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This One Thing I Do.

(Phil. 3:13. See verses 7-16.) (Convention Address)

HUMAN experiences, as well as the Divine Word, attest the importance of concentrating energy upon some one thing if we would achieve the best results.

It was Jesus who said, "No man can serve two masters." "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." It was the Apostle James who said, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."

To-day the keenest business men of the world are endorsing this teaching of Scripture by applying the principle to their business. In the making of machinery and other things it is found expedient to subdivide the work, so that each man may do a certain part only and thus become more proficient. This one thing he does and thus becomes more proficient in it. To attain the utmost success in any walk of life it is found necessary to focus attention on some object or purpose. No man can serve two masters.

If this be true as regards earthly things, how much emphasis it places upon the words of Jesus and the Apostles as relating to spiritual things. And not only their words but their lives attest the principle. The words of Paul,—"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus' have only an empty sound until we thoughtfully consider what things he had left behind, and what was now the aim or prize for which he was running. And since we are exhorted to follow his example in the race, it may be well for each of us to examine ourselves to see how like, or unlike, our course is that of Paul's.

Looking back we find that Paul had superior advantages and prospects as a man. He had "much learning," having been educated under one of the best teachers of that day, "Gamaliel." Education was more rare then than now, and more costly. Consequently, the opportunities and influences of educated men were proportionately greater.

Paul, as a member of the Sanhedrim, and a "master in Israel," occupied a place of great influence and dignity among his fellow countrymen. Add to these honours the fact that by birth he inherited "Roman citizenship," we find a man with brighter prospects than one in ten thousand of his countrymen for gaining a place of pre-eminent distinction, either in the State government, or in the Jewish Church.

Whether or not Paul also inherited wealth we are not informed, but it is reasonable to suppose so. But, summing up all these possessions, the ambitions which they pointed out, Paul turned his back on them all when his eye caught sight of the heavenly prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus. He counted them all but as dross when compared to the true jewel. It is when reviewing this course of action that he uses the words of our text.

"Whatever things were gain to me, these I have on account of the Anointed One, esteemed as a loss. But then, indeed, I esteem all things to be a loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of the Anointed Jesus my Lord; on whose account I suffered the loss of all things and consider them to be vile refuse, so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in him, . . . to know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship (sharing) of his sufferings, being conformed to his death. Not that I have already received it, or have been already perfected, but I pursue, if indeed, I may lay hold on that for which I was laid hold on by Christ. Brethren, I do not reckon myself to have attained it, but one thing I do—even forgetting the things behind and stretching forth towards the things before, I press along the line towards the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. As many, therefore, as are perfect should be of this mind,

and if in any (other) thing you think differently, God will also reveal this to you.” (Phil. 3:7-15. Diaglott.)

Though Paul had sacrificed so much, there is no evidence that he ever regretted it, or desired to have those things back. On the contrary his ambitions seem to have been such that he could have wished that his possessions and hopes had been yet larger, in order that his sacrifice might have thus been the greater. In his case there was no “looking back” like Lot’s wife, but a forgetting of those things which he had sacrificed. He thus avoided a temptation common to many today, who, though they have left very little, comparatively, continually look back at it and recount to themselves how much they have suffered and lost, thus hindering a completion of the sacrifice and race begun. Let us take a lesson from this, and forget, too, the things behind—forget our old hopes and earthly aims and ambitions—and fill our minds only with those aims and hopes which are before, laid up, in reservation for us.

But what was the one thing that Paul did? We are apt to forget that Paul and the other Apostles were men much like ourselves. And though the common affairs of life are scarcely mentioned, but only the more public ministrations, nevertheless all of these entered into their life experiences much as with us. Remembering this will enable us the better to appreciate their examples. Hence, we answer that the one thing which Paul was doing was not preaching, nor writing, nor singing hymns, nor travelling, but the one thing he did was, as Jesus expressed it—doing the will of God. It was in harmony with this will of God that Paul travelled, preached, made tents, was persecuted, imprisoned, etc.; and it was necessary, as Paul knew, to lay aside and forget all the aims and masters in order to render acceptable service to Him who declared, “No man can serve two masters.”

