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IF GOD SO LOVED US**

(1 JOHN 4:11)

Christmas is especially the season of love, as we ‘...remember again the events surrounding the birth of our Saviour as the Babe of Bethlehem. So it is good for us to turn our thoughts briefly in simple meditation on - The love of God in Christ Jesus brought anew to our minds at this season - The response which that love should and does evoke in our hearts - The gracious qualities which that love should be displaying in our lives. Our meditation might well centre on the following three beautiful New Testament scriptures, two from the beloved apostle John, whom we might call the “expert” on love and the third from the apostle Paul, the great expositor of the character and qualities of love.

(1) *1 John 4:19 - “We love Him, because He first loved us.”*

(2) *1 John 4:11,12 - “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No one has seen God at any time; if we love another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us.”*

(3) *1 Cor 13:13 - “And now abide faith, hope, love these three; but the greatest of these is love.”*

HE FIRST LOVED US

The first two passages tell us that the Christian’s love is a responsive love. Because we have seen and appreciated the expression of God’s boundless love in the gift of His dear Son, our hearts go out to Him in gratitude and love. It is just this which separates the true message of the gospel from every other message. We might well fear, possibly reverence, a God of justice, of wisdom and of power, but it is only a God whose great heart of love is shown to us who could command our love in return.

“We love him because he first loved us”, says the beloved Apostle John. When did this love begin? Two Scriptures tell us- Rom. 5:8- “while we were yet sinners”, and Eph. 2:4,5- “even when we were dead in sins.” But His love goes back even before the foundation of the world, for we read in Eph. 1: 4, that “He hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.”

God’s love in fact shines out throughout all His eternal plans and purposes before and in creation, but most of all in the gift of His Son, the Saviour of the World. For God so loved the world (not only believers of this age, but all mankind) that He gave His only begotten Son that all might have life. God’s will is not that any should perish, but all come to a saving knowledge of the truth in Jesus Christ-1 Tim. 2:4 John 3:16

How true to our own experience are the words of Jer. 31:3. Though spoken by the prophet to Israel, they are even more true of us in this age- “I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.” “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” Our love toward God is responsive, grateful love-a returning of thanks and appreciation for His love and goodness to us. But here the thought widens-our response of love should also flow out to others who are similarly rejoicing in God’s love. Such love will be a measure of the reality and depth of our own love toward God as the Apostle John reasons in 1 John 4:20, 21.

IF GOD SO LOVED US

If God so loved us? Is there any doubt about God’s love? No, this is not the “if” of uncertainty, but the “if” of challenge. God’s love is truly the great certainty of life, demonstrated for all time at Bethlehem and Calvary. The Apostle is saying to us all-I have just reminded you that it was God who sent His only Son into the world so that you might have life through Him. In recognition of the vastness of His love, how can you do other than

show your thankful response to Him and also to those whom He has also loved?

But why should we love the brethren? Firstly, as we have seen, it should be the answer of our hearts to God's love-the principle of "freely ye have received, freely" give would surely apply here. Conversely, lack of love to others must certainly point to faulty appreciation of what God in love has been and has done for us.

Secondly, we are now members of a family, and our Father's love should permeate **all** the members of that family. Or taking Paul's figure of various parts of a body to represent Christ's followers- "if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it"-1 Cor. 12:26.

But last, and by no means least, this is our Master's will- "a new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" -John 13:34,35. What a standard of love is called for here-love like our Saviour's for His disciples! If God so loved us-if Christ so loved us-what a challenge to Christian Love on our part this poses. How should this love for the Lord's brethren be displayed? Like every other Scriptural instruction, it needs practical application-in deed as well as in word as the Apostle makes clear in 1 John 3:16-18.

LOVE IN ACTION

The writer to the Hebrews says we should provoke one another to love and good works-what a happy combination this is- love expressed in kindness and concern for others and also in practical ways as need arises. We need to watch constantly to see and seize opportunities to show our love in whatever is the right and best way for each occasion.

