



Volume 83 No. 3 MELBOURNE, JULY-SEPTEMBER 2000 “THERE WILL I MEET WITH THEE”

“There will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee, from above the mercy seat.” (Exodus 25:22)

A RENDEZVOUS WITH GOD

In the words of the text, God is saying that He has appointed a trysting place where He will condescend to come near to His servant Moses in intimate communion, and there unfold His will! A meeting ground provided by God Himself where He, the high and lofty One inhabiting eternity, will hold special converse with mortal man! Wonderful indeed was such a mercy seat, centre of close communion and unique revelation, that holy place where Moses, “faithful in all his house as a servant”, might be alone with God. How exceptional were his privileges, and how extraordinary the revelations he received in his rendezvous with God.

Yet this was only a typical approach into God’s presence. Wonderful though it was, it was but a shadow cast before, giving promise of better and greater things to come. In a time, then distant, with a glory far excelling, a great “Mercy-Seat” would be provided by God in His progressive purposes. Then with still more sublime meaning He would speak to recipients of His grace, saying, “and there will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the Mercy Seat.” In due time “Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house are we” would be the centre of a greater intimacy with God, a great unfolding of His grace, and a richer inheritance, “eternal in the heavens.” Truly, “if what faded had its glory, then what lasts will be invested with far greater glory.” Now through the Spirit, and by a nearer approach to God, “we all mirror the glory of the Lord with face unveiled, and so are being transformed into the same likeness, passing from one glory to another.” (2 Cor 3:11, 18 Moffatt)

We call to mind that “holy men of old searched diligently concerning the grace that should be the happy estate of ones in a coming day” - our day! We should never forget that righteous ones of other ages could not see or hear things now unfolded to us and placed within our reach, “which things even the angels desire to look into.” But now, since God in Christ has reconciled us unto Himself, “from above the mercy seat” He sends the word of His grace to us through His ministering apostle. “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from ‘a consciousness of evil’ (Diag) and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Heb 10: 19-22)

God was indeed in Christ reconciling us unto Himself. He was in Christ in such intimate union, in such sympathetic tenderness, and in such immeasurable sacrifice that His redemptive love remains too profound for us to fathom, and costly beyond our comprehending. How dear to the heart of God are His blood-bought children! What insight into the depths of that love comes to those grateful, receptive hearts who keep constant tryst with God close by His own lovingly provided Mercy Seat! What words from above that great “propitiatory” are heard there, and how much those words are constantly needed by even the most faithful saints!

Dark stains from the pit from which we were lifted can flash before the mind; recollections can come which send a dart of pain through the now cleansed conscience; and moments, acts and memories we would rather forget forever, can come back like a cloud over the spirit within. How all this painful recollection will be shut out from our unsullied and unbroken communion in heaven we do not know, but while we are still tabernacling in flesh wherein is no perfect righteousness, it is good that we visualise at times that from which redeeming love has lifted us. Praise be to Him by whose kind favour we have been washed, cleansed and sanctified and for whom there is therefore now no condemnation.

“HE IS OUR PEACE”

Oh, the peace the Saviour gives! Truly, “He is our peace.” The past, with all its stains and shadows, its foolishness and indiscretions, is under the blood -that efficacious, full-atonement blood which “cleanseth us

from all sin.” The voice which speaks from above the Mercy Seat speaks peace, the perfect peace of which the Psalmist wrote, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” (Psa 32:1) This is surely a blessed state when, concerning it, the apostle challenges, “Who will bring accusation against God’s chosen ones? Will that God who justifies? Who is he who condemns? Will that Anointed One who died, and who still more also is at the right hand of God, and who intercedes on our behalf? Who shall separate us from that love of God, which is in the Anointed Jesus.” (Rom 8:33-35 Diag)

“We have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have been introduced into this favour in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God.” (Rom 5:1,2 Diag) “This favour in which we stand” - what a heritage it is! Here “the God of peace” shall be with us, “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” stabilise us, and here we may be filled “with all joy and peace in believing, that (we) may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Phil 4:9, Rom 14:17, 15:13) How complete is our peace **with** God, and how marvelous the peace **of** God into which it leads us.

Does life have its disturbing incidents, and problems their disquieting distractions? Are there burdens of our own to bear and loads borne by others that we must share in fulfilling the law of Christ? None is immune from such personal burdens, nor exempt from such load-sharing, if they are true to God and to His children. But has God not said, “I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat? And there He speaks, “Be not anxious about anything, but in everything let your petitions be made known to God by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving and that peace of God which surpasses all conception, shall guard your hearts and your minds by Christ Jesus.” (Phil 4:6,7 Diag) What a Mercy Seat is ours! Blessed rendezvous with God, where weary spirits find relief, often escape the snare of the tempter, and find at times a ladder such as Jacob saw, and exclaim with him, “This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” (Gen 28:17)

Wonderful words came from the lips of Jesus, words of life and beauty indeed - words illuminating prophetic pages, words establishing new standards of life and conduct, and words so laden with endearment that we are left in speechless **wonder**. To those with whom God can commune “from above the mercy seat” the word is “The Father Himself loveth you.” He loves us! Yes, but with what an astounding depth and measure! Jesus gave us its dimensions, “that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me. (John 16:27, 17:23) Could there be, therefore, any surer test of our nearness to God through Christ than in finding our hearts responding with an inexpressible gladness to such declarations of so unique a place in the love of God?

If, as we are told, “the goodness of God leadeth to repentance”, it must surely follow that when repentance has prepared the way for this further revelation of divine love, a greatly increased inflow of love to God will lift one up where communion from above the mercy seat will be habitually sought after. Such will be blessedly real, and give to the whole perspective of life a maturity embracing even greater nearness to God, greater light on His inspired word, and richer foretastes of heavenly fellowship.

