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A Practical Self-Examination on Love.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.”-2 Cor. 13:5.

IT seems impossible to describe love, this wonderful quality without which nothing is acceptable in the sight of God! The Apostle does not attempt to define love, but contents himself with giving us some of its manifestations. Those who possess a love with such characteristics are able to appreciate it, but not able otherwise to explain it. The fact is that love, like life and light, is difficult to define; and our best endeavors to comprehend it are along the lines of its effects. It is of God; it is godlikeness in the heart, in the tongue, in the hands, in the thoughts — supervising all the human attributes and seeking to control them. Where love is lacking, the results are more or less evil; where love is present, the results differ according to the degree of love, and are proportionately good.

In the Christian an outward manifestation of amiability, meekness, gentleness, patience, etc., is not sufficient, either in God's sight or in his own. These graces must be produced by the spirit of love, filling and expanding within his own heart. Many of the graces of the spirit are recognised by the unregenerate and are imitated as marks of good breeding, and in many cases are successfully worn as a cloak or mask, covering hearts and sentiments wholly antagonistic to the holy spirit of love.

The measure of our appreciation of divine love will be the measure of our zeal in conforming our characters to the divine pattern. A naturally rough, uncouth, depraved disposition may require a long time, after the grace of divine love enters the heart, before that grace is manifest in all the thoughts and words and acts of the outward man. Others, on the contrary, of more gentle birth and cultured training, may, without the grace of God within, have many of the outward refinements. None but Him who reads the heart is competent, therefore, to judge as to who have and who have not received this grace, and of the degree of its development in their hearts; but each one may judge for himself, and each one begotten of this holy spirit, love, should seek to let its light so shine out, through all the avenues of communication with his fellow-creatures, as to glorify his Father in Heaven and “show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.”-1 Pet. 2:9.

Amongst the “gifts” of early Apostolic times, prophecy, or oratory, was one highly commended, and large faith was reckoned as being amongst the chief of Christian requirements; yet the Apostle declares that if he possessed all of these in their fullest measure, and Love were absent, he would be nothing — a mere cypher—not a member of the new creation at all, since love is the very spirit of the begetting to the new nature.

What a wonderful test this is ! The Apostle Paul counsels, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.” Let us each apply the test to himself: Whether I am something or nothing in God's estimation is to be measured by my love for Him, for His brethren, for His cause, for the world in general, and even for my enemies, rather than by my knowledge, or fame, or oratory!

Yet we are not to understand that one could have a knowledge of the deep mysteries of God without having been begotten by the holy spirit of love; for the deep things of God knoweth no man, but by the spirit of God; but one might lose the spirit before losing the knowledge it brought him. In the measure of character, therefore, we are to put Love first, and to consider it the chief test of our nearness to and acceptance with the Lord.

Love is the Secret of True Politeness

Having given us such a conception of the importance of Love, the Apostle proceeds to describe what it is and what it is not—how it operates and how it does not operate, or conduct itself. Let us each make a practical application of this matter to himself and inquire within:

Have I such a love, especially for the household of faith, as leads me to suffer considerably and for a long time, and yet to be kind? Am I patient with the weaknesses and imperfections of those who give any evidence of good intentions? Am I patient even with those who are out of the way, realising that the great adversary blinds the minds of the masses and remembering that this manifestation of love was very prominent in our Lord Jesus, who was patient with His opponents?

Am I kind in my thoughts, seeking to guard my manner and my tones, knowing that they have much to do with every affair of life? Have I this mark of love pervading my actions and words and thoughts? Do I think of and am I considerate of others? Do I feel and manifest kindness toward them in word, in look, in act? A Christian, above all others, should be kind, courteous, gentle in the home, in his place of business, in the Church—everywhere. In proportion as perfect love is attained the constant effort of the heart will be to have every word and act, like the thought which prompts them, full of patience and kindness. With the child of God these qualities are not to be mere outward adornments, they cannot be; on the contrary, they are fruits of the spirit—growths from or results of having come into fellowship with God, having learned of Him, received of His spirit of holiness, of love.

