

THE WORD AND WORK

(Volume XXXIX, January, 1945)

ANOTHER YEAR

The Lord of earth and sky,
The God of ages, praise,
Who reigns enthroned on high,
Ancient of endless days;
Who lengthens out our trials here,
And spares us yet another year.

Barren and withered trees,
We cumbered long the ground;
No fruits of holiness
On our dead souls were found;
Yet doth he us in mercy spare,
Another and another year.

When justice bared the sword
To cut the fig tree down,
The pity of the Lord
Cried, "Let it still alone":
The Father mild inclines his ear,
And spares us yet another year.

Jesus, Thy speaking blood
From God obtained the grace,
Who therefore hath bestowed
On us a longer space;
Thou didst in our behalf appear,
And, lo, we see another year!

Then dig about the root,
Break up your fallow ground,
And let our gracious fruit
To Thy great praise abound;
O let us all Thy praise declare,
And fruit unto perfection bear.

—Charles Wesley.

WORDS IN SEASON

R. H. B.

"THIS YEAR ALSO"

These words taken from the parable of the Barren Fig Tree (Luke 13:6-9) come to us with a meaning at this time of the year. Here was a tree — not a thorn-tree, but a good tree by nature; not out in the wilderness or growing in the com-

mons, but in the vineyard of the Master. But the Master had come time and again looking for fruit thereon and found none. When year after year it bore no fruit the lord of the vineyard said to the dresser, "Behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none: cut it down; why doth it also cumber the ground?" And the dresser answering said, "Lord let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it: and if it bear no fruit thenceforth, well; but if not, thou shalt cut it down." Here the parable closes; but the impression is left that the dresser's intercession prevailed, and the life and opportunity of the tree was extended for another year—and, if it bore fruit, for years after that.

Lo, my brother, you have long enjoyed the light and grace and blessing of God—more light and grace and blessing than numberless millions have had. Was it just for you that God bestowed it upon you? Why would the great Gardener have set you as a fig tree in His vineyard? Merely that *you* might be blessed and saved? Or would He expect some response and return? Would the Lord of the vineyard look for fruit on His tree? Has He really found fruit on it? And if not — if you have only been

"Living for self, and self alone,
And nothing else beside—
Just as if Jesus never had lived,
As if Jesus never had died"—

might not the sentence have gone out to the unseen watcher, "Cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground"? Or perhaps even worse — if not only no good fruit, but evil instead — what will the Master say? "For the land that drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them for whom it is also tilled, receiveth blessing from God; but if it beareth thorns and thistles" — then what? But the Lord is gracious and longsuffering; and there is a mighty Intercessor on high.

"And the dresser then made answer,
Leave it, Lord, another year;
By thy grace I'll dress and keep it
Till some fruit thereon appear.

"And if ripened fruit be showing,
It is well, my Lord will own;
If no fruit thereon be growing—
After that, Lord, cut it down."

So His reply is, "*This year also.*" For we all owe our life and salvation to the longsuffering of our God.

ANOTHER YEAR

In olden days, more than in these days, the saints of God affected a great contempt for life, and professed to long and yearn for death. Their hymns often voiced such sentiments.

Some of the older people will remember the sweet old song, once sung with such fervor:

“I would not live away—I ask not to stay
Where storm after storm rises dark o’er the way;
The few cloudy mornings that dawn on us here
Are enough for life’s woes, full enough for its cheer.”

We would not say they did not mean it — it was at least good poetry and a sweet sentiment. But even our forefathers who longed so to die, showed considerable will to live when their lives were in danger, and did what they could to get well when they were sick. No — it is not just the natural thing for us to want to die; nor is it altogether a mark of sainthood and super-godliness. Jonah, peevish about one thing and another, wanted to die; but the Lord was good to him, and didn’t take him at his word. Elijah, defeated and despairing, cast himself under the juniper-tree and requested for himself to die. But the Lord had a far better thing in store for him. That new year God gives you is a precious gift of love and mercy. “This year also.” It is given you that you may make good — whatever the failures of the past may have been. “I gave her time to repent” said Christ about a certain bad person. And who can estimate the value of such a gift as that? Do not think light of it. It is given you that you may yet bring forth fruit. It is your golden opportunity. If once the Master of the house be risen up and have shut to the door, in vain would we plead that He open the door again.

OUR CHANCE

A man told a dream. He dreamed that he had died and gone to heaven. It was heaven at last for him! How glorious it was. He entered through the gate into the city of God. There the Savior met him and welcomed him. “Before you enter upon your eternal bliss,” said the Lord, “I want to show you something.” He took him to the parapets of heaven and pointed into the distance. “What do you see there?” asked the Lord. “I see the dark world I came from.” “Now look again—” And he saw a great throng of humanity moving onward, forward, some laughing, some crying, some singing, some quarreling, dancing, fighting; and they were all drawing near to a high precipice, and when they reached the edge, they fell over and were dashed to pieces at the bottom. “Now,” said the Lord, “would you rather stay here, or go back to tell these people about Me?” “I believe I’ll go back” the man answered. That was the spirit of the apostle who knew that to him to die was gain, and who had a desire “to depart and be with Christ, which is very far better,” yet realized that to abide in the flesh was more needful to those sheep, and would bring fruit from his labors. (Phil. 1.) Yea, that was the very motive of Christ when He left the Father’s home above and the “glory-circled throne,” and came to this poor world to

suffer and die. Whatever blessed and wondrous service God may have for us in the ages to come (Eph. 2:7)—one thing we shall never again be able to do for Him: there can be no sacrifice, no burden-bearing, no suffering for Christ then. Here and now, only, if ever, can we bear His cross; here only we can confess Him before a hostile world; only while we are here can we go forth to Him bearing His reproach. Our life here holds an opportunity for the Christian that can never come again.

