

# WORD AND WORK

## WORDS IN SEASON.

R. H. B.

### UNITY AND LIBERTY.

The following from the pen of A. T. Pierson:—

“Ever since the Reformation there have been going forward two exactly opposite movements, due to as many opposite tendencies—the movement toward sectarian division, and the movement toward denominational union. That two so opposite tendencies should be in operation at the same time seems, at first glance, contradictory and inexplicable; but a moment’s careful consideration will show not only that it is a fact, but that there is a reasonable philosophy behind the fact. The Reformation broke the shackles of religious thought by releasing men from bondage to papal superstition and prelatical authority. . . . The immediate effect of the dawn of religious liberty was that men began to think freely, then to speak freely; and thus they disclosed divergencies of opinion, which, being positively held, and expressed with impunity, led to controversies, and controversies led to separations for opinion’s sake, until even minor matters of differing opinion became the watchwords of ecclesiastical parties, and sects multiplied. . . .

“This result was natural. The only way to keep men from such separations is to keep them in ignorance, and in dependent slavery to authority. Liberty always leads to individualism and independence. Men can be kept on a level only by the despot’s method—cutting off any head that rises above the common plane. The instant that a dead level of equality and subordination is no longer enforced by violence done to manhood, differences begin to assert themselves and to become increasingly manifest and manifold.”

If this be correct (and the reader will agree to the almost self-evident truth of these forceful words) it is manifest that the true unity of the New Testament church must be a unity which is superior to the differences that arise among the free children of God. This statement needs to be carefully limited. No unity is possible where there is not fundamental common ground. Those who accept the Bible as the final authority cannot and must not fraternize with those who do not. Those who believe in Jesus Christ upon the evidence of the gospel, cannot be one with those who do not so recognize Him and who discredit or pervert the testimony. No unity between Christians is possible where there is not agreement as to the way in which a man becomes a Christian. Nor could Christians worship together without agreement on the congregational practice in which they must jointly engage. That is plain. But within necessary limitations—if for every difference of conception and teaching a separation must follow,—then either is unity impossible, or by some form of religious tyranny all independent study, belief, and utterance must be suppressed.

### UNITY AND UNIFORMITY.

When Paul admonished the brethren at Corinth that they

"all speak the same thing"—what did he mean? Suppose there were at Corinth some who were more deeply versed, and of maturer understanding in the Scriptures than some others—did Paul want such to confine themselves to the scope of the babes, and say only what they said, no more, no less, for unity's sake? Or would he want the babes to assert the teaching of the full-grown, though unable to grasp it, and so "speak the same thing" in order to avoid a difference? Did he want some to copy the speech and teaching of the rest, or should some particular one lead off and all the rest repeat his words and points and arguments after him, so that they all might be saying "the same thing"? "No," you reply, "Paul meant that they should all preach and teach the truth, just what is written." Good:—did he want them to confine themselves merely to quoting of scriptures, not attempting any comment, remark, application, illustration, argument, or conclusion? But if these things be permissible—no matter how careful and conscientious the brethren might be, would it be likely to give occasion for differences in expression, or in conception, or in accuracy; or any room for one to apprehend some peculiar side of the truth, and another another? Or may it happen that one or several might misapprehend some things? Or that one might see more, and another less of the truth in Christ Jesus? But how in that case could they "all speak the same thing?" If to "speak the same thing" means perfect uniformity, Christian unity would not be possible except at the sacrifice of all individual liberty.

But it does not mean that, and cannot. It was not doctrinal differences that lay at the root of the divisions at Corinth, but a disposition to cliques, the tendency to form parties around the names of noted leaders, though all these leaders have, without conflict, taught the same doctrinal truth, each in his own way. And that was what Paul admonished against. "*Now this I mean,*" said he, himself explaining his own meaning, "that each one of you saith, I am of Paul and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ." That was the matter in which they did not "speak the same thing." They should have said, "All of us alike are the Lord's people and all of us have the right to all the truth. We do not belong to any man nor to any set of men. Paul, Apollos, and Cephas are ours, not we theirs, and we are Christ's and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. 3:21-23).

#### RESULTS OF ATTEMPTED UNIFORMITY.

The idea of unity by uniformity is vicious in its tendencies. Instead of really producing unity, it is fruitful in causing new divisions, or else it produces a state of spiritual bondage, of slavish conformity to leaders or to current views, or to human creeds, or preconcerted agreement and hypocritical "orthodoxy." This has often been illustrated in the past. Among those who have tried the experiment, the "Plymouth Brethren" (so-called) are a notable example. They started out with an earnestness and godliness that commands our respect, and which

perhaps puts us to shame, to be non-sectarian, undenominational, and in all their teaching and practice strictly scriptural. Their one fatal mistake, as I see it, lay in their rigid demands of uniformity. Fellowship among them seemed to depend not only on the acceptance of God's Word as the absolute authority and final standard of judgment (which is proper) but upon agreement on even details of interpretation. Their teachers are so sure that they are Spirit-taught, and contending for the pure and only truth, that they can brook little contradiction. It would be disloyalty to God to tolerate much dissent to their beliefs. So if one, studying independently sees cause to differ from the accepted views of others he is looked upon with doubt, then discredited and marked as an unsound teacher; and half thrust, half pulling, he lands outside the fence, where he will gather a new following, in which in due course of time the same process of segmentation is repeated. Thus with all their purity of purpose they have, as a people, utterly failed of unity; and their ranks are so rent that utmost wariness is needed to know who is who among them.

In a lesser measure, because less strenuously applied, the same principles have produced the same process of disintegration among the brethren of the Restoration Movement. I do not need to enumerate the wings and factions and "families" that exist in the professed church of Christ, some of them refusing each other Christian fellowship. The term "loyal" has come to have too many definitions. And among the larger contingents that still cohere it is to be feared that the agreement in many cases is not so much due to a common personal conviction and independent faithfulness to the word of God, as to a studious copying after one another, and conformity to the "representative views of the brotherhood"; which is but another name for the unwritten creed, to which we bow in submission "for unity's sake."

#### THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

It is not possible to have the New Testament unity without the New Testament spirit. But the New Testament spirit is the Spirit of God, which is not only the Spirit of truth, but also the Spirit of love. For "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." (Gal. 5:22, 23). It is for the lack of these things that divisions come which ought not to come. For some divisions are inevitable and necessary. (1 Cor. 11:19). But there are divisions among those who ought to be joined together in the bonds of the Lord Jesus; and these are *always* traceable to the failure of *love*. For it is love, and only love that can suffer long and be kind; that is "free from envy, scorn, and pride," and that delivers from the selfishness and self-seeking that is characteristic of our human nature. It is only love that can be tolerant, humble enough to learn from another, or to take a criticism or a correction or a rebuke, or to bear with a brother in a mistake if it can righteously be borne with. Faith unites minds; love knits

hearts. (Col. 2:2). No agreement in doctrine can very long hold together a people who do not truly love one another. The disagreements and differences and difficulties that continually tend to arise can be met and adjusted only by love; and where that is lacking New Testament unity is impossible. Such is God's will. The same Lord who prayed that His disciples might be one *that the world might believe* that God had sent Him, also said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples because ye have love one to another." Till then the world will not know.

"I therefore the prisoner in the Lord beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye are called, with all *lowliness* and *meekness*, with *longsuffering*, *forbearing one another in love*; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. 4:1-3). Thus is true unity kept.

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### THE BLAME OF DIVISION.

The teaching of Jesus caused a great reaction among the stereotyped teachers of that day's orthodoxy. It caused trouble and division. Yet Jesus was not to be blamed. He spoke the truth in love. If it caused strife and enmity it was due not to Jesus Christ's work, but to the hardened and selfish hearts of the religious leaders, to whom any further light than they possessed was distasteful. In like manner if today a faithful man should bring out truth that has been unperceived, or ignored, or suppressed, it is likely to cause a reaction among those who think more of their written or unwritten creed than they do of the truth. It would of course be easy for such men then to create a division over the issues thus raised, and to throw the blame of the division upon the servant of God who did not recognize their sectarian boundaries but went on to know and to teach all he finds in God's word. But in doing this they would judge themselves, and the truth they have rejected would condemn them.