Looked at thus, if we would be acceptable to our Master and win the prize of our high calling, we must determine also—”This one thing I do.” Did we once have an ambition for wealth and luxury? We must forget that, as one of the things that were, but are not. Were we ambitious for fame, worldly honour or office? Let all these fade away in the light of the greater honour and glories now before us in prospect, for which we are now running and striving—”A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” This is the one thing to be sought now, and all our doings must be with reference to it if we would win it. To divide our attention would be to lose it.

Perhaps many of us .may feel that we are so placed that the larger part of our time is taken up in labourng for the meat that perisheth. We may find that we have not very much time to devote to the service of the Gospel. However, let us remind ourselves that Paul made tents for a living—"laboured working with his hands.” Now, was not Paul as truly in the service of God while making tents as while preaching? Was he not as really doing the one thing? The fact that we have less time, and doubtless less talent to spend in declaring the unsearchable riches of Christ, does not change the matter. God knows the circumstances and necessities of each one of the called ones, and He declares it to be His will that we care for those whom His providence has placed under our care. Hence in this caring for them, you are doing His will who declares,—”If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own household he bath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.” (1 Tim. 5:8.)

But, on the other hand, let us see that our attention to earthly things is limited by necessity. There is danger that our necessities be too liberally considered thus tending to cultivate pride, vainglory, and desire for the things of earth: and to hold us back and hinder us in our race. There is always danger lest the needful affairs of this life develop into matters of aim and object which would interfere and conflict with the one aim before us.

In a word, then, whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, let us do all to the glory of God. If we find certain food to incapacitate us and interfere with—this one thing we do—then we should deny ourselves that food. Can we glorify our Father more by great plainness of dress, or great plainness of speech? Then that alone and not our convenience or will, but His will be done. This is doing the same thing and seeking the same prize in the same way as did Paul. This, too, is what Jesus means when He said, “Seek ye first (chiefly) the kingdom of God.”

Let us keep the great example of our Lord ever clear before our minds. Let us not be side-tracked, or moved away from the hope of the Gospel. Christ said it was His meat to do the will of His Father. Let us also fully appreciate the example of the great Apostle Paul, and seek to follow him as he followed Christ in single-hearted purpose. Paul had one great aim and purpose of life; he did not attempt to mingle the service of Christ with the attainment of earthly good things, wealth, name, fame etc. He did not seek for honour here and the crown of glory hereafter, but he had one object in view, one aim, one great purpose of soul. To this singleness of purpose he owed his extraordinary attainments as a servant of Christ. A man will accomplish little who allows his mind to be distracted by a multiplicity of objects.

A Christian will accomplish nothing who has not a single great aim and purpose of soul. That purpose should be to do the will of our heavenly Father—to bend our wills to His, to deny self, to take up our cross daily to follow Christ in meekness and humility, and seeking to cultivate in our hearts the blessed fruitage of His spirit.

Let us, then, strive to so live that we may be able to say that there is one great object which we always have in view,

and that we mean to avoid everything which would interfere with that.

It will be noticed in Paul's argument as stated in Phil. 3:15, that he concludes that as many as are standing complete in Christ, should have "this mind" to seek the one thing—the prize before and to forget those behind. And when he adds, "And if in anything you think differently, God will reveal even this unto you,- it seems that he meant to have us understand that wherever this entire consecration to the will of God exists, based on the ransom, as expressed in verse 9, such consecrated ones are in the right way; and though they might, perhaps. have minor errors, it would only be a matter of time when they would come to appreciate the truth. Let those who claim to stand complete in Christ Jesus, be thus minded, and thus, in all we do press along the line, keeping in view only the on him and the prize of our high calling.

Concordances

Some copies of Strong's Exhaustive Concordance are now on hand with strong cloth binding. While the price is greatly increased, these Concordances contain such a wealth of information with the meanings of all Hebrew and Greek words used in the Bible, and are really essential for detailed study of the Scriptures. The present price is 17/12/6.

My Heart's Desire.

Give me, dear Lord, a heart that's true and clean,
That I might never do an action mean.

Give me, O Lord, a very humble mind
That I might never speak a word unkind.

And hands that ever willing to be used
In any way my Lord and Master choose;

And feet that's ever quick Thy messages to speed
To those who for Thy love and mercy plead.