DEATH AND THE SECOND COMING

The Christian's death is a blessed exchange for him. It means rest—rest from the trials and temptations that beset us here; and peace and joy in the presence of Christ. But even so that "intermediate state," as sometimes it is called, is indeed but a comparatively short interim, till the Crowning Day comes, the day of Christ's returning; when the trumpet shall sound and the dead in Christ shall be raised incorruptible and we, the living ones, shall be changed. And when Christ who is our life shall be manifested, then shall we also with Him be manifested in glory. (Col. 3:4.) For that day we wait. The Christian does not wait and work with a view to death, but with reference to Christ's coming. That, not death, is the goal of the Christian hope. And one day, we know not how soon—it may now be very, very soon: no generation of the past has had as much reason to expect Him as we have—well, one day He *will* come; and we shall be glad of every good thing we have done for Him, and for all we have suffered for His Name's sake, and of every work of faith, and labor of love, and all the patience of our hope. I trust that in that hour we shall be glad, and, like John in Patmos, be able to say, "Even so come, Lord Jesus." It is good to be of those who have loved His appearing. But if He came today—would I have to be ashamed before Him at His coming? G. Campbell Morgan said that every morning he prayed that Christ might come that day; and every evening he thanked God that Christ did not come that day. For if Christ did not come, there is some reason, good and wise, as seen of God, for another day's delay. So it is good. And in the meanwhile we have time from God to do what never can be done again after this time is past.

LOOKING FOR FRUIT

But to go back once more to our fig tree. It was not the first time that the Lord of the vineyard had come looking for fruit on that tree. During three years he came and looked and sought, and each time turned away disappointed. I will let the reader ask himself, and give his own answer—has by any chance the Lord come looking for fruit on your tree—perhaps for three years or even longer? And you are still here, and God is giving you another year. Some One has pleaded for you, and the word has been spoken for you, "This year

also." Now may blessed fruit appear in this year of grace!
WHAT IS FRUIT?

Four things are called "fruit" in the New Testament. 1. "The fruit of lips, which make confession to his name." (Heb. 13:15.) Some may think that is "only talk" and worth nothing. If it were "only talk" it would be worth nothing—but if it is a word of praise from the heart, how greatly the Lord appreciates it! Already in the Old Testament the psalmist said, "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving; and it please Jehovah better than an ox, or a bullock that hath horns and hoofs." (Psalm 69: 30, 31.) We do so little of that—and our singing is often so absent-minded. Here is a real bit of fruit that the Lord desires and looks for.

2. There is the fruit of good works, works born of faith and love "Bearing fruit in every good work." (Col. 1:10.) There is much "religious work" that goes for nothing. To one of the churches in Asia the Lord said, "I have found no works of thine perfected before my God." But in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but faith working by love. (Galatians 5:6.)

3. There is the fruit of the Spirit—fruit the Holy Spirit brings forth in the life when the Spirit has His way and His sway in the heart. (Galatians 5:22.) That is the fruit of the Christian character.

4. There is the fruit of souls won for Jesus; to which end all other fruit contributes and is subservient; "that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles," as Paul puts it. It is the great fruit of the "missionary" endeavor, at home and abroad, in which every Christian, great and small, can and must have a part.

Let us by faith and prayer seek to bear such fruit abundantly through Jesus Christ in this new year.

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WILL-O'-THE-WISP

These are the days in which many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased, as foretold by Daniel the prophet. (Dan. 12:4.) The facilities for travel and learning are unprecedented. The average man today has more information and a far broader outlook on life than the average man has ever had before. Multitudes of printing presses are running at full speed; printed literature finds its way into every nook and cranny where human beings live. What words cannot tell is set forth in pictures and illustrations, the like of which for perfection and cheapness have never been seen before. Many a boy today knows more facts and of the secrets of nature than sages knew in days gone by. With this breadth comes a certain shallowness. The wealth of things is confusing. Old ideas are given up because they do not harmonize with newly discovered facts; old standards are discarded because they

do not fit the new circumstances. Everything seems relative, nothing absolute. Every thought must be held tentatively. Strangely, the knowledge of the day tends to real ignorance. Every conviction is breaking down, nothing replacing it; and by knowing so much the world is approaching more and more the limit of knowing nothing at all, agnosticism, the goal and issue of "the knowledge falsely so called." Thus this strange "light" of these last days is effecting a deeper darkness in which the children of error perish.

BREADTH AND DEPTH

We are in the world, though not of the world. With all watchfulness, there is yet the danger of our being subtly influenced by the spirit of the times. The "knowledge" of the last days shines upon us also; and we enter into the same breadth of information. God grant it may not result to his faithful few as it is resulting with the secular and religious world at large! "The hardest things in the world to unite," says President Faunce, "are breadth of apprehension with intensity of convictions." There is nothing more noticeable in these days than the weakening and failure of convictions. The apostles of the old, arrant infidelity, men of the Bradlaugh and Ingersoll type, are indeed gone forever. But a new leaven is subtly at work. In schools and colleges, in newspapers and magazines, in public lectures, in theological seminaries and in the pulpits, gradually, but with deadly certainty, the religious convictions of young and old are being undermined. Science is flouting God and Christ, redemption and righteousness. Learned heads in high places have decided the Bible is a bundle of myths, legends, and traditions. Little birds take up the song of the big ones, and, with much affectation of learning and spiritual discernment, rehash the wisdom of the higher ones in the pulpit to commoner people, many of whom—alas!—are only too willing to lend their ears to the rot they hear, if only because it promises them indulgence to self-will and a free reign to the flesh. And thus everything is shaping itself for the coming judgment.

THE DANGER OF THE CHURCH

Now the church of the Lord is not coming through this unscathed. Some indeed are growing stronger in faith and bolder in testimony, on the principle that the night brings out the stars and troublous times raise up heroes. And truly the Lord needs faithful witnesses in these days—earnest, consecrated Christians, rooted and grounded in the faith, firmly footed on the Rock, bold and aggressive in their reliance on the imperishable word. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" asks the psalmist. But this foundation cannot be destroyed for him; if only he does not abandon it. Let us take heed. Unbelief creeps like a shadow. It comes of itself. We cannot afford to neglect the great salvation.

NEWS AND NOTES

Davis City, Iowa: "I was in a meeting with the church in Anthony, Kansas, from November 29 to December 13. The meeting was good considering everything. Had some rain and snow during the time. I spoke mostly to the church to help them get a better understanding of the things of God and our duty and attitude toward Him. The church there began two years ago.

"We are planning to begin another Bible school here on Tuesday, January 2. Only a small class is in view so far for this year."—Wm. J. Campbell.

Louisville, Ky.: "A young lad accepted Christ as his Savior and put Him on in baptism a few Sundays ago. The Camp Taylor work moves along nicely in spite of inclement weather of late.

"My family and I had a pleasant visit to Dugger and Linton, Indiana, over the holidays. I was privileged to speak at the Linton mid-week service and to enjoy a social gathering with the Dugger church. Brothers Clymore, Hoar, and Graham are doing a good work in that section, not only with their congregations, but they are reaching out into the community around. This is as it should be and we praise God for these missionary-minded men of God."—J. R. Clark.