And even where a difference of doctrinal view (not directly affecting worship and practice) arises between brethren, and there may be just question as to the correctness of the position of the one who raised the point of difference, it would be the easiest thing in the world for a combine of objectors to create a division, and throw the blame of it upon the innocent party. If (for illustration) there had been men capable of it, and having the power to do so, in the days when David Lipscomb set forth his powerful teaching on the Relation of Christians to Civil Government—a teaching which then and until yet has caused great stir—if some set of publishers, or any other set of men, had required of him to cease from teaching along such disturbing lines—would he have paid any regard to such a demand? And if they had published him unfavorably and "warned" the "brotherhood"—would he have given up his position? Those who knew David Lipscomb can answer with conviction. Not he. It was his

humble boast that never, to please any man or sect or the brotherhood, did he surrender the least truth of God's word. And if for reasons of their own such evil brethren had begun to draw lines and to disfellowship, any who held with David Lipscomb's position, a division could and doubtless would have occurred, and those men could of course have charged him with "driving the wedge," and being "the divider" because he had taught things "not essential to salvation" to the disturbing of the churches. The only reason this was not done then was that there were no men who could or would have done it, or else the personal cause which always underlies in such cases was absent. But if it had happened David Lipscomb would have been no worse a man, nor more of a divider than he was.

I have transferred this in a figure, to David Lipscomb, as applicable to any other faithful man, to show that all are not "dividers" who are called such; and that it is easy for men who have the power and are capable of it to trump up a division upon even the smallest differences, and charge the guilt of it upon those who desire nothing else than to learn and to teach God's word. Let us care to follow John 7:24.—*R. H. B., in Word and Work, 1918.*

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### NOTES AND QUERIES.

1. What do you hold will be the relative position of the church and national Israel during the Millennium?

2. Do you hold that the saints of the Patriarchal and Jewish dispensations will constitute a part of the government, or ruling class during the Millennium?

#### ANSWERS.

1. The position of national Israel during the Millennium will be one of earthly supremacy, of exaltation and dominion over the nations. The Church, on the other hand, shares with the Lord Jesus Christ in His glory and special prerogatives—His over-rule over all, His throne, His royal power, His rights of judgment. She is ever with Him, participating in all He is and does.

2. As to the place that will be accorded to the saints of the Patriarchal and Jewish dispensations, during the Millennium, I know nothing more definite than what may be gathered from such passages as Matt. 8:11, 12; Heb. 11:9, 10, 13-16, 39, 40; Job 19:25-27; Dan. 12:13; Hag. 2:23, in so far as these passages have a bearing on the question.

\* \* \* \* \*

Do you hold that the kingdom spoken of in John 3:5 is the same as the kingdom spoken of in Dan. 2:44? If no, what kingdom do you teach John 3:5 has reference to?

John 3:5 has general application to the Kingdom of God. It applies to the Kingdom as it now exists (in the church) and to the Kingdom as it shall be upon the fulfilment of Dan. 2:44. Citizenship in the Kingdom is conditioned on the new birth.

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WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD.

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## NEWS AND NOTES.

From New Zealand: "Please find enclosed subscription for Word and Work; and please forward the bound volume of 1924, if you have it. We appreciate the paper."—R. Farley.

From Dallas: "The outlook for 1925 is brighter for the Hebrew work, than it was at this time last year. I pray that much good may be accomplished through the sacrifice that is being made by those fellowshipping it."—J. E. Blansett.

From Cynthiana, Ky.: "We feel greatly encouraged with the work at Salem. Think the work starts off with greater zeal this year. Good meetings this month. Church sending regularly for missions, both at home and abroad."—Edward E. Kranz.

From Los Angeles: "Please send me Word and Work. It helps me to a better Christian life."—Margaret Neal.

From Port Arthur, Tex.: "I have started my third year's work here. We are growing in every way, and planning a new church building for this year. There have been about 200 additions to this congregation since I came here. We are planning greater things for God in 1925."—L. E. Carpenter.

We have received a copy of "The Primitive Christian," bulletin of the Abilene, Texas, church, where F. B. Shepherd labors in the ministry of the Word.

Ivy J. Istre, of the Louisiana French Field, has changed his state and his postoffice; but he still lives in Louisiana: who can solve this puzzle?

J. R. Clark has moved to Linton, Ind., to labor with the good church there.

Our readers will enjoy the able contribution in this issue from brother R. K. Francis, evangelist of the church in Manchester, England. Also the article from the pen of brother Wiltshire, of Australia.

All who are eager to get the Word and Work lesson helps in good time each month should send a quarter for our Quarterly for the year.

From Toronto: "We are pleased to report that the work of the Lord is progressing somewhat in East Toronto. Since brother Firth's report of January, two more have put on the Lord in the institution of Baptism. Brother Chas. Petch will be with us until the first of March, after which Brother D. H. Jackson, of Fern Ave., Toronto, will be with us for one year."—E. Hogg.

"The Kingdom of God," 88 pages, 50c; "The Second Coming," 25c.

A few more schools can still be supplied with the Word and Work Lesson Quarterly—for adult and senior classes, 6c each.

Don Carlos Janes is now on a lecture tour, Southwest. And he has stirring things to tell, of what he has heard and seen and learned in his world travels.

"Announcement has already been made of the standing granted Harding College by our state university. On January 6, the school was also approved by the Texas State Department of Education as a standard Senior College. The letter from the department says: 'The State Board of Examiners has approved Harding College as a standard four-year college for 1924-25 and subsequent years.' The letter states further that 'work done in your institution during or subsequent to 1924-25 will be accorded full recognition by this Department in the matter of teacher certification.' It is with deepest gratitude that we receive this recognition. For while all states by common courtesy accept the rating given by each to its own colleges this direct approval strengthens the standing of Harding College, both at home and with other states."—L. C. Sears.

"As many Word and Work readers already know, for some years the brethren in and around Graton, Calif., have maintained a grade and high school, where the Bible is recognized and taught as the chief text book. The work has grown beyond their expectations; and it now seems imperative that a larger and more suitable building be constructed. This the brethren have planned to do, giving money and labor to the extent of their ability. Their burdens are already heavy, as the school is supported wholly by personal donations, and of course the running expenses must be kept up; so the needs are being made known to others that they may have opportunity to have fellowship in this work.

"Will the Lord's people everywhere consider the situation? This and the Santa Rosa Christian Academy (recently established) are, so far as we know, the only schools of this kind in all this big far West. In this section Churches of Christ are few. There are prospects of reaching the Japanese people through the school. We feel that this is a splendid opportunity; and those wishing to have fellowship in the work may send contributions to Dell Davis, Sebastopol, Calif., Route 2. Any gift, large or small, will be gratefully received."—J. Edward Boyd.

Chattanooga sends a club of fifty; Mrs. Holloway rolls up about a hundred and a half at this time of year. Many other fine clubs are coming in—the best renewal response we have had for some years.

From Greenville, S. C.: "The work here moves on with encouragement. Two baptized last week. Bible Study started last night. Fair returns the past year."—G. F. Gibbs.

From Jacksonville: "Our new church building is going along fine. The roof is on now, and the workmen are on the inside at work. We hope to be in it by February 15th, Lord willing.

"We had a great year last year. Many souls were led to Christ and about \$6,300 went through the treasury. Baptized two on the last two Monday nights, respectively. We have three Bible classes every week, aside from the regular prayer-meeting service, and two jail meetings a week. Bro. W. G. Daniel, a man full of the Word and the Holy Spirit, teaches one week-day class. Bro. N. B. Hardeman is to begin a series of meetings on March 2, D. V. Pray for us."—H. N. Rutherford.

**THE PRACTICABILITY OF CHRISTIAN UNITY.**

R. K. FRANCIS.

It has been said that before Christian unity can be made practical, a practical plan, by which, and upon which, all Christians can unite must be found. This seems to be the one thing lacking today, to make unity practicable. It is a great gain that we have come to realize the need for union among Christians, as the great work of today. The time therefore, has come when, in the interest of this realized need, all ambiguities should cease, and we should approach the question with certitude, clearness of vision, and full knowledge of New Testament teaching thereupon.

The prevailing feeling today among the professing followers of Christ, toward unity, is more than a desire; it is a necessity. This being so, we must now see that no denominational plan, nay, no human plan, can claim to be an adequate base on which to build the united church of God's glorious Son. We must go back to the New Testament basis as the only and altogether adequate foundation. Of course, this carries with it our conviction that the New Testament is a true record, that it did not grow up through human agency in a mist of fable and legend and untruth, but is indeed the word of God.

