieth them." (**Ezekiel 20: 12**.) "Verily ye shall keep my sabbaths: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifieth you." (**Ex. 31: 13**.) "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever." (**Ex. 31: 16, 17**.)

Two reasons are given for their keeping that day: first, "for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed," (**Ex. 31: 17**); second, "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; THEREFORE JEHOVAH THY GOD COMMANDED THEE TO KEEP THE SABBATH DAY." (**Deut. 5: 15**.) This second reason most certainly does not apply to Christians nor to any save Israel. The sabbath was made known to Israel when God spoke to them at Sinai, for, "Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, . . . and madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, . . ." (**Nehemiah 9: 13, 14**.) Thus, though solemnized a few days before in connection with the gathering of the Manna, the sabbath was a new institution to Israel.

Nowhere in the Bible is the sabbath enjoined upon other peoples than the Jews: nowhere is it made a rest day or special worship day for Christians!

THE NEW TESTAMENT DOES NOT BIND THE SABBATH UPON CHRIS-

TIANS. The New Testament was not in force until after the death of Christ. Read Hebrews 9:16, 17. By consensus of scholarship the New Testament church did not begin until the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. The record of its beginning is found in Acts 2. Christ Himself lived under the law dispensation and, therefore, as all orthodox Jews, observed the sabbath. The fact that the new covenant did not have a formal beginning until Pentecost (Acts 2) explains why the women kept the sabbath before going to the tomb early on the first day of the week. Indeed, after Peter preached that Pentecostal sermon and about 3000 Jews, along with the few who were already disciples, were welded together by the Holy Spirit to form the primitive church, they knew nothing about breaking loose from the law of Moses. Thus far they had heard only a message about Christ: His death for their sins, His burial and resurrection. The law of Moses was so much a part of their very being that there was of necessity a transition time, during which they were being weaned away from the law, even though they immediately met upon the first day of the week to break bread and began their duties as Christians. After a time their break from the law was complete.

In the writings of the New Testament there is no mention of Christians assembling on the sabbath for their worship, nor is the sabbath anywhere enjoined upon Christians. All the other sins pointed out and forbidden in the ten commandments come in for condemnation over and over in the New Testament. If the Lord wanted the sabbath to be binding upon Christians why didn't He say so at least *once*?-and, this especially in view of the fact that the sabbath was so vividly held forth in the Old Testament as a purely Jewish institution!

The New Testament writers do mention the sabbath. In the Book of Acts, in keeping with his desire to go "To the Jew first and also to the Greek" Paul often sought out the Jewish synagogue first upon entering a new community. He did this not because he wished to go back under the law and worship with the Jews, but because it afforded him an opportunity to teach them. These were new points where the gospel had not gone, and, of course, the synagogue worship was not a meeting of Christians, but of Jews. Thus it is sometimes said that Paul and a companion went into the synagogue upon the sabbath day, but never anywhere in the New Testament is it said that Christians met on the sabbath to worship!

Speaking of the law of Moses and of the ten commandments in particular, of which the sabbath command was a part, Paul says: "having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross." (Col. 2:14.) Ephesians 2:15 gives further evidence that the thing which was abolished included the ten commandments: "having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances." The wording is even more specific in 2 Corinthians 3:7: "But if the ministration of death, written, and engraven on stones, came with glory, . . . which glory was passing away: . . ." In verse 14 of this same chapter we read, "It is done away

in Christ." Therefore the ten commandments, including the sabbath command was nailed to the cross along with the rest of the law. In Nehemiah 8 the writings of Moses which were read from early morning until midday were called in verse 1, "the law of Moses" and in verse 8, "the law of God." Thus any attempt to distinguish between the ceremonial commandments as the "law of Moses" and the ten commandments as "the law of God" is without foundation.

It is interesting to note that just after the ordinances of the law are said to be nailed to the cross in Col. 1:14, the inspired Apostle adds in verse 16, "Let no man therefore judge you in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day; which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's." The "feast day" was an annual affair, the "new moon" monthly, and the "sabbath" weekly. They were all put in one category as shadows of things realized in Christ. Having the substance there is no longer need for the shadow! In Galatians 4:10, 11 we read, "Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain." No Sabbatarian would ever make such a statement as that! I am told of a Sabbatarian who read himself out of his error by simply reading the verses before and after some of his proof-texts. Contexts can be damaging to false notions!

We have found that the New Testament declares that the ten commandments, including the sabbath command, has been done away, and that such as would demand sabbath-keeping of Christians are strongly rebuked by Paul. To them we should give place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with us.

