

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. XXXIII January, 1950 No. 1

An Admonition for the New Year Our Year Text for 1950

"Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life." - Proverbs 4:23.

IN CASTING about for a Scripture *suitable* to the New Year; one that could easily be kept in mind and be of constant benefit to us, this admonition from the sayings of Solomon was chosen *from* among the many that could have been *used*, as being particularly appropriate. It is taken from a chapter dealing especially with the course *of* wisdom, and was the inspired utterance of one who had been divinely endowed with wisdom and understanding.

Shortly after Solomon ascended the throne of the Lord in *the* place of his father David, God appeared unto him in a dream and asked what he should give him. Solomon, sensible of his youth and lack of experience, and awed, by the great responsibility of *ruling* and judging the myriads of God's chosen people, requested that he might be given an understanding heart to know judgment, and *to* discern between good and evil. This request *so* pleased the Lord that he said to him:

"Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for *thyself long* life; neither hast asked riches for *thyself*, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; behold, I have done according to thy words; lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like, thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor: so that there shall not be *any* among the kings like unto thee *all*. thy days. And if thou wilt walk *in my ways*, and keep my statutes and commandments, as thy father, David did walk, then I will [also] lengthen thy days." - 1 Kings 3:5-14.

In all probability the foundation for Solomon's wisdom had been laid in the guidance of the Lord during his youth; and a large part of the honor' and riches which he inherited *as* king, had been built *up* by the providence and foreknowledge of God before he came into *office*. But long life was made de pendent upon his faithfulness *in* walking *in* the Lord's ways, which constitute the course of wisdom.

Solomon soon had opportunity to demonstrate his understanding heart. This he did by manifesting much astuteness in deciding the contention of two women over the motherhood of a child to which each laid claim. His unique method of demonstrating which one was the mother of the child, gained the approval of Israel; and has come down: in the records of Scripture as a testimony to his understanding of human nature.

But the best testimony to the greatness of his understanding *has* been the wisdom in the proverbs that he set forth. According to the statement in 1 Kings 4:32, *Solomon* uttered 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs or *psalms*, which means that we have only a portion of them in the Scriptures.

THE PURPOSE OF PROVERBS

The first seven chapters of Proverbs are addressed to sons, and since "Whatsoever, things were written aforetime were written for our learning (Rom. 15:4), they are particularly applicable to all *who* have become the *sons* of God, and, grouped together with chapters, eight and nine, they voice the praise of wisdom. The purpose for which the Book of Proverbs is written is given in the first five verses of Chapter 1: "For gaining sagacity and intelligence, for a grasp of wise teachings, for training in right conduct, in duty, goodness and integrity, for imparting insight to the ignorant, knowledge and sense to the young for understanding maxims and parables, the sentences of sages and their aphorisms." (*Moffatt.*) And then he further adds: "Let the sage too listen *and* learn, let the intelligent know how to handle life." Rotherham translates this last verse "A wise man will hear and will increase learning, and, a discreet man, wise counsels will acquire." In other words, one may be wise and discreet even though he be young; for wisdom does not consist in knowing everything there is to be known, but in the right application of that which *we do* have and know.

SOLOMON'S REIGN, TYPICAL

Many things concerning Solomon and his reign were typical of the thousand-year reign of Christ. Solomon was chosen of God and endowed with wisdom from on high -- so is Christ -- he was declared to be without equal in wisdom and understanding, either before or after, his time -- the same is true of Christ but on a much grander scale; he was exalted above all kings, and all paid him homage and brought presents -- the same again is true of Christ, for all kings shall bow before him. As a result of his wisdom and righteous judgments, Solomon's reign, was a time of peace and prosperity, for "Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon." - 1 Kings 4:25.

Also in "A Song of Solomon" (Psalm 72) it is said of the reign of Christ: "In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea [antitypical of Solomon's dominion, 1 Kings, 4:21], and from the river unto the ends of the earth. . The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. [1 Kings 10:1-10.] Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.

Besides wisdom, God gave him riches, glory, and honor; his fame spread throughout all the world. Then too, in the beginning of his reign, he built a house for, the habitation of God, a place where God did hear and answer prayer. (1 Kings 8:28; 9:3.) The stones of that temple were prepared during the reign of David, but the erecting of the temple took place under Solomon in the glory age. Likewise the living stones of the great antitypical temple are taken from the quarry of this world, and are prepared under the direction of the Lord in this age of the Church's warfare, suffering, and death; but the erecting of the temple will be the first work of the Glory Age, after

Christ takes unto himself his great power and awakens these living stones, that he may assemble them unto himself as head stone to form the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (Heb. 12:23; Rev. 3:12.) It is our opinion, based upon the evidence of events foretold, that the last of these living stones are now receiving the final tests and polishings necessary to prepare them for their eternal resting place. And so it behooves us to give heed to the words of wisdom of which our text is a part.

THE HEART -- WHAT IT SIGNIFIES

The admonition of our text is: "Keep *thy heart* with all diligence." But why is the heart singled out in this admonition? Why not the doctrines, or the mind or the tongue? The wise man has not left us in doubt as to the reason: "For out of it are the issues of life." But just what does the heart signify? Why do the issues of life depend upon its condition?

The literal heart is the most vital organ of the human body; through its operation and control of the blood stream, it supplies oxygen and nourishment to all the other parts, and carries away the waste products that they may be eliminated through the various means by which, this process is accomplished. The operation of all the many organs and functions of the body depends upon the heart. If it becomes affected by weakness or disease, then all the bodily operations suffer impairment. We think and feel because the blood stream supplies life and vitality to the brain. It is because of the vital part that the heart plays in our ability to function as human beings, that it is employed to represent the motivating elements of character that determine what we become.

In Scripture the heart is used to picture the emotional rather than the purely intellectual part of our thinking. Our desires and affections are represented as coming from the heart, and so constitute an outward indication of its true condition. The study and mental grasp of truth that calls forth no sentiment in connection therewith, will have no beneficial effect upon the life; but if such study includes an appreciation and a desire to order our lives in accordance therewith, then the emotional part of our thinking, the heart, has been called into action, and there will be a proportionate result in our lives; for "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." The unemotional perception of truth will not lead to righteousness; but the heart perception, that which calls into play the emotions, will do so, and will become evident in the outward; life; for "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." - Rom. 10:10.

Much of our thinking concerns only the reasoning ability of our minds. Some men have studied the Bible just as they would study a book on mathematics, and whereas this may have its effect upon their store of knowledge, and increase their reasoning powers, yet it will not transform the moral course of their lives. Therefore we are not told that "As a man thinketh so is he," but "As a man thinketh *in his heart*, so is he. It is the thinking that includes the emotional operation of the mind that determines what we become in character.