The Great Songs Press office has 45 or 50 used books, No. 1 edition, shape notes, for sale postpaid at 15¢ each.

Good Things in Store

Brother Boll has promised us another feature study for the 1945 Word and Work. He will either give expositions on a book of the Bible or take a survey of a group of books, such as the minor prophecies.

We plan to publish a brief history of the Portland Avenue church, Louisville, in the February issue. A picture of the church building is to appear with the history.

Plans are about complete to carry reprints from the Pioneers on prophetic themes. These pages which are to appear in each issue of the Word and Work beginning with the March number are to be

selected from a wealth of material and will be choice statements.

A Special Club of 2000

In order that more may enjoy and be benefited by these statements of the Pioneers we are adding a special club of 2,000 names to our mailing list. All fair-minded disciples will be glad to consider what the revered pioneer preachers have said on prophetic themes, especially in view of the fact that it may shed light and help the cause of unity among simple Christians.

We hope to present some choice articles on the subject of fellowship during the year. Such articles will tend to inspire us to "think unity" and to be filled with the Holy Spirit and love which, in turn, should result in a closer walk with God and with one another.

Western Song Tour

Brother E. L. Jorgenson, Compiler of the alphabetical hymnal, "Great Songs of The Church," is scheduled to visit the West Coast again in the month of March, 1945, exact date to be set soon. This will be the twelfth of these annual singing tours since 1932, the last ten consecutive. The course this year, God willing, is Louisville to Los Angeles on the Southern route (by train of course); thence to San Francisco, and homeward on one of the middle roads.

Dugger, Ind.: "Just recently a mother of two children was restored and placed her membership with the Farnsworth congregation. The attendance and interest have been good all fall.

"We had a fine Thanksgiving service here at Dugger the night before Thanksgiving Day. Brethren from other congregations were present and added much to the interest of the meeting.

"We will close the year 1944 with a prayer that we will not fail the Lord in any responsibility that He places upon us in the new year."—Maurice Clymore.

Greenville, South Carolina: "On October 22 I preached my farewell sermon at Fisherville, Kentucky, and bid those good folk there a fond good-bye. Our stay of nearly four years with them was a pleasant one indeed and our prayer is

that God may supply every need at that place and may the work grow, prosper, and ever be a glory to His matchless name.

"After a wonderful trip through the beautiful Smokies we arrived here in Greenville and have now become settled in our new field. I began my work with the Judson church here on October 29. So far the work seems encouraging, but there is much to be done. This entire city, and its outskirts, is a rich field for evangelistic endeavors. Pray for us in our new field that God may guide and direct every plan that is made and every effort that is put forth that the greatest good may be done for the cause of Christ here."—Ben Rake.

(The following report arrived too late for the December issue.)

Johnson City, Tenn.: Since my last report, a young lady has been baptized into Christ here at the Locust St. church. The first Sunday in Nov. was our annual Homecoming Sunday, and we had 130 in Sunday school, and one of the largest audiences at the regular worship service we've seen here in a long time.

"The meeting with the Highland church, Louisville, was indeed pleasant. It was good to be associated with the Jorgensons, the Highland brethren, and with numerous other brethren from other congregations. During the course of the meeting, five responded to the invitation. Three came for baptism, one to confess wrong and to place membership, and the other to transfer membership, all for which we praise God."—Robert B. Boyd.

Sellersburg, Indiana: "For the church at Sellersburg, 1944 was a glorious year. The Lord showered His blessings upon us in abundance in many ways. To Him we give all the glory, honor and praise. Below, is a brief report of the work here for 1944:

"First, there were 69 souls added to the congregation. The majority of these were new converts. 21 of this number came during our revival with Brother Olmstead as evangelist. The rest came at our regular services throughout the year. Not one month passed without some one coming.

"Next, our offerings reached a new all time high of \$10,645.15, for an average per Sunday of \$200.85. This is an average increase of \$63.74 per Sunday over the preceding year. We are thankful for the fact that 16½ percent of our total income was given to missions. We have some building plans in mind for the future and already have a fund of over \$4,000.00 for this purpose. The Lord has blessed us wonderfully in this way.

"Then, our attendance and interest has also been at its best during the past year. We don't have the records completed yet, but we feel sure our attendance also reached a new high.

"The church here released its minister for five revival meetings during the year. The Lord's blessings attended each of these.

"We look to the future and the coming year with hope and courage, praying God's blessings upon all and for other open doors for His service."—Howard T. Marsh.

Brother Elmer Ringer reports a good start on their building fund. Several gifts have been presented to the church. The new building is already under way. Those who wish to help should address, Elmer C. Ringer, 1124 Tenth Street, Tell City, Indiana.

In sending in subscriptions please indicate whether renewals or new.

If your subscription has expired please renew promptly. A dollar spent thus goes a long way.

During the year which is past we received several monetary gifts to help us carry on, which we appreciate very much.

Orders for Bibles and other books have also been a help to us in meeting our office expense and printing bills.

Again our Word and Work Quarterly supply has been exhausted. If you would like the Word and Work Quarterly please get your order in by the first of the month preceding the new quarter. However, if you fail to make it by that time get your order in anyway and we may be able to take care of you. Our lessons are based on the Uniform Series as they have been all through the years. Our quarterly is Scriptural, concise, scholarly, a

help to Bible study and not a substitute.

Some Commendations

Harrodsburg, Ky.: "The Word and Work and quarterly are both worth a lot to us."—Mrs. L. D. Duggins.

New Albany, Indiana: "I like the Word and Work and think it gets better all the time. May the Lord's richest blessings rest upon it through the year."—Miss Florence Hotel.

Franklin, Ky.: "I am sending check to help keep the truth before as many as will hear, and for eight subscriptions. Word and Work is strong and scriptural, has the spirit of Christ, no 'ist' or 'ism' or dictator spirit, as many others have these days. It gives much light on Revelation.

"May God bless Brother Boll for years to come, if the Lord tarries, and may many be led to study the

whole word of God and believe what it says, regardless of what men man say."—Mrs. J. P. Waldren.

Pekin, Ind.: "I am so very thankful that you can still print your good magazine. I surely do love to read it and look forward each month to receiving it. It gives so much light on the blessings from God."—Mrs. Nora L. Phillips.