BE YE THANKFUL

Ben J. Elston

It is a time of year for Thanksgiving. So is every other time of year. I am thankful that I am a man — of the race of man. Not, merely, that I am an animal, and have life. My kitten purring at my feet, is an animal and has life. But I am not merely "to be taken and destroyed." I am; but I also am to be. With my being (existence) I had nothing to do. God, in very goodness, fixed that. What I do about accepting the proposition He made to me in making me, is a matter about which I can be piously wise, or insanely foolish. There is doubtless more love, of highest quality, in giving me power to choose, than I understand; but I am grateful, as far as my feeble intellect penetrates, that He has willed as He has. Nothing but my own inexcusable folly can make a wreck of the happiness He planned, both for Himself and for me. Giving me a way to win, and all proper encouragement to perform what He can rightfully require of me, in whatever environment, my own wrong choosing is all that can make me fail. I THANK HIM for giving me the opportunity He has. "*Be ye thankful.*"

THOUGHTS WORTH WHILE

D. H. F.

The following editorial from the *Christian Standard* is still timely:

THANKSGIVING MEDITATION

What virtue is more rare than gratitude? What fault is more base than thanklessness? Only one of ten cleansed lepers returned to give thanks to Jesus and glory to God for their healing. Paul reminds us that ingratitude is the first step downward in the tragic path of sin and degradation. "Knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks" (Rom. 1:21).

No nation has greater cause to thank God than has the United States of America, yet no nation goes more heedlessly on its way. Undeservedly we have come through a world-wide conflict comparatively unscathed. While all the rest of the world has been suffering from famine our fields have produced as never before. But is the goodness of God leading us to repentance?

We have a day set aside for national thanksgiving. One might well expect the churches to be crowded with the grateful and every home to ring out with songs of praise and thanksgiving to God, the giver of every blessing. But it is doubtful whether our gratitude will be in proportion as high as the one to ten ratio of the ten lepers.

A handful will gather to pray and praise. But to the many Thanksgiving will be a day of feasting and fun, sports and reveling. Family tables will be piled high. Football stadia will be crowded. Liquor will flow. Dance bands will work overtime. On the day set aside for gratitude the people of America will prove in countless ways that they are "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."

All this will help to prove that gratitude is essentially a Christian virtue. Only the knowledge of the grace of God, faith in His Word and its saving power, the assurance of sins forgiven, and the hope of eternal life—in short, nothing less than being born anew into His kingdom, is sufficient motivation for thanksgiving to God through Christ. And this thanksgiving will not be for one day in the year. Christian gratitude will result in a whole life poured out in loving and faithful service.—Editorial, *Christian Standard*.

A CONDUCTOR'S EXAMPLE

A railroad conductor with a large party of his associates made an excursion to a Southern city, at which they arrived on Saturday night. Someone planned a picnic for the following day, Sunday. "Of course you are going with us," said this man's companions. "No," was the reply of the conductor. "I am going to church; that is my habit on Sunday." His attitude was criticized sharply by some of the company; but he remained firm in his decision. Greatly to his surprise the following morning when he started for church, he was accompanied by one hundred and fifty men who had been thus influenced by his simple act of fidelity to principle.—*Baptist Teacher*.

An old and wise philosopher has given to us these practical rules for a

HAPPY MARRIED LIFE

Never both be angry at once.

Never talk AT one another, either alone or in company.

Never speak loud to one another unless the house is on fire.

Let each other strive to yield oftenest to the wishes of the other.

Let self-denial be the daily aim and practice of each.

Never taunt with a past mistake.

Neglect the whole world besides rather than one another.

Never make a remark at the expense of each other . . . it is meanness.

Never part for a day without loving words to think of during absence.

Never meet without a loving welcome.

Never let the sun go down upon any anger or grievance.

Never forget the happy hours of early love.

Never forget that marriage is ordained of God, and that his blessing alone can make it what should be.

If you make these rules of your new home, peace and happiness shall follow you all the days of your life.

J. Marvin Powell.

KEEPING TIME WITH GOD

Traversing one night a city street, I was startled by a sharp clanging above my head. On looking up, I found myself directly beneath the tower wherein a hugh clock was striking the midnight hour. I took my watch from my pocket, and lo, the slender, overlaying hands were pointing exactly to the hour of twelve. It scarcely seemed possible that that tiny piece of mechanism in my hand could keep time with the huge machinery that filled the whole room of the tower; but the proof was before me, and as I gazed at the two pairs of hands of such diverse proportions, I understood as never before that the *most insignificant being needed only to be clean, in running order, and divinely regulated*, to keep time with divinity itself.—*Christian Observer*.

PATIENCE

Let us confidently and lovingly trust in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him! He is worth waiting for. Patience is a proof of our faith. A faith that has no patience is a tree that has no fruit, an organ that has no music, a bird that has no wings: a complete contradiction in terms.—Joseph Parker.

A Quaker, speaking in the open-air, was opposed by a man who ridiculed the idea that there was a God who answered prayer. The Quaker stopped and asked the troubler quickly, "Friend, dost thou pray?"

"No, not I," was the reply.