In his first letter to the Corinthian Church, chapter eight, verse 'one, Paul states that "Knowledge puffeth up, but love builds up." Love, in this instance, would be synonymous with wisdom, for wisdom causes one to act so as to make the best use of his knowledge. In the connection in which this Scripture occurs, the best use of knowledge would be to refrain from eating meat that had been offered to idols, lest there be danger in partaking of such meat of causing a weaker brother to violate his conscience by doing the same. To take advantage of the knowledge that an idol

means nothing, under such circumstances, would only tend to puff up; whereas, to be self controlled, in order that a brother be not harmed, would result in becoming: more God like.

THE KEEPING OF THE HEART

Though the emotional part of one's thinking is largely the determining factor in what he becomes at heart, nevertheless, this emotional (heart) thinking must be controlled through the will, and the will in turn, must be subject to guidance through the operation of the purely reasoning faculty of the mind in its apprehension of the principles of God set forth in his Word.

The kind of love thus begotten, does not originate in human sentiment, or in the natural likes and dislikes, but is the result of desires and emotions based upon the principles that activate God. The exercise of God's love is not dependent upon being pleased with its object, but upon what can be done to benefit and bless its object. It was while we were enemies and strangers that the love of God operated to provide our redemption through the gift of his only begotten Son to die for us. And so, godly love is not merely sentiment -- that is, a mental attitude, thought, or judgment permeated or prompted by feeling-but is kindly, charitable thoughts, words, and acts motivated by principle.

The keeping of the heart consists largely in keeping the desires and affections centered upon things above. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of *God*. *Set your* affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead [to all earthly life, hopes, and prospects], and your, life is hid with Christ in God." - Col. 3:1-3.

The doing of this is not an easy task, but, as our text indicates, will require the utmost diligence and persevering application. The natural tendencies of the flesh, and the allurements of the world all tend to draw us away from the; narrow path that leads unto *the* life. Satan leaves no stone unturned in his endeavor to deflect our desires into other channels. 'He turned Eve's desires toward the forbidden fruit the desires of Solomon, whose words of wisdom are exemplified in our text, were turned aside to the seeking and pleasing of many wives. Unsanctified desire is the cause of all our downfalls.

James says: "A man [Christian] is drawn away [from the straight and narrow path] *by his own lust* [desire that has become inordinate]." (James 1:14.) The same Greek and Hebrew words have been translated both as "desire" and "lust," depending, evidently upon the character of the desire. Peter says: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." (1 Pet. 2:11.) Then Paul says: "Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." - Gal. 5:16.

Inordinate desire, in so far as the saints are concerned, is not restricted to things that would be looked upon as evil, but includes anything that would draw us away from our covenant of sacrifice and full submission to the will of God. As Paul explains (1 Cor. 6:12, 10:23); "All things [not sinful] are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient [margin, profitable]; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not," " I will not be brought under the power of any."

Some let their desires for art, music, literature, science, philosophy, business, or sports occupy all their time and attention; any one engaged in any of these pursuits is almost compelled to give his full time and attention if he would become a success in the eyes of the world. So the faithful follower of Jesus, who may have to earn his daily bread in some such manner, is at a disadvantage, humanly speaking, but not so actually; for he finds that time and effort, redeemed

from such pursuits in the service of the Lord and the study of his Word, is, not only well repaid, but is vitally essential to spiritual welfare.

Then, too, some have a consuming desire for glory and honor of men; they covet office and power, the direction of large enterprises, and the supervision of successful activities in a social or a religious way. The sects and organizations of Christendom have given much opportunity, to those who have an inordinate desire for leadership and control over God's people. And so it behooves each, one of us, in the year now beginning, to examine carefully our motives and desires, that our hearts may be pure in our Father's sight.

The keeping of the heart, therefore, will have to do with the control of the desires and affections that they may reflect the glory of the divine character. This will have to be the object of our daily striving, if we hope to make our calling and election sure, for the condition of the heart: will determine the issues (outcome) of life. Most of those chosen of the Lord have appeared insignificant in the sight of men; but as God said to Samuel when he sent him to anoint David: "Man looketh upon the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." He judges our works by what he sees in our hearts, he is able to know the intent and the motive that actuates us, and to judge by the loyalty and obedience manifested just what our lives would be if we had perfect organisms through which to operate.

Just what this year may bring forth, none of us know; but praise God, we do know that nothing can pluck us out of his hand or separate us from his love if we continue to trust him.

- J. T. Read.

"Let All Your Things be Done With Love"

MAY SPEAK with the tongues of men and of angels, but if I have no love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal; I may prophesy, fathom all mysteries and secret lore, I may have such absolute faith that I can move hills from their place, but if I have no love, I count for nothing I may distribute all I possess in charity, I may give up my body to be burnt, but if I have no love, I make nothing of it.

"Love is very patient, very kind. Love knows no jealousy; love makes no parade, gives itself no airs, is never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful; love is never glad when others go wrong, love is gladdened by goodness, always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient.

"Love never disappears. As for prophesying, it will be superseded; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will be superseded. For we only know bit by bit, but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will be superseded. When I as a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I argued like a child; now that I am a man, I am done with childish ways.

"At present we only see the baffling reflections in a mirror, but then it will be face to face; at present I am learning bit by bit, but then I shall understand, as all along I have myself been understood. Thus faith and hope and love last on, these three, but the greatest of all is love. Make love your aim, and then set your heart on spiritual gifts." - 1 Cor. 13; 14:1, *Moffatt*.

This wonderful passage written by the great Apostle Paul is, one of the most beautiful and sublime in the New Testament. It describes an ideal toward which every sincere Christian must strive. The chapter has been described as one of the Psalms of the New Testament, and doubtless it can be truly said that this is a Psalm of Love.

In the materialistic days in which we live, many may consider the subject with which the Apostle deals in this chapter as merely, sentimental and as having no place in this practical twentieth century. Sad it is that the great majority of professing Christians will lightly read through this chapter and dismiss it from their minds as a "piece of fine literature," describing a beautiful sentiment which cannot be applied to the practical and every-day experiences of life. That this is not an overstatement of fact is seen in the distress, injustice, and oppression which exist in the strongholds of the Christian (?) religion after nearly two thousand years. Those, however, who have learned something of the great God of heaven, the Creator of the universe, have been taught that Love is not merely an emotion or kindly sentiment, but is rather a principle by which the universe is controlled, and a principle which must govern the lives of all who would be in harmony with God. The Scriptures teach that "God is Love," and in deep reverence it is suggested that the Apostle Paul in this 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians has analyzed for us the Character of God. He has shown just what he is, like in his dealings with his intelligent creatures. Therefore; those who would be like him -- God-like in thought, word; and deed -- must think upon his character and appreciate its beauty, seeking to apply this principle of Love in every detail and experience of life.

It is specially helpful when reading through this chapter to remember that it was the Apostle Paul who wrote this wonderful description of Love, and who furthermore urged that the, attainment of this quality was to be sought for above everything else. He was no dreamer, no impractical idealist, but he was a man of character, of principle -- outspoken and straightforward, and one who would never compromise the truth. In some respects he seems to have been as lonely man, and stood somewhat alone in his apostleship. He was a great philosopher and, one who insisted on the importance of a correct understanding of doctrinal truths. Yet this chapter reveals that he was not satisfied with the truth alone; he knew that there was a purpose behind the revelation of all truth. Unless that purpose was attained, the truth would be valueless so far as the recipient was concerned. That is one of the important lessons the Lord's people need to apply in this our day.