Kelowna, B. C.: "I quite enjoyed the November Word and Work. Thoughts Worth While contain some good solid lessons. Words Not Lawful to Utter by Brother Boll was a good article. Oh, if people would only awake to a realization that this conflict which is upon the earth is a warning for them to flee from the wrath of God which is surely coming—perhaps sooner than we expect. How I pray that the Light come into their darkened souls before it is too late."—A. Manton.

NIGHT BRINGS OUT THE STARS

Life hands many a hard situation to men. Some have more difficult problems than others, but we all usually get our share sooner or later. Men differ not so much in the number of hard things they meet as in what they do when these come.

Some men crumple up and faint—the storm comes, the house goes down. Others meet trouble stoically; they get hard, even bitter; they strike back at life and try to get even. They don't often get even, but they grow brittle and crack to pieces. Some men, when trouble comes, use it as an occasion for finding new resources, so they can meet the situation and live victoriously in spite of it, like Paul, who said, "I take pleasure in infirmities, . . . when I am weak, then am I strong." How could this be? It could work that way if a man's load forced him by exploring to discover some new resource which would give him the use of the power he did not use before. This isn't strange; it is natural. In history, men's burdens became heavy, so they explored and found steam and electricity, which hauls their loads and lights their way. Needs meant new power if men took them rightly.

Today we are getting new dangers, new burdens, new testing. We can quit; we can grow bitter; or like Paul we can seek God, the source of strength; and find that character comes by testing, and even a cross can be a road to victory. The soldier can find a thousand excuses for doing the first two, but many a man will find the glory of doing the third. This is the message of religion, and plenty have discovered that it works.—Chaplain E. D. Greenlaw.

THE REIGN OF MONEY

R. H. B.

To a preacher of the word a sister remarked that if she had a thousand dollars cash she would gladly give it for the privilege of hearing a series of his sermons. The sister was of the sort that meant what she said; and her life and faith and zeal bore testimony that she was not speaking in hyperbole as much as one would think when she had made that remark. The preacher jokingly replied, "If you will hand me the thousand dollars I will go to your home and deliver the whole series of sermons to you." And the preacher was only jesting for he was a man that loved the Lord, and whose principles did not admit of his being controlled by money-considerations in his service to God. But after he had so replied to the sister and had gone his way, a little voice, very soft but incisive and insistent, began to speak to him. "If that sister had in reality offered you a thousand dollars," the little voice said, "would you not really enough go and deliver that series of sermons to her specially? and perhaps you would consider it quite a nice little chance and privilege to do so? Why not then feel the same way without the thousand dollars?" And one question begat another. "You are very busy," quoth the small voice, "and you just CAN not go here or there to the perhaps very needy place:—suppose some wealthy man would tell you to go to such a destitute point and hold a meeting and 'here is five hundred dollars.'—'When?' you ask. 'Right away, or I must send some one else.' 'I don't see how I can possibly go!' 'Very well, then.' 'Now just wait a bit—it is true I have an engagement at so-and-so, but maybe I can call it off or put it off. I believe I will undertake that meeting.' Would you? Would five hundred dollars make such a difference? Would you think a chance of working for the Master at such remunerations a great opportunity and privilege, and would you count it more of an opportunity or privilege than under ordinary circumstances?" The preacher tried to change the subject. But the little voice resumed relentlessly. "Just what would you call serving mammon, and what serving God? Or perhaps you can combine the two? The Lord Jesus hardly thought it could be done: 'No man can serve two masters. . . . ye cannot serve God and mammon.' Are you about to ask how a man could get along? 'Therefore I say unto you be not anxious. . . . Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.'"

WHAT IS PROFESSIONALISM?

The preacher was about to lose himself in meditation on

this singularly beautiful and interesting passage, and had half unconsciously begun to shape a sermon outline on it, when the little voice jerked him up again rather sharply. "Say, just what is 'professionalism' any way? It has been remarked that a preacher who is a 'professional' is one of the most pitiful creatures on God's green earth. I have been told that among some established sects professionalism is organized. They have a full-fledged system of it, and the ministry of the word is not only a craft but even a graft. If this is correct it may be one reason why the world is holding the corrupt church-ism of the day in such contempt. The scoffer has long perceived that the expressions 'call' and 'field of labor,' and 'opportunity,' and 'scope of influence,' etc., are used with a peculiar shade of meaning by some of the gentlemen of the cloth; and has surmised that behind a dignified and pious exterior, there is often much vulgar scramble for a job, and the meanest wire-pulling, and all it involves of envy, professional jealousy and vicious hatred. There is something, too, which is 'LOYALTY' to cause and creed and church into which the consideration for God and Christ enter only secondarily; there is apparently a zeal for truth and the love of souls does not really and essentially figure. It is in fact a concern for a job with its salary and support, for a standing in the ranks—which does not spring from a heavenly vision like Isaiah's vision of the glory of the King, but from the vision of the plum tree and the solution of the bread-and-butter proposition—" "Please don't trouble me with these extreme views!" cried the preacher in desperation. "I am speaking only of certain sectarian practices now, and will get to my question presently," continued the persistent little voice. "You will have to bear with my remarks a little longer. The sum of what I was saying, is that there is no essential difference between the Pharisee in Jerusalem who incited the Jewish mob to cry, 'Crucify him,' and Demetrius and his craftsmen, makers of silver shrines to Diana, who stirred up the Ephesian mob to cry out, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians' by the space of two hours. At the core of both of these were simple professionals—the Pharisees handled the law and cared neither for mercy, justice, or God; and the silversmiths did not care as much for Diana as they did that their trade should continue to flourish. This 'professionalism' is no doubt the result, and in turn the further cause of religious stagnancy and decay, and all the hypocrisy that pertains thereto. When faith is fresh and true and pure the disciples go out for the love of God and in great enthusiasm of truth and love, and tell the story everywhere; some working with their hands to sustain themselves, some going forth for the sake of the name, taking nothing of the Gentiles, and sustained more or less by brethren who cannot themselves go. So long as such are the circumstances they are nothing hindered from being lovers of the truth and of souls, in all sin-

cerity. By and by, as the number of disciples begins to multiply, and the support becomes more certain and definite, and the martyr spirit fails, other questions arise which greatly complicate the preacher's course; the question of preference and prestige; the question of 'fields' and 'calls' and 'appointments'; of staying in favor with men and the fear of boycott and ostracism. Once he sought only to ascertain the meaning of God's word and presented it joyfully as he found it; now he is rather concerned to set forth the views of his party and is careful to adjust his preaching to certain understood standards. He learns to practice 'Shibboleth' till he can frame it exactly. Once he worked to hold the approval of God; but now to hold his place and that is 'professionalism,' is it? Now, tell me, is the root of all this in that money question? Is it that principle which makes you more ready and alert to go to a \$500 place than to another, is that the seed of all this evil? And do you carry all this in your heart, as it were, in embryo? Perhaps then you—are professional?"