“GIVE ME THINE HEART”

Does God really crave this close, intimate, reciprocal love from us; does He find in our ardent affections toward Him an odour of sweet incense? Can it be that His emotional depths are stirred in a special way by the warmth of our responsive love, when, as we know, He has the sublime, unceasing outpouring adoration of heaven’s highest creatures? His word reveals that it is indeed so. Is He not asking for this love in His appeal, “My son, give me thine heart”? Is it not the same appeal in His other words to us, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind”?

Herein we perceive the divine delight in our love; He does rejoice in its overflowing purity and performance. He is love, and it is the very character of true love to crave reciprocation. He who bestowed mother-love on womankind bestowed it out of the fathomless depths of His own great parental affection. Our power to love with all our heart, soul, strength and mind was given to us for this great purpose. We turn the pages of the written Word and we gaze upon the reflection of infinite love revealed in the living Word, and love begets love, reciprocal affection becoming a consuming joy within, and from our hearts we can say -

“Take my love, my God; I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, I wish to be
Ever, only, all for Thee.”

But if we would know ‘God’s love drawing thus powerfully on our heart’s love, we need to remember that it is found only around His own appointed trysting place, “the blood-bought Mercy Seat.” This is where the apostle brings us, saying, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:10) It is therefore clear that only when we keep habitual rendezvous with God at the Mercy Seat will our love for Him rise up as a sweet incense, rejoicing His heart. Also, since love is the fulfilling of the law, where other than in this same hallowed place where God communes with us from above the Mercy Seat, will His love become shed abroad in our hearts, broadening and deepening until God and neighbour are loved according to the command in which Jesus epitomised the whole Law? It is

through abiding in this sacred place where God meets with man that we find joy and rest in His love, and there fellowship with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Words of assured forgiveness have come from Him who promised to meet us at our Mercy Seat. Wonderful words of love have also been spoken there to our cleansed and dedicated hearts. The past has been put under the blood, and the present made a blessed walk of close communion with God. But still there is more to follow. How like our Lord to speak again and say to us now as He said to His brethren long ago, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (John 15:11) So that our joy may now be complete He has spoken words calculated to give us the assurance that all we have committed to Him for the future is safely in **His** keeping. By virtue of our being His purchased possession, bought by the blood of His dear Son, can we not, by faith, believe that He who began His good work in us will surely complete it?

"THE LORD IS THY KEEPER"

He who is able to make all grace abound toward us and whose Spirit bears witness with ours does indeed speak to us "from above the Mercy Seat", enabling us to rejoice in a hope both sure and steadfast. "He shall give His angels charge over thee" is a blessed promise. Another is equally assuring, "The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand" (Psa 121:5) Again, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty". (Psa 91:1) Such comfort coming from a keeper who never slumbers or sleeps, must, if we are true-hearted, give us faith to say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day". (2 Tim 1:12) And again. "Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of **His** glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and ever". (Jude 24,25)

Here, surely, is a message "from above the Mercy Seat" peculiarly comforting and assuring at this time. To such as are now waiting in hope "for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ", what rest of heart there is in knowing that our trust is in One able to keep us from falling and to make us stand faultless and rejoicing before His glory. "He is able to keep you from falling". He who knows us each one, with all our weakness, who knows our "unprofitable" service and all about our mistakes and failures, is able to keep us, each one. Faith believes that He can and will, for "He is faithful who promised".

All along the way there has never been wanting "from above the Mercy Seat" the word in season for present needs. God has never failed to speak to us through the medium of His all-embracing Word. Comfort, warning, great and precious promises, reproof, everything necessary to our fellowship with Him, He has spoken. Even in the wonderful now in which we live, there comes the message by which we are in a special way privileged to keep a rendezvous with God. We stand on the border line, our salvation is so much nearer than when we first believed. All along we have been favoured to know "a place than all beside more sweet", a trying place of prayer and communion where "the oil of gladness on our heads" has been no figment of our imagination, but a true witness of God's Spirit bearing witness with our own. He who has spoken full and abiding forgiveness, and sent into our life the needed heart-strengthening words of endearment, has spoken in just as faithful a manner to loyal hearts those words whereby such may rejoice in hope of a final attainment of the glory to which they have been called in the love and foreknowledge of God.

Thus, among the incidents and diversified experiences of life we treasure recollections that memory preserves for us as hallowed resting places to which our hearts turn for fresh encouragement when faith needs reminders of God's never failing love and care. He who has spoken the word of good cheer to our hearts along the way over which we have so far come, will not be silent towards us in times like those in which we live. As before, He will continue to speak to us "from above the Mercy Seat", giving strength for daily needs and assuring us that soon, perhaps very soon, He will have us with Him yonder in His immediate presence. Then face to face and in a glory exceeding all previous conception, ours will be an eternal rendezvous with God.

Thanks be to Him for all past and present joys of communion through Christ, our Mercy Seat. Praise be to His name that, even here in the house of our pilgrimage, He has walked with us in such priceless fellowship. In love and joy we long for the hour when, no more with veil between, we shall see Him in all His glory and know the rapture of perfect communion with our Father and with a Bridegroom whom our souls love supremely. How transporting is the prospect of this eternal rendezvous in glory! (RJM:77)

Fear Not, Little Flock

(Luke 12:32.)

What endearing words, so sweet, so simple, so full of meaning and what comfort they bring to the heart in this day of fear! They remind us of a mother who hearing a cry in the night, rises swiftly to tend the one she loves. Taking the trembling one in her arms she tells it to fear not, while she rocks it to sleep on her breast.

How many times we are told in the Scriptures to fear not, and our Saviour must have realised the great power fear would have over the human mind when He told His little band of faithful followers so many times to fear not.

What a persistent and formidable foe fear is. It attacks from every direction. It is the imp and progeny of sin, and where it hides the child of God may be sure that the Adversary is working very hard to stumble the unsuspecting one. Nevertheless, a godly fear is necessary in the composition of a true Christian character, for the child of God must fear to do evil, or to wound the feelings of a brother or sister, and should reverence and fear God. Fear makes a splendid watchdog, which should warn if any evil approaches the heart, but it should never repose in the heart.