But it is left for the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians to fully illustrate the qualities and pre-eminence of love. It would be virtually an impossible undertaking to define, as it were, the undefinable - but he goes about the task by describing how love acts in relation firstly to others and then to all circumstances of Christian experience.

In Galatians, Paul lists love as the first of the fruits of God's Holy Spirit, and in Colossians he calls it the bond of perfectness-that which rounds out and blesses all other Christian graces. Peter also proclaims the pre-eminence of love in the lists of Christian qualities which we should strive diligently to add on to faith. Truly, love is the crowning glory of Christian character.

Now abideth faith, hope, love-these three but the greatest of these is love. In these words, the Apostle sums up his endeavours to portray the practical characteristics of love-the more excellent way. In his list of these in 1 Cor. 13, he gives 11 separate expressions of love toward others, 4 all-embracing aspects of love, and, finally, sums up with the permanence, perfectness and pre-eminence of love.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Like many other New Testament Scriptures, this portion listing the qualities of love is one for personal application. We need each to examine ourselves as to whether we are progressively and consistently exhibiting more and more of these qualities of love. A quick personal check-up may well be profitable as we face a new year of service for the Master.

1. Love suffers long - do we always seek to be patient with others?
2. Love is kind - are we always eager for others' welfare?
3. Love is not envious - are we glad when others receive blessings?
4. Love does not boast - are we ready to be self-effacing?
5. Love is not puffed up - are we mindful that all we have is of God's grace?
6. Love is courteous - are we gracious at all times to all people?
7. Love seeks not its own - is our chief concern for others?
8. Love is even tempered - do we seek to be understanding towards others?
9. Love thinks no evil - do we harbour wrongs or rather cast them behind us?
10. Love rejoices not in iniquity - are we anxious to hear only the best about others?
11. Love rejoices in the truth - is our joy in all that is pure and good?

All these graces of love are specially directed towards others, all spring from the same Holy Spirit, the first and greatest fruit of which is love. If love is the keynote of our lives, all these gracious qualities should be evident. If they are not, there is urgent need for prayerful attention to those areas where we are falling short. But love goes beyond even these qualities-love is the all-prevailing means by which the believer can meet all

the circumstances of life - for love, says the Apostle, **Bears** all things, love **Believes** all things, love **Hopes** all things, love **Endures** all things.

All these graces of love are of course the expression of perfect love, as we have seen only in our heavenly Father through and in our Saviour. The development of this sort of love is what should be taking place daily in our lives, the key to growth being love for and obedience to His Word. "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him"- 1 John 2:5.

So at this season especially, we can rejoice in the immeasurable love of God, that love which brought our Saviour from above to die on Calvary. May our desire then be that of the Apostle for his Thessalonian brethren- 1 Thess. 3:12, 13- "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all, to the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, at the coming of Jesus Christ with all His saints." "For now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

(P.P. 69/1)

The Spirit of Power

"Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1.8)

This was the promise which restored the disciples' faith just before our Lord's Ascension. For five or six weeks since his death they had been in a condition of perplexity, not quite sure what was going to happen or in which way they would continue the work they had been doing in these three years past. "*Tarry ye in Jerusalem*" He had said "*until ye be endued with power from high*" (Luke 24.49). That expression must have been associated in their minds with the promised coming of the Holy Spirit: "*ye shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days hence*" (Acts 1.5), for Jesus had made it plain to them that after his departure they would experience the presence of the Holy Spirit in a manner previously unknown to them. "*The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*" (John 14.26).

Now this association of the Holy Spirit of God with the idea of power or energy - the word is *dunamis* which means energy actively exerted and is the basis of our word dynamic-was a very familiar one to the disciples. They knew from their reading of the Law and the Prophets that the Holy Spirit is the power that executes the mighty works of creation, gives life and vitality to all living things, conferred upon God's warriors of olden time superhuman physical strength whereby they wrought great works in his Cause, inspired his prophets with visions and dreams and knowledge of coming things beyond the ability of men to discover unaided.