In order to fully appreciate the beauty and force of the lesson which the Apostle seeks to convey in this chapter, it is necessary to understand the circumstances in which the epistle was written and of those to whom it was addressed. It is usual when considering this 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians, to note its connection with the previous chapter and the chapter which follows; but while Paul does doubtless contrast this fruit of Love with the various gifts of the spirit: with which the Church had been endowed, yet there is a very vital connection between this chapter and all that has gone before. In very beautiful, and tender language he gives a summary of his conclusions on all the varied topics with which he has been dealing. How true it is that Love will solve all the problems which arise in the Church; but in order to have this love, a correct appreciation of God's Love and its operation essential.

At the time Paul wrote, his letters to the, Corinthian brethren, Corinth was a city of renown. It was a great seaport and, because of its geographical position, served as 'a gateway between the eastern and western ports of the Roman Empire., It was one of -the richest and' most powerful cities in Greece both commercially and politically. Its inhabitants were noted for their; mental activity and love of learning, and were notorious throughout the world for their immorality and licentiousness. To understand the difficulties which arose within the Corinthian Ecclesia it is essential to remember these things. In view of all the circumstances, it speaks volumes for the

power of the Gospel message, and for the zeal and energy of the great Apostle Paul, that he was able to establish an ecclesia in this city of sin and luxury. He was assured that the Lord had "much people in this city," and for eighteen months he labored and "taught the Word of God." As a result of his ministry, and with the aid of those humble servants of God, Aquila and Priscilla, a small company were brought together in Christian fellowship, largely composed of the poorer and humbler members of the city's population. It was to these same brethren at Corinth that he wrote at the commencement of his first letter: "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea," and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are that no flesh should glory in his presence." -1 Cor. 1:26-29.

Some time after Paul had left Corinth and was actively preaching the Gospel at Ephesus, he received a letter in which the Corinthian brethren desired his advice and counsel on matters which had been exercising their minds. About the same time he also received information of grave difficulties which had arisen within the Church, difficulties which caused him grave concern and (much grief. The reports he had received indicated how great was the influence of the world in which they moved. Let us not be too harsh in our judgment of those brethren at Corinth -- it is so easy for our standard of conduct to be governed by the world about us. The spirit of Corinth had entered into that company of the Lord's people: This has ever been the danger and snare which has confronted the Lord's people throughout the Age.

How easy it is to allow the spirit of the world to enter among the Lord's people, and to adjust our standard of conduct by the standard which prevails around us. How necessary to ever remember that we are, a "called out" people, separate from the world and its spirit. The standard of conduct held before the people of God is not the standard of the world about, but that which is seen in his Word. If the ideal is a high one and seems impossible of attainment to the fallen flesh, yet the standard must never be lowered, but with a conscience ever quick to discern the slightest deviation from the path of truth and righteousness, we must strive daily to develop more of the character-likeness of our Heavenly Father. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." That is the standard before every child of God.

It was as the result of the reports which had reached him, and the letter of inquiry he had received, that the Apostle sent his first epistle to the Corinthians, and from it we gain our information of the sad spiritual condition of the brethren. In opening his letter Paul gives thanks to God for "the gifts of utterance and knowledge by which the Church was enriched. He did not belittle these gifts, they were indeed the cause of thankfulness. "I thank my God for the grace of God bestowed on you in Christ Jesus that in him you have been enriched with everything, with readiness of speech and fulness of knowledge." Yes, these gifts had been given for the edification of the Church, yet how much harm- these same gifts can do if the spirit of the world is allowed to enter the assembly. That is what had happened at Corinth. The love of eloquence and the desire for knowledge for its own sake were the things; for which the people of this, city were renowned, and this spirit had entered the Church. Pride of intellect had usurped the holy spirit's influence, and the result was divisions, contentions, and a spirit of faction among the brethren. Because they worshiped intellect, they followed individual teachers. Some said, "I am of Paul"; others followed the eloquent Apollos. There were those who rigidly adhered to the Jewish Law and claimed to follow. Cephas or Peter, while still others had formed a small clique and to the exclusion of all other brethren maintained that *they* were of Christ. The Apostle reminds them that Christ is not divided, and that Paul can do nothing to deliver them from condemnation. What is the connection with chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians? Surely it is that *love* would have surmounted these difficulties.

Eloquence and knowledge combined with Love can result only in mutual helpfulness and edification. Without Love, our knowledge and the gift of utterance can result only in harm to the Church, and to him who possesses these gifts. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling: cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and have *not love*, I am nothing." That is the verdict of the inspired Apostle Paul.

SPIRIT OF HUMILITY MAINTAINED BY LOVE

As Paul continues his epistle, he next reproves them for their pride and boastfulness. The brethren at Corinth had imbibed that spirit of self-sufficiency for which the Lord had to reprove the Laodicean Church through the Revelator: "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods; and have need of nothing." In chapter 4, the Apostle reminds the brethren that he and Apollos were but stewards; of God's truth, and that it is the duty and responsibility of every minister to be a faithful steward. So he exhorts them "not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another." After all, the truth they had received was not because of any particular merit, and he goes on to ask, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" Then in a spirit of irony he says, "Already ye, are full, already ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us."

These things have been written for our instruction; and is there not a lesson for the Lord's people today? The understanding we have received of the glorious; truth of God's Word, with all its sacred secrets, is not due to any merit of ours, nor because of the intellectual capacity which we may possess. Faithful stewards of God have ministered the Word to us and we have been diligent to "search the Scriptures"; but the enlightenment which has come to us as a result of our seeking is due to the influence of God's holy spirit operating upon the mind and heart. There is therefore no cause for boastfulness, and we need to be watchful lest we become puffed up and proud of heart. This brings us again to the 13th chapter of this Epistle, where in five simple words Paul clearly indicates the cause of this spirit of boastfulness and pride which he has been describing in chapter 4: "*Love ... is not puffed up.*" How much is conveyed in those few words! It is *Love* which will enable a spirit of humility to be maintained.

Proceeding to chapter 5 the Apostle finds it necessary to refer to a very gross sin which had been committed within the Ecclesia. The sin was such, that it was not so much as named among the surrounding Gentiles of that profligate city. How great must have been the grief of the Apostle that such a sin should have been committed by one who professed to be a follower of the pure and holy Jesus! But that which was still more grievous to him, was the fact that the brethren were prepared to tolerate such a condition of things in their midst. Here were those brethren, puffed up with pride, when they should have been mourning for the sin and disgrace which had come upon them, and the dishonor into which God's name and the Christian faith had been brought!