Give me grace to tell Thy wondrous plan
That Thou hast purposed, Lord, for fallen man,

That I may faithfully to them relate
How Thou wilt save them from their lost estate:

And as they plead Thy love and mercy, Lord,
For Jesus' sake Thou wilt to them accord

Thy perfect peace that they may do Thy will,
And all Thy works of grace in them fulfil.

—Matilda Cole, Cardiff.

“The General Assembly of the Church of the First-borns.”

Heb. 12:22, 23.

THE Church of the First-borns” is not to be confounded with the Church of the First Resurrection. The word first, in the phrase First Resurrection signifies better, superior. The • First Resurrection includes only the Lord and “the Church, which is His Body”; in other words, the Bride Class. But in this glorified Church of the First-borns are included all those who are born of the spirit. Those who are to be of the spirit nature will be those who have been developed throughout the Gospel Age—before God’s favour goes to the world. This Church of the Firstborns includes all who come into covenant relationship with God before the New Covenant is put into force. Some will have part (an inferior part, however, to that of the Church) with the great “High Priest of our Profession” in instituting the New Covenant. They will all have some share with Him in dispensing the blessings of the New Covenant to all the families of the earth—’to Israel first, and then to all nations.

This Church of the First-borns is prophetically pictured in the Old Testament in connection with the passover. In that night when all the first-born of Egypt were slain, all of the first-born of Israel were passed over. These escaped because of the blood on the lintels of their houses and because of their partaking of the lamb within. We know that afterward all of the first-born of Israel were exchanged for the one tribe of. Levi; and that this tribe was separated or divided into two parts—one a priestly class and the other a servant class. The former were called Priests; the latter Levites; though, of course, all were Levites. These two classes were types of the Church of the Gospel Age.

“But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; to the General Assembly of the Church of the First-borns.” (Heb. 12:22, 23.) More properly we understand this to signify that we have approached—this is that to which we are coming—it is in sight. Some have already reached it. Our Lord has reached the goal. And some others of the First-borns have also reached their goal; and some of us have not yet reached it. But this is what we are approaching. We shall all have come into power and into our place in the Divine Plan, at the close of this Gospel Age. Thereupon will culminate the “time of trouble” with which this Age will end, typified by the trembling of the mountain of Sinai. Then, in the same connection, we read that we are approaching an innumerable company of angels.

The Apostle seems to be here setting before us the glories of the future. Not only shall we see our heavenly Father and our heavenly Lord, and be ushered into the Assembly of the Church of the First-borns, but we shall be ushered into the presence of an innumerable company of angels. These are the angels who encamp around about those that fear the Lord and deliver them. (Psa. 34:7.) They are sent to be ministers for those who shall be heirs of salvation. (Heb. 1:14.) They have been with us here overseeing our interests; and it will be part of our joy on the spirit-plane to make their acquaintance. If the Apostle had neglected to mention these, we would think it strange; for he is enumerating the things to which we are approaching.

Thus we see that the Church of the First-borns includes the “Great Company” of the Levites as well as the smaller company of the Priests. As the Levites had no inheritance in the land, so not only the “Little Flock” but also the “Great Company,” the servant class, the companions of the Bride, have no share in the earthly inheritance, but will have a share in the heavenly inheritance.

A Lesson from the Trees.

Some young people were discussing life, and the question was asked: “Which season of life is the most happy?”

Being unable to agree on the subject, they referred the question to their grandfather, a veteran of over eighty.

“You see that grove of trees before the house,” he said. “When the spring comes and the buds are breaking on the trees, I think—How beautiful is spring! And when the summer comes and covers the trees with foliage, and the birds sing in the branches, I think—How beautiful is summer! When autumn loads them with golden fruit,. I think—How beautiful is autumn! And when it is winter, and there is neither foliage nor fruit, then I look up, and through the leafless branches, as I could not do so until now, I see the stars shine.

If we are living as God would have us, we will be happy through all the seasons of life.

“Hymns of Dawn Music Book.”—Containing the original 333 hymns, 27 additional in an Appendix, well bound in strong cloth, with silver lettering, this new edition is priced at 10/- post paid.

Christ’s Return. His Revealing and Manifestation..

(Continued from August issue.)

“IF ANY MAN HEAR MY VOICE”

Luke 12:35:48.

“Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning, and be ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord when he shall return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh they may open unto him immediately.”