"YE SHALL RECEIVE POWER"

They knew all this, and now, inconspicuous and untalented men that they were, they themselves became recipients of this mysterious ability to perform great and wonderful works which patently they could never have done in their own natural strength. "*Ye shall receive power*"; the reality of that experience is attested by the manner in which this group of untutored and inexperienced men set out after Pentecost to preach Christ and his Kingdom against the formidable opposition mounted against them. By the power of the Spirit they spoke in many tongues to men of many nations, withstood the threatenings of the authorities who sought to suppress their work, and in no uncertain fashion gave witness to the fact of the Resurrection.

A few weeks earlier they had all been in hiding in fear for their lives; now they stood before the people preaching the new faith and defying the authorities to stop them. "*Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard*" (Acts 4. 19, 20). That was the reaction of Peter and John to those who sat in judgement upon them, and there was nothing their judges could do about it.

This is the Holy Spirit. Invisible but all-powerful, it effects the stupendous works of creation, bringing all things into existence, giving light amid darkness, illuminating people's minds and making them understand things which could not otherwise take shape in human thought. The vehicle of all life, this power initiates new life in the hearts of believers, sustaining them in the vicissitudes of human existence, bringing them through the transition of death into a new environment, conferring upon them new bodies in which life is renewed and continues. There is nothing in space and time but is controlled by this supreme and all-embracing power, the Holy Spirit of God.

THE POWER OF GOD

This is the true doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The power of God, operating to create and sustain all things, living and non living, to convey his commands and fulfil his Will, this is the Holy Spirit. The ultimate source

of the Holy Spirit in God the Eternal none can understand. How it is that God is, and that we exist, and know that we exist, that external to our own being and personality there is a material universe which we can see and hear and feel, we do not know. The mysteries of God and of existence are too great to comprehend. But we must accept and believe in this Divine energy pulsating through all that God has made and reaching out to the extremity of his creation, effective in the performance of his will, whether it be in the physical process of material creation, or the instruction and enlightenment of those to whom He has given life. That Divine Energy which has its centre and source in God is the outward evidence to man that God is, that the things that happen in space and time have their origin in, and derive their reality from, Eternal Deity.

Scientific men are devoting a great deal of their time nowadays to investigating the source of the energy which drives the Universe. One fruit of their labours has been the atomic bomb, which produces and dissipates an enormous amount of energy in a fraction of time by "splitting the atom". Atoms are microscopic "piece parts" of which all material things are made and there are millions of atoms in a grain of dust, but atoms themselves are made of even more microscopic parts and when some of those parts are separated there is a tremendous release of energy. This occurs continuously in the sun and it is from the sun that the earth derives the energy to keep it going. We feel that energy as heat, and we see it as light, but it is itself invisible.

Every day the sun lifts forty thousand gallons of water from the ocean for each man, woman and child now living on the earth, carries it across the sky and drops it as rain so that the processes of life can continue. In the centre of the sun an atom divides and sets free a quantity of energy-scientists call it radiation. That radiation travels through space at the speed of light and when it reaches the earth it is seen as light. It falls upon a head of wheat growing in the field and sets in motion a series of changes whereby the plant takes a little of the surrounding air and a little moisture from the ground and out of them produces the material substances of the wheat grain. But there is more in that grain than came from the air and the ground. That radiation which travelled from the sun has also been transformed into part of the substance of that wheat grain. The light of the sun, winging its way to earth, in a very real sense enters into man to support his life.

THE VEHICLE OF LIFE

So is the Holy Spirit, Divine energy extending into all places of God's dominion, all-powerful in executing his will. Perhaps this is nowhere better shown than in the opening verses of Genesis. "*In the beginning the earth was without form and void, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, 'Let there be light, and there was light'.*" The temptation to interpret those words in terms of modern science is strong indeed. The word "moved" in this text means to flutter or undulate and "waters" is, not the seas, but "*tehom*", the primeval abyss. Sir James Jeans was the first to point out how accurately this expression fits modern knowledge of the nature of light, a cyclic or undulatory series of "waves" of many frequencies. These two initial verses in Genesis might well picture the momentous happening at the dawn of time when the Holy Spirit of God began to operate in the primeval nothingness to initiate the complex system of radiation and matter which constitutes the material universe-and at that time, in an instant, there was light!