Have I the love that “envieth not,” the love that is generous, so that I can see others prosper and rejoice in their prosperity, even if, for a time, my own affairs be not so prosperous? This is true generosity, the very reverse of jealousy and envy, which spring from a perverted nature. The root of envy is selfishness; envy will not grow upon the root of love. Love rejoices with them that rejoice, in the prosperity of every good word and work, and in the advancement in Christian grace and in the divine service of all who are actuated by the divine spirit.

Have I the love that is humble, that “vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up”? the love that tends to modesty, that is not boastful, not lifted up? Have I the love that would prompt to good deeds, not to be seen of men, but that would do the same if no one saw or knew but God only? that boasts neither of its knowledge nor of its graces, but in humility acknowledges that every good and perfect gift comes from the

Father? And do I make return to Him in love and service for every mercy? Boasting over self-esteem has led many a man not only into folly, but sometimes into gross sins in his endeavor to make good his boasts. The spirit of the Lord is the spirit of a sound mind, which not only seeks generously to esteem others, but also soberly to estimate one’s self, and not to think too highly of his character and attainments.

Have I the love which is courteous, “doth not behave itself unseemly”? Pride is the root out of which grows much of the unseemly conduct, impoliteness, so common to those who think themselves somebody, either intellectually or financially. Politeness has been defined as love in trifles; courtesy as love in little things. The secret of politeness is either surface polishing or love in the heart. As Christians we are to have heart-love which will prompt us to acts of kindness and courtesy, not only in the household of faith, but in our homes and in our dealings with the world.

Have I the love which is unselfish, which “seeketh not her own” interests exclusively, which might even be willing to let some of her own rights be sacrificed in the interests of others? or have I, on the contrary, the selfishness which not only demands my own rights on every occasion, but which demands those rights regardless of the conveniences, comfort and rights of others? To have love in this particular, means that we will be on guard against taking any unjust advantage of others, and will prefer rather to suffer a wrong than to do a wrong; to suffer an injustice than to do an injustice.

Love Begins at Home

Nothing in this signifies that one should neglect the caring for and providing in every way for those dependent upon him by the ties of nature, in order that he may do good to others. In every sense, “love begins at home.” The proper thought, as we gather it, is that men and women, possessed of the spirit of perfect love, would not think exclusively of their own interests in any of the affairs of life. Put into exercise, this element of Love would have a great influence upon all the affairs of life, inside as well as outside the home and family.

Have I the love which is good tempered, “not easily provoked” to anger—love that enables me to see both sides of a question, that gives me the spirit of a sound mind, which enables me to perceive that exasperation and violent anger are not only unbecoming but, worse than that, injurious to those toward whom they may be directed, and also injurious in

their effect upon my own heart and body?

There may be times when love will need to be firm, almost to sternness and inflexibility, where principles are involved, where valuable lessons are to be inculcated; and ...his might come under the head of anger, using that word in a proper sense, in regard to a righteous indignation, exercised for a loving purpose for doing good, but, it should be exercised then only for a time. If justly angry we should see to it that we sin not either with our lips, or in our hearts, in which, at no time, may we entertain any but loving and generous sentiments towards those who are our enemies, or toward those of our friends whom we would assist or instruct or correct.

To be easily provoked is to have a bad temper, fretfulness, bad humor, touchiness, quickness to take offence. This is wholly contrary to the spirit of love; and whoever is on the Lord's side and seeking to be pleasing to Him and to attain to an overcomer's position should jealously guard himself against this general besetment of our day. To whatever extent this disposition is fostered, or willingly harbored, or not fought against, it becomes an evidence of a deficiency and imperfection of our development in the holy spirit of our Father, and of the deficiency of our likeness to our Lord Jesus, our Pattern.

Very few of the evidences of a wrong spirit receive from one's self as much kindness and as many excuses for their continuance as this one. But however much natural depravity and heredity and nervous disorders may tend toward this spirit of fretfulness, taciturnity and touchiness, every heart filled with the Lord's spirit must oppose this disposition to evil in his flesh, and must wage a good warfare against it.

It will not do to say, "It is my way," for all the "ways" of the fallen nature are bad; and it is the business of the new creature to overcome the old nature in this as well as other works of the flesh and the devil. In few ways can we show to our friends and households more than in this the power of the grace of love. This grace, as it grows, should make every child of God sweet tempered. In no way can we better show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light than by the exhibition of the spirit of love in the daily affairs of life.