THE thought appears to be that the Lord be present and knocking, and that some might not be sufficiently alert to hear the “knock,” while those who were in the right attitude and waiting for Him would more quickly recognise the Lord’s presence. Then there is the promise of verse 37, “Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Verily, I say unto you, he will gird himself and make them to sit down to meat and will come forth and serve them.”

This is surely a wonderful promise, and also clearly indicates that the Lord will be present among His people prior to His taking control of earth’s affairs. Not only will the world be unaware of His presence, but many of His own people will evidently be too much taken up with other things, soothed to spiritual drowsiness by worldly attractions, or social matters, or even social uplift, temperance or religious work, and thus fail to recognise His presence, and fail to enter the marriage feast, fail to sit down at the table to eat the meat specially provided by the Lord for the watchers. We find similar language in Rev. 3:20, addressed to the Laodicean Church: “Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me.”

Verse 45 seems clearly to indicate a class which will refuse to believe that the Lord is present, and who will begin to smite those who are rejoicing in the fact, and are enjoying the feast which the Lord promised to prepare, a feast of truths, new and old, out of the storehouse—the Word of God. So that here, again, we notice the solemn fact that the first work at the Lord’s return is a separating work among professing Christians, “Judgment must begin at the House of God.”

This separating work is termed the “harvest,” and the Lord gave the Parable of the Tares sown in the wheat field to illustrate the matter. (Matt. 13:24-30.)

This parable covers the whole Gospel Age. The “good seed” is the Word of God, the true Gospel of grace in Christ. The enemy that sowed the tares is the Devil, who has sought to becloud the truth and to pervert it by presenting error, right from the beginning. His crafty work is seen in all the false religions of heathendom, as well as in Christendom. The great anti-Christian Roman Catholic Church is surely his masterpiece —so wonderful a counterfeit of the true Church that millions have been deceived. The tares, sown among the wheat, have developed so that the wheat field has become a tare field. The terrible falling into error and development of tares could be seen even in the Apostles’ days, but to the enquiry as to whether the tares should be separated or pulled up,” the reply is: No, do not do any separating work until the Harvest time--the Harvest is the end of the Age.” Then the Lord would be present to direct the work, and would have the tares bound in bundles for the burning. Thus the wheat would be separated from these bundles and gathered out of the field into the barn.

This is all to be accomplished by the present Lord, in preparation for the setting up of the Kingdom. The Kingdom will not commence its thousand years’ reign of glory and blessing until the wheat is all garnered—that is, until the Church, the members in Christ, are all gathered home to reign with Him. The reign will not begin until the tares have gone into the fire, nor until Satan, the present prince, is dethroned and bound.

The question now is as to just where are we in regard to these important matters?

“Watchman, tell me does the morning
Of fair Zion’s glory dawn?
Have the signs that mark its coming
Yet upon thy pathway shone.
Pilgrim, yes; arise, look round thee!
Light is breaking in the skies;
Gird thy Bridal robes around thee,
Morning dawns, arise; arise!”

While we have the prophecies of Daniel, the 1260, 1290, 1335 and the 2300 days, pointing to the years 1798, 1828, 1874 and 1846 respectively, yet none of these prophecies just clearly state that the Lord would be present again. They speak of the ending of Papal power and the cleansing of the sanctuary, and “Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the end of the 1335 days.” The Lord has left us rather to judge by the signs, the conditions about us, and the work going on among Christians, as to where we are in respect of His coming. The matter then may be discerned by those who search, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,” and as for those who neglect the Word of God, neglect to watch, and do not trim their lamps—the Word of God which is a lamp to our feet, a guide to our pathway—they will surely be left in ignorance of these important developments in connection with the Lord’s presence and the deliverance of the Church.

The Lord has stated that when the Son of Man returns there will be similar conditions to those which existed in Noah’s day, prior to the Flood. There were about 120 years during which Noah preached and warned of the coming catastrophe—the deluge—and during which time the people scoffed and went their own way eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, and knew not until the flood came. (Luke 17:26-27.)

“As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man, they did eat, they drank, they married wives, and they were given in marriage until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.” “Likewise also in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded. But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the days of the Son of Man.” (Luke:17:27-30.)