In precisely the same manner the Holy Spirit is the vehicle of life, whether upon this earth or anywhere else. The ancients knew this. Speaking of the living creatures of the earth, the Psalmist says "*Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created, and thou renewest the face of the earth*". (Psa. 104. 30) "*If he set his heart upon man*" says Elihu in Job 34. 14-15. "*If he gather to himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again into dust.*" The power which makes life possible in any organism, from man downwards, is the Holy Spirit. The historians of the Old Testament recognised this when they credited the possession of apparently superhuman power to the influence of the Spirit, as in the case of Samson or Jephthah or others of whom it is said that the Spirit of the Lord came upon them and they performed mighty deeds. Whether in Old Testament or New Testament, the idea behind the expression Holy Spirit is that of Divine power, Divine energy, operating in creation to the accomplishment of the Divine purpose.

MANIFEST IN OUR LORD

Nowhere is this more evident than in the case of our Lord during his sojourn on earth at his First Advent. The power of the Holy Spirit, which is of the Father, was possessed and exercised by the Son. Of his exalted position before coming to earth the writer to the Hebrews says that He upheld all things by the word of his power. (Heb. 1.3). In other words, creation was maintained and directed by his command in the power of the Spirit. And that power was his even during the temporary period of his humanity. Of Jesus, it is declared that the Father "*gave not the Spirit by measure*" unto him (Jno.3.34): in other words, He possessed the power of the Spirit to an unlimited degree and that was manifested in one, out of many aspects, in the works of healing which he performed. "*The power of the Lord was present to heal them*" says Luke (Luke 5.17)

In the three instances when it is said that "virtue" went out of him to heal the afflicted, that word "virtue" is this same word *dunamis*, power, that same Holy Spirit by which all his works were done. This close association of the Holy Spirit with the Son is an important element of Christian doctrine and it is very plainly indicat-

ed in the Book of Revelation. In the “throne scene” of the fourth chapter there are “*seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God*” (better, the sevenfold Spirit of God). But in the fifth chapter the One like a sacrificial lamb standing before the throne has “*seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth*” and this corresponds with the headstone, which is Christ, of Zech. 3. 8 to 4. 10, where likewise are the seven eyes, “*the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth*”. The “seven spirits” of course allude to the Holy Spirit’s function of universal surveillance and operation “to and fro through the whole earth”.

The union and distinction between the Father, the Son and the Spirit is indicated in Rev. 1.4-5 where the salutation comes from the Eternal, and from the “seven spirits”, and from Jesus Christ. The unity of the Son and the Spirit is shown in Rev. 3.1 “*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*” and repeated seven times in chapters two and three. The Millennial invitation “*The Spirit and the Bride say, Come*” (Rev.22.17) is the proclamation of the Lord and his Church and here again Jesus calls himself “the Spirit”. As though anticipating this, the Apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians thirty years before John saw the visions of Revelation, announced the same truth. The Lord, he says, is the Spirit, and by the power of the Spirit we are being transformed into an image of the glory of the Lord. (2 Cor. 3. 17-18).

RESURRECTION POWER

But the greatest manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit is seen in resurrection. The work of the Spirit in material creation, in the development and sustaining of life, in the illuminating of believing minds, in the transformation of imperfect, deathbound men and women to the deathless glory of Divine sonship, all this is eclipsed in the revealed Word of God by the greatest exhibition of power of all time, the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. “*The surpassing greatness of his power*” says Paul “*The energising of his mighty strength which he exerted in Christ, raising him from the dead and seating him at his own right hand in the heaven*” (Eph. 1. 19-20). The death and resurrection of the Son of God still has elements which are difficult for us to understand, but that a mighty operation of the Holy Spirit was responsible for the empty tomb and the entry into celestial glory of him who died upon the Cross is incontrovertible.