**OUR LORD'S PRAYER.**

Certain it is that our Redeemer did not, in John 17, pray for an impossible or impracticable something. That unity for which He yearned was a spiritual unity; it was also an organic unity. He compares it with His own oneness with the Father. That unity has not yet been attained by the whole of those calling themselves by His name; but with a sufficient motive, and along New Testament lines, it is not only possible but can speedily be achieved.

The early church was one. The disciples of the Christ, under apostolic preaching and teaching, formed a community of brethren, who were associated together upon a broad basis of liberty, equality, and loyalty, illuminated, directed, and united in one Spirit. Their organization under their great Head was a marvel of simplicity and of spiritual power. Can that unity, that oneness, be reproduced today? Undoubtedly. And the cause of the Christ would gain immensely thereby. But we must get back to essential New Testament principles for it. The New Testament supplies the model; and it is a perfect model. The legislators of the New Testament Church were led by the Spirit into ALL truth; they left nothing to be discovered by the "critics" of today. We must have therefore, the restoration of that model church, and unity upon the same basis; the truth as it was at first proclaimed, the law of pardon as divinely given, the worship, the elders, bishops, overseers, and deacons, and the love, unity, and power of that early church. Here is Christian unity. No federation of sects, no union of denominations, is Christian

unity. It can only be upon the Divine plan, and the Divine plan is found only in the Christian Scriptures.

#### THE BASIS OF UNITY.

Three things at least must characterize this foundation—it must be authoritative, secure, and infallible. Without these qualities the foundation will not stand, neither can our minds and hearts ever be satisfied. But no human basis can produce or possess these qualities, so that to talk of the "Apostles' Creed" and "the Nicene Creed" as fulfilling certain conditions towards Christian unity is, in our judgment, to talk learned nonsense. If we want to adequately guard the faith and secure unity in the twentieth century we can do so not by imitating the fourth century and formulating a human creed, but by a return, pure and simple, to the New Testament. The Divine plan, presented therein, lacks nothing necessary to unite the whole people of God.

We find in our investigation along this line that the only apostolic and Divine confession of faith which God the Father has laid for the Church, and that on which the Christ, Himself, said He would build, is that sublime and supreme fact that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of the living God. He is the great central fact of Christianity; the peculiarity of the Christian system; its specific attribute. This fact is declared in a proposition for our belief, and the very terms of this marvelous proposition involves the commitment of the human soul to a Divine Person, on the ground of the faith of the heart. The whole faith of the primitive Christ was based upon a living Christ. He was the absolute Sovereign.

The principles of our Christian religion, like the grand laws of nature, are few and simple, yet omnipotent to all the ends of their Author. There are grand principles in Christianity; two laws revealed and developed, the combination of which produces harmony and loveliness in mind and heart.

These two are involved and embodied in the sublime fact that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God. These two ideas are, the *Person* of the Christ, and His *Office*. Here is the whole revelation of the mystery of the Christian constitution. A clear conception of, and a cordial belief in, these two facts will make any man a Christian; and he may, by Divine help, carry them out in their vast dimensions and glorious developments to all eternity. Let there be no mistake here. Christianity is not an ethic, it is not a legal system; it is a *gospel*, and **FACTS**, not doctrines, form its basis. Further, the Christian Scriptures have nothing to do with opinions, or abstract reasonings; but deal with the fundamental facts of the gospel, which are the bed-rock of faith.

The great creed truth, the central foundation fact of Christianity, is intelligible, comprehending all necessary truth and having all saving power. This position must be accepted even though it involves denominational sacrifices. To teach or preach Christ is not merely to teach or preach abstract doctrines con-

cerning the Christ. In Paul's declaration, "I preach Christ and Him crucified," the predicate "crucified" is so vast and deep in its importance as to make such a conception as the above forever impossible. The fulness of God could utter itself only in a deed, and in such a deed.

#### FOUNDATION OF CHURCH.

The Divine must be the basis of unity; this is the Rock all may and must build upon. Then there will be unity of faith, of affection, of purpose, and unity of co-operation. Any attempt at Christian unity on a lower plane than the New Testament basis must prove a failure. The world by human wisdom could never find God; He had to be revealed. The world by human wisdom can never follow God; but the power of the Spirit through the teaching of those inspired men will lead all men to Him. Christian unity is possible and practicable on the Divine basis.

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### "THAT BLESSED HOPE."

J. WILTSHIRE.

The word "hope" is a very pleasant word without any qualification whatever. The Apostle Paul, however, has something in mind which the plain, unaided word hope cannot express. He therefore employs another word not inferior to hope to make the expression more worthy: "*that blessed hope.*" Now this phrase is so moulded that it defines something which as an unailing fountain of joyous inspiration abides alone. Moreover the Apostle says "the grace of God that bringeth salvation . . . hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world: looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." How eminently practical are the lessons of the grace of God! It lays down every principle necessary for a virtuous life, and holds before all who follow its leading the unailing lamp of a joyous hope.

What is this hope? It is that which springs from the resurrection of our Lord. It is the harvest of which He was the first fruits. It is the fulfilment of the first fruits. It is the fulfilment of His Word, "Because I live, ye shall live also." It is what the Apostle John means when he says, "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

*"Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."* (1 John 3:3).

Of course he does. It is as natural that he should do so, as it is that an affectionate wife should desire to have her house clean and tidy, and herself pleasingly dressed to welcome her beloved home after a period of absence. "That blessed hope" is of very practical value. Any phase of truth which is calculated

to purify the life of a disciple should never be neglected by the teachers of the Churches.

*"Abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."* (1 John 2:28).

The fiancee abides in the absent lover by recalling and re-reading his words, and by fondly admiring the tokens which his love has expressed itself in. If she abide not in him and her heart seeks other objects, those words are dead and those gifts are expressionless. The coming of the lover is regarded with shame and apprehension. So it is with the Christian in respect of his Lord. Many regard His Word as cold, His gifts as commonplace, and His coming as a subject for dread. The heart has loved other objects perhaps, and faith has been broken. "That blessed Hope" inspires to faithfulness.

*"Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh."* (Matt. 26:13).

I have heard a good man criticised because he at once believed the coming of the Lord to be near at hand, and engaged himself in a large philanthropic scheme, which was to anticipate the needs of many generations. Personally, I think he was right. If the scheme is well-pleasing to our Lord, He wants to come and find us at it, even if we have no more than excavated for the foundations. Christ is not awaiting the completion of plans, He awaits the preparation of man, and man's life is often complete while his plan is only a fragment. So shall it be in the coming of the Lord.

*"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour"* (Philippians 3:20).

"But Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait,

The sky, not the grave, is our goal:

O trump of the angel! O voice of the Lord!

Blessed hope! blessed rest of my soul!"

*"This same Jesus . . . . . shall so come in like manner"* (Acts 1:11).

Not in the person of the Holy Spirit, not as the angel of death, but "this same Jesus." "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven." The angels for ever vetoed star-gazing. He will come without our gazing into the heavens; He will probably come more quickly if we keep our eyes and hearts on the task which He has appointed us.

"What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." (2 Peter 3:11).

"For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11:9).

May God bless richly the devout and prayerful reader! I have purposely selected "That Blessed Hope" as the theme for this week. In its realization we shall meet again. Maranatha!

—From *Christian Advocate, Birmingham, England.*

## SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

R. H. B.

"Watchman, what of the night?" The old question still and often arises in the hearts of God's people. The night has been long; and the sure promise of the glorious morning draws our eyes to the eastern sky, if haply we may discern the signs of the dawn. Is it wrong to ask such questions? Has God given us any sign of the approaching day?

We know that the Jews of Christ's day were rebuked by the Lord because they had not read the signs of their time better. "Ye hypocrites, ye know how to interpret the face of the earth and the heaven; but how is it that ye know not how to interpret this time?" (Luke 12:56). "Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times." (Matt. 16:3). With the word of unfulfilled prophecy before them, and events transpiring in their sight, should they not have recognized the time? But "because they knew him not, neither the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath," they "fulfilled them in condemning him." (Acts 13:27).