"Then what dost thou know about it?" said the Quaker.—*Moody Monthly*.

THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS

R. H. B.

Turning now to the book of the Lamentation of Jeremiah we note that it is not all one continuous poem. Five outstanding parts are generally distinguished: the first, second, and fourth are marked by the initial word "How," from which the book as a whole has its Hebrew title ("Aichad"). These five divisions correspond to the five chapters in our English Bible.

In the first lines of the book the prophet dwells mournfully on the devastation and distress of Jerusalem and Judah. But mark the fact: he clearly sees and confesses the real cause and reason of Zion's affliction: "For *Jehovah* hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions. . . . Jerusalem hath grievously sinned . . . she remembered not her latter end. *Therefore* is she come down wonderfully; she hath no comforter." (Vs. 5, 8, 9.) This is important. So long as the sinner only counts himself unfortunate, and blames his misfortunes on this or that or the other circumstance, and perhaps even makes excuse for himself, and implies that God has dealt unjustly with him (as, alas, many do) — there is no real penitence, and therefore there can be no hope. The prophet clearly discerns the real cause of Judah's downfall. It is ever the mark of true repentance that the humbled sinner condemns himself and justifies God. This note runs through the whole of "Lamentations."

And see how he calls on *Jehovah* to behold his affliction (for the prophet all along identifies himself with the stricken people). "See, O *Jehovah*, and behold; for I am become abject." And again, "See, O *Jehovah*, and behold to whom thou hast done thus." (2: 20.) So indeed it was. "I have forsaken my house, I have cast off my heritage; I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of her enemies." (Jer. 12: 7.)

The dreadful thing that had happened is that "the nations" — the uncircumcised Gentiles — had entered into Israel's sanctuary; "concerning whom thou didst command that they should not enter into thine assembly." "O God," cries the Psalmist, "the nations are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem in heaps" (Ps. 79: 1). And, "They have set thy sanctuary on fire; they have profaned the dwelling-place of thy name by casting it to the ground." (Ps. 74: 7.) "The kings of the earth believed not [so great had been the respect for the God of Israel] neither all the inhabitants of the world, that the adversary and the enemy would enter into the gates of Jerusalem." Nevertheless, the incredible thing came to pass. "It is because of the sins of her prophets, and the iniquities of her priests." (Lam. 4: 12, 13.)

Over and over again, he acknowledges that it was *Jehovah's* own hand that laid all this judgment upon her; and that for good and sufficient reason. See this in verses 12, 13, 14, 15, 17. And why? "*Jehovah* is righteous; for I have rebelled against his command-

ment." *That was something for all the world to hear and see and behold:* "Hear, I pray you, all ye peoples, and behold my sorrow." (1: 18.) Take notice, all men everywhere: *this is what comes of sin!* "For, lo, I begin to work evil in the city that is called by my name; and should ye be utterly unpunished?" said the Lord; "Ye shall not be unpunished; for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith Jehovah of hosts." (Jer. 25: 29.) *The judgment of Jerusalem is a warning and a prophecy to all the nations of the world.*



Among secondary causes of the fall of Judah and Jerusalem one is prominent: the false prophets, who misled the people with their deceitful message of "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." "Thy prophets have seen for thee false and foolish visions; and they have not uncovered thine iniquity to bring back thy captivity, but have seen for thee false oracles and causes of banishment." (Lam. 2: 14.) Always in times of impending crisis there is a plague of false prophets. They spring up like toadstools, everywhere. Their message is pleasant to hear, and they are popular with the world. "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you," said the Lord Jesus to His disciples — "for in the same manner did their fathers to the false prophets." (Luke 6:26.) They sing their sweet lullaby to the sinners who need to be awakened and brought to repentance. "They say continually unto them that despise me, Jehovah hath said, Ye shall have peace; and unto everyone that walketh in the stubbornness of his own heart they say, No evil shall come upon you." (Jer. 23: 17.) The true prophet of God naturally comes into conflict with that lying tribe of false prophets, as may be seen in Jer. 23, verses 9-32; and in chapter 28, where Jeremiah clashed with the false prophet Hananiah. But then as now, people believed what they liked to believe, and they listened to what they wanted to hear; and the multitudes followed after those pious pipers to their destruction.



Another cause of their tragic fall is mentioned. It seems like an excuse at first sight, but it is not that: it is their complaint that the fathers had eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth were set on edge: "Our fathers sinned and are not; and we have borne their iniquities." (Lam. 5: 7.) Quite true — the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children. The heredity transmitted by their ancestors and the environment created through the example and precedents set for the younger generation by their fathers, constituted indeed a powerful influence for evil, and went far toward determining the way and destiny of the children. But after all, heredity is not predestinated fate. "Be ye not as your fathers" is God's call over and over (e. g. 1 Chron. 30:7, 8; Zech. 1:4.) The iniquity of the fathers is not visited upon the children indiscriminately, but "unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me"; the while God shows mercy to thousands of them that love him and keep His commandments. The penitent prophet and people in Lamentations, are not making excuse, nor trying to shift the blame of their guilt. Again

and again comes the frank unqualified confessor, "We have sinned," and "Jehovah is righteous." And whatever the mitigating circumstances may be, this is the only right attitude before God.