It is difficult to believe that these brethren were completely indifferent to this state of affairs. Doubtless less they disapproved of the terrible sin, for they had progressed some way along the Christian pathway, and this sin was one which even the licentious Gentiles of Corinth did not countenance. It would seem, however, that they had a wrong conception of what was required of them as brethren in Christ. They had received the teachings of Jesus, from which they had heard the lessons of forgiveness and brotherly, love; but this did not mean that they were to overlook sin which had not been repented of, or that they were to admit into their fellowship those Who practiced sin. Surely the essence of Christian fellowship is that those who claim to follow Christ have repented of their sins and are striving to walk in the Ways of righteousness. In the 13th chapter, the Apostle shows that Christian love is not merely a kindly sentiment, willing to overlook all that is sinful and treating the sinner as though he had not sinned. "*Love rejoiceth not in iniquity.*" Those whose lives are governed by the love of God can have no sympathy with sin, nor fellowship with those who practice sin.

The next matter with which Paul deals in chapter 6 concerns certain brethren in the ecclesia who had been unable to settle their differences and had gone to the law courts of the unbelieving

Gentiles. The Apostle reasons with them: "How strange, how inconsistent, that those who are to judge the world should go to the world to be judged!" "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. 6:2.) Yet here were those brethren unable- to judge the small matters which concerned themselves. Furthermore, (this effort to justify themselves and to maintain their "rights" indicated a lack of true appreciation of their calling. To what have we been called? We have been called to sacrifice -- to surrender our human "rights" -- to suffer with Christ. How did Christ suffer? "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; When he suffered, he threatened, not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. What an example for those who claim to follow his steps! Paul would seem to remind them of this when he asks: "Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" (1 Cor. 6:7.) Well did the Apostle know that the exercise of Love would have solved such difficulties as this, and so in the 13th chapter again, he says: "*Love seeketh not her own.*" (1 Cor. 13:5.) Perhaps now we are beginning to see how all embracing is the grace of Love, and how necessary it is that all our energies should be concentrated on the development in our hearts of this Love which alone will make us God-like, for "God is *love.*" It is recorded that St. Augustine once said, "Love, and do what you will." How true it is that Love in the heart brings with it perfect freedom and liberty in Christ.

Perhaps reference can be made to still one other matter of which Paul makes mention in this Epistle to show how vital is the connection between the 13th chapter and the rest of this letter to the Corinthian brethren. In the 8th chapter he deals with the subject of things offered to idols and shows that knowledge- without Love can prove harmful to the welfare of our brethren. The chapter commences, "Now as touching things offered unto idols; we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth."

The Church at Corinth comprised both Jews and Gentiles, and it would appear that the outlook of some was rather "broader" than that of those who had been nurtured within the strict confines of the Jewish religion. Among the brethren were those who were firmly convinced that food which had been offered unto idols was thereby made unclean, and therefore it would be wrong to touch, taste, or handle it. Others failed to see any difference between food which had been offered to idols, and that which had not, and so felt free to eat whatever food was placed before them. The Apostle had no difficulty in the matter. To him there was but one God and therefore it mattered not to him if food had been offered to gods which were non-existent.

Now what was the proper course to be adopted by these brethren in view of this divergent viewpoint? Each was free to exercise his liberty in the matter; but what would be the effect upon those brethren who felt so strongly that to eat of, this food was displeasing to God? There was one rule by which the matter could be easily decided; it was the rule of Love. Am I going to harm my brother or sister by exercising my liberty? Is my conduct in things which are not vital to my salvation likely to cause others of my brethren to act against their conscience?

Are not such questions equally appropriate, today, even though we may not be troubled by the problem of food which has been offered unto idols? As Christians who have been privileged to see the full extent of our liberty in Christ, we need to cultivate in our hearts that Love which will first think of *others*. Paul exhorts those who saw their liberty to "take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak." Later, in the 10th chapter, he says: "All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's good." Again in chapter 13 the Apostle has summed it all up in the words: "Love is kind," and "seeketh not her own."

Proceeding to the 12th chapter we there learn that although diversity in the Church is essential for its edification, yet this is no cause for discord and division. Much of the difficulty at Corinth was due to this diversity. There were among them those who had "the word of knowledge" -- a deep insight into the Word of God. Others were able to prophesy to expound and eloquently teach others in the way of truth. Apollos was among these. Again others were able to work miracles -- to speak in different tongues, and to interpret tongues, etc. *In this* Ecclesia there were Jews and Gentiles, there were bond and free. Yet in all this diversity they were exhorted to a oneness between those who by one spirit had been baptized into one body. Unity without uniformity was a desirable condition in, the Church *it still' is*, aye, it is essential to the well being of the Body of Christ.

We dare not despise the gift of knowledge, nor the gift of prophecy, nor other of the varied gifts within the Church. Without them the Church can never grow to the stature of a perfect man. Paul therefore likens the Church to a body, each member performing a different function, yet all working for the health and sustenance of the, whole body. Just as the ear, the eye, the hand, and the foot together with the less prominent members are essential to the welfare of the whole body, so every gift which God has provided in the Church is necessary, and every member, however varied the gifts may be, has some function to perform in the edification of the complete Body of Christ.; "That there should be no schism in the Body," says the Apostle, "but that the members should have the same care one for another." - 1 Cor. 12:25.

He then indicates clearly that all cannot possess the most prominent gifts or be the most prominent members in the Body. All cannot be apostles, prophets, and teachers; all cannot be workers of miracles, or have the gift of healing, or speak with tongues and interpret. While we may rightly desire these more eminent gifts, yet towering above them all is a much more excellent way by which the Body, can be edified -- a way in which every individual member whether he be apostle or the most humble and, lowly can have a part. *It is the way of Love*. Without Love we may possess all the most eminent gifts, yet count for nothing before our Heavenly Father. In the 1st verse of chapter 14 (1 Cor. 14:1), Paul places the matter in its proper perspective and indicates the correct sequence of our desires: "Follow after Love and desire spiritual gifts," or as rendered by the Diaglott: "Ardently pursue Love and be emulous of the spiritual gifts." Other translations render this phrase: "Make Love your quest, and be eager for spiritual gifts." (Weymouth.) "Make Love your aim, and then set your heart on spiritual gifts. (*Moffatt.*) Surely the exhortation is that our desire for spiritual gifts must be prompted by *Love* -- love that will seek to edify, to strengthen and encourage our brethren.

This consideration is intended to emphasize the importance of Love, not as a theory, but a principle which is to govern our lives if we are to be pleasing to the Heavenly Father. As individuals, or as communities of the Lord's people we may not be troubled with the peculiar difficulties which confronted our brethren at Corinth, nevertheless, whatever the experiences which come into our lives as they concern our relationship to God and to our brethren in the Lord, the spirit of Love in the heart will be a guiding principle enabling' each to live and act in harmony with the will of God and the highest interests of his people.

The way of Love is the way of sacrifice, and it is to sacrifice we are called. "God so loved that *he gave*"; our Lord Jesus so loved that it cost him his life, and we are called so to Love that we will lay down our lives for the brethren. May we heed the exhortation of Brother Paul as he concludes his letter to the Church at Corinth: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. *Let 'all your things be done with love.*" - 1 Cor. 16:13, 14.