It is perfectly true that "of that day and of that hour knoweth no man;" nor will anyone know of it till it comes to pass. But it is equally true that the Lord Jesus gave His disciples certain indications by which they might know the near approach of the great expected event of His return. In the same sermon in which He told them that no man knew, nor could know, the day and the hour, He gave them, in answer to their request, the signs of His coming, and of "the end of the world," "the consummation of the age." (Matt. 24:3, mg.) Certain things, He said, would happen, which should be of no special significance. "Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled; for these things must needs come to pass; but the end is not yet." (Matt. 24:6). But immediately he mentions something that is significant—the contrast being most clearly brought out in Luke: "*Then said he unto them: Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be great earthquakes, and in divers places famines and pestilences; and there shall be terrors and great signs from heaven.*" (Luke 21:11, 12). After having mentioned some occurrences that would come *before* all this (viz. persecution of disciples, siege and fall of Jerusalem, captivity and dispersion of Israel, the bondage of Jerusalem "until"—) He resumes with the signs: "And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity for the roaring of the sea, and the billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." (Luke 21:25-27). Now comes the word to His disciples concerning this: "But when ye see these things *begin to come to pass*, look up, and lift up your

heads; because the time of your redemption draweth nigh." (Luke 21:28). Most evidently the Lord expected them to keep their eyes open and to mark the course of events; and He wanted them to know when the time was near. "And he spake to them a parable: Behold the fig tree, and all the trees: when they now shoot forth, *ye see it* and know of your own selves that the summer is nigh. *Even so ye also, when ye see these things coming to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh.*" (Luke 21:31). It is worthy of our special notice that when the kingdom of God is nigh, our redemption is nigh. (Comp. Rom. 8:23). The one is contemporaneous or closely connected with the other. Moreover, His disciples were not to wait till all these things had run their course before they could know, but "when these things *begin to come to pass* lift up your heads, for the time of your redemption draweth nigh."

Now it so happened that very recently some of these things referred to came to pass as never before. The four things our Lord enumerates, War, Earthquakes, Famines, Pestilences, have had unexampled fulfilments within the last decade. During the last ten years, the world has had the greatest war of all history, the most tremendous earthquakes on record, the greatest of famines, and the greatest pestilence. At no time in past history did it come to pass that nation rose against nation and kingdom against kingdom, so literally and so extensively as in the recent great war. It was a world-conflict, and of such magnitude as had never been known. The same is true concerning earthquakes. Mr. S. D. Gordon, who has made a special study of this feature, says that, taking all possible counter-arguments into consideration—the fact that better records are kept, that more perfect instruments register more perfectly the earth-tremors, and that wider publicity is given through the press, yet scientists have reached the conclusion "that there has been an increase, and a steadily marked increase, through the centuries, and especially in the last twenty-five years. . . . . The year 1906-1907 was unusually marked, and the increase since, distinctly marked. . . . . In December, 1920, the worst earthquake up to that time occurred in the province of Kansu, in Western China, when it was said 'the mountains walked.' And now in September of 1923, the Japan earthquake is reckoned *the very worst yet recorded.*"

The same arresting fact applies to the famines—the one in North China first, which seemed overwhelming in its awful extent, but was eclipsed by the magnitude of the Russian famine a very short time after—the greatest of all famines in human knowledge.

So, likewise, the pestilence that arose during the war, and has never wholly disappeared, the "influenza," girdled the globe, and claimed an incredible number of victims in all countries and climes—far, far more than the War destroyed. It was the most extensive and destructive pestilence in human history.

When these things begin to come to pass! Have they begun so to come to pass? Surely no generation has had a warning so grave and impressive as this; and at no time before have believers had so loud a call to look up and lift up their heads because the time of their redemption draweth nigh.

If then the Lord has Himself given us signs of the approaching Day, shall we not heed them and regard them?

In next month's issue other "Signs of the Times" will be considered.

## THE DUTY AND WORTH OF PRAYER.

When I was asked to take charge of the prayer hour, I was very glad to say "Yes." I would rather have it than all the other hours put together. I think if God has given to me any special message it has been to call people to prayer. I believe there have been thousands and tens of thousands of people who were brought to salvation in answer to prayer.

Will you turn to Colossians 4:2? "Continue steadfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving." Here is a very definite command to God's believing children, not merely to pray, but to continue steadfastly in prayer; praying day after day, week after week, month after month, making praying our business. I think that praying is the chief business of the Christian, at least of the Christian worker. You know we have a way of contrasting prayer and work; we say of one Christian: "He is a praying Christian;" and of another: "He is a working Christian." Well, I want to tell you that prayer is the hardest work we can do; and if we pray as we ought, it is a work that takes more out of us—it is the most exhausting work that an intelligent Christian can engage in. It is not merely a matter of privilege, but of command; not merely that we are to pray occasionally, but to pray steadfastly.

First Thessalonians 5:17: "Pray without ceasing." That doesn't mean, of course, that we are to be praying every minute, but that when we start prayer, we are to keep it up. So many people pray and pray, and then quit; the command is to keep it up. How long? Till the Lord comes.

James 5:16: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another." We are commanded to pray for one another; not merely is it a privilege for us to do so, but we are commanded to do so. Believers in Christ are commanded to continue steadfastly in prayer; and if we don't, we are disobeying God. The Christian who doesn't spend much time in prayer, is disobeying God; you are a rebel against God if you don't spend much time in prayer.

Luke 18:1: "And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint"; "ought always"—not "may," but "ought." And the word there in the

Greek is emphatic; it is the strongest word there is indicating obligation. "Men ought always to pray."

Now a passage from the Old Testament, First Chronicles 16:11: "Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually." Another passage from the New Testament, First Timothy 2:8: "I will therefore that men pray everywhere."

These are enough for us to know that God commands the believer to continue steadfastly in prayer; and if we do not do it, we are definitely disobeying God.

I once heard an evangelist, at the opening of a large campaign, say that he was so busy, he had so many duties to attend to he really didn't find time to pray. "Often when I close the day," he said, "I have not time to kneel down, but I just say, 'Oh God, Thou knowest it is all right between me and thee' and fall asleep."

I went out of that meeting with a sad heart. Any man who even lets Christian work crowd out prayer is disobeying God.

When that man left town, the ministers agreed that the kindest thing they could do about the meetings was to say nothing about them. There was nothing accomplished. That is a temptation that comes to one who gets a large hearing in Christian work.

#### HOW TO GET THINGS FROM GOD.

The second thought I wish to give you, is that prayer is God's appointed way of obtaining things, Matthew 7:7-11: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him."

Luke 11:13: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Mark 9:28, 29: "And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, How is it that we could not cast it out? And he said unto them, This kind can come out by nothing save by prayer." Why was it they could not cast the demon out? Because that kind only came out by prayer, and they hadn't been praying as they ought. Why is it we can't cast out the devil in the name of the Lord? Simply because we haven't been on our knees and faces before God as we ought to. Prayer is God's appointed way of getting things.

I want to give you another thought closely related to it. You will find it in James 4:2: "Ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ask not." Here is the most strenuous activity put forth to obtain things: "Ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war" and

yet are getting nothing. "Ye have not because ye ask not." The reason why we don't have the things that we most earnestly desire, is because we don't ask, we don't pray for them. That is the secret of our lack, temporal and spiritual,—neglect of prayer. That is the secret of the poverty and powerlessness of the average Christian, of the average minister, and the average church. Why haven't you more victory in your life, more victory over sin? *Neglect of prayer.* Why is it that Satan gets the victory over you? *Neglect of prayer.* There is only one reason. "Ye have not because ye ask not."

Why is it that I as a Sunday-school teacher have not more power in teaching the Word to my class? Why are there so few conversions in my class? *Neglect of prayer.* Why do we see so few revivals? You say conditions are changed. No! Believers are changed. We don't pray as we used to. Praying in a great many circles has come to be a forgotten art. We can get up a great evangelistic campaign; we can put out a lot of advertising. Moody didn't know anything about advertising; he didn't know how to organize a campaign. His campaigns were nothing compared to the campaigns now-a-days, so far as the organization is concerned. He didn't know anything about having a shop worker, and a worker for the high schools, and a singer, and a pianist, and an assistant singer, and a whole crowd of twenty to fifty helpers along with him. He didn't know how to work the newspapers,—he didn't have to, they went without working. We could give Moody some points on a great many of these things, but there was something D. L. Moody did know. *He knew how to pray.*

Finn didn't even have a Sankey with him; he went absolutely alone, as far as human helpers were concerned, but I tell you he moved the world. In one meeting in Rochester, when he gave out the invitation, there came down the aisle the Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals of New York City, and pretty much every lawyer in Rochester followed him. That meeting in Rochester was some meeting, and yet he didn't even have an organist with him. John Livingston preached where they sang nothing but "Psalms," and they didn't even have an organ, but there were five hundred people who definitely dated their conversion to one morning, when he spoke to them. John Livingston knew how to pray, and he spent the whole night before that morning in prayer.