Never in our lives do we need faith and perfect trust in God more than we need it today. People seem to have lost faith in God, and evil and vice abound. What a vivid picture Paul paints of the people of to-day, when he declares that they would wax worse and worse; that in the last days trying times should come, for they would be lovers of self, money-lovers, boasters, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, accusers, without self control, ferocious, rash, self-conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than God, having a form of piety but denying the power thereof; and from all such he exhorts us to turn away.

O, the blessedness and peace that reigns in the heart of the children of God, who look to the Father with the faith of a little child, never doubting that the Divine hand that has supplied the wants of today, will also provide the needs of tomorrow! As the mother runs to the aid of her sick child, even so, God will come quickly to the aid of those who call upon Him, and His best gifts are to those who have perfect faith and implicit trust in Him.

Our Saviour teaches this lesson. When He was with His disciples on the lake of Galilee, a storm arose, lashing the waves to fury; and in the midst of the tempest the boat had sprung a leak and the disciples were in great peril. In fear and dismay they ran to our Saviour and found Him sleeping peacefully. They awakened Him, saying, "Master,

Master, we perish." Then arising, He rebuked the wind and the raging of the water, and there was a great calm. And He said unto them, "Where is your faith?" In this case the disciples' fear was caused by a want of faith. Had they had perfect faith in their Master, they, too, could have slept peacefully and would have known no fear.

The Psalmist gives us a splendid pen picture of that storm in the words, "They that go down to the sea in ships and occupy their business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep. For He commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind which lifteth up the waves thereof! They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths. They reel and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble and He delivers them out of their distress. He maketh the storm a calm so that the waves thereof are still" (Psa. 107:23-29). It may be that our Saviour had previously been discussing these powerful words of the Psalmist, and to try the effect of His teachings and to test their faith had permitted the raising of the storm. Even so it is today, amid all the gathering gloom and the banking of the storm clouds, when men stagger and reel under the power of the Divine hand.

Although the storms are of a different character, they are purposely sent by God to try our faith, and to see if we have perfect faith and implicit trust in Him. O, if we could only have that sweet love and trust in God, which even little children teach us every day by their confiding faith in us.

We see many instances where our Lord tested His disciples and gave them warnings. After Peter had made his avowal of love, our Lord had warned him that he would deny Him, and we all know the result. Jesus, revealing Himself to Paul on the road to Damascus, told him plainly that he would suffer many things for His Name's sake. And as we follow the Apostle Paul in all his wanderings, we see him buffeted from pillar to post, and treated by some as the scum of the earth. We follow him to prison, and in depths oft, five times he received forty stripes save one, thrice he was beaten with rods, once stoned, thrice shipwrecked, in perils often, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, and yet, in spite of all this formidable list of fears and sufferings he counts them all as light afflictions. So real was his faith, so great his love and loyalty to his Master, that fear could find no place in that noble heart. We realise that the many things he suffered acted as the chisel of persecution that shaped that noble character into a gem of loveliness, which has so endeared him to all believers.

As we look back over the mist of years and recall the wondrous words of the Apostle which have shed a halo of glory around the cross of Christ, reaching numberless hearts, stimulating and comforting, and leaving an impression which is the reflex of Christ's glorious character, let us step forward bravely and courageously into the future, and "fear not." (PP 6/31)

THE MERCY SEAT

From every stormy wind that blows,
From every swelling tide of woes,
There is a calm, a sure, retreat;
Tis found beneath the Mercy Seat.

There is a place where Jesus sheds
The oil of gladness on our heads;
A place than all beside more sweet;
It is the blood-bought Mercy Seat.
O! whither could we flee for aid,
When tempted, desolate, dismayed?
Or how the hosts of foes defeat
Had suffering saints no Mercy Seat?
There, there on eagle wings we soar,
And sin and sense molest no more;
And heaven comes down our souls to, greet,
While glory crowns the Mercy Seat.

(BSH 89)

The Mind

MAN'S AUTOMATIC STEERING MECHANISM

"Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. (Rom 12:2)

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Phil 2:5)

There is much that we do not know about the 1 functions of the mind. However, much has been discovered in this day of increased enlightenment, and since we are living in a very eventful period in history of the human race, when many minds are being subjected to much subtle propaganda with far-reaching effect in its influence on people's minds, it may be helpful to take a brief look at some important things which are known about the human mind. Then we can consider a few texts of Scripture which will help to nurture and cultivate our renewed minds, the "mind of Christ" which is in all those who have fully consecrated their lives to the service of God, and who have been begotten by the Holy Spirit to the new nature, the spiritual nature.

A dictionary definition of "mind" is "the seat of consciousness, thought, volition and emotional powers; memory, opinion". Consider one of the many texts in the New Testament in which reference is made to the mind - Romans 12:2 - *"Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."* Dr. Strong gives the meaning of the word here for mind (Greek - *NOUS*) as "the intellect, i.e. mind (divine or human in thought, feeling or will); by implication meaning." Consider another example Phil 2:5 - *"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."* Dr Strong defines the word here (Greek - *PHRONEO*) as "to exercise the mind, i.e. entertain or have a sentiment or opinion; by implication to be (mentally) disposed more or less earnestly in a certain direction; intensively to interest oneself in (with concern or obedience)."

Having in our thoughts, then, these definitions of the "mind" which must be renewed by the mind of Christ, and which all of His followers must seek to have, it may be of profit to analyze, by question and answer, some further details in this connection, namely, Why must this human mind be renewed? First of all let us think of the mind as that something which mankind has above all others of the animal creation – the capacity to think, to reason, to plan, the power to translate thoughts into actions, the scope for reaching out after new horizons, the power to visualize the thinking and planning of today put into effect tomorrow. That something, if it is in tune with the great Master Mind of the universe, can be capable of the greatest good and rise to the greatest heights even on the human plane of living. After all, we understand that mankind was created in the image of God (Gen 1:26,27) – in His moral likeness, a reasoning, sentient being. Even today, when so much evil is in the world, there are many noble examples which show up the finer human qualities as being of divine origin.