- Edwin Allbon, Eng.

Acceptable Sacrifices

Part III

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." - Rom. 12:1.

THE question left for us to consider, as to the purpose the Father has in making provision for and accepting the Church's sacrifice, being one on which there is great divergence of opinion among brethren of undoubted consecration and faithfulness' to" .the Lord, we need not be surprised to find the explanation largely veiled under symbolical and typical language; and when approaching the types and symbols, we must do so with full realization that for their understanding we must have the guidance of the same spirit that inspired them. Though our interpretation does seem to us the only one which harmonizes all the Scriptural allusions, and that without straining in its application of any passage, we may only ask the reader who differs to be lenient in comparing his interpretation with the one we present. The oneness which the Scriptures enjoin may not be attained merely by reasoning alike on this and kindred subjects, but is ours because "in one spirit were we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13), therefore all having the same spirit, each member will realize its need of every other member and all will seek to function in mutual helpfulness.

When the plain statements of Scripture are found to be contradictory to an interpretation, that interpretation is disproved; but even here there is danger that it may be an individual interpretation of the plain Scripture that contradicts, instead of the Scripture itself. Let us confess, too, in all humility, that the fact that we have not as yet found the Scripture that contradicts the explanation which we accept, does not prove that there is no such Scripture. The following is presented because to the present time we have not found any Scriptures which to our mind seem in contradiction to it. Although some have been suggested, in each instance it has seemed to us that the contradiction was in the thought added to the text by the interpreter, and not in the text itself.

"Planted Together in the Likeness of His Death"

In His prayer to the Father on that last evening before His crucifixion, recorded in John 17, our Lord declared His special interest in those whom the Father had given Him. It was for these He prayed: "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine." In this prayer He declared He had sent these into the world just as the Father had sent Him into the world. It was through their sanctification and oneness with the Father and the Son that the world would believe. And His further declaration was that the Father loved these chosen ones even as He loved the Son.

Thus does He exalt those who are to be partakers with Him in all His glory -- partakers in His sufferings, partakers in His sacrifice, partakers in His death, therefore partakers in the glory that is to follow; planted together in the likeness of His death, raised in the likeness of His resurrection. "If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." Would it be possible for any one to take greater honor to himself than the Lord Himself has bestowed on His Body members, the underpriesthood?

In our previous study we found a suggestion that the Church had a part in the tabernacle pictures, being represented in one of the coverings of the building. All Bible students are in agreement that

the main picture of the tabernacle types, and the essential one for all to grasp and appreciate is the representation of our Lord's acceptableness as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. All are agreed that the Apostle Peter connects the Church with the tabernacle picture by speaking of them as a priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9), and that under the symbol of the anointing they are even represented as members of the High Priest's body. (Psalm 133:1, 2; 1 Cor. 12:12, 13,27; Eph. 5:29, 30.) Since the Church is invited to sacrifice and suffer with Christ, and in view of these well known facts, would it not be reasonable to expect the tabernacle types to show the Church's share with Jesus in the privilege of presenting an "acceptable sacrifice"? In the New Testament there are numerous Scriptures indicating our privilege of presenting ourselves for sacrifice with Him on the altar. Of this order is the very symbol of our consecration, indicating that we are baptized into His death. We note it is not "into death," but "into His death." In fact the special hope of the Church as distinguished from that of the world is bound up in this one point. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father,, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. (Rom. 6:3-5.) The fact that in the verses immediately following the Apostle suggests the thought of being, dead to sin must not be allowed to turn our minds aside from the astounding truth that, he is asserting in, the verses quoted above, namely, that we are to share in the death of the One who knew no sin and who, therefore could never die to sin, but who did, die on account of sin.

It should be unnecessary to remark that any interpretation of this and similar passages that suggests that the Church shares in or adds to the ransom, is false. Though the members of His Body die with Him whose death was a sacrificial death,, the just, for the unjust, they cannot be thought of as bringing any merit of their own for the cancellation of another's debt. When they offer themselves and are accepted, when they consecrate and are thus "baptized for the dead," it can neither be because the dead need any addition to the price already secured for their release, or because this poverty-stricken Church could find the minutest fraction to add to that price.

That Christ is a propitiation "for our sins and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world," we are plainly taught, but since the Scriptures distinctly tell us that Christ has appeared in the presence of God on behalf of the Church, but nowhere says He has appeared for the world, we are led to believe that He has not yet done this. When He appeared for the Church, the acceptance was manifested by the sending of the Holy Spirit upon the waiting disciples. When He has appeared for the world, then will the promise be fulfilled: "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh." But after this first work, of appearing on behalf of the world, there will still remain a second and necessary feature of Christ's work-the lifting of the willing and obedient from their fallen estate to the glorious perfection Father Adam and all his family would have enjoyed had there been no fall. It seems to us that God has seen fit to receive ours as an **acceptable** sacrifice, with Christ's, for either or both of these reasons. Having found no Scriptural indication that the Father's acceptance will be limited to either of these points, why should we place any limitations?

"In one Spirit were We All Baptized"

In the years preceding His being made flesh, Jesus, watching over Israel, beheld that the blood of 'bulls and goats, though thousands were slain, could never accomplish the redemption the loving Father had planned. Pity for the fallen race and harmony with the Father's desires, and being prepared to clearly discern the great truth these bloody sacrifices were intended to teach, Jesus presented Himself in sacrifice and was found 'acceptable. "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; **Mine ears** hast **Thou opened** [by these thousands of slain animals whose shed blood could never **take** away sins]. Burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required. [When I saw this] **then** said I, Lo, I come." (Psa. 40:6, 7.) It was the spirit of sacrifice that brought Him to earth to die on behalf of the fallen race, and "in one spirit were we all baptized into one body."

It has already been clearly shown, we trust, that our being baptized into the one body of our Lord is not thought to add in any degree to the merit of His sacrifice. It is our privilege that is added to, and not His efficacy. That there is a presentation of the merit does not imply actual worth or merit of the vessel itself in which it is presented. The excellency of the power is wholly of God and not of us. Nor can we suppose that any future work of blessing, entrusted to the Church will cause any of God's creatures to raise his voice in praise of the earthen vessels now being cast aside and broken, nor to consider any thus used as being anything but "unprofitable" servants.

For those who are able to accept the Master's prophetic statement that "All the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias," was to be "required" of the generation then living, there is no difficulty in thinking that a righteous God has some reason for accepting the willing sacrifice of the Church. (See Luke 11:50, 51.) The accepting of our Master's statement in this text, however, does not induce any one to believe that the Jews who fell in the horrible massacre that attended the destruction of their beloved city were any part of the ransom sacrifice, or in any way detracted from the glory of the One who by hanging on the tree took away the handwriting of ordinances that was against the Jew. Whatever then we shall find to be the Scripturally designated purpose for which the sacrifice of the Church is to be appropriated, we need have no fear that it will in any measure detract from the glory of our Lord or interfere with the beauties of our loving Father's Plan.