I have heard any number of people say: "Oh, I did love to hear D. L. Moody preach." I have heard some of his sermons more than twenty times, and I would rather hear any one of his sermons twenty times more, than I would care to hear any other man on earth preach a new sermon. D. L. Moody was indeed a great preacher, but I want to tell you that he knew better how to pray than he knew how to preach. I have forgotten many of the sermons he used to preach; but I shall never forget how sometimes he would say: "Torrey, let us pray."

## PRESCRIPTION FOR A REVIVAL.

I am firmly convinced that I have a prescription that will bring a revival to any community, any church. I have given it around the world, and a great many have taken it, and it has never failed. It is this: Let a few of God's people, they don't need to be many, get thoroughly right with God themselves,—the rest will count for nothing unless you start right there; then let them band themselves together to pray for a revival until God opens the heavens and comes down. Then let them put themselves at God's disposal to use them as He sees fit. That will bring a revival to any church, any community.

Brethren, if you are leading a defeated life, nobody is to blame but yourself, and the whole secret of it is, you are not praying enough. If you are a failure as a Sunday school teacher there is nobody to blame but yourself. If you are a failure as a father or mother, if your children are growing up out of Christ, you are to blame; it is the believer's privilege to have converted children.

I said that in my early ministry in Minnesota, and one of the old Methodist ministers came to me and said: "How old are you?" I said: "Twenty-seven." "How many children have you?" "Two." He said: "You'll know more about it when you get older." Well, I do know more about it; I know it's true. I have had the joy of seeing each one of those children converted, and in Christian work. If you are not having success in evangelistic work, it is the fault of no one else but yourself. You say: "Conditions are so changed;" but God isn't changed. You say: "It is so hard for a man to get calls." Perhaps it is, human calls, but you can get divine calls, and they are better. Oh, if we believers who are here today would really believe what the Bible teaches about prayer, and get down to business, the business of praying, we would see something worth while accomplished. Let us go to God now in prayer.—R. A. Torrey.

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One would be very glad to forestall every misapprehension and avoid every ambiguous word, but it is difficult. On the last page of the Kingdom book I notice an expression which is open to misunderstanding. It is stated there that *Christians* are not in the judgment of Matt. 25. But by this is not meant that "the righteous" there are not believers in Christ; but that they are not Christians of the present dispensation. For to the church is made the promise that she shall be caught up to meet Christ in the air; and when He appears in glory she appears with Him (Col. 3:4); and when He sits on the throne of His glory she shall sit down with Him (Rev. 3:21); and that she shares with her Lord the prerogative of judging the world. (1 Cor. 6:2). All of which would evidently be impossible if she were judged along with the world in the same judgment.

R. H. B.

## REAL CONSECRATION.

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me: and art acquainted with all my ways.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.—Psalm 139.

O thou Searcher of all hearts, I herewith solemnly appeal to thee in attestation of the truth that I have surrendered my little all to thy will and disposal. My past, my present, my future. All I am, or have been or hope to be. All I have, or hope to have, and all I control, and shall ever possess or control. My time, my whole time, by night or by day. All my enjoyments of whatever character. All my sufferings, however severe, or from whatever source. All my affectional nature with the objects to which it clings, or shall cling. Having thus without reserve surrendered my being to thee for all time and eternity, I am simply at thy disposal. Having surrendered my will to the guidance of thine on every subject, I declare myself ready to accept whatever thou shalt choose or appoint.

This body, being thine, is now to be used for thy glory. Its appetites are to be indulged only as it pleaseth thee. Its wants are to be met by the substances which thou hast provided. I have therefore agreed to eat that variety and degree of food which may best qualify me to glorify thee, as far as thou givest me light. Help thou me when by carelessness or to gratify bodily appetites, I have injured this temple of thine, to feel the need of atoning blood. And since I have voluntarily chosen the Lord Jesus Christ as my wisdom, my righteousness, my sanctification and redemption, I now recognize that this body which belongs to Him, shall be attired as He has commanded. Having yielded my deathless power to Him I recognize Him as the Sovereign, whose will in all respects, is to be the guide of life. I am therefore solemnly covenanted to attire this body to please Him. I will therefore seek with all the wisdom He gives, to avoid that which is gaudy and foolish, and be contented with plain, neat dress, suited to the avocation to which He has called me. And will now and hereafter, seek my "adorning," not in my apparel, as the wearing "of gold, or pearls, or costly array," but in a "meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." 1 Tim. 2:9; 1 Pet. 3:3, 4.

Thy substance, of which thou hast made me the steward, I will now and forever dispose of as thou shalt direct. I will carefully inquire of thee as to the outlay of thy money, and use all now in my care, or that shall hereafter be entrusted to me, in view of the glory and spread of thy kingdom. If called to business life, I will be diligent and frugal, so as to make all the money I can, to be used as thou shalt designate for the spread of thy Holy Gospel. If I find my heart hesitate to give any part of this substance, to help the poor, or in any other way, which

thou shalt choose for thy glory, I will make my wicked heart surrender to thy will, and thy substance in my hand shall be used to glorify thee!

Having made a complete surrender of my spiritual nature for thy blessed purpose, including all my organs of sense, I am covenanted to use these in accordance with thy pleasure. I therefore engage to use my eyes to please thee, and carefully to avoid looking at any forbidden object, and so to guard my organs of hearing that my soul may not be defiled by my listening to depraved or foolish and idle conversation. Do thou so inspire my heart with wisdom and give me such determination of will, that thy holy habitation within, may never be defiled, through any indulgence of sense; or my spirit, or body, ever be tainted by impure impressions made through either of the five senses which I have consecrated to thee. I do therefore beseech thee for grace, so to guard all my innocent appetites, and so to use all the functions of my body, that in these thou mayest be glorified. I have consecrated to thee my tongue, that henceforth I may honor thee by my words. In this I am covenanted to avoid vain, loose, idle conversation and to put such restraint on witty and jocular utterances as I may find pleaseth thee, and to avoid too lengthened conversations even on solid and religious subjects, as thy word declares, "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin." Prov. 10:19.

My social capacities I have devoted to thee, and thereby acknowledge my obligation to use my social nature only as thou shalt choose. Help thou me in this most difficult task, to avoid the frivolities of social life as never to grieve thee with any indulgence of that which is merely worldly; and yet to maintain such cheerful demeanor as may ever make apparent the attractions and glory of the cross. In all my social intercourse, I am pledged to be pleased only as I am pleasing thee. This covenant to be wholly thine, involves complete separation from everything which displeaseth thee. I herewith, therefore, solemnly agree to separate myself from all and every fellowship which thou hast forbidden, and do this day and forever sunder my connections with all fraternities which require a heart union with ungodly men or influences.

Having separated myself from all that is evil, I solemnly set myself apart to seek that which is good, to promote thy glory in the highest well-being of the human race. I am therefore henceforth covenanted to employ the time and power and money given me as far as I have wisdom; not to please and benefit myself, but to please and glorify thee, and be a blessing to the souls that thou hast made.

To this end, help thou me to avoid vain and trivial pursuits, all light and foolish literature and conversation, with all sluggishness and idle habits; that my whole time, not needed for rest, may be given to holy activities in solid reading, reflection, study of Scripture, active business life, and in all such ways as

thou shalt choose. So that I may not live to myself, nor for my own happiness, but to him and for him who died and rose again.  
—M. L. Haney.

## REPORT OF HEBREW MISSION FOR 1924.

Stephen D. Eckstein, Missionary in Charge.  
Peak and Main Street Church, Dallas, Texas.  
J. E. Blansett, Minister.