However, if the human mind is given over to the influences of the Adversary, the satanic forces of evil and of spiritual wickedness in high places, this same mind can be capable of the most diabolical evil and cruelty, and be the greatest power for the destruction of things good and pure, to a degree almost beyond words to describe. So then, each one of us as a human being has this "something" called the mind. Before we came to Christ, it was the "natural" mind, and, before going on with the question, Why must this mind be renewed in following Christ?, let us pursue the analogy of the "automatic steering mechanism".

This something called the mind is that which directs' people's everyday thoughts and actions and has some influence for good, bad or otherwise on not only themselves, but also on all those with whom they associate each day. As Christians, should we not then seek to know something of what mankind has learned, but more importantly what God's Word has to say, in respect of such an important part of every one of His creatures, and more especially so in respect of those who are His New Creation, His peculiar people, those whom He has drawn by His Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:9, John 6:44)

Volumes have been written by those who have studied the human mind and its behaviour. A knowledge of some of the basic findings in this area is helpful in enabling us to appreciate with a remarkable piece of electronic mechanism the mind is. It has been well called “man’s automatic steering mechanism” and when we expand this concept a little further and then relate it to what God’s Word has to say on the same subject, we begin to see just how very important it is that our minds be stayed upon our Heavenly Father and His righteousness. (Isaiah 26:3) It is said that one tenth of every human mind is conscious and nine tenths subconscious, that is, outside the range of attention. It is through this remarkable arrangement that our Creator has built into the human brain what might be called a subconscious homing device, which in its effect is really a subconscious feedback cycle.

It works on the principle that, as we know, mankind is endowed with five senses – sight, hearing, feel or touch, smell and taste. Each day, humanity judges its affairs by the exercise of these five senses. Every day, every hour, every minute, every second of our wakeful or conscious time, via these senses, mental impressions of situations that continually develop and pass around us in the daily course of our lives are fed back through the one tenth conscious part of our minds to the larger, nine tenths part, the subconscious. Examples are the constant barrages of advertising, radio, TV, hoardings or whatever other means. Thus any repeated impression or thought fed back in this manner can build up a tremendous bank of subconscious energy.

These thoughts and impressions are received by the subconscious as the operational “data” on “the way things are”, much in the same way in which a program is fed into a computer. The subconscious then goes to work to suppress or expand our performance to conform exactly to this set pattern. We can see then why Solomon said, “As a man thinketh in his heart (or mind) so is he.” (Prov 23:7) Thus, then, is how a person’s daily performance is controlled.

If one takes a daily “failure”, or “life is difficult”, or “no progress” attitude, that is, a constant negative thinking program, and builds up thereby a self-image of this kind, he or she can be sure that their subconscious will use all the forces or resources of the human body to limit their energy – their creative ability, analytical skill and perception – so that they conform exactly to the “operating formula” of this self-image. They literally cannot do any better than their self-image, built up from their thoughts and mental perceptions. Failures should however not be allowed to produce a further negative “can’t do any better” frame of mind, nor should the reactions of others lead to a constant “I can’t seem to please anyone” attitude. Nor should visualizing of things they fear might happen or they hope will happen make them give up trying to think and act and hope positively.

Let us see how some of these thoughts can be applied in our Christian lives and also how they answer the question as to why the human mind needs to be changed and renewed by the transforming power of Christ in us and working through us by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 12:2, already referred to, goes on to give the reason why the human mind needs renewing – “so that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” How very true, indeed! The veil of human mindedness in the natural man or woman hangs between them and the sacred and spiritual truths of God. The only way to set it aside is by full consecration to the doing of God’s will, which is to sacrifice the flesh and its worldly interests and pursuits. It is in the glorious and privileged condition typified by the Holy of the Tabernacle that the consecrated children of God enjoy their inner life and walk with God. This is quite beyond the sight of the world and the worldly. What a precious thought!

In the “Holy” we are experiencing the transforming and, during this process, we are learning more and more so that we may truly prove what is God’s good and acceptable and perfect will for us. “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly.” “This is the will of God, even your sanctification.” “Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth.” (1 Thess 5:23, 4:3, John 17:17) What a privilege is this proving of God’s will! The Greek here translated “prove” was used in times past in the context of testing or proving of metals and signifies to investigate, examine and discern. By careful tests under close examination and observation the metal was proved. So it is that we prove the will of God.

How do we do this? One way is surely through the study of His Word individually and with others, by prayer and by faith. We all know the joyful experience of gathering around God’s Holy Word together. On such occasions we meditate upon the Scriptures, we endeavour to rightly divide the word of truth. (2 Tim 2:15) With sentiments of praise and worship in our hearts, we wait upon the Lord and He speaks to us through His Word. How important it is then that we assemble ourselves together in the right attitude of heart and mind.

As we come to see less and less of ourselves, and more and more of Jesus and His spirit of love in our hearts, we see how the subconscious feed-back cycle works out in our Christian lives. For instance, if we come to Bible Study and feed into our one tenth conscious mind critical thoughts, not positive or constructive, not in harmony with God’s love for what this brother or sister has to say, instead of endeavouring to see Jesus and His words, the negative impressions feed into the nine tenths or subconscious part and build up to become the force which directs our daily lives. If we continually dwell on the weaknesses, real or imagined, of our brothers and sisters, seeing always their faults instead of their Christlike qualities, then just as surely as we are feeding these impressions into the subconscious mind, to that extent we will be the poorer in our own spiritual

lives.

If we would only follow our Lord's example of positive action when tempted to criticize, condemn or judge our brethren! When tempted to listen to something which is in the nature of gossip or evil-speaking, if we resolved instead to think and speak as would our Lord and Master if He were in our position, how greatly we would enrich our Christian living. How much more influence for good our daily lives would become if we saw to it that each day and hour and minute we were feeding into our "computer" the right program for Christian living. Is this, then, how the mind is renewed?