The Apostle indicates that a similar direction action by the Father will effect the “change” to celestial conditions of those who follow the Lord to the end of the way. “*God hath both raised up the Lord and will also raise up us by his own power*”-dunamis-(1Cor. 6. 14). Divine energy will go forth to translate the life that is adapted to this world into another world, into another order of existence, with a new and different body adapted to the new environment. Like all changes, this change will require energy; that energy emanates from the Holy Spirit of God.

In the final age of this world’s probation God will pour out his Spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2. 28). Isaiah saw something of this and he described the coming day when “*the Spirit is poured upon us from on high*” and the result will be peace and quietness and assurance for ever (Isa. 32. 15-18). Thus is pictured a period in human history when the power of God in active operation for world conversion and the rehabilitation of the planet will be so outwardly manifest that none can deny it. The wonders of present day scientific achievements are as nothing to the marvels of Divine creation and the achievements of the future, to be brought within man’s reach and understanding when he learns to co-operate with Divine power instead of fighting against it. The eyes of the Lord going to and fro through all the earth will find only peace and quietness and assurance for ever. For God said, long ago, in his immeasurable wisdom and foresight, “*My Spirit shall not always strive with man*”.

(B.S.M.)

Eternal Love

One there is above all others,
Well deserves the name of Friend;
His is love beyond all others,
Costly, free, and knows no end.
They who once His kindness prove,
Find it everlasting love.

(John Newman)

“We Would See Jesus”

Life has its battle grounds, where fierce conflicts are waged against opposing forces. Life has its fords and crossing places, where we go over from one great experience to another. Life has its mills, where are ground out the product of a greater love and a serener trust. And life has its gardens of peace, where one can sit be-

neath the blossoming boughs and rejoice in the warblings of the feathered songsters of the place.

And it was one of the gardens of peace that Jesus found in a certain home in Bethany. It was for Him a little oasis in the world's desert. We know not what took Him there on the occasion of his first visit, but we are told that he conceived a love for Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha.

There were many homes that might have entertained the Master, but they failed to do so. They failed to see their opportunity. It has been said that opportunity knocks once at every door. We do not know. But we do know that it can be turned away. It does not insist on entrance. It just comes. In appearance it may not even seem prepossessing, but it is Opportunity nonetheless, and it has precious jewels to give to those who can receive it.

Much has been said on the subject of Mary and Martha. No doubt they were both very good women. During one of our Lord's visits to their home it would seem that Martha was occupied with the housework more than was necessary. Consequently she was missing a thing of great value. Mary saw something of this and desired it. Yet at a later time Martha manifested great faith in Jesus, and we can believe that in her heart she was his true friend to the last.

There were times when Jesus needed comfort and refreshment, just as his followers do. The world is a hard, stern place in which to live. We do not refer to the natural world, but to the world of affairs that man has reared. There are times when the heart grows weary with the incessant struggle with the inclement elements, and when we yearn to step out of it all for ever so brief a span. Then perchance we think of the home of a friend, one who will understand and whose words will buoy us up and cheer us along life's way. For a true friend is a priceless possession in a darksome world.

Mary and Martha appeal to us as being the friends of Jesus. And the Master did not have many friends on this earth. The people did not understand Him. He had been called with a calling that they knew nothing of. They failed to discern the temple wherein He dwelt. And little did they know that the dome of that temple reached up to the very skies. The thoughts of Jesus soared far above the selfish schemes and ambitions of men. He was in the world, and yet the world saw him not for what he was. ,

And the world sees him not for what he is today. Yet the world needs to see Him more than it needs anything else. To see Jesus is the highest vision that God can grant to man. And if we belong to the favoured few who see Him - his friends under all conditions of life - we have a source of joy that the sum total of the world's hardships cannot remove from us.

Suppose that by pressing a magic button we could transfer ourselves from this modern sphere of existence to the little town of Bethany over nineteen centuries ago. Here we are in the home of Lazarus, And here is Jesus, travel worn and weary, yet able to speak as never man spake. And what is the Master talking about? Is it politics? Is it about the recent arrest of some criminal? Is it about the affairs that make up the Roman world? Is it about any one of a thousand things that frequently engage our conversation when we meet together?