St. Paul also speaks of the same time, saying, “This know, that in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy. Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” (2 Tim. 3:1-5.)

The Lord, after speaking of the signs of His presence, warns against the possibility of that day coming upon us unawares. “Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Luke 21:34-36.)

The Ten Virgins Parable.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins indicates that there will be two classes even among those interested in the Lord’s return. Some have trimmed their lamps and have oil in their vessels, .and are thus able to appreciate the presence of Christ, while others seem to lack the spiritual perception through lack of oil in their vessels, the holy spirit in their hearts, and so fail to enter the Bridal Chamber, and are not recognised by the Bridegroom.

It would seem probable that the outworking of this Parable of the Ten Virgins has been in course of fulfilment ever since the ending of Daniel’s 1290 days. It was somewhere about 1825 that the advent movement had its beginning, and the message went throughout Christendom, “Prepare to meet the Bridegroom.”

Mr. Miller and others prominent in this movement had concluded that Christ would return about 1844, which they understood was the end of Daniel’s 2300 days (years). (Daniel 8:14.)

A great disappointment occurred at that time, for those whose minds were exercised on the subject had not grasped the correct thought of the manner of the Lord’s return. They looked for Him to appear again in human form, visible to the human eye. They had not noticed the intent of the Lord’s own words (Luke 17:20-24.), “The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation,” Neither shall they say, “Lo here, or lo there! For behold the Kingdom of God is (or will be) among you.” Even this disappointment of 1844 seemed to be intimated in the Word,--And he said unto the disciples, The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it; and they shall say to you: see here or see there, go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning that lighteneth out of one part under heaven and shineth unto the other part under heaven (the sunshine out of the east unto the west), so shall also the Son of Man be in his day.” It is quite evidently a mistake to think of this lightening as the lightning flash. It’ is foolish to think that the Lord’s second presence would be but a flash as of lightning. He is represented elsewhere as the “Sun of righteousness that shall arise with healing in His wings.” (Mal. 4:2).

That surely means that He will not be seen by the natural eye, though every eye of faith will see Him, and appreciate the light of the knowledge of the Lord, which shall cover the whole earth as the waters cover the sea, and feel the

warmth of His love and the healing influences of those rays of sunshine from His glorious presence. We may recall the incident of Paul's conversion, and how the Lord appeared to him in the way, and His appearance was above the brightness of the sun at noonday, and could not be looked upon. Paul was blinded. Then, too, we remember how highly the Lord was exalted after His resurrection. Paul declares that he saw Christ "as one born (in resurrection) before the time." He saw Him as He will be when He comes as a glorious spirit being, in the "express image of the Father's person" "whom no man hath seen nor can see."

There is not one word in connection with the Lord's coming again to indicate that He would once more change His nature and again become flesh, but on the contrary, He declared (Matt. 24:30), "There shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." And again (Luke 9:26), "He shall come in His own glory, and in His

Father's, and of the holy angels." And Matt. 16:27, "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father and with His angels." It would be but reasonable that, if the Son of Man should return in human form visible to men, the angels also would be in similar form, and thus also be seen of men. We remember again that it was in order that Christ might pay the price of sin by giving "His flesh (His humanity) for the life of the world," that He bad become flesh, that He had been "made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that He might by the grace of God taste death for every man." (Heb. 2:9.) Having accomplished the great sacrifice, He comes again, not in the body of humiliation, but in power and glory, in the "express image of the Father's person."

The apostle John did not even know what He would be like, but he knew that He would come "as He is." He would not change His condition or nature, but those who will see Him must be changed to be like Him. (1 John 3:2.)

There are scriptures which, if taken literally, might appear to teach to the contrary of the Master's words, "Henceforth the world seeth me no more," but if we patiently examine these passages we believe it will be seen that they are figurative or symbolic, and when their real meaning is discerned they will be found beautifully harmonising with the plain statement of our Lord, and with the Apostle Paul who said, "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh; henceforth know we Him (so) no more."

We have, for instance, the statement that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night; and yet again we read that He will descend with a "shout," and the "voice of the Archangel" and the "trump of God." All these take place at the presence of the Lord, yet only those who are earnestly waiting, watching and listening will hear the shout, the voice, the trump, or the "knock." Others shall be unaware of His having come. Rev. 3:3 (Diaglott). -Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard and observed it, and reform. If therefore thou shouldst not watch, I may have come as a thief, and thou mayst by no means know at what hour 1 may have come on thee." All these symbols refer to the message of truth, a proclamation of His presence, etc.