This may mean a complete change of ideals and a new attitude to our whole way of living – "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His marvelous face!" Our Heavenly Father asks from us a full surrender, full consecration, non-conformity to this world and a transforming to kingdom requirements. Then and only then, can God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine into our hearts and minds by the gospel to give us the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. This knowledge cannot be comprehended by the natural mind. (1 Cor 2:14)

What is the result of this transforming work? Development of the character likeness of Christ? Growth in the fruits of the Spirit? (Gal 5:22, 23) Daily development? Yes, a desire to please Him in all things and a love in our hearts which comes from God the Father! But how can we continue in this way against the powers of Satan aligned with all the forces of evil to thwart God's plan? We can surely "gird up the loins of our minds". (1 Peter 1:13) We can continually keep before us those virtues of Phil 4:8 – "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things."

Can we develop or cultivate our five human senses to a greater appreciation of our daily needs as new creatures in Christ Jesus, or could we say that we have also what may be called five spiritual senses corresponding to the five natural ones? Can these be cultivated? Yes, indeed, as we come more and more into Christ, the "eyes" of our understanding open wider and wider to things not seen by the natural eye. By degrees, the "hearing" of faith increases until every good promise of the Divine Word is forceful and meaningful. In time, we come into closer "touch" with our Lord and His invisible powers (the powers of prayer and praise). After a time and little by little we "taste" that the Lord is gracious and precious. As we progress, we come to appreciate those sacrifices and incense prayers which are a "sweet odour" to the Lord.

But can Christians, then, be considered as having a sixth or spiritual sense which enables them even though still in the flesh to understand things quite beyond the perception of those around them not begotten by the Holy Spirit? Yes, indeed, for we read (1 Cor 2:9,10,14) – "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God... The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

How grand, how glorious, how rich is the daily experience of all those, who by the grace of God are finding that the things of this earth are growing dim, as the "deep things of God", revealed by His Spirit come more and more into focus, as the "mind of Christ" in us. (1 Cor 2:16) enables us to appreciate the transforming work which has brought about this renewal of mind. What exultation, what thanks are due to our Heavenly Father as we experience with the apostle Paul the joy of understanding "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," (Col 1:26,27)

May God bless all these things to our hearts and minds, that we may see the daily need, the constant need, for feeding through our conscious minds thoughts and impressions which are godly and pure, so that the force which is built up in the subconscious will direct our daily lives and actions in ways pleasing to our Heavenly Father and edifying to all those with whom we daily associate. Amen.

(The above article is taken from an address given about 30 years ago.) (NM)

"In the Days of Thy Youth"

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them". (Eccl 12:1)

Those of the Lord's children who early gave their 1 hearts to Him and committed their way to His guidance can all bear testimony to multiplied blessings as the results of that early start in the right way. We are always glad to see young people among us taking the first steps in the way of life. To all such young pilgrims we would say, God bless you! You are starting out as young soldiers of the cross, and we want you to be brave and true soldiers, and to remember that the first duty of a soldier is obedience to his Captain – Jesus Christ.

Give close attention and try to understand what He would have you do, and then be very prompt to obey, whether or not you are fully able to comprehend the wisdom of His directions.

Many question how early in life a child may give his or her heart to God and be fully consecrated to Him, but the Scriptures make very plain the fact that they may and should be consecrated to the Lord by their parents before their birth, that thus their prenatal influences may ensure them a mental and spiritual inheritance tending to godliness, and that with the dawn of intelligence this disposition should begin to be cultivated and warmed into vital, active piety, so that at a tender age they may understandingly ratify the parental covenant of entire consecration to God.

We have many notable examples in the Scriptures of such early consecration to the Lord. It is said of John the Baptist that his parents “were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless”, and that John was given to them in answer to prayer – “filled with the Holy Spirit, even from His mother’s womb”. (Luke 1:6,15,44,66,80) Paul was similarly endowed from his birth (Gal 1:15, Acts 26:4,5), and was zealous toward God long before his conversion from Judaism to Christianity. (Acts 22:3,4) So also were Timothy (2 Tim 1:5,3:15), Samuel (1 Sam 1:11,2428,2:11,18,19) and Moses (Exodus 2:1-10).

Those thus early devoted to the Lord escape many a snare and many an entanglement, which in later years bring distress and trouble to so many. They do not have to reap the bitter harvest that always comes from the sowing of “wild oats”; they do not find it so much against the current of their nature to live godly lives; and they have in later years the strength of character born of continued self-discipline and self-restraint, and all the blessed advantages of a long acquaintance with God and of the instructions of His Word and of the leadings of His gracious providence.

How wise is the counsel, “Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth... while the evil days come not” etc. These evil days of bitter disappointment and despair will never come to those who in youth commit their ways unto the Lord and trust Him to guide their paths. His ways are ways of pleasantness and all His paths are peace. They are not by any means smooth¹ and easy ways, but they are always peaceful and pleasant, because He who has said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb 13:5), is always present to comfort and to bless, and to make all things work together for good to those who love God – the called ones according to His purpose.

Those of the consecrated who have children and young people under their care have much to do in shaping their course and in leading them to Christ, by throwing around them the influences of their own consecrated lives, and imparting to them such instruction as their own acquaintance with the truth and their more matured experience and judgment can give. Such efforts, properly directed are not lost upon the young. Let them see both in example and teaching how distinctly the line is drawn between the *consecrated* believer and the world; that there is no compromise with the world; that to follow Christ is to renounce the world with all its ambitions, its gaiety and its pleasures and companionship.

Let them see the hollowness of worldly pleasures, and take occasion to call attention to the dissatisfaction and unrest of those who pursue these delusions, and the peace and joy of those who have left the world to follow Christ. It is helpful also to tell others how graciously the Lord has led us, to speak of the various turning points in our course, where the friendly crook of the Good Shepherd kept us from straying away into the wrong path; or how when once we strayed His mercy tenderly pursued us and brought us back to His fold; how He has shielded us from evil, comforted us in sorrow; satisfied our longing souls with the joys of His salvation; and made us sit down with Him in heavenly places.