"TURN YE AT MY REBUKE"

By this time the preacher had got to his room. He closed his door and then did the right thing—he cried to his Father who is in secret. And among other things, this is what he said, "O my Father, deliver me from the dominion of money. My heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked—only Thou canst know the depth of it. Without realizing that it was so, I was on my way to become a professional. And now, Father, forgive Thy penitent servant, and guide his wayward feet into THY paths. Make me wholly free from the fear of man, and the fear and love of money. Help thou mine unbelief! May I by Thy grace love Thee, even Thee alone and supremely; and because I love Thee, may I love Thy truth, and the souls of men. Enable me to lay all my burdens and concerns as to this world's affairs upon the God who will in no wise fail nor in any wise forsake them that rest their trust on Him; and then to go forth to do all Thy will, even Thine, unto the end." So he spoke, and set his heart; and came forth from thence to be a simpler, humbler, braver, more honest man to live, no longer for himself, but for Him who loved him and gave Himself up for him.

Your final experience will be with God your Maker. Life is made of experience after experience with persons and things, how many only God knows, but, *finally* with Him. No escape here. How happy they who have had experience with Him in this life. It is to be sought after. And He is accessible. You need be no stranger to Him. You dare not be an enemy.

Fifth and M Street church, Louisville, featured a fine special song service New Year's eve, in which the Highland church, both young and old, joined with great pleasure to all present.

“UNTIL CHRIST BE FORMED IN YOU”

Stanford Chambers

Paul had travailed for the Galatians in his preaching the Gospel to them and bringing them to the Lord Jesus. Soon afterward some one had bewitched them so that they were removed from Him. Paul marvelled that such a thing should be possible, and he was grieved. But his was not a love that would let them go, so into travail he went again for them, “until Christ be formed in you.” To Paul’s inspired view these were no trivial matters.

“Until Christ be formed in you.” “If any man is in Christ he is a new creature.” The first work of grace on our behalf is to bring us into Christ. It takes place in the believing of the Gospel. The agent is the Spirit of God, whose office it is to effect for us this new relationship in Christ Jesus. “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit,” said Jesus, so we are begotten, given a new nature, set in a new relationship, a new creature in Him. A marvelous work! Don’t be too timid about terming it miracle, for such are “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” “Born from above.” It is not natural, but spiritual. Of course there are cause and effect, there are agent and instrumentality, nevertheless, *born of God*. “For,” quoting Galatians again, “ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ . . . one man in Christ Jesus.” “And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” This is wonderful—glorious!

“Until Christ be formed in you.” There is something beyond our coming into Christ. He is to be formed in that one who has become a new creature, His new creation, already a partaker of the divine nature. Christ is to “dwell in your hearts through faith,” and is to enlarge Himself within. “Christ in you the hope of glory.” He is to take over, as we yield, and live His life in us: “I live, . . . not I, but Christ.” The divine purpose is that when the Christian is seen, Christ is seen. One in whom Christ is formed has taken on the mind and ways of Christ. His works and words are not mere imitation; they proceed from within, from that new nature created and sustained within by the Holy Spirit. In proportion as Christ is formed in us and is privileged to live His life in and through us, in that measure do we come to know in this life “the power of his resurrection.” How many Christians are living up to their privileges in Christ Jesus? “My little children, of whom I am in travail again, until Christ be formed in you.”

The Watch Meeting at the Portland Avenue church, Louisville was well attended even though the weather was very disagreeable.

CHRISTIANITY IS MEEKNESS

J. H. McCaleb

The Bible says that Moses was a meek man. But little do we comprehend what that means. Perhaps the negative side of his character best indicates the even flow of his regular life.

When we read about Moses' striking the rock and giving vent to his wrath against the children of Israel, our faces light up. We understand fully his emotions and rather sympathize with his actions. It is the natural reaction of a man hard pressed, and just about the way we do ourselves.

But Moses' life was not like that. He gave up everything to follow God. He was misunderstood by his friends and enemies alike, and yet went on without murmuring. He made his mistakes, too, but bore their consequences without whimpering. He was truly a meek man.

Always to me the man who "can take it" has been a hero. There have not been many who truly fill that role. And in our everyday dealings we usually absorb punishment with the thought of paying back in kind. Our powers of resistance are buoyed up by the anticipation of the blows we ourselves shall strike.

But true meekness is not like that. We suffer hardship only that we may survive and surmount to do good. Again and again our troubles are of our own making. Through it all we should endure with patience and murmur not. When the night is over and the black clouds torn asunder, we must walk in the light of a new day—to do good. Better still, when trouble comes that is not of our own making, we will praise God, take courage, endure and do good. No malice, no returning evil for evil—just doing good.

Jesus Christ was the perfect example. Not a sin and not a character-blemish were ever his. And yet no one has been more evilly spoken of and persecuted. Never an unkind word nor a vicious spirit marred the life of the Lord. He suffered in meekness and went about continually doing good.

"Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth."

AM I PAYING MY DEBTS?

Christians are responsible for the example they give to others.

Parents are under obligation to God to give their children Christian training.

Neighbors must give an account for those going to hell because of their influence.

Every Soul will surely reap that which he sows.

Will my neighbor, my brother, or my boy point a condemning finger at me in the Day of Judgment because of the life I lived?—Orell Overman.

BIBLE QUERIES ANSWERED

J. Edward Boyd

From Tennessee comes this query: "*Do the Old Testament prophecies speak either directly or indirectly of the church? If not, does that mean that the church came into existence as an 'afterthought' on God's part?*"

Isaiah 2:2-4 is sometimes quoted as a direct prediction concerning the establishment of the church. It is indeed true that the church is spoken of as a house and that it did have its beginning in Jerusalem, and that the gospel did go forth from there; but similarity in certain respects is not always proof of identity. The question yet remains: Is the church the house spoken of by the prophet and was that the occasion the Lord had in mind? The same prediction is given in Micah 4:1-3, and there it immediately follows the statement: "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest." (3:12.) Mr. John Urquhart (*Wonders of Prophecy*, pp 132-133) has pointed out the literal fulfillment of each of these three predictions; of Mt. Moriah, upon which was built the Lord's house, the temple, he says: "Yet part of this limited area *is covered with trees* The mountain of the House . . . has become like the high places of a forest." Surely the prophet did not immediately use the expression "the mountain of Jehovah's house" in an altogether different sense; the context contains no hint of such a change. No, he is not here speaking of the church, but of that time when Jerusalem and Mt. Moriah, now abased, shall once again be exalted to be the religious center of the earth. (See also Zech. 14:16.)