Daniel 12:1 shows that the Lord would be present, "shall stand up" prior to the "Time of Trouble." Rev. 11:1518 shows that the nations will be angry, and like those in Noah's day, unaware of the presence. 1 Thes. 4:16 shows, too, that Christ will be present when the shout, voice and trump sound forth, and Matt. 24:31 tells the purpose of the sounding of the trumpet to be the accomplishing of the harvest work, to -gather together his elect from the four winds of heaven." That is, the gathering of the saints out of all the bundles of error and sectarianism, into the light and liberty of *he truth as it is in Jesus.

We still have for further consideration the Lord's parables, "The Tares" and the "Ten Virgins," as indicating the work of gathering the saints out of all the systems of error during the second presence of Christ; and it will be noticed that in neither parable does the separation begin before the Lord has come.

All ten virgins were pure ones, they were Christians, they were interested in the Lord's return, they had all gone out to meet Him. That does not mean that they had gone to any particular place to meet the Lord, but they had their minds exercised in the study of the Bible; they were watching. They, no doubt, represent those who in Miller's day and since have been "looking for His coming." There are two ,classes mentioned, wise and foolish, and evidently such trials or tests which the Lord permitted, through the misunderstanding of truth in 1844, and 'many others since that time, are for the very purpose of separating the wise from the foolish. Some get discouraged through these tests, and lose heart and become drowsy, and some seem also to have excitable dreams, and are led away by vain fancies and imaginations. What light they started out with flickers and dies, and they have no oil in their vessels, they are short of the holy spirit in their hearts to "guide them into all truth, and teach them things to come." Ultimately they appear to secure oil for their lamps, but too late to enter the marriage chamber. The door had been closed, the elect had been completed, the Bride had made herself ready and entered the joys of her Lord.

It is not for us to try and discern to which class anyone may belong, but it is the part of wisdom for us each to examine

our hearts and see that we have “oil in our vessels.” We may gain a good deal of intellectual knowledge and discern something of the trend of events so that we may be expectant, even go out to meet the Bridegroom, and yet be sadly short of the holy spirit. It is not sufficient that we have been begotten of the spirit; we are leaky vessels, and need continual refilling.

This is the principal work we have to do; without it we shall be failures. If we have the holy spirit in our hearts, the Word of God, being -prayerfully studied, will surely shine clearer and clearer, and reveal the presence of the Bridegroom. Not only so, but the fruits of God’s holy spirit in our hearts will be manifest in our lives, in love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. (Gal. 5:22-23.) Or as Peter (2 Pet. 1:5-11) puts it, “Add to your faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. . . . 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.”

Why He Knocketh.

“When he cometh and knocketh they may open unto him immediately.”—Luke 12:36.

From the Parable of the Young Nobleman, also that of the Wedding Garment (Matt. 22), and from Luke 12:37-48 and other Scriptures, it would appear to be manifest that the Lord would be present, judging among His people and otherwise preparing for the establishment of His Kingdom, while yet unknown to the world. He would bring to a conclusion the work of the Gospel Age, separating the “wheat from the tares,” and finally gathering the perfect body of Christ, the full number of His elect, the fact of His presence being known only to those watching and listening for His ‘knock.” It is to such that He has promised to “gird himself and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.”

This feast is a spiritual one, and indicates that the Lord “will bring forth things new and old” out of the storehouse. And the promise is that those watchers who are themselves refreshed by the truths specially revealed by the Lord when He has returned, are to be engaged in the service of providing these “things new and old” out of the storehouse, to all who are faithfully watching, to such as have ears to hear. And the Lord said, “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.”—Luke 12:42-44.

This spiritual feast appears to be what was indicated by the 1335 days of Daniel—’’Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the 1335 days.” —Daniel 12:12.