To all dear children and young people who have given their hearts to God, and who are trying daily to follow Jesus – God’s blessing. There are little ones who love Jesus and who are not ashamed to stand up for Him among others who do not love Him or try to please Him; who are brave and true to God, even when laughed at and thought peculiar when they speak of the good news of the kingdom. And it is cause for joy to see young people, who have renounced the world and its ambitions and pleasures, among the most faithful of those who have consecrated their lives to the Lord. May this good work go on in a deepening and widening course.

Let the young rejoice in the prospects of a lengthened campaign and great usefulness in the Lord’s service; let those of maturer years bear up bravely and wisely under the burden and heat of the day, doing valiant service as veterans in the army of the Lord; and let the aged pilgrims, leaning upon the staff of divine truth and rejoicing in its steadfastness, stand as beacon lights to others, and at the end of their course be able to testify, “I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith”. (R1671)

“We Cease not to Pray for You”

(Col. 1:9-14)

The loving care of the apostle Paul for all the 1 churches which he or his co-workers had planted is well known, not least through his epistles or letters to them. In these he usually includes a prayer on behalf of

the particular congregation concerned, expressing his desire and prayer to God for the very best in Christian understanding and grace for them. These prayers are indeed some of the richest of his writings so let us consider his earnest prayer for the brothers and sisters at Colosse, as recorded in Colossians 1:9-14.

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

At the time of writing, the apostle had evidently not been to Colosse himself, but had received news through Epaphras of the welfare and progress of the brethren there. There were apparently some troublesome elements in their midst, as there were in some other churches, including the destructive influence of the Gnostics and the legalistic contentions of the Judaisers. Nevertheless, Paul was still able to commend those in Colosse for their faith in Christ Jesus, their love for the saints and their love in the Spirit. It was on this account that his keen desire and prayer was that they might grow and be strengthened in their faith and in their daily lives.

The issues which affect the Christian today may well outwardly appear different but the apostle’s petitions for the Colossian brethren are really just as appropriate for us today. We live in a day of materialism, an outlook quite at variance with the concept of the true riches set before the Christian. The world is still full of philosophies but, without the love and power of God, these have no life-giving or life-sustaining value. The Christian life calls for growth and development in the knowledge and understanding of God’s will but it is still intensely practical. We are not called to shut ourselves away, but to let our lights shine. There are still legalists about also, but we are counselled to stand fast in the liberty wherein Christ has made us free.

One commentator says of this prayer of the apostle that “there is something very precious and exceedingly instructive in being thus permitted to share the thoughts, and notice the petitions offered up by the apostle Paul for the Lord’s people in various circumstances. His deep concern for their growth in grace, their development in divine things, their apprehension of the purposes of God, and the manifestation of spiritual power in the life... all these come out very strikingly as he bows his knees before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... It is questionable if any merely human writer has ever been able to give as helpful suggestions for our own prayer life as will come to us in our meditation upon these various petitions.” (Ironside)

From the passage quoted above, we note that verses 9 to 11, and possibly the opening clause of verse 12 concerning thankfulness, list the apostle’s petitions for the brethren; the remaining portion to the end of verse 14 lists blessings and privileges which were already theirs, and on which the apostle desired that they build. The giving of thanks in verse 12 may refer to Paul’s doing so for their present standing in the Lord, but in other prayers and exhortations the importance of the grateful heart and the open expression of thankfulness is strongly commended. It is part indeed of his cure for anxiety – “in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” (Phil 4:6)

Let us then look briefly at the features of Paul’s prayer and how they come down to us today. They are probably five in number and all have extensive implications. The **first** petition is that the Colossians (and we also) may be *filled* with the knowledge of God’s will. There are a number of things which the apostle wished his hearers in the various churches to be filled with – in Rom 15:14 “all knowledge”, in Eph 3:19 “the fulness of God”, in Eph 5:18 “the Spirit”, in Phil 1:11 “the fruits of righteousness”. These are closely related and probably encompassed in his prayer for their filling with the knowledge of His will.

There are two words commonly used in the New Testament for “knowledge” and it is interesting that the stronger of the two is here used. The more general word GNOSIS is used frequently and favourably in the New Testament, but it was evidently the boast word of the Gnostics. Something better is what the apostle here sought for the Colossian brethren and the word EPIGNOSIS is used. This is defined as “exact or full knowledge, discernment, recognition... expressing a fuller or full knowledge, a greater participation in the object “known”, thus more powerfully influencing (those concerned)” This is an element in Paul’s prayers for the Philippians, Ephesians and for Philemon also.

In another of his epistles, Paul had to take some to task for still relying on the milk of the word, when they should have progressed to the strong meat stage. So with each Christian, the simple basic elements of the faith do not change but the vision of our Heavenly Father’s ways and will should be expanding and growing more radiant as “still new beauties may we see and still increasing light”. Such discernment is not the product of human wisdom, but of the influence of God’s Holy Spirit on each believer’s heart. As it is written – “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” (1 Cor 2:9)

The apostle’s hope and expectation for the Colossians and for us is for a broadening and deepening perception of the Divine character and greater comprehension of His love as outlined in His word, including the blessing of all mankind after the call and preparation of those who are to share with their Lord in that

grand program of blessing. Elsewhere, the apostle prays that the Lord's people "*may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height and to know the love of Christ, which passeth (human) knowledge.*" This is not like earthly knowledge, which puffs up, but, blessed by wisdom and spiritual understanding, leads on to Christian maturity. How important it is that our Bible classes be geared towards this end, that our minds and hearts be open to beauties that we may not have noted before and that we listen to what others have appreciated!

Wisdom is the key to the proper application of knowledge. Furthermore, in 1 Cor 13 Paul goes so far as to say that all knowledge, and even all faith, without love are vain. But here the Christian is blessed by the inner working of the Spirit of God to provide the "spiritual understanding" for which Paul prays. In his corresponding prayer for the Ephesians, Paul seeks for them "*that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened.*" (Eph 1:17) Understanding enables us to see what the will of God is for us, in our own lives and in our relations with others, to recognise their needs and their virtues and so to act appropriately.