The kingdom prophecy of Daniel 2:44 also has been applied to the church. But certain facts are decisively against such an interpretation. The little stone struck the image upon the *feet*; when the church came into existence the Roman Empire was yet a unit—not until long after was it divided even into *two* parts. The little stone broke the image in pieces like chaff "and the wind carried them away, so that no place was found for them"; the church did not so to the empire; on the contrary, Christians were expressly enjoined to be in *subjection* to the civil rulers. (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17), and when Rome was smitten down, it was not by the church, but by barbarian hordes. Again, after the destruction of the image the little stone became a "great mountain and filled the whole earth"; whereas even until now the true church occupies a comparatively insignificant place in "this present evil world." Evidently, then, this is not a direct prophecy of the church, but rather of the kingdom as it shall be after Jesus comes again. It is likewise a mistake to apply the "new name" of Isaiah 62:2 to that of "Christian," given

first to disciples at Antioch; for it is quite clear that the prophet is speaking expressly of Zion and Jerusalem (v. 1), and not of a body of people to come into existence centuries later.

However, all this does not mean that the church was an afterthought on God's part. Some things were "hidden from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 13:35.) These are in the New Testament called "mysteries"—secrets previously unrevealed, although many prophets and religious men had vainly desired to see and hear them. (V. 17.) Among these were the "mysteries of the kingdom," which Jesus revealed to his disciples in the parables of Matt. 13 and in His explanation of them. Therein they were shown the kingdom in its present aspect: a time of seed-sowing with only partial fruitfulness; a time when evil would be permitted to be mingled with the good until the harvest, which is the end of the world (or more accurately, the consummation of the age, as in the margin of the American Standard version). Thus is pictured the church in the world (and, alas, the world in the church); it is the kingdom as it exists in this present evil age. The prophets had clearly seen and foretold the kingdom gloriously triumphant, all opposition crushed, universal in its sway; but this present aspect of the kingdom, the church, although in the mind of God all along, they had not been permitted to see.

And yet it does appear that here and there in the Old Testament are fore-shadowings of these days—allusions which the writers were led to make without realization of their full significance. For instance, some see in the story of Isaac's marriage a picture of this age: As Abraham sent a trusted servant far away to seek out a bride for his son, even so has God the Father sent the Holy Spirit to prepare a bride for the Lord Jesus. More clearly, perhaps, is the church pictured in the tabernacle services: the high priest, as he entered into the Holy of Holies on the day of atonement with the blood of the sacrifice, typifies Christ, our great high priest, as He enters into heaven itself with His Own blood; and the other priests, ministering continually in the holy place, typify Christians, the "royal priesthood" who now minister in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Then there is the celebration of the King's marriage in the 45th Psalm, which Christian expositors, especially in view of such New Testament teaching as that found in Eph. 5:33 and context, generally refer to the union between Christ and His church. Such instances as these tend to confirm us in the view that the church, while not directly predicted by the prophets, was not an afterthought, but was all along in the mind of God.

Any individual or any institution that could take the Bible to every home in this country would do more for the country than all the armies from the beginning of our history to the present time.—Chief Justice Brewer.

THE NEED OF OUR TIMES

W. H. Crain

I am sure there was never a time when our best efforts should be exerted more perseveringly than now. Thousands upon thousands of the people of the world are being killed, maimed, and otherwise suffering as the result of this terrible conflict, and so few of them know the *truth*. I am made to wonder if Satan is not reveling in his success of deluding and blinding the eyes of so much of the world to the truth of God's Word. There is so much preaching of conflicting doctrines, and so little reading of the Bible by the people in general, that no other result than confusion can be expected. Preaching of the Bible, or rather should I say, preaching a little of the Bible mixed with enough things that please the world, can produce nothing but confusion.

Indeed, "the harvest is white, and the laborers are few." How we need to pray that God in His infinite goodness and mercy may help us to study to show (not to show the other fellow where we are right and he is wrong) ourselves approved of God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, and to give us the courage, strength and will to work now, while it is called today.

I am not pessimistic, for our God rules in the heavens above and on earth beneath, and will over-rule all things to honor and glorify His Name. The things that meet our eyes and ears today are disheartening. But from beyond it all, there shines forth in all their beauty, the glorious promises of God to His servants. And one among the sweetest is, "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord." The future looks dark for the world. The religions of the world seem to be becoming more tolerant of each other, Protestant, Catholic and Jew can apparently worship together, but they are intolerant of the true worshippers of Christ. May God show us the way to do more good in His name.

THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

W. J. Johnson

If Satan is bound as some teach that he is, why should Christians wear the whole armor of God that they may withstand the wiles of Satan? Evil conditions in the world today indicate that Satan is actively engaged in deceiving. For this purpose "he has transformed himself into an angel of light and his ministers fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness. (2 Cor. 11:13-15.) In all places his presence is manifest. "As a roaring lion he walketh about seeking whom he may devour." In subtleness he makes his attacks. Entering through the lusts of the flesh, he leads many astray. He hurls his fiery darts with accuracy. To withstand his wiles we must put on the whole armor of God and stand in the strength of

His might. The different parts of the armor are needful for protection in resisting. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." So if anyone fails to distinguish between these conditions and those existing when Satan is bound a thousand years, is cast into the abyss, and the door is shut and sealed over him, he is doubtless blinded, for then Satan does not deceive the nations, and the saints live and reign with Christ. (Rev. 20.) Faith is important to ward off Satan's fiery darts to prevent their inflicting blindness. Satan is active and loose. So put on the whole armor of God and in His strength stand.