Offerings for Sin Burned Without the Camp

Having in mind the close association of Christ and His Body members in their sacrificial work, we turn to the Apostle's words in Hebrews 13:11-13, where we read: "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." The Apostle here under inspiration gives explanation of a type which otherwise would be dark and mysterious. After mentioning the fact that certain beasts whose bodies were burned without the camp were offerings for sin (there were but two thus offered), he proceeds to tell who is thus typified: "Wherefore **Jesus** also suffered without the gate," and, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach."

Since the allusion can apply to no other sacrifices, evidently the Apostle is here referring to the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement as given in Leviticus 16 those of the bullock and of the goat. Aaron offered first the bullock for himself and his 'house. Christ "appeared in the presence of God for us"-His Body members and all the household of faith. Next he offered a goat "taken of the congregation of the children of Israel," representing the Church taken from the world, and all that

was done with the bullock was done with the goat, and its blood presented for the "transgressions of the children of ' Israel"-representing the world of mankind. That we may not be led astray in our understanding of Hebrews 13:11, it is necessary to note with care the phrase "for sin." Here we must guard, against adding any thought of our own to the phrase, as for instance to make it read "for (providing the price for the cancellation of] sin." The expression "for sin" is a broad one that may include anything that will be done in connection with sin. The Savior had studied well the tabernacle types. He saw that the blood of literal "bulls and goats could never take away sin," wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." We, too, noting those same types find that on the day the bullock was sacrificed and its body "'burned without the camp" to represent our Lord's willing death, there was another animal-an insignificant one indeed by the side of that perfect bullock whose blood was "brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin" and its body was "burned without the camp." Can we, like the Master, hear the tabernacle type teaching us a lesson? If so, "let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach."

Two Presentations of Blood

But we hear some one say: "One must not miss the point of this text. It is found in the phrase, 'bearing His reproach.'" That is indeed an important point; but are there not two important points in this text? Let us be faithful students of the Word and not miss either point. We are to bear His reproach, but let it be by going forth unto Him without the camp." The bullock and the goat were offerings "for sin" -- not however requiring both to meet the sinner's penalty-that having been done in the death of the One who is the antitype of that bullock. Inspiration is careful to use a phrase that can apply to both sacrifices. Both are for sin-the first representing the presentation of that corresponding price, for us; the second showing the privilege the Church has of sharing in bringing the benefits of that sacrifice to the world. The sacrifice at Calvary would have availed the Church nothing if there had been no presentation of that merit on our behalf, and if there had been no provision of grace whereby we might learn to appropriate its benefits for our transformation into the likeness of our Lord. Likewise there must be a presentation of that merit for the world for which Christ died, and there must be some arrangement made by which the benefits of the life thus provided for them may be made permanently theirs.

To many, one great and insurmountable obstacle stands in the way of the acceptance of the Lord's goat as a 'type of the Church. Very truthfully it is claimed, "the blood of the Lord's goat is brought into the tabernacle by the high priest"; and the question is asked, "Can that represent a Church which has nothing to offer?" Our answer would be that since the imputation of Christ's merit, the Church does have something to offer which is an "acceptable sacrifice." Because this is a point which could not possibly be shown by the type, does not militate against the acceptance of that which is pictured. In order to portray in every detail the conditions of the sacrifice of the Church, it would have been necessary to take a dead goat to represent us who, were "dead in trespasses and sins." The next step then would have been to transfuse the blood of the bullock into the veins of the goat, thus bringing it to life. The picture becomes simple and clear if we bear in mind this truth which it could not picture. Can any one complain that the Savior is being robbed of aught of His glory when at last the blood of the antitypical "goat of the sin-offering that is for the people is sprinkled by the High Priest Himself "within the veil"? Every drop of blood presented there will be that of Him who is a "propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." Blood represents life. All the life the Church has is imputed life, and therefore when presented on the altar it is but the returning of that which she has received at His blessed hand. With this fact in mind we can accept without reservation the astounding assurance that "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Yes, we can even take now the full meaning of the original Hebrew "yawkawr," and read: "**Valuable** in the sight of the

Lord is the death of His saints." The world knoweth them not, but "**in the sight of the Lord**" the death of these lowly ones becomes valuable, though of itself, it has but the leanness of a goat. The life of His dearest treasure-His only begotten Son is to be presented this time not for us, His body members, Himself and His house, the household of faith, but "for the people," for the sins of the whole world, an acceptable sacrifice though borne in "earthen vessels."

Partakers with Christ

This blood is no common, or unholy thing. (Heb. 10:29.) It is because of the absolute perfection of the life laid down that the Church can be made perfect "through the blood of the Age lasting covenant"; and only thus could the Apostle speak of our partaking in common of the cup which represents it. (1 Cor. 10:16.) As the adjective translated "unholy" in Hebrews 10:29 has as its primary meaning "common," as of a thing shared in common, some have found in this an insurmountable difficulty to the acceptance of the thought that the Church shares in the communion cup, overlooking the fact that this word is actually the adjective formed from the noun which is translated "communion" in 1 Cor. 10:16. In the latter text the Apostle is urging us to appreciate the privilege of being partners in this cup, while in the former he warns against losing sight of the great value which attaches to it. The privilege of such a sharing is indeed not a thing to be lightly esteemed. "Behold Israel after the flesh: have not they which eat the sacrifices communion with the altar?" (1 Cor. 10:18.) Thayer's Greek Lexicon defines this word communion: "a benefaction jointly contributed."

The objection also is made that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews definitely states that the high priest went in only once every year, bearing the blood (Heb. 9:6, 7, 24-28), but the objection is seen to, be without foundation when we turn to the record in Leviticus (16:14, 15, 34) and find that the high priest did actually visit the most holy twice in the one day for the purpose of sprinkling the blood of the bullock and later the blood of the goat. Between the two sprinklings there, was time for the slaying of the goat. Quite evidently the writer is thinking of this entire ceremony of the Day of Atonement, which was observed but **once** a year, as but one event (Lev. 16:34); and just that closely do we find our lives and our sufferings knit with our Lord's in the New Testament's revealing of His purpose for us. "It was necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these" (Heb. 9:23) -- the first alone of which sacrifices has as yet been presented.

The difficulties in connection with our subject which might be thought to exist regarding the 12th verse also of this same chapter, disappear if the fact is borne in mind that the discussion is of a work done after "having obtained eternal redemption," and not with the still later features of God's Plan which have to do with cleansing the world from the stains of sin. Having "obtained eternal redemption" (though not yet applied "for all") Jesus became "Lord of all" and to Him was therefore given "all power in heaven and earth" -yea, even "the keys of death and hades" are His; and in association with Him, and because associated with Him, the Christ (Gal. 3:16, 29) will bless all the families of the earth, bestowing upon them the benefits of Jesus' ransom sacrifice.