January 11, C. M. Cockrell, Treasurer, Garrett Avenue Church of Christ, turned over balance on hand . . . . .	\$193.41
Other contributions for January . . . . .	32.00
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>\$225.41</b>
February . . . . .	\$220.75
March . . . . .	204.95
April . . . . .	167.80
May . . . . .	175.25
June . . . . .	162.50
July . . . . .	188.25
August . . . . .	117.25
September . . . . .	254.20
October . . . . .	173.65
November . . . . .	179.50
December . . . . .	317.51

**\$2387.02**

Charged to Salary . . . . .	\$1310.00
Rent . . . . .	750.00
All other items . . . . .	195.03

**\$2255.03**

Balance on hand December 31. . . . . \$131.99

We wish to extend our hearty thanks to all who aided in carrying on the work through 1924.

May God's choicest blessings attend you all through 1925, and on your part, may you still help to carry on the work to a glorious success, is the prayer of your servant,  
Geo. Hardison, Treas.

### Funds for Sister Kennedy, December, 1924.

F. L. Rowe, Cincinnati, Ohio . . . . .	\$5.00
Miss L. A. MacDougall, West Gore, Nova Scotia . . . . .	1.00
Mrs. Myrtle MacDougall, West Gore, Nova Scotia . . . . .	1.00
"Her Friends," Lexington, Mass. . . . .	2.00
Church of Christ, Henning, Tenn. . . . .	25.00
A Brother, Louisville, Kentucky. . . . .	10.00
Miss N. Ethel Hoag, Wauchula, Florida . . . . .	5.00
By Chas. M. Neal, Dugger, Indiana:	
Dugger Church of Christ . . . . .	10.00
Ellis Church of Christ . . . . .	2.00
New Union Church of Christ . . . . .	1.00
Mr. and Mrs. Glessie Eades, Sullivan, Indiana . . . . .	2.00
Mr. and Mrs. Chas. M. Neal . . . . .	1.00

**Total . . . . . \$65.00**

Sent Sister Kennedy by New York Check . . . . . \$60.00

Balance . . . . . \$ 5.00

Many thanks to all for this much needed help.

**R. G. Schell.**

## A CALL FOR BULGARIA.

On Lord's Day morning, Oct. 19, 1924, a "stranger" might have been seen walking down the road south from Valdosta, Ga. His worldly possessions were the clothes he wore and—a Bible. Without home or relatives, for sixteen years ago he left his home in Bulgaria, and came to America to find work.

With little education and for some years unable to speak the English language he went here and there hunting work. In May, 1921, he joined the Socialists in order to help secure work, but soon found out that they had little or no use for God or the Bible. Being raised in a Catholic country he had but little opportunity to read the Bible, but about two years ago he secured a copy of the Bible which has since been his constant companion. He spends much time reading the precious book.

Seven miles south of Valdosta, on the Sunday morning referred to, he stopped at the home of Bro. Frank Morrow to ask for something to eat. While Sister Morrow prepared a lunch for him, Bro. Morrow taught him the way of the Lord more perfectly, and what one must do to be saved. He immediately replied that he was then ready to obey. The same afternoon, in the presence of many members of the Dasher Church, he made the good confession and was baptized. That night, before a large audience, he told how happy he was that he had found his Savior. He said that though his home-land people knew not God, yet "they shall know." The desire to go as a missionary to far away Catholic Bulgaria seems to grow every day. But he needs much teaching yet and we are holding him with us for that purpose. He is taking Bible work in Dasher Bible School and is also being helped by the brethren. He is very anxious to know more of the Bible. Why not send him as an interpreter with some missionary to Bulgaria, the missionary continuing to instruct him? Many Austrians and Russians speak practically the same language as the Bulgarians.

He wants to go next Fall if the Lord wills. *Is there not some Christian whose soul is aflame with the love of Jesus and with the desire to save lost souls who will go with Brother John Petroff? Petroff is willing to lay down his life to save others.*

"BEHOLD I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR."

That God may stir up the heart of some faithful man to go to this destitute field with our dear Brother Petroff is the prayer of the Dasher Church and Dasher Bible School.

For further information address Brethren O. P. Copeland or Frank Morrow, Valdosta, Ga., R.F.D.

FRANK MORROW,  
A. L. COLSON,  
H. C. HINTON,

Ministers.

O. P. COPELAND,  
P. W. MCLEOD,

Elders.

## THE MISSIONARY OUTLOOK.

DON CARLOS JANES.

Though the reports have not all been received yet, it is believed the work of 1924 will show up remarkably well and that it is quite possible, by God's blessing, to make 1925 our very best year on foreign fields. There are many cheering things, such as conversions abroad, building operations, new workers, new churches giving to missions, etc., to report. It is a pleasure to announce that even weak churches and some that are in debt are giving to the foreign work. But more about these things later. It seems that better support for Bros. Langpaap, Bixler, and McCaleb, and for Sister Kennedy, is in order; and we should greatly bestir ourselves in prayer and otherwise to open work this year in China and get a dependable man off to India. The policy of sending funds directly to unknown natives is not encouraged. A special monthly bulletin is supplied free to those who care to do what they can to enlarge the work.

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### IF CHRIST SHOULD COME TOMORROW.

It ought not to make any difference when Christ should come, but as a matter of fact it would.

Many of us could not continue our present forms of either business or pleasure. There are sins which we are conscious that we should not permit if Christ should come tomorrow.

Oh, but you say, "I do not think he is coming." Then read God's word, which declares, "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Answer these questions:

1. Would you continue your present associations?
2. Would you disregard your present financial obligations, either to God or to man?
3. Would you permit the sin in which you now indulge "If Christ should come tomorrow?"

—J. Wilbur Chapman.

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Some folk have great intellectual difficulties. When it is stated that Washington, D. C., is not the same as the United States, but that all who are in Washington are in the United States, it passes their comprehension. This mystery is great, but I speak about the church and the Kingdom.

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The Word and Work follows the general custom of reprinting, from time to time, valuable articles from the ablest writers of the day, and of other days. In such reprints, there may be found, though rarely, statements of minor consequence that might be open to criticism. Whatever we attach our signatures to—that we heartily endorse; whatever we print or reprint from others, adding no corrections or explanations,—that we have judged worthy of thoughtful reading, and in the main, of acceptance.

—The Editors.

# The Lord's Day Lessons.

The Scripture Text used in these lessons is the American Standard Revised Version, Copyright, Nelson & Sons.

## FIRST LORD'S DAY LESSON OF FEBRUARY.

Lesson 5.

February 1, 1925.

### THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES.

**Golden Text:** He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit.—John 15:5.

**Lesson Text:** John 15:1-11.

1. I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit. 3 Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples. 9 Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide ye in my love. 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

Verse 6. If a man abide not in Christ—what five things follow? At what point might a restoration still be possible?

Verse 7. What condition of all-prevailing prayer is here set forth? What is the proof that His word is abiding in us? (John 5:38) Will such people be apt to make wrong petitions? Is not this a great challenge to us?

Verse 8. If the branches bear much fruit, what will it mean to the Husbandman? How shall we be proved to be Christ's disciples?

Verses 9, 10. Is the Husbandman's tender care of the Vine a mark of His great love? Is the Vine's free giving out of itself to the branches

Verse 1. Looking forward through verse 4—What three parties figure in this allegory? Who is the Husbandman (the gardener)? Who is the Vine? Who are the branches? What is the Gardener's business? What is the Vine's? What responsibility belongs to the branch?

Verse 2. If a branch bears no fruit, is there any reason why it should be left standing? What does the Husbandman do in that case? But if fruit appears, what does He do? Why? Is this cleansing and pruning always a pleasant process? (Heb. 12:11).

Verse 3. Were they already cleansed? By what? Is the cleansing also progressive? (Eph. 5:26, 27).

Verse 4. Does the Christian abide in his Vine automatically, like natural branches in their vine; or is it a matter of will and choice? What exhortation runs through all this? (Compare Acts 11:23). Can a branch be independent of the vine? Can a branch bear any fruit apart from the vine? Can a Christian, unless he remains in union with the living Christ?

Verse 5. What relation does the Lord Jesus sustain toward His disciples? What does the Vine see to? Does the branch have to trouble about that part of it? What is the great thing for the branch to see to? If the branch abides in Him, in what way will it show? What can a man do apart from Christ?

proof of love? How much does the Father love the Son? (John 3:35). How much does the Son love His own that are in the world? How much does the Father love those who are Christ's (John 17:24)? What exhortation does the Lord Jesus base on this? Comp. Jude 21. How do we abide in His love? Did the Lord Jesus abide in His Father's love in the same way?