BEN'S BUDGET

Ben J. Elston

As time is now measured, 1944 draws near to its end. Quite naturally I've thought more seriously of personally meeting the Lord than in any previous year. And of the wisdom of this no rational adult can doubt. What if the call comes unexpectedly? or if the mind should cloud until it cannot be trusted? or if we permit deception that holds out baseless hope? What if we have believed a lie, or THE lie? Let us be exhorted to strictest honesty and careful weighing of facts. To avoid "respect of persons"; God "once for all" revealed the standard by which we who hear are finally to stand or fall. Jude 3. Belief in God's testimony concerning Jesus—only saving Name—must be in the heart and control the life, here in the world, if our hope is of value. It chills the blood to hear loud, final profession of hope where the life has been clouded. May God help us all to embrace and maintain a saving, cheering hope! Love to all the faithful.

VIGILANCE IN SMALL THINGS

The Word of God emphasizes the importance of constant diligence in the Christian life. Watch that first step toward wrong-doing. Playing marbles "for keeps" or taking a ten-cent chance on a punch-board may seem a small thing; but either is a step, if nothing more, in the direction of gambling, a vice which has enslaved millions and brought woe upon multitudes. That little social drink of beer—what does it matter? But it may matter a great deal; for the one may lead to another, and then to something stronger, until the chains of drunkenness are forged about the soul and the prospect of a drunkard's grave looms ahead. And you Christian! You say that it doesn't matter that you stay at home from church this Sunday? But it will be a little easier next Sunday, and still easier the next, until the Lord's service makes little appeal to you. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation?" (Heb. 2:3.)—From *The Torch*.

THOUGHTS WORTH WHILE

D. H. F.

Could there be a better time to face sincerely this heart-searching question:

“WHAT IS YOR LIFE?”

We're yet at the doorway of this New Year—this the first month. We are now taking inventory, and arranging schedules. Knowing the brevity of life, let us not attempt to go forward without Him “in whom we live and have our being.”

May we remember the folly of him who boasted that he had much goods laid up for many years, only to hear God say: “Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee!” “Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.” Better by far that we say, “If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that.” May we therefore give Him priority on our life schedule that “life may be sweet and joy complete” as we live, love, and labor for the glory of His name, and the betterment of our fellow men. Then, should death o’ertake us, He’ll be there “transforming the shadows into the morning.”

Which Way?

“To every man there openeth
A way, and ways and a way,
And the high soul climbs the high way,
And the low soul gropes the low,
And in between, on the misty flats,
The rest drift to and fro.
But to every man there openeth
A high way and a low,
And every man decideth
The way his soul shall go.”

Dear reader, What is YOUR decision *to-day*?

“GOTTADO”

Some thirty-five years ago, the gardener and caretaker of an estate on Cape Cod was an old Portugese named “Charlie.” His vegetable garden, shrubs, and flowers were “a thing

"STANDING UP INSIDE"

Man indeed looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. We are especially reminded of this by the following story:

A mother insisted, and finally succeeded in getting her contrary little boy to sit down. "Mother," said Johnnie, "I'm sitting down, but I'm standing up inside."

This is not the kind of obedience that God requires. This is obedience in the letter that killeth. It is the Spirit that giveth life. When the grace of God really takes hold of our hearts, Christ can give us an inward "sitting down" into His will. Johnnie need not stand up inside unless he is determined to have it so.—*Prairie Pastor*

SCRIPTURE-GIVEN CONFIDENCE

The atheistic doctor said to the man who was arguing with him, "How do you know you have a soul? Can you hear it, can you see it, can you smell it, can you taste it?" "No," said the man. "Can you feel it?" "Yes," said the man. "Then with four senses to one you still believe you have a soul?" "Yes. Say, Doctor, is there such a thing as a pain?" "Sure." "Did you ever hear, see, taste or smell a pain?" "No." "Ever feel a pain?" "Certainly." "With four senses to one do you still believe there is such a thing as pain?" "You win," laughed the doctor, "you got me!"—*Sunday School Times*.

ONLY ONE WAY OUT

About eighty men of the 156th Field Artillery Regiment from Fort Dix, according to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, who had been called out to fight fires, were being trapped without knowing it. An unknown airplane pilot, seeing their plight, risked his own life by flying low enough to drop weighted paper notes to these men. Three times he did this, and the notes told the men that they were trapped, that the pilot could see the way out, and that he would guide them to safety. The men believed his words and obeyed him instantly, dropping their tools and following their guide.

On the double the soldiers went through a narrow, flame-lined channel, and all reached the highway safely. It is interesting to note that the men did not stop to argue on the notes that came from above to see whether they were genuine, and they took no chances by trying to find some other way out. They believed the only one who could view the whole scene, and ran for their lives and were saved.

God, who alone can view the whole scene of this troubled world, sent His Son to save men, and He calls on them to believe in His Word. How futile to try to find other ways out! The Lord Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).—*Forward*.

EVERY MAN'S CONSCIENCE

R. H. B.

“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, (says Paul) even as we obtained mercy, we faint not: but we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.” (2 Cor. 4:1, 2.)

In these words, the apostle Paul tells us something of the ministry which he had received from the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God — of the rectitude and straightforwardness of his message, and the nature of its appeal to the hearts of men. He tells us that he repudiates all the “hidden things of shame,” all “craftiness” and manipulation of the word of God. His one aim is by the plain and open declaration of the truth to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

One fact stands out clearly in this — namely that *every man has a conscience*. No man is without a *conscience*. The wickedest man as well as the best man in the world has a conscience — the heathen as well as the Christian; the savage as well as the civilized; the criminal as well as the saint. Some men may *seem* entirely devoid of it. In others it may have lost its sensitiveness so that they are said to be “past feeling,” and “having their conscience seared as with a hot iron.” In some it seems to lie dormant, smothered, buried under the weight of life-long evil. Some have wilfully and ruthlessly overridden and slain it, and have silenced its voice — as they think, forever. But for all that — every man has a conscience. It is never absent, never quite dead, never put wholly and finally to sleep. It has a way of waking up and asserting itself, sometimes suddenly and at a most unexpected time. And men have been known to go insane and to commit suicide under the stress of it.