As additional evidence that the sufferings of Christ were not yet complete with the death of Jesus, note that it was thirty years later when Peter, writing of "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow" declared that these still are things which "the angels desire to look into." He had suffered, He had died, but the angels recognized that the work of the great antitypical atonement day had only begun. (1 Pet. 1:12.) Again, our Lord's words, long after His ascension, to Saul, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," Ware evidence that the sufferings of His followers are considered as the sufferings of Christ, the Anointed. "Sanctified through the offering of the

[natural] body of Jesus Christ," henceforth "Know ye not that your [natural] bodies are members of Christ?" - Heb. 10:10; 1 Cor. 6:15.

Those who are invited to share in the sufferings of Christ can readily enter into the emotions of the Apostle who spoke of himself as the one "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body's sake, which is the Church; whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made, manifest to His saints. To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." - Col. 1:24-28.

This perfection will be the reward of only those who are "baptized for the dead"-not for providing the price which would meet the penalty against the dead, but for the privilege of being the ones through whose instrumentality the benefits of Jesus' sacrifice should reach them. The Church's baptism is into "His death," and that includes "suffering with Him" in the experiences that lead up to "His death. "If the dead rise not again" then all these sufferings would be of no avail-the Church would not rise to the perfection they had been promised, nor would they have the privilege of lifting their fellow-men to a like perfection on the human plane.

"But rejoice in so far as ye are partakers of Christ's suffering, in order that when His glory shall be revealed ye may be glad with exceeding joy." - 1 Pet 4:13. Literal reading.

"When I survey the wondrous cross
On which my blessed Savior died,
All earthly gain I count but loss;
How empty all its show and pride!

"I'm not my own, dear Lord-to Thee
My every power, by right, belongs,
My privilege to serve I see,
Thy praise to raise in tuneful songs.

"And so, beside Thy sacrifice,
I would lay down my little all.
'Tis lean and poor, I must confess;
I would that it were not so small.

"But then I know Thou dost accept
My grateful offering unto Thee;
For, Lord, 'tis love that doth it prompt,
And love is incense sweet to Thee."

- P. E. Thomson

The Question Box

Question:

In Isaiah 28:10 and again in verse 13 these words appear: "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little." The words are generally understood to teach that our Lord fits his instruction to his true followers gradually, as they are able to receive it; starting with the milk of the Word 'in their spiritual infancy and holding back solid food until they start to grow. 'My question is: How can this Scripture be thus understood in relation to its context, and especially in view of the words with which verse 13 closes: "that they might go, and fall backward, and the broken, and snared, and taken."

Answer:

The context, of course, must always be taken into consideration in Bible study; any understanding which does not harmonize a text with its context is likely to prove erroneous or, at best, partial. Let us consider the passage in its setting.

It was in the early years of the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, that the 28th chapter of Isaiah was written. For some years the people had been under the yoke of Assyria; that yoke had become intolerable; they were determined to liberate themselves from it.

Isaiah, of course, was just as much a lover of freedom as the rest of the nation; there was no truer patriot than he. But he knew that the people, could not count on the help of God while they continued godless and corrupt; their yoke, he knew, was but the manifestation of the divine displeasure. Accordingly, he counseled them to wait to strengthen themselves in piety, in an unselfish devotion to the public welfare, and in the practice of private virtue until, God being once more on their side, they would be able to break the power of Assyria and assert their independence.

The counsel was unwelcome. They had no mind for private or public reformation; nor were they disposed to wait. They, preferred, instead, to try their hand at international diplomacy and statecraft. What if they were to call Egypt to their help against Assyria, to set the one military tyranny, of the time against the other? Might they not thus work out their salvation?

"No!" said Isaiah. "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help ... but look not unto the Holy One of Israel." (Isa. 31:1; 30:1-4.) Against this proposed Egyptian alliance he set his face as a flint. But there were not wanting other counselors who opposed him. There were plenty of priests in Jerusalem, plenty of prophets, even who, sharing as they did in the popular vices, were willing to pander to the spirit of the times.

These false counselors, it is evident from verse seven, had lost their way through strong drink.; It may have been that at one time they had had clear vision and could reach sound judgment, but certain mock at the simple words which, under divine inspiration, I have been moved to speak, and, you lisp out your base and drunken imitations of them-you, who should be the first to welcome and act upon the Word of God. Know then, that God will' punish your sin by *a people of stammering* [Rotherham translates: *jabbering*] lips and an alien tongue. (Verse 11.) God has taught you, by the very words which you deride, where you might find rest and freedom, how you might give peace to the people who are weary of war and its calamities; but you would not listen. (Verse 12.) . To you the Word of the Lord has become mere, baby talk, at which you jest. (Verse 13.) Know, then, that that Word, which might have been a light to your path, shall blaze up into a consuming fire. You jeer at it as an endless series of petty injunctions; instead it shall inflict on

you- an endless series of intolerable calamities. In the very teeth of that Word you are about to strike a blow for freedom; seeking it in your own way, not in God's way; but as a reward and consequence of your disobedience, the Word, that might have given you freedom and a stable security and peace, shall become a stone on which you shall fall and be broken, a net in which you shall betaken and bound, a' trap in which you shall be caught and imprisoned. (Last words of verse 13.)

The prediction was fulfilled. The fierce Assyrians, when they heard that the Hebrews had allied themselves with Egypt, once more swept through the land. The very men who had jabbered their scornful imitations of Isaiah's words, who had affected to think that he used the broken and imperfect dialect which mothers employ to their babes, were destroyed or taken captive by the Assyrian troops, whose language,' according to the scholars, while it closely resembled that of the Hebrews, had just those differences which made it sound to them like an imperfect and barbarous dialect. So terrible, and so exact, was the retribution that fell on their sin.

That St. Paul understood Isaiah's words in the manner outlined foregoing is evident from the use he makes of them *in* his first letter to the Corinthians. At Corinth there was a great *deal* of speaking in unknown tongues, often without *profit* to either speakers *or* hearers. In chapter 14, of his first letter to that Church, the Apostle deals with the matter in some detail. After showing that the gift of tongues was inferior to that of prophecy, that without the gift of interpretation it was entirely useless, and that thus exercised it was manifestly misused, he illustrates his point by a reference to this very passage. (Isa. 28:11, 12.) "In the law it is written: 'With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will. they not hear me, saith the Lord. " (1 Cor. 14:21.) The Prophet's contemporaries scoffingly rejected his instruction, which seemed to them childish; and he warned them that the next divine message would come to them from Assyrian lips the conquerors with their foreign speech would be upon them, though even so terrible an experience would not bring the frivolous Israelites to listen to their God. And so, (*this is the inference which, in his discussion of the gift of tongues, St. Paul draws from the Isaiah passage*) tongues are for a sign *not* to those who believe, but to the unbelievers; and, not a sign, apparently, which would induce them to repent and be saved, but one which would confirm them still more in their obstinacy or indifference for will they not say that you are mad (1 Cor. 14:23) just, as Israel would not hearken? (Isa. 28:12.) St. Paul's citation of course, has only the value of illustration; there was, in Isaiah, *no prediction* of the Corinthian situation.