Evidently not. It is something higher than these things that so completely chains the attention of Mary. Jesus must have spoken some beautiful words in that quiet home. We are not given the discourse. But it must have contained something about His Father, something about salvation's mighty plan. How our Lord must have loved to speak of these matters to those who had the heart and mind to receive them! Ah, yes! here in this simple abode we see Jesus - not in the palaces of the great, but with the meek and lowly of heart, with those who possessed the capacity for faith and love.

But the spell is broken. We are back again in our modern world. Men are clamoring for dollars and cents. Pride and selfishness are turning human hearts to stone. Nations have bought upon the scene the grim terrors of war. Darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. Wild beasts of destruction have been unleashed! Oh! that we might see Jesus with the human eye. Oh! that we might hear the tender accents of His voice. "The world is waiting for the sunrise" - a sunrise to be brought to men by Him. Poor world! Poor human hearts that by the million are breaking. O golden Day of God, with your unspeakable plenitude of joy! Come soon! Come soon!

But while we cannot see Jesus with the natural eye we can see him in a higher sense, even with the eye of faith. We see his tenderness, his compassion, his love. And there are times when his presence seems so real that other things just fade away. But for the most part the vision of his face is reposeful and calm, and, as we reach out in the darkness and touch his hand, he speaks to us in a still small voice, yet with words of strength and assurance that drive all our fears away.

We would see Jesus with a still closer and truer vision. Ere long the thunders of the world shall crash, and the billows of human passion shall surge upon the land, But "there is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the dwelling place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she

shall not be moved. God shall help her, and that right early." Let us then look up above the blackness and the gloom, and we shall see a star, and now while we gaze and gaze upon it, it assumes a form. It comes nearer and nearer. And now there can be no doubt about it - it is indeed the very Christ, the Son of God, Ah! yes, He is looking on, and he knows that the world's approaching change is even now at the doors.

And soon this Mighty One shall wield the rod of his power over a boundless domain. No more then shall the pale spectre of death stalk about the land. No more shall rivers of blood flow because of devastating wars. No more shall the gaunt hand of famine lay millions in the tomb. No more shall the sons of toil be exploited by the plutocrat and the profiteer. One country shall arise to catch the beams of glory poured forth by the Sun of Righteousness, and that country shall be the world. One people shall dwell therein in freedom, in happiness and in life, and that people shall be mankind. One law shall shine forth in a mundane paradise to eternally safeguard the interests of the human family, and that shall be the law of Love. And upon a new foundation shall be built a new world - the theme of all God's ancient prophets - to reflect the radiance of righteousness, joy, and peace forever more. That is what the vision of the Christ will mean to the sons of men.

We would see Jesus "When morning gilds the skies," before we start in on the tasks and duties of the day. We would see Him in the evening when night clothes the earth in sable robes, and we want to feel the assurance that his guardian angel will be with us during the hours of sleep. We would see Him when temptation assails us, and receive the overcoming power that he promised to his own. We would see Him when trouble like a gloomy cloud has settled down, and the flail of anguish beats upon the heart. We would see him every day, and under all the vicissitudes of the years.

Then *let* us see Him. Let us take care that nothing robs us of our heavenly vision. Let us follow the example of Mary of Bethany, and sit at His feet. Let us enjoy the good portion that cannot be taken from us while our hearts are right. Over two thousand years of sorrows, and over the world's dark sea of death, let us see the Master's face smiling upon us in love, and let us hear his words, pure and tender and sweet as when he uttered them so long ago: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." And, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

(The Herald)

THE CHRISTIAN'S WALK

The Christian's walk, of course, means his or her course of conduct, including thoughts and words and acts. In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul indicates very clearly what this walk or course of life of every Christian should be, outlining it in seven different ways.

1. NOT ACCORDING TO THIS WORLD (Eph. 2:2) The new creation should walk not according to the course of this world, not according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit which now works in the children of disobedience. This is the walk of the world, the walk of evildoers, the walk of the children of wrath; it is the very opposite of the walk of the children of the light.