It is a strange faculty of our being — almost more than a faculty — more like another self within us; independent — not subject to our will — often acting altogether contrary to our will and desires — an inward judge that passes upon our words, thoughts and actions. Conscience does not know everything: it itself needs to be informed and enlightened, especially in matters of religion, from the one and only source of true light, the word of the Lord. It is not infallible. But it is always on the side of right, in so far as right is known. It is absolutely and incorruptibly honest, and will never compromise with wrong. Every sinner in the world is more or less conscious of being wrong, and he has something in him that will never be satisfied with the way he is doing. People often go to great lengths to hush the accusing, condemning voice of conscience. They resort to the rush and clatter of the world — the whirl of

business, of pleasure, of exciting activities, to stifle its voice, and for a time they succeed. But only for a time. Sooner or later—sometimes too late—but surely, at some moment, conscience comes into its own. It was to this thing called conscience” that Paul addressed himself. When he proclaimed his message, when he preached his gospel, he knew that in the hearts of his hearers he had an ally—whether they would heed or refuse. He knew that every man’s conscience would secretly or openly give its verdict for the truth which he spoke.

In four outstanding features did Paul’s message appeal to the consciences of his hearers.

1. Paul preached God’s unswerving demand for righteousness. This was the very basis of the gospel. God can accept nothing less than perfect righteousness; and all that is unrighteous He must oppose and condemn. The conscience instantly recognizes the justice and validity of this demand of God. We could not respect Him if He did not require righteousness. The demand of His righteous law must be met. If God winked at sin and wrong He would Himself be guilty. But “the wrath of God is revealed against *all ungodliness and unrighteousness* of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness.” And since “there is none righteous, no not one,” all the world stands guilty before God. And thus far conscience cannot do otherwise than to give its assent, and say that this is right, and only right, and cannot be otherwise.

2. Paul preached the judgment—man’s responsibility and accountability before God; and that God must “bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or bad.” The realization of this is almost intuitive. In his book, *The Religion of a Jurist*, Chief Justice Brewster said that during his forty years on the bench one ever deepening assurance and certainty had fastened itself on his mind—namely that somehow, somewhere, every failure of human justice will be made good; that somewhere, somehow all that is hidden will be brought to light, all that is crooked will be made straight.” There may be men who persuade themselves that “death ends all”—but conscience gives them the lie. The injustices and inequalities of our brief earth-lives are too many and too great and they cry out for adjustment and redress. If death ended all there would indeed be a huge accumulation at last of unfinished business in the universe. But Paul preached a righteous judgment of God “who will render to every man according to his works,” a judgment “according to truth,” without respect of persons, and also that God will judge the *secrets* of men, by the one Man who has proven true to God and to man, Jesus Christ the Lord (Rom. 2:6-16). And the conscience of man gives its full assent and ratification to this, that it is no less than true and right.

3. But the heart of Paul’s gospel is the message of God’s grace—the glad tidings of mercy toward sinners, of free and

full forgiveness of sins for all who turn from their sins and come to Christ. This is a serious matter for the conscience. It must see and be convinced that this can really be, and *how* such a thing can be. An awakened sinner, convicted of the enormity of his sin and guilt, can not be lightly satisfied that his sin can be blotted out and that he can be made free from all guilt. He must see a satisfactory reason for it. He must have more than a sentimental belief in the general goodness and leniency of God, or some arbitrary and unprincipled pardon. Else the sinner can never have inward peace. His conscience cannot ever be satisfied with repentance alone, however sincere; for it is obvious that what has been done is done, and stands as a fact forever. As a poet of the world once said:

“The moving finger writes; and having writ
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a word of it.”

This is absolutely and indisputably true; and conscience bears witness to it. And yet—is it possible to speak of mercy and grace and forgiveness? How can it be?

A mine-worker of Yorkshire who was in great spiritual distress said to a certain noted preacher, “I have been in hell the last several days. Is there any hope or chance for me?” The preacher showed him Isa. 55:6, 7. “Here in this passage of Scripture God tells you something you must do; and then tells you what He will do. What you must do is this:

“Seek ye the Lord while He may be found;
Call ye upon him while he is near.
Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man his thoughts,
And let him return unto the Lord. . . .”

And this is what God says He will do:

“And he will have mercy upon him,
And to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

The man looked at the passage for a few moments, and suddenly raised his head and said, “I don’t believe it.” The preacher realized what was going on in the man’s mind. “And why don’t you believe it?” he asked. “It’s *too cheap*,” said the man. And he was right. It was his conscience that spoke. Just taking that passage by itself, such salvation on such terms *would* have been “*too cheap*.” The preacher had an inspiration. “How far below surface do you work?” he asked the collier. “Eight hundred yards,” he answered. “How did you get home?” “I walked home.” “But how did you get out of that hole?” “I came up in the lift.” “How much did it cost you?” “Nothing at all,” he replied. “What! Do you mean it cost nothing to get you up out of that depth?” “No—well, of course, it cost the Company; yes, I guess it cost them a good bit. — I think I see what you mean: it is cheap to me, but it *cost God a lot*.” — And just so it did. That Gospel which Paul

preached declared that God gave His own Son, His Chief-Beloved, and how on God's behalf and for us, He assumed the burden, and the judgment, and Himself bore the cost of it all.

"There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin—

No other could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in."

"Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5:21.) It is not that an innocent person was made to suffer in place of the guilty—no sense of justice could sanction that kind of thing: but that God, in the Person of His Son, took our sins upon Himself. As it is written: "He was wounded for our transgression, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquities of us all!" (Isa. 53:4-6.) And so Peter also declares "He bore our sins in his own body upon the tree." (1 Pet. 2:22.) Now if indeed such a thing as this was done, conscience is clear and satisfied; and with confidence the sinner can sing,

"My sin—Oh the bliss of that glorious thought—

My sin, not in part, but the whole,

Is nailed to His cross, and I bear it no more:

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!"

4. Finally—Paul's gospel commended itself to every man's conscience in that it was not merely a makeshift to escape merited punishment, but its final object and issue was a new and righteous life. "If any man is in Christ he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold they are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17.) For if Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree, it was "that we having died unto sin might live unto righteousness." (1 Pet. 2:24.) If we are "buried with him through baptism into death," it is that we might be raised with Him to walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6:4.) Moreover Paul's own conduct and work bore testimony to this new life in Christ, and to the rightness and righteousness of his gospel; and thus in both word and deed manifesting the truth, he commended himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

This message so great and glorious if received in submissive and obedient faith, is indeed the power of God unto salvation; but if refused and rejected it becomes "a savor of death unto death." Let us take heed how we hear! May we never attempt to find our peace in a false or insufficient way—but in honest dealing with God, in acceptance of His verdict and sentence upon sin (*our sin*), in sincere repentance, by trust in His righteous love and the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ, and by the obedience of faith which takes hold of the unspeakable gift.

And to this every man's conscience utters its solemn *Amen!*