In the light of the foregoing discussion may we not summarize our answer to the question thus:

1. That our Lord graciously suits the instruction of his -true Follower according to their several stages of development is a truth none will question. It is abundantly attested in the Scriptures. - 1 Pet, 2:2; Heb. 5:12, 13; 1 Cor. 3:2.
2. That this is not the sense in which the words were originally Bused in Isaiah, chapter 28, is also clear. On the contrary, instead of being a description of the abundance and variety of the means of grace which God has granted to the Church, the words in verse 10 really constitute a drunken sneer at the simplicity of Isaiah's message to the people of his time. His use of the same words, in verse 13, was (as Rotherham, in a footnote to that verse suggests) a "giving back to the scoffers their own words now as a stern threatening" of the coming Assyrian conquest. The sincere (unadulterated) milk of the Word which Isaiah gave them did not produce the happy results it might have done but, because not mixed with faith in them that heard it, proved to be a forewarning of impending disaster.

- P. L. Read.

The Season's Greetings

Since unable to reciprocate as we would gladly do, we who are engaged in the service at the Institute take this means of thanking the brethren for their many messages of encouragement received during the year, and especially at this holiday season, and to wish you the Season's Greetings. Well realizing that it is largely through your upholding of our hands, both by your prayers and by such messages, that, we are able to carry on, we are grateful indeed for your faithfulness, and are thankful that the Lord is "not unmindful of your work and labor of love." May his grace enrich and sustain you as you have prayed that it might also be manifest in our lives.

"Another year is dawning!
Dear Master, let it be,
In working or in waiting,
Another year with Thee.
Another year of service,
Of witness of Thy love;
Another year of training
For holier work above.

With Brethren Overseas.

Dear Brethren:

With rather different import I may say, in imitation of the Apostle, "I have now completed my course" -- the three months and nineteen days of absence from the States and the office planned for me by yourselves and brethren of Great Britain; and made possible by the willingness of others to add my usual duties to their own during that time. The blessings were such as one expects to find, and almost always does find in journeying among the brethren, for all seem desirous of looking after our every physical and spiritual need. I was not permitted to fully enter into the physical experiences of the friends in these difficult times, for cooperation on the part of other local friends as well as conservation on the part of my forty six hostesses provided practically as varied a diet as on my previous visit of eleven years ago. Brothers Jennings and Hudson braved: the discomforts of a night ride on the train to meet my boat at Plymouth and give me the pleasure, of their company to London.

The committee which planned the itinerary of the trip were very generous in allowing rest days, and usually, these were at places where brethren owned autos, In many of the drives taken through the country, I was surprised to find great quantities of ammunition "still stored supplies left from the recent war. Walks to provide much needed exercise and the inspiration of nature's beauties were enjoyed on many occasions, particularly out of Sheffield and Glasgow. Still more inspiring were the occasional visits to the aged and infirm.

Tracts given out in various places were usually as graciously received as at home, but there were rock startling contacts, no great signs of interest, on the trains and four boats used; but on the Marine Shark, the, boat on which I went to England, I had the privilege of conducting the service for the Protestants on board. Over 200 attended the service, but none inquired later for additional information about the "more excellent way." However, as usual, I am hopeful some of the

attendants may be of those Peter expected to be found "praising God on our behalf in the day of their visitation."

The time of my arrival "in Great Britain was planned so that I could have the blessing of the London Bank Holiday Convention, a better opportunity of renewing old acquaintances than I could hope for at any other time. For all of us the joy of that occasion was much added to by the presence of Brother Luttichau from Copenhagen and Brother Alblas from The Hague.

Seventy meetings were conducted throughout the Islands, and the Message delivered to about 2800 brethren did not differ from the tenor of the ones with which you are all familiar, a plea that all should "continue in the faith grounded and settled and not moved away from the hope of the Gospel" "which was preached beforehand - unto Abraham, saying in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," the Gospel through which they were begotten and to which all must remain faithful if they are to be born "unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight." - Col. 1:19-23; Gal. 3:8; 1 Cor. 4:15.

The friends were often reminded: that we are given truth not just that we might know, more than others, but that we might through it know God and thus be transformed into his likeness. They were therefore urged: "Delight thyself *in the Lord*," with the assurance that thus he will eventually be their "great reward," "Delight thyself in the Lord: and he will give thee [himself, that which is] the [true] desire of thine heart."

It was suggested, too, that severe though they were, the recent experiences of warfare Should not be considered as the severest tests to the Lord's people. For many at least, faith in human interpretations and particularly the individual's own-might prove their undoing. The only safe course regarding "secret things" is to "wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart"; "lean not to thine own understanding, but remember that "the way of a fool is right in his own eyes." "Who can understand his errors?" Therefore, we should *all* be praying: "Cleanse thou me from secret faults, keep back thy servant also from the "presumptuous sin" of considering the thought of my own or any other brain as more important than God's thoughts. Remember the wide gulf that always separates them, as wide as the distance between heaven and earth.

We are of Christ's house "if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end," "*partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.*" "We are of the circumcision [of the heart] which worship God in spirit, and rejoice in Christ *Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*"

The friends seemed to me in excellent spiritual condition, and growing in their appreciation of truth for its effect upon themselves as well as for the privilege of telling it to others, though there are some who are teaching that the door to the high calling is now firmly closed on the last member of the Body. The friends of the Bury district report that a series of public meetings held during the last two years has resulted in six consecrations.

Many Scriptural citations were entrusted to me to bear to the brethren in the States: Phil. 4:1; 1 Cor. 1:3-9; Acts 20:32; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; Eph. 3:17-19; Rom. 8:38, 39; 15:13; 1 Cor. 15:57, 58; Psa. 134; 2 Thess. 1:11, 12; Heb. 13:20, 21; Numbers 6:24-26, And the following letter was entrusted to me by the Secretary of the Young Peoples Group of the British Isles:

27th October, 1949.

To the Young Brethren in the United States and Canada.

Our dear brethren in Christ:

Fraternal Greetings in our Redeemer's name.

We greatly appreciate this opportunity to send a short message of love through the hands of our Brother Paul Thomson. His ministry has been a great comfort and strength, to the British friends, and his timely words of wisdom have been greatly edifying. We thank you for sparing him to us, for so long, as you have our Brother John Read also. These pilgrimages have been gratefully received.

We pray continually for those of similar hopes and ideals on the other side of the Atlantic, and as brethren of similar age, with similar privileges and also trials and besetments of like character to yourselves, we can rejoice with you in a particular way -- peculiar to those who have found the Lord in their early years. May the Lord continue to guide and to bless you, and to keep you from the evil of these latter days, that you might be presented faultless before: him, perfect and entire, fitted to dwell with the Heavenly Bridegroom.

In true brotherly affection we greet you all.

Your brethren in the Lord,

Young brethren of the British Isles.

Praying that the messages I was moved: to give may have been under the Lord's direction and used of him for the blessing of some, and with gratitude to all who made the trip possible, I am
Your fellow servant,

P. E. Thomson.