Love Thinks No Evil

Have I the spirit of love which "thinketh no evil," which is guileless, not suspicious of evil or looking for faults in others, not attributing to them evil motives? Have I the love which seeks always to interpret the conduct of others charitably, to make all possible allowance for errors in judgment rather than to impugn the motives of the heart? Perfect love is good intentioned itself; it prefers and, so far as possible, endeavors to view the words and conduct of others from the same standpoint. It does not treasure up animosities and suspicions, nor manufacture a chain of circumstantial proofs of evil intentions out of trivial affairs. "Faults are thick where love is thin" is a very wise proverb.).

But where love passes over offences and takes no account of them, holding no grudges, this does not mean that love would treat evildoers in precisely the same manner that it would treat its friends. It might be proper, or even necessary, to take some notice of the offences to the extent of not manifesting the same cordiality as before, but no hatred, malice or strife should be manifested — nothing but kindness and gentleness, leaving the door of opportunity open for a full reconciliation as soon as possible, doing all that could be done to promote a reconciliation and evincing a willingness to forgive and forget the wrong.

"Love Rejoiceth Not in Iniquity"

Have I the love that is sincere, that "rejoiceth not in iniquity (in-equity), but rejoiceth in the truth"? Are the principles of right and wrong so firmly fixed in my mind, and am I so thoroughly in accord with right, and so out of harmony with the wrong, that I am grieved with evils wherever encountered and sympathise with all who fall into evil or who are beset with temptations? Am I so opposed to wrong that I would not encourage it even if it brought advantage to me? Am I so in accord with right, with truth, that I could not avoid rejoicing in the truth and in its prosperity, even to the upsetting of some of my preconceived opinions, or to the disadvantage of some of my earthly interests?

Every one who is seeking to develop in his heart the holy spirit, perfect love, should guard carefully this point of sincerity of motive as well as uprightness of conduct. The least suggestion of rejoicing at the fall of any person or thing that in any degree represents righteousness or goodness is to be deplored and overcome. Perfect "love rejoiceth not in iniquity" under any circumstances or conditions and would have no sympathy but only sorrow in the fall of another, even if it should mean his own advancement.

The love of God, which the Apostle here describes as the spirit of the Lord's people, is a love which is far above all selfishness and is based upon fixed principles which should, day by day, be more distinctly discerned and always firmly adhered to at any cost. However profitable error might be, love could take no part in it, and could not desire the reward

of evil. But it does take pleasure in the truth—truth upon every subject, and especially in the truth of divine revelation, however unpopular the truth may be; however much persecution its advocacy may involve; however much it may cost the loss of friendship of this world and of those who are blinded by the god of this world. The spirit of love has such an affinity for the truth that it rejoices to share loss, persecution, distress or whatever may come against the truth or its servants. In the Lord's estimate it is all the same whether we are ashamed of Him or ashamed of His Word; and of all such He declares that He will be ashamed when He comes to be glorified in His saints.

Have I the love that "beareth all things"? that is impregnable against the assaults of evil? that resists evil, impurity, sin, and everything that is contrary to Love? that is both able and willing to endure, for the cause of God, reproaches, reproofs, insults, losses, misrepresentations and even death? "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith"—the very life and centre of which faith is the holy spirit of love for the Lord and for those that are His and, sympathetically, for the world. Perfect love can bear up under all circumstances and, by God's grace, bring us off conquerors and "more than conquerors through him that loved us."-1. John 5:4; Rom. 8:37.

Love is Not Suspicious

Have I the love that believeth all things? that is unwilling to impute evil to another unless forced to do so by indisputable evidences? that would rather believe good than evil about everybody? that would take no pleasure in hearing evil, but would be disposed to resent it? Perfect love is not suspicious, but is, on the contrary, disposed to be trustful. It acts on the principle that it is better, if necessary, to be deceived a hundred times than to go through life soured by a suspicious mind—far better than to accuse or suspect even one person unjustly. This is the merciful disposition, as applied to thoughts; and of it the Master said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (Matt. 5:7.) The unmerciful, evil-thinking mind is father to unmerciful conduct towards others.