The subsequent features of Paul's prayer follow on from the infilling with a clear knowledge of the Divine will. The **second** petition is "that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing". The daily practicality of faith is here again brought to our attention. Surely it is the desire of each heart to please God. The profession of our faith is good but it needs daily expression if we are to please Him."Without faith, it is impossible to please God" – we read this in Heb 11:6, but the examples of faith whom the writer goes on to tell us about all showed their faith by lives and acts of faith and obedience. The worthy walk is the daily expression of our thankfulness and of our love for Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

The **third** petition of the apostle's prayer is for "fruitfulness in every good work". The primary fruitage desired in every Christian is the development of the fruits of the Spirit. These in turn will lead to lives of fruitfulness in service to the Lord, to His people and in witness to those around us. In parallel with this petition, the apostle seeks for his hearers a **fourth** blessing – increase in the knowledge of God. The daily walk and work will surely lead to closer communion with our Father and our Saviour, who promised to come and abide with each child of God. This takes our thoughts back to the opening petition but here the emphasis may be more on a personal knowledge built on experience of the love and mercy of our Heavenly Father in all His dealings with us.

Paul's own testimony near the end of the way, based on his experience, was – "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." This is the knowledge that has been learnt and tempered in the fire of experience and this can sustain us. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." (John 17:3) "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." (Phil 3:10)

A **fifth** petition is for the strength to carry on the good fight of faith in reliance on His glorious power. As Christians, we are not currently subject to physical threat in this land, but the Christian faith in which we rejoice is being more and more reviled. Often now, we hear reference to "Bible myths" and the alleged refutation of the Bible by science, the concept of freedom for each one to choose his or her own way to God, in whatever guise they envisage Him. We can appreciate earnest seekers after truth, however misguided, but our stand can only be that there is no other name, no other way, no other Lamb than our dear Lord and Saviour, and we may well especially need the Divine strength to be true to our Lord.

We must never forget however that our Father's power is not a meagre power like ours, but a glorious power. Paul was assured, as we may be, that His grace is sufficient in every situation. This Divine power, exercised in the resurrection of our Lord, is now, through Him, effective for His followers. So strengthened, the Christian will be enable to endure patiently, to suffer long and in all things to rejoice. Such staying power comes only through faith in Him whose power is infinite. It is said of the faith heroes of old that they "out of weakness were made strong", by faith. So, Paul's desire and prayer for the brethren at Colosse and for all God's people was for their growth in discernment of God's plans and purposes, a closer walk of faith, fruitfulness in character and every good work, increase in personal acquaintance with God and finally Divine strength to endure steadfast to the end.

Over it all, we have our Saviour's own assurance given not long before He was to leave the disciples – "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." Right down the age, He has been caring for His church and in these last days of impending transition we can be sure that His promise is still sure. May the prayer of Paul for the Colossians and our Lord's promise of His abiding presence be fulfilled in each of our lives in this and each succeeding year. Amen

Thankfulness

A thankful spirit pervaded the entire life of Jesus, and surrounded with a heavenly halo His otherwise darkened path. In moments we least expect to find it, this beauteous ray breaks through the gloom. In

instituting the memorial of His *death*, He “*gave thanks!*” Even in crossing the Kedron to Gethsemane, “He sang a hymn!”

We know in seasons of deep sorrow and trial that everything wears a gloomy aspect. Dumb nature herself to the burdened spirit seems as if she partook in the hues of sadness. The life of Jesus was one continuous experience of privation and woe – a “valley of Baca,” from first to last; yet, amid accents of plaintive sorrow, there are ever heard subdued undertones of *thankfulness* and joy!

Ah, if He, the suffering “Man of Sorrows”, could, during a life of unparalleled woe, lift up His heart in grateful acknowledgment to His Father in heaven, how ought their lives be one perpetual “hymn of thankfulness,” who are from day to day and hour to hour (for all they have, both temporarily and spiritually) dependent on God’s bounty and love.

So let us cultivate the thankful spirit; to those who do so it becomes a perpetual feast. There is, or ought to be, with us no such thing as *small* mercies; all are great, because the least are undeserved. Indeed, a really thankful heart will extract motive for gratitude from everything, making the most even of scanty blessings. Paul, when in his dungeon at Rome, a prisoner in chains, is heard to say, “I have all, and abound!”

Let us guard, on the other hand, against that spirit of continual fretting and moping over fancied ills; that temptation to exaggerate the real or supposed disadvantages of our condition, magnifying the trifling inconveniences of every-day life into enormous evils. Think rather how much we have for which to be thankful. The world in which we live, in spite of all the scars of sin and suffering upon it, is a happy world. True, the “Everlasting Hills” are in glory, but there are numberless eminencies of grace, and love, and mercy below; many green spots in the lower valley, *many more than we deserve!*

God will reward a thankful spirit. Just as on earth, when a man receives with gratitude what is given, the donor is more disposed to give again; so also, “the *Lord* loveth” a cheerful “receiver”, as well as a cheerful “giver”.

Let ours, moreover, be a *Gospel* thankfulness. Let the incense of a grateful spirit rise not only to the Great Giver of all good, but also to His blessed Son our dear Redeemer. Let it be the spirit of the child exulting in the bounty and beneficence of His Father’s house and home! “Giving *thanks* always for all things unto God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!”

While the sweet melody of gratitude vibrates through every successive moment of our daily being, let love to our adorable Redeemer show for *Whom* and for what it is we reserve our notes of loftiest and most fervent praise. “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift!”