But the gloom of the Lamentation is brightened with a wondrous gleam of hope. As we read the broken-hearted stanzas of the prophet's plaintive song, we become aware that after all a hope and a confidence is left to him, and in spite of the irreparable ruin all is not lost. There is first of all the fact that it is *Jehovah's* hand that laid the punishment upon them. He must have had a purpose beyond the infliction of pain. "For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men"—least of all His own people. (Lam. 3:3.) Some may prefer to take the sorrows of life as fortuitous accidents, or to think they have brought them on themselves by their own blundering and mistakes, or misfortune, God having nothing to do with it. But to God's people there is deep consolation in the faith that whatever of good or ill may befall them, and whether the cause of it be seen or not—it comes from Him. "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterfalls: all thy waves and thy billows have gone over me." (Psalm 42:7.) But so long as they are *His* waterfalls and *His* waves and *His* billows—it is well. So throughout the Lamentations the prophet is conscious of God. The strokes that fell—terrible though they were—came from His hand. Not blind fate, nor blind laws and forces, but an all-knowing and loving heart are back of it all. All is gauged, all is controlled, all subserves a wise and benevolent purpose. For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.

And therein lies the hope. The chastening of the Lord is disciplinary and remedial—not retributive and final. "This I recall to my mind; therefore have I hope. It is of Jehovah's loving-kindness that we are not consumed"—for could he not as easily have consumed us? And if He did not, is it not that He willed to lengthen our our days so that He might yet show us mercy? "His compassions fail not; they are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. Jehovah is my portion, saith my soul, therefore, have I hope; as he says elsewhere: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon the earth I desire beside thee." (Ps. 73: 25.)

Then follow words tenderly consolatory, which I must leave for the reader to see for himself. (Lam. 3: 21-29.) And an appeal to repentance: "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to Jehovah. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens."

For their affliction so severe, was not as the hopeless doom that falls on their enemies. "Hath he smitten them as he smote those that smote them? or are they slain according to the slaughter of them that were slain by them? The prophet foresees the day when the Lord shall again speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and will say unto her that her warefare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins. (Isa. 27: 7; 40: 1, 2.)

In the last lines we find an appeal to Jehovah, and a prayer

that *He* might turn them, that so they might indeed be turned. For our turning, though it is indispensable, and turn we must and will with all our hearts, yet it must be backed up by His grace and power if it is to prove true and valid. So, "Turn thou us unto thee, O Jehovah, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old." (Comp. Ps. 80.) Will He answer such a prayer? Surely He must be minded to do so, for He Himself has spoken it! (The last verse of the book therefore, must, according to the context, be read as in the R. V. margin, "unless thou hast utterly rejected us, and art wroth against us.")

The certain outcome of sin; the sure proof that God means what He says when He warns; the prophecy for the whole earth portrayed in Jerusalem's fate; the knowledge that the sufferings of God's people are chastenings; the humility of true penitence; the hope that shines through the gloom for those who wait for Jehovah — these are some of the precious lessons of truth that come to us out of the sad song of Jeremiah's Lamentation. And the dark distresses of God's people are lighted by His love; and their sorrows, bitter though they be, are infinitely better than the hopeless sorrow of the world.

BEN'S BUDGET

Ben J. Elston

Well, unable to go immediately to China, the Forcades are all now in New Orleans to see what they can do there to advance the Way. I pray that they may be useful there, and am persuaded that they will make the best of the situation. It is a wicked city. Rome is strong there. But that is far from all the trouble. Deep seated lack of "love of the truth" is in evidence. Is it true that we allow ourselves to entertain prejudice against those who are prejudiced against us? How hard are those, who say so much of unity, working scripturally themselves to bring unity about? We need to be "of sound mind and sober unto prayer." Have we so often repulsed the notion, held by too many, that prayer influences only those who themselves pray, that we have lost sight of the certainty that prayer really does most wonderfully benefit those who soberly pray? Do we easily drift to extremes? These thoughts come as I reflect on New Orleans as a needy place which I am too feeble to enter. The Forcades' mission, whether temporary or permanent, is interesting, and for it I mean to work and pray. May God help every Christian there in helping in every good work, and hindering in nothing. Needless irritation is distinct damage. The time is short, sheaves are wasting, laborers too actually on a strike. The Word of God is good for more than we know. After all the stormy way that New Orleans has weathered, it may be yet that she is to experience a blessed calm in which glorious gain may be made. God may "have much people" there.

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