Have I the love that "hopeth all things," perseveres under unfavorable conditions, and continues to hope for and to labor for those who need my assistance? Have I the love that "endureth all things," that continues to hope for the best in regard to all and to strive for the best, and that with perseverance? Perfect love is not easily discouraged. This is the secret of Love's perseverance: having learned of God, and having become a partaker of His holiness, it trusts in Him and hopes undismayed for the fulfilment of His gracious covenant, however dark the immediate surroundings.

This hopeful element of love is one of the striking features in the perseverance of the saints, enabling them to endure hardness as good soldiers. Its hopeful quality hinders it from being easily offended, or easily stopped in the work of the Lord. Where others would be discouraged or put to flight, the spirit of love gives endurance, that we may war a good warfare, and please the Captain of our salvation. Love's hopefulness knows no despair, for its anchorage enters into that which is beyond the veil, and is firmly fastened to the Rock of Ages.

Let us, Beloved, with all our getting, get love—not merely in word, but in deed and in truth—the love whose roots are in the new heart, begotten in us by our Heavenly Father's love, and exemplified in the words and deeds of our dear Redeemer. All else sought and gained will be but loss and dross unless, with all, we secure love. (From "Reprints.")

Melbourne Christmas Convention.

The brethren of the Melbourne Class wish to announce that their Annual Christmas Convention will be held this year (D.V.) on December 25th, 26th, 28th and 29th, in the Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond. They extend a cordial invitation to all friends able to attend any or all these gatherings, and further information is obtainable from the Class Secretary—Mr. J. B. }ham, 16 Kennedy Street, South Oakleigh, S.E.13, Victoria.

Greeting Cards.

One of our brethren in the printing trade has kindly produced some Greeting Cards and sent them along with the request that the proceeds from the sale of them be donated to the General Tract Fund to assist in the work of the Institute. This is very much appreciated, in the service of the Lord.

These cards are quite nice and are suitable for general greetings, but they are not Christmas Cards. The price is 3/- per dozen, post paid; orders may be placed by quoting numbers, as follows

“Just for To-day,”
“One Here and There,”
“How Readest Thou?,”
“The New Leaf,”
“The Best of Wishes—Faith—Hope—Love,”
“Drop a Pebble in the Water,”
“My Bible and I,” “Love’s Victory,”
“The Touch of the Master’s Hand,”
“Some Worthy Attainments,”
“Come Unto Me.”
“Somewhere the Light is Shining,”
“The Secret of His Presence.”
“Watching and Praying,”
“Thus May He Bless and Keep Thee,”
“Not Seeing, Yet Believing,”
“Hitherto and Henceforth,”
“The Lord My Shepherd,”
“Into His Marvellous Light,”
“Right was The Pathway,”
“This is My Will for Thee.”
“Are Ye Able ?”

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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord’s Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

A cross (x) on the wrapper indicates that the subscription to “Peoples Paper” is overdue.

Christian Fellowship.

(Excerpt Convention Report, 1929.)

. . . . Toleration is not enough. Sometimes we hear the value of toleration praised in high terms, and we certainly agree that toleration is a great deal better than intolerance, but toleration is not fellowship. What kind of a time would I be describing to absent friends if I told them of the wonderful way in which the friends at this Convention had tolerated me? They would not think that I had had such a wonderful time after all, would they? It would be apparent that only by a considerable strain on their Christian forbearance had the conventioners managed to put up with me for three days. My experience would not be exactly what we would understand by the word fellowship.

When the Apostle John (1 John 1:3) speaks of fellowship with “us,” I understand that he had reference to the fellowship of spirit which exists in the Christ Company. As our first thought in this connection let us consider 2 Cor. 5:16, ‘Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh.’ We are still in the flesh, each of us trying to “keep the body under,” and the fellowship we have is the fellowship of spirit. If I meet with brethren who are striving to walk in the footsteps of Christ, handicapped as we all are by reason of birth, education, environment, etc., the fellowship I have with them is not after the flesh but in our mutual attempt to grow more and more like Christ. So with the Psalmist I rejoice to say, “I am a companion of all them that fear Thee and keep Thy precepts.”

In Phil. 2:1 the Apostle speaks of fellowship of the spirit. As illustrating this: Suppose I have been absent from a brother for a year or so, and during that time I have been seeking to grow more and more like Christ, to develop more of His spirit of humility and of truth. I have been trying to get more of the spirit of holiness in my life, more of the spirit of liberty, more of the spirit of joy in bearing the fruit of the spirit and in helping others, more of the spirit of patience, more of the spirit of peace.