Verse 11. Did the Lord say these things to make His disciples miserable? Do His words contain the key to true joy and happiness?

#### NOTES ON LESSON 5.

##### TEACHING POINTS AND QUESTIONS.

1. The three Parties in this great Comparison. (1) The Husbandman—the Father, He is the Author and Planner of it all. He sent the Son. He planted the Vine and tends it. (2) The Vine—the Lord Jesus Christ. The Source of life and power to His own who are united to Him. (3) The branches—the disciples; who are utterly worthless in themselves, but through union with Christ, the Vine, bring forth Divine fruit through Him. (Phil. 1:11).
2. The Christian's Marvellous Position. His high and intimate relationship to Christ the Lord.
3. The Living Christ, our Necessity. Other religions can flourish, though their founders are dead and gone. Christianity could too, if it were only a system of doctrine or morals. If Christ had only been a great Teacher, or a high-Character and Example, or merely a Benefactor, it would not matter whether He lives or not. But Christianity is a Life, which we hold only in union with our living Lord.
4. The Christian's one great Responsibility—to abide in Christ. "That with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord." Acts 11:23. To maintain that relationship unbroken, in continued faith and obedience is the Christian's one concern. (Consider 1 John 2:24).
5. The Importance of Fruit. That is the practical issue of it all. No fruit—the Husbandman cuts off the branch. When He sees some fruit, he prunes that there may be more fruit. Then He wants much fruit, and therein He is glorified.

Four things are fruit: fruit of the lips (Heb. 13:15); every good work done in Jesus' name (Col. 1:10); fruit of the Spirit—graces of Christlike character (Gal. 5:22); the spreading of the gospel and winning of souls. (Rom. 1:13).

## SECOND LORD'S DAY LESSON OF FEBRUARY.

Lesson 6.

February 8, 1925.

### CHRIST'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

**Golden Text:** Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are.—John 17:11.

**Lesson Text:** John 17:1-13.

1. These things spake Jesus; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee: 2 even as thou gavest him authority over all flesh, that to all whom thou hast given him, he should give eternal life. 3 And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ. 4 I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify

Verse 1. After what things was this? See John 13-16. Why did He lift up His eyes to heaven? (Isa. 66:1). What hour had at last come? What did He request of the Father? Why did He want this?

Verse 2. What authority had the Father given Him? For what? Would He give eternal life to all men? To whom only? How can we know whom God gave to Jesus? (John 6:37).

Verse 3. Wherein does life eternal consist? Can a man truly know God and Jesus Christ, without having known and received His forgiving love

thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. 6 I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them to me; and they have kept thy word. 7 Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee: 8 for the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them, and they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee, and they believed that thou didst send me. 9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me; for they are thine: 10 and all things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine: and I am glorified in them. 11 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 which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are. 12 While I was with them, I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me: and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13 But now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy made full in themselves.

them? Now where was He going? What did He want the Father to do for them? For what should the Father keep them in His own name? What more did the Lord have in view by speaking these things in the world?

through the gospel?

Verse 4. How had Jesus glorified the Father on the earth? Was He always concerned about this? (John 4:34; 9:4). Is that the way for us also to glorify God?

Verse 5. Having finished His work here, what does the Son now ask? Had He had glory with the Father before the world was? (John 1:1-3; 2 Cor. 8:9. Comp. John 17:24). Had He laid that glory aside? (Phil. 2:6-8). Did He now wish to resume it?

Verse 6. What great thing had He done for the men whom God had given Him out of the world? What is the "name" of God? (His character). What is it to manifest His name to others? (Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:9). What shows that these men had responded to Christ's revelation?

Verses 7, 8. What had they learned through this schooling? What had Jesus faithfully given them? What did they do with those words? What did they learn and believe? Will the humble reception of His words produce the same faith yet?

Verses 9, 10. For whom exclusively was the Lord Jesus praying? For those then present only? (v. 20). Whose were they? If they were the Father's, were they the Son's also, and vice versa?

Verses 11-13. What was the burden of His prayer for them? What part did He do by them while yet with them? Where was He leaving them? What did He want the Father to do for them? For what should the Father keep them in His own name? What more did the Lord have in view by speaking these things in the world?

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#### NOTES ON LESSON 6.

##### THE GREAT PRAYER.

John 17 has been called the "Most Holy Place" of the Scriptures. It is the Lord's great Intercessory Prayer in which He sums up the work of His ministry on the earth, with especial reference to His disciples, the men whom God had given Him out of the world; praying for them and for all those who should believe on Him through their word, that the Father might keep them in His Name, and that they might be one, even as He was in the Father and the Father in Him "that they also may be in us; that the world may believe that thou didst send me." (V. 21). These solemn words were not directed to mortal ears, though men were permitted to hear it: it was the Son's highpriestly address to the Father, on the eve of the great Sin-Offering, the Atonement day of the ages. All this, with all that was done and said that memorable evening, falls under the key-note, "Having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end." (John 13:1). We have here a sample of the intercession which the Son of God evermore offers for us in the Father's presence. (Heb. 7:25).

##### THE ONENESS OF BELIEVERS.

Again and again recurs the petition that His disciples and those who

should believe on Him through the apostles' word, might be one. Christians are exhorted to give diligence to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, to speak the same thing and to see that there be no divisions among them. Some contend that the unity the Savior prayed for is a spiritual, invisible unity, by which all the redeemed are joined to the Lord and one to another. Such a unity does exist; but evidently does not exempt us from the obligation to maintain a right outward unity among ourselves. On the other hand the Lord does not want that "federation," the false union, the combining of all sorts of creeds and parties and sects into a sort of religious trust. But let those who would obey the Lord abstain from human names, authoritative human creeds, and man-made distinctions, and walk in the light of God's word, in faith, obedience, and forbearing love. This is all we can do in the matter; the rest we must leave with the Lord, "For there must be also factions among you that they that are approved may be made manifest among you." (1 Cor. 11:19).

#### TEACHING POINTS AND QUESTIONS.

1. The Occasion of this Prayer—where and when it was offered.
2. The Scope of this Prayer. What the Lord prays for concerning Himself (vs. 1, 5); for His apostles and then living disciples (vs. 9-19); for those who should believe on Him through their word, and for all together (vs. 20-26).
3. Christian Unity. Note the occurrence of the word "one" in vs. 11, 21, 22 (twice), 23. Would it be good for all religious sects and denominations to combine? Can men be true Christians, form a congregation, work and worship together, and yet not be a sect or belong to a "denomination"? How? How is Christian unity to be maintained? (1 Cor. 1:10-13; Eph. 4:1-7; Phil. 2:1-5; Col. 2:2.)

### THIRD LORD'S DAY LESSON OF FEBRUARY.

Lesson 7.

February 15, 1925.

#### JESUS IN GETHSEMANE.

Golden Text: Not what I will, but what thou wilt.—Mark 14:36.

Lesson Text: Mark 14:32-42.

32 And they come unto a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I pray. 33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly amazed, and sore troubled. 34 And he saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: abide ye here, and watch. 35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him. 36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me: howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt. 37 And he cometh and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst thou not watch one hour? 38 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. 39 And again he went away, and prayed, saying the same words. 40 And again he came, and

Verses 32. Where was Gethsemane? (v. 26.) Who went with the Lord this far? Where was Judas at this time? (John 13:27-30). Did He take all the eleven with Him to the place?

Verse 33. On what other occasion did He take these three with Him? (Mark 9:2). Were those who had seen His glory better prepared to witness His agony? Why?

Verse 34. What did the Lord Jesus say concerning Himself? What scripture was fulfilled in this? (Isa. 53:3, 4).

Verses 35, 36. What refuge did the Lord Jesus seek in His extreme sorrow? How did He address God? (Who else has the right to address God so? Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). Did the Lord Jesus put anything beyond the power of God? What did He ask for? But only on what condition? Did He want to be released from the great work He came to do? (John 12:7, 8). If He had wished to be so released what could He have done? (Matt. 26:53, 54). Could anyone have

found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy: and they knew not what to answer him. 41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough; the hour is come: behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Arise, let us be going: behold, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

taken His life without His willingness? (John 10:18). But what was His foremost and only purpose? (John 6:38).