In this 12th chapter of Daniel, three periods are particularly mentioned-1260 days (time, times and a half), 1290 days, and 1335—which are to be counted from the setting up of the desolating abomination, and the taking away of the continual sacrifice. This event would appear to be about 539 A.D., when both items mentioned in Daniel 1 2:11 became facts. Papacy assumed civil control, and the mass was instituted, as though the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ, offered “once for all,” was not completely satisfactory and all availing. These three periods appear to terminate respectively 1795-99, 1825-29, and 1874. The 1260 days or years reaching to 1795-1799 marked the time when the Papal power, which had so long trodden down the saints of the Most High, was broken, and the Pope was taken prisoner by Napoleon and carried to France. Thus the saints of God were relieved from Papal persecutions. With the greater liberty, the truth of God’s Word began to shine, Bible Societies sprang into existence, and the work of cleansing the sanctuary went forward. The great Reformation under Zwingli, Ecolampadius, Melancthon and Luther had started the cleansing by rebuking the abuses and errors of Rome. Wesley had followed in preaching faith and true holiness. Sanctification was his chief theme. By 1825 there was the Campbellite or Church of Christ movement, also the Millerite movement, which awakened the Christian world to great expectations regarding the Lord’s return. A clear understanding of the doctrine of the ransom seems to have been attained, and a class has ever since 1846 been separated from the nominal churches.

It would seem to be about 1825-29 that the preaching respecting the Lord’s return drew together those who “loved His appearing.” It was as though the Parable of the Ten Virgins there had the commencement of its fulfilment, as already stated.

Ever since that time God’s watching people have been permitted to have experiences which have proved and tested their faith, and evidently divided class from class. The great “shout” or proclamation which was promised has been accomplishing its purpose, and calling out those who “have ears to hear” to go forth to meet the Bridegroom. Then even among those who are represented as ten virgins there have been experiences which have no doubt been the means of demonstrating to which class each watcher belongs, the “five wise” or the “five foolish” virgins. The whole ten

virgins represent Christians—pure ones—justified, cleansed by the precious blood of Christ. Not only are all Christians, but all are interested in the Lord's return. They desire to meet Him and have some knowledge about His coming, yet there is a difference among them; five are wise, having not only a knowledge of God's Word, "the lamp to our feet," but they have a good supply of oil in their hearts and minds; these could readily adjust their minds and hearts to an appreciation of events and recognise the "signs of His presence," and so enter into the joys of the near approach of the Kingdom and enjoy the feast which the Lord had promised to prepare for those whom He would find faithfully watching.

The five foolish lack the supply of oil in their vessels, are short of the holy spirit in their hearts, and, therefore, have not the appreciation of events or a Scriptural understanding of the signs of the Lord's presence, and, therefore, fail to enter into the feast. The first test of the Harvest time soon came. Mr. Miller had predicted the second presence in 1844, and expected the Lord to come with "outward show" and to be seen by all. It was evidently expected that our Lord would appear with a human body instead of as He had said, "the Son of Man cometh not with outward show," but "in power and great glory, and all the holy angels with Him." They had overlooked the fact that Jesus was "put to death flesh, but quickened spirit," that "flesh and blood (human nature) cannot inherit the Kingdom of God," that "though we have known Christ (says the Apostle) after the flesh, henceforth know we Him no more," and that even the apostle John was ignorant of what our Lord was like in the glorified condition. "We know not what we shall be like, but we know that, when he shall appear we shall be like him, and see him as he is." (1 John 3:2.) So the Christians of this Millerite movement suffered a great disappointment, which began the operation under the Lord's providence of separating the two classes of virgins. This was the commencement of the Harvest work, beginning first among the Lord's own consecrated people.

(To be continued.)

One Day at a Time.

One day at a time, with its failures and fears,
With its hurts and mistakes, with its weakness and tears,
With its portion of pain and its burden of care ;
One day at a time we must meet and must bear.

One day at a time to be patient and strong,
To be calm under trial and sweet under wrong ;
Then its toiling shall pass and its sorrow shall cease :
It shall darken and die, and the night shall bring peace.

One day at a time—but the day is so long,
And the heart is not brave and the soul is not strong.
O Thou pitiful Christ, be Thou near all the way ;
Give courage and patience and strength for the day.

Why should we look forward or back with dismay ?
Our needs, as our mercies, are but for the day.
One day at a time and the day is His day;
He bath numbered its hours, though they haste or delay.

His grace is sufficient, we walk not alone;
As the day, so the strength that He giveth His own. —Selected.

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