Suppose, when I meet this brother, I find he has been striving likewise and that as a result the mellowing influence of God’s holy spirit in him is manifest to me as the mellowing influence of God’s holy spirit in me is manifest to him. Is there not fellowship of spirit? There is, indeed. There is nothing else on earth quite like it.

There are some places where they are not so well educated—they spell the word fellowship differently. In the dictionary it begins with “f,” but there are some who begin it with “g,” and they go on in this way—g-o-s-s-i-p spells fellowship. That is not the kind of fellowship with which we wish to have anything to do.

Another point I have noted down for myself is, try and be a better listener—to listen in a way that shows I am giving full attention. If one’s mind is preoccupied he may appear to be listening when others are speaking to him when actually his mind is too much filled with other matters to be of any real comfort to the one who may be seeking sympathy or attention. A father was reading a newspaper when his little child wished to tell him something, and he attempted to hold conversation with her while still reading the newspaper. “Listen, Father,” said the little girl, tugging at his coat sleeve. “I am listening,” he said, continuing to have his eyes glued to the newspaper. “Ah, but I want you to listen with your eyes, too,” she replied. And so in order to have more of the fellowship of my brother in Christ I am determined to give more of my fellowship to him and this will empty my life of all the things that centre around self, that I may be free indeed to fellowship with my brethren in a way that will mean something to them.

Books Available.

“God’s Promises Come True”—11.

“The Divine Plan of the Ages”—Cloth bound 4/6; paper covers 2/9.

“Emphatic Diaglott” — New Testament —18/-.

“Our Lord’s Great Prophecy”-1/-. “Manner of Christ’s Return”-1/-. “Christ’s Return”-1/-.

“Some of the Parables”-1/-.

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Know of the Doctrine

“If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself.”—John 7:17.

WE are living in a day when the very word doctrine seems to be offensive to the majority of Christian people. Each denomination realises that its own system of doctrines is imperfect, unsatisfactory, undependable. And the same is believed in respect of all other doctrines. Hence, by mutual consent Christian people seem disposed to henceforth and forever ignore doctrines; for they believe that, if after nineteen centuries they are thus confused, the matter never was clear and never will be clear to anybody.

All this is a great mistake; the doctrines of Christ, as presented by the Great Teacher and His Apostles, was a great message, of which none of them was ashamed. The difficulty with the Lord’s people today is that we gradually fell away from those doctrines—we gradually put darkness for light and light for darkness, and thus gradually got into the spirit of Babylon, and into the spirit of bondage to human traditions and creeds. Instead of shunning doctrines, we should realise that they are the very things needed to cause the scattering of our darkness and superstitions, and to draw all of God’s people nearer together.

The doctrines of Christ and the Apostles are what we need to inspire us to break down all our creed fences, which so long have separated us as God’s people, the one from the other, in various denominational folds, all which are contrary to the Divine arrangement; for God has but the one fold for all His “Sheep” of this Age, as He will have another fold for the Restitution “sheep” of the next Age—the Messianic Kingdom Age.

Can we doubt that if as God’s people we put away sectarianism and the creed spectacles of our forefathers, and if we go with pure, sincere hearts to the Lord and His Word, we will there find again the “one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father over all, and one Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” and “one Church of the First-Born, whose names are written in heaven”? (Eph. 4:5,6; Heb. 12:23). Let us hearken to the words: “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward,” “But remember the former days, in which ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly whilst ye were made a gazing stock both by reproaches and by afflictions; and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.” “For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.” (Heb. 10:35, 32, 33, 36).

The time seems long to all of us, even though we remember that “a day with the Lord is as a thousand years.” When we think of the fact that it is thirty-nine hundred years since God’s promise to Abraham that his Seed should bless all the families of the earth—when we think of the fact that Israel did not receive that great privilege of being the spiritual Seed from which primarily that blessing should go forth, and that the “elect” are receiving it; when we think of the fact that God has been over nineteen centuries in selecting the “elect” from Israel and from all nations, it is enough to stagger our faith unless we hold firmly to the Divine promise and remember that God confirmed it with an Oath. By these two immutable, unchangeable things, the Divine Word and the Divine Oath, we know that the Seed of Abraham is to be developed, and that eventually it is to bless all the families of the earth. It is the Divine will that we allow our faith in this great promise of God to be “an anchor to our souls, sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil.”—Heb. 6:19.