Verses 37, 38. When He came back, did He find the three watching? Was that a time to sleep? Why not? Was it an awful time of crisis? What did He know of their inward attitude? and what of their strength to stand? How only could that weakness

be met? Why did Peter fail soon afterward?

Verses 39-41. What does Luke tell us about this? (22-43, 44). Did the three companions keep watch this time? Or the third time? What did Jesus tell them after the last prayer? Was their opportunity to pray past? Why did He immediately tell them to "arise and let us be going"?

#### NOTES ON LESSON 7.

Can we teach this lesson by rote? Can we make a dry logical outline of it? No. We can only tell the story of the Savior's agony of soul, and the horror of great darkness that came over Him in that awful hour. This is not a lesson that lends itself to argument and discussion. We can only stand afar off and worship.

We must not imagine that it was the dread of physical suffering and death that caused this sorrow. A far more terrible thing was before Him. For "Jehovah laid upon Him the iniquities of us all;" and He was going to bear "our sins in His own body upon the tree." He who knew no sin was about to be made sin on our behalf, that we might be made righteous in the righteousness of God in Him. He was to become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth upon a tree") that the blessing that was His might come upon us. That involved the most awful consequence possible for Him: separation from God, that abandonment which really constitutes the essence of death. For, seeing He represented us and took our place, He must die a sinner's death, though He Himself was perfectly free from that evil and hateful thing called sin. And it goes without saying that those who have obtained a share in His redemption will never have to go through that which He suffered on our behalf.

"Smitten for offenses, which were not His own,  
He for our transgressions, had to weep alone;  
No friend with words to comfort,  
Nor hand to help was there,  
When the meek and Lowly humbly bowed in prayer.

"Abba, Father, Father, if indeed it may,  
Let this cup of anguish pass from me I pray,  
Yet if it must be suffered  
By me thine only Son,  
Abba, Father, Father, let thy will be done."

## FOURTH LORD'S DAY LESSON OF FEBRUARY.

Lesson 8.

February 22, 1925.

### GOOD CITIZENSHIP.

Golden Text: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.—Rom. 13:9.

Lesson Text: Romans 13:1-10; 13, 14.

1. Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. 2 Therefore he that resisteth the

Verse 1. What direct command to all Christians? What reason is given? Is all civil power a power delegated of God? Who ordained civil government?

power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment. 3 For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same: 4 for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. 5 Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake. 6 For this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. 7 Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. 8 Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. 9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law. 13 Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. 14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Rather what are they exhorted to do? (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

Verses 8-10. Should a Christian sink himself into debt? What only debt is good? Does he who discharges that fulfill all the demands of the law? Why is love the fulfilment of the law?

Verses 13, 14. (Read verses 11, 12 also).. Since we are "not of the night nor of darkness" (1 Thess. 5:5) how ought we to walk? What six things to avoid? What is revelling? chambering? wantonness? (See any common dictionary). But what shall every Christian do? Has not each one already put on Christ in baptism? (Gal. 3:27). What then is meant here? (Comp. Col. 3:12, etc.) Shall we make any allowance or provision to let the flesh have its way?

Verse 2. What is said of those who resist the civil power? What is the result of such a course? Does a Christian have any share in anarchism, bolshevism, rebellion, fomenting of discontent, strife, disorder? Can he be a law-breaker? a despiser of dominion? (2 Pet. 2:10).

Verses 3-5. What in the main is the purpose of human government? What does it curb and suppress? What does it favor and foster? What weapon has been committed to the civil government? Has the government the right to use it? On whose behalf does the civil authority wield the sword? Against whom? What two reasons has the Christian to be in subjection?

Verse 6. What is "tribute"? (Taxes). For what reason do Christians pay tribute? (v. 4). What is the government's special business. Would peaceful life, homes, industry, prosperity be possible without the government? What government was ruling when Paul wrote this? (Rome) Was it a good government? (Very corrupt and evil). But did this teaching apply even then? Does it apply today? In what only should a Christian refuse to obey? (Acts 5:29).

Verse 7. To whom is tribute due? Should Christians try to evade the full payment of their taxes? To whom are due customs? Can a Christian be justified in any smuggling scheme, or any effort to escape payment of special tolls, revenues and duties? To whom is fear due? Should a Christian be defiant toward constituted authority? To whom is honor due? (1 Pet. 2:17). Should a Christian speak contemptfully of the President, of high officials, governors, or rulers?

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#### NOTES ON LESSON 8.

#### THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY TOWARD THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

Christians are not of the world, even as Christ their Lord is not of the world. But being in the world it is God's will that they as He Himself had

done, should live in respectful submission and obedience to the rule and authority that holds sway on the earth. "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme; or unto governors as sent by him for vengeance on evil doers and for praise to them that do well . . . . Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the King." (1 Pet. 2:13-17). The civil governments of the world are of God's ordering. They exercise a power delegated to them of God for the purpose of maintaining law and order, until He shall come whose right it is to rule, and the kingdom of the world shall become the kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ. (Rev. 11:15). The fact that these powers are ordained, however, does not imply that these governments are necessarily—in themselves good and righteous. Governments that could be called just and beneficent have been few. Rome, for example, which was the ruling power when Paul wrote the words of the text of this lesson, was noted for rapacity and oppressive cruelty, and its open corruption. Nevertheless, on the whole it was immensely better than no government. It preserved order and maintained the rights of life and property to the extent of making it possible for men to pursue peaceful activities and to have homes and families. In this it served its purpose. The civil-government is necessarily worldly and fleshly in its nature, an institution of this world and for this world. It can go no further nor needs to. There are no Christian governments, though some are more or less influenced by Christian ideals and teaching. All human governments arise in blood, and in blood they go down, and by the sword they stand. In the nature of things they are bound to maintain their existence and rights, to battle for their interests, to fight for the foes without, and repress rebellions and disorders within; for which end they have the use of the sword.

But the Christian's duty toward the civil government is clearly set forth: namely that of submission, ready and willing obedience, the rendering of due respect and honor to the visible representatives of the civil power. To which should be added, prayer for the rulers (1 Tim. 2:1) and thankfulness to God if our lot has been cast (as is surely the case in the United States) under a good government.

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### TEACHING POINTS AND QUESTIONS.

1. **Civil Governments.** Are they merely human powers, or have they been ordained of God? (Consider Gen. 9:6 as involving the principle of human government. Also Dan. 2:37-45; 4:22, 25; 5:18, 19). What is its special design? (vs. 4, 6). In executing its appointed function, does the civil power act on God's behalf and represent God? What therefore is it to resist the government? What means for enforcing law and order have been committed to it? Are civil governments necessarily good, because ordained of God? Was the Roman power? Did God nevertheless demand the Christian's respect for it, and submission to its authority?
2. **The Christian's duty toward Civil Government.** What is the Christian's duty? Can we please God by evading or breaking laws, defrauding and disobeying the government, or sharing in agitations and uprisings against the constituted power? What if the government should require a thing contrary to God's instructions to His people? (Dan. 3:4-6, 16, 17; Acts 5:29). In every other case what is God's will? (1 Pet. 2:13-17). What more should we do? 1 Tim. 2:1-4.
3. **Render to every man his due.** That takes in our attitude toward every official, from the highest ruler down. Is fear due? Is honor? In a democratic government is the tendency to disrespect, irreverence, contempt, toward authorities a peculiar danger? What sort of example should a Christian set in the world? Did the Lord Jesus ever criticise the civil power in His day? Did Paul, or any other of the apostles? Should we?

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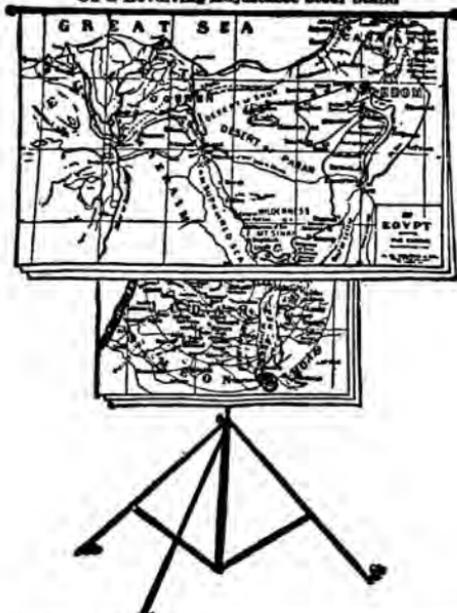
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