OUR GUIDE AND MASTER “The Lord alone did lead him” (Deut. 32:12)

The hill was steep, but cheered along the way
By converse sweet, I mounted on the thought
That it so might be till the height was reached;
But suddenly a narrow winding path
Appeared, and then the Master said, “My child,
Here thou wilt safest walk with me alone.”
I trembled, yet my heart’s deep trust replied,
“So be it, Lord.” He took my feeble hand
In His, accepting thus my will to yield Him all
And to find all in Him. One long, dark moment.
And no friend I saw, save Jesus only.
But oh! so tenderly He lead me on
And up, and spoke to me such words of cheer,
That soon I told Him all my grief and fear,
And leaned on His strong arm confidingly.
And then I found my footsteps quickened
And light ineffable, the rugged way
Illumined, such light as only can be seen
In close companionship with God.
A little while, and we shall meet again
The loved and lost; but in the rapturous joy
Of greeting, such as here we cannot know,
And happy song, and heavenly embraces,

And tender recollections rushing back
Of pilgrim life, I think one memory
More dear and sacred than the rest, shall rise.
And we who gather in the golden streets
Shall oft be stirred to speak with grateful love
Of that dark day when Jesus made us climb
Some narrow steep, leaning on Him alone.

(Gertrude W. Seibert)

Gifts of Faith

Faith may be viewed from two standpoints – *belief* and *I trust*. In the Scriptural use of the word faith, we understand it to be a belief in God and the things that we have reason to recognise as being of God – God's prophecies, the promises of his Word, etc., and a heart reliance on him – not just belief in anything. The latter would be what we would term credulity. And the person who could believe anything would be foolish; whereas, he that believes what God has said has the Wisdom that cometh from above, and is, therefore, wise from the Scriptural standpoint.

We understand that the purpose and determination of the Christian should be to have his faith largely developed, and he should obtain it from the Scriptures. Many people have faith which they believe to be of God, but which, on investigation, they find to be unscriptural and not a faith in what has come from God, in what he has expressed, but from the traditions of the "Dark Ages" and from college professors, etc., and is quite contrary to the "faith once delivered to the saints".

In this particular sense we would understand faith to represent a heart-quality of trust in the Lord – something that has been acquired through the knowledge of God – through acquaintance with him by the various means by which he has been pleased to reveal himself. This is a faith which cannot continue to subsist or increase unless knowledge shall increase, based upon the Divine Revelation, and full acceptance of it and the coming into harmony with the Almighty, so as to be able to apply the promises and to recognise that they belong to the individual.

We would consider faith, then, as belief in God and in his promises, as a personal trust in God, giving us the rest and peace of God. As to how these views of faith agree with the words of our Lord. "*When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth*", and as to how they agree with the statement of the Apostle Paul in Corinthians respecting faith as a gift of the Holy Spirit, we would say that in the first of these passages the rendering should be, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find The Faith on the earth?" The implication is not that he will find no faith, but Shall he find "The Faith (the Doctrine) once delivered unto the saints"; hence we understand our Lord's words to mean that when the Son of man cometh he will not find, save in a few "The Faith once delivered unto the saints", but will find instead misconceptions.

And so we find that many Christian people, when talking on this subject, do not know what they are talking about. They have not "The Faith once delivered to the saints". Thus we are reminded of the statement of the Scriptures that "the inhabitants of the world have been made drunk" with the false doctrines which have perverted the Word of God. Instead of the "good tidings of great joy" they have been told bad tidings of most horrible torture. It is intimated in the Word that *some* will have The Faith. But the Lord implies that it will be a small number who will possess it.

Respecting the gifts of faith: At the very beginning of this Age gifts of speaking with tongues, gifts of interpreting tongues, gifts of healing, etc, were bestowed so that they might be exercised for the benefit of the people. It would require a great deal of faith to be able to say, as did Peter to the impotent man at the temple, "Arise and walk". One would need the "gift" in order to do this. And so with those who spoke with tongues. It would need to be a miraculous gift which would enable them to master any unknown language.

Those gifts which God chose to give were granted because the Church was in its infancy and needed them for encouragement. The gifts were given also for a witness because the Church did not then have the New Testament; it had not as yet been written. The early Church needed some means for instructing one another. And so one would arise and speak in an unknown tongue; a gift of interpretation would be given to another, and he would rise and give the interpretation. These gifts were given amongst them as a sort of drawing power to cause the Lord's people to assemble themselves together. Thus was the Word of God sent out for a time through this imperfect channel.

We should not think that a higher development was indicated by the possession of these gifts, but rather, these gifts were granted during the infancy of the Church, and we should not pray for them. The Scriptures show that either they were the gifts possessed by the Apostles or else, subsequently, they were the result of the impartation of the Holy Spirit and laying on the hands of the Apostles; as, for instance, when Philip, the deacon, sent the Apostle that he might lay hands upon the people that they might receive the gifts; evidently Philip had not the power to do this of himself.

As to the desire for speaking with unknown tongues, the Apostle gave them a warning reproof. He said, "*I would rather speak five words in the Church with my understanding — that by my voice I might teach others also — than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.*" (1 Cor. 14:19, 19.) He tells them that if any man possessed the gift of speaking with tongues, let him pray that he might interpret — that he might be able to express himself intelligibly to those to whom he was speaking, rather than in dark sayings. And then he proceeds to say that this strong desire for emulation in the possession of the gifts did not of itself indicate deep consecration to God. He tells them that if they spoke with the tongues of men and of angels, it would profit them nothing, if they did not have love. The possession of an unknown tongue did not imply that a man had reached a higher attainment and relationship to God.

He says that the fruits of the Spirit are more to be desired, which are these — meekness, gentleness, patience, fortitude, self-control, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, love. Peter tells us, "*If ye do these things, ye shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*" (2 Pet. 1. 10, 11.) We might have all the gifts of the early church and have no evidence whatever that we would be sure of a place in the Kingdom. Love excels all the other virtues, because it is the most enduring.

When we shall see and know thoroughly faith will, practically, have come to an end. And hope will be practically at an end when our hopes in our Heavenly Father's promises have reached fruition. But love had no beginning and it will have no end. God is love. Since God was without beginning, so Love was without beginning; because it is His character, His disposition; and as He endureth forever, so Love will endure forever. (CTR)