What we all need as God’s people is to put away human theories and other gospels and take hold afresh on the Gospel of Christ. These other gospels are other messages of hope, aside from the one which the Bible presents. For instance, Theosophy is one of these; Evolution is another; New Theology is another. These all hold out a different gospel from that which Jesus and the Apostles presented; the one that was given to us for our sanctification, and through the holding fast of which, and the obedience to The Faith,

we are to be saved and given a share with Messiah in His glorious Empire of the world.

The doctrines of Christ mean those doctrines presented in the Bible by Jesus and His mouthpieces, the Apostles. These doctrines relate to the Church and to the world, and God's blessing for each; these doctrines relate to sin and its forgiveness; the terms of that forgiveness, the basis of that forgiveness—the death of Jesus—and the hope of that forgiveness, release from Divine condemnation, fellowship with God, and everlasting life obtained through a resurrection of the dead.

But some one will inquire, Why is it so difficult to understand the doctrines of Christ? Why are there so many different denominations of Christians? Why do they all so misunderstand the matter—that the different denominations have resulted from the differences of theory respecting the teachings of the Bible? The simple explanation is that, shortly after the death of the Apostles, when the Church began to be in a measure of prosperity, the Adversary came in and sowed the seeds of false doctrines, using human lips and human pens in his service, through pride and ambition. The darkness became so great that, looking back today, we speak of the period as the “Dark Ages.”

The various denominations of Christendom are evidences of honesty, perseverance and love of the Truth, because our forefathers, who made these creeds, were each trying to get more and more out of the dark and back to the “True Light.” They all made the mistake, however, of holding too much to the creeds and theories of the past. Let us not make the same mistake; let us cut loose entirely from every authority outside the Word of God. Whoever can help us understand God's Word—we should be glad to have his assistance; but we cannot acknowledge as inspired or authoritative the teachings of the “Fathers” of the early times however conscientious they may have been, because we cannot recognise that there were any such authorised successors to the Apostles.

God, who foretold through the Prophets this long period of darkness, and who has blessed and guided His saintly children throughout it, without removing all of their blindness, has promised that with the end of this Age will come a great blessing and enlightenment upon His people, when the “wise virgins” will find their lamps burning brightly, and be able to understand and appreciate the deep things of God: “The wise shall understand, but none of the wicked shall understand.” In the end of this Age the curtain was to be drawn, and the “true light” was to shine forth, scattering all the darkness. We are in the close of this Age today, and therefore may see much more clearly than did our forefathers, the Divine character and Plan for human salvation.

Our text is a message from the Master's own lips. He gives us the key to a clear knowledge of His doctrines, namely, that the student must be fully consecrated to God and fully desirous of knowing His Will and His Plan. In order to see light in God's light—to see the Truth, from the Divine standpoint of the Divine revelation, we must draw near to God in the spirit of our minds, consecrated in our heart. We must will to do His will.

But what does this mean? What is it to will to do His will? God's will represents actual perfection of thought and word and deed, toward God, toward our fellows in the Body of Christ, and toward all mankind. This is the Divine Standard set up, but we are no more able to fill its demands than were the Jews. As St. Paul declares, “We cannot do the things that we would.” Weakness of the flesh, frailty and imperfection, we all have with the world; the best that we can do is to will to do right, and to the best of our ability carry out that covenant with the Lord to do His will. At the very best all will come short of perfection.

But for those who have come into harmony with God, through Christ—for those who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice—for those who have Jesus for their Advocate, a provision has been made, whereby the willing, all desiring to do the Divine will, and manifesting endeavors so to do, are counted as

righteous—as though they did the Divine will perfectly. This class, in the Scriptures, is known as the “saints”; they are the prospective members of the Body of Christ. It is to these that the promises of our text apply, that they shall will to do the Divine will, shall know whether Jesus merely made up these teachings of Himself, or whether He was the active agent of Jehovah in what He did and in what He taught.

Shall we not, then, determine to give our hearts, our wills, fully to the Lord—determine in our wills to do God’s will? If so, following the instructions of the Word of God, we shall doubtless be blessed and enabled fully to know, to appreciate, to understand, the doctrines of Christ—the deep things of God, which are revealed to this class by the spirit of God.

Bible Study Meetings.

Assemblies for undenominational Bible Study are to be found in the various States, and all earnest truth seekers will be very welcome.

Melbourne.—Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond (near Church Street)—Sundays, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Geelong, Vic.—Sons of Temperance Hall, Ryrie Street—Sundays. 3 p.m.

Adelaide.—Builders and Contractors Rooms, 17 Way-mouth Street.—Sundays, 3 p.m. and 6.15 p.m.

Perth.—No. 7 Harvest Terrace (opposite Parliament House).—Sundays, 3 p.m. and 5.30 p.m.

The Find.

“Mother, I’ve found an old dusty thing
High on the shelf—just look!”

“Why, that’s a Bible, Tommy dear,
Be careful, that’s God’s book.”

“God’s book,” the child exclaimed,

“Then, mother, before we lose it.

We’d better send it back to God,

For you know we never use it.”

—”The Churchman.”

RADIANCE

The shining face is no mystery. Centuries ago the Psalmist knew the secret, and wrote, “They looked to him and were ‘radiant.’ “ It comes to those whose faces are always turned toward Christ, as a flower turns toward the light.

It was said at the time the Boxer rebellion that Chinese Christians could not be disguised—the light in their faces betrayed them. The pity of it, that every Christian may not be known by the shining of his face!

Dwelling in the Lord.

TO dwell in Christ means to be in the closest relationship with Him; there must be agreement, harmony, and unity of purpose, producing a feeling of confidence and goodwill. The closeness of this relationship is shown clearly in the beautiful illustration of the vine and its branches. The vine is the stem or trunk that produces and supports the branches which bear the fruit. The branch is part of the vine, with which it must remain connected. “Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” (John 15:4.) Here the word “abide” has the same meaning as the word “dwelleth” in 1 John 3:24, for we surely dwell in God as we continue to abide in Christ.

We dwell or abide in Him by doing His will, keeping His commandments, and He abides or dwells in us. This union is a double one—we in Him and He in us. To establish and maintain this union it is necessary to keep His commandments; God cannot dwell in us unless we dwell in Him. “If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” (John 14:23.)

In Psalm 37:3, we read, “Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.” Here also is implied a spirit of concord without which God’s bounty could not be enjoyed. His commandments must be kept, then the promise of peace and plenty would be fulfilled.

Further the prophet says, “He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his water shall be sure.” (Isa. 33:15, 16.) Again the condition attached to the promise is righteousness, and he who does righteously has the spirit of God and dwelleth in Him. Under the dispensation existing at the time of the Psalmist and Prophet, the promises were earthly, and to enjoy God’s favour it was necessary to keep His commandments, just as it is now, if we would receive His spiritual favours.

“And hereby we know that he abideth in us by the spirit which he hath given us.” In Rom. 8:9 and 14, we read: “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you; for as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

Being led by the spirit of God is abundant evidence of the inward presence of God’s spirit which leads us to seek those things which are above rather than mind the things of the earth..

Christian Way Ended

Word has been received of the passing of our elderly Sister Thorpe, who had resided with her son and family in Gippsland, Victoria, since coming to Australia from England about eight years ago.

Sister Thorpe had attended one of the Melbourne Conventions a few years ago, and made the acquaintance of a good number of the brethren; her sincerity and love for the Lord and His truth was very manifest indeed. Our dear Sister had rejoiced in the truth for many years prior to coming to Australia, and we trust for her an abundant entrance into the Kingdom by the Lord's grace.

Failing health in recent years had prevented Sister Thorpe from leaving the home in Gippsland, but her letters were always cheerful, and one of the Apostle Paul's lovely texts was always in her mind; she certainly rejoiced in it, and quoted it freely—"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28.) Sincere sympathy is extended to our Sister's relatives, who also appreciated the Christian qualities shown by Sister Thorpe during her sojourn in the home. "Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

"He always wins who sides with God,
To him no chance is lost;

God's will is sweetest to him when
It triumphs at his cost.

Ill that He blesses is our good,

And unblest good is ill;

And all is right that seems most wrong,
If it be His sweet will.

—Farrar.