2. IN GOOD WORKS (Eph. 2:10) The new creation should walk in good works, "for we are God's workmanship, created in Christ unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them."

3. WORTHY OF THEIR CALLING (Eph. 4:1) The new creation should walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called. Their vocation is the very highest of all; they are the representatives of their Lord and Master; they bear His name, and should seek in everything to glorify it and never to dishonour it. What we do, what we say, what we think, even our general appearance, deportment and where we are seen, all reflect more or less upon the great King whose ambassadors we are. Our vocation is that of servants of God, and no earthly vocation should be permitted in any degree to hinder or lessen the influence or the service which we have undertaken as children of God, as joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, as prospective members of His Bride.

4. NOT AS OTHER GENTILES (Eph. 4:17) The new creation should not merely refrain from the sins and immoralities of natural mankind, but are to allow our Master's spirit and example to pervade all life's interests. We are to refrain from following foolish or worldly fashions, from being influenced by any worldly spirit. We are to have the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of a sound mind to direct us in all our joys, in our sorrows, in all our undertakings. Indeed, whatever we undertake we are to do to the glory of God; we are not to be influenced by the spirit of the world, but on the contrary are to set a proper example in all matters -in gentleness, kindness, patience, faithfulness to our Lord and to our duty.

The walk of the world is on the broad road; the walk of the new creation is on the narrow path. As we progress in Christian experience, we find this narrow path getting further and further away from the broad road

which the world is travelling. Whoever try to keep pace with the world will surely soon find themselves leaving the narrow path or otherwise disadvantaging themselves as new creatures.

5. IN LOVE (Eph. 5:2) The new creation's words, their deeds, everything with which they are connected, are to be governed by the law of the new creation - love. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another, as I have loved you." In compliance with this law of love and our Lord's glorious example, the apostle says that we ought to so love one another as to be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren. We should be ready to take any opportunity of service for the brethren, especially along the lines of their spiritual or higher interests as new creatures.

"Love worketh no ill to his neighbour", would not take any advantage to deceive him or injure him in any way. Love would not prompt to speak evil of his neighbour, but with the scriptural injunction would "speak evil of no man". Love would do so from principle because it is right; but, furthermore, would not wish to do anything that would be harmful to another's interests, to their welfare, but rather to do something to their credit or blessing. Love, as we progressively walk in it, ultimately brings us to that blessed condition where we can love our enemies and be glad of the privilege to do good to them.

6. AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT (Eph. 5:8) The new creation's course in life should always be directed towards those things which are just, pure, noble, loving, kind, those things which are in harmony with the Divine character and Word, those things which prove of greatest blessing to neighbours and to friends. As children of light, every day and year should see progress; our light should be shining more clearly and accomplishing the greater good. We should not be ashamed of the light, but set it on a candlestick, that it may give light to all in the house, to every member of the household of faith. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 5:16)

7. CIRCUMSPECTLY (Eph. 5:15) The new creation is to look carefully around at every step. Christians cannot afford to live carelessly. As they look around and realise the various pitfalls and snares, not only will they seek to make straight paths for their feet lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but additionally will seek Divine aid and counsel and guidance, so that they make no mistakes, that every step be such as will have Divine approval and glorify God in their bodies and spirits, which are His.

The circumspectness of our walk as new creatures is all the more necessary because our adversary, the devil, is specially on the alert to ensnare us, and our tests are permitted to be more severe as we come nearer to the goal. We should walk circumspectly also because we profess to be of the new creation, begotten by the Holy Spirit, not of the world but separate from it, and because our lights so shining are a reproof to the world. To walk circumspectly is to hearken to the instructions of God's Word and to the leadings of the Holy Spirit - thus to walk carefully, and in so doing to develop that character which is most pleasing to our Lord and Head.

(P.P. 15/7)

"As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." Colossians 2:6, 7.

"O for a closer walk with God, a calm and heavenly frame
A light to shine upon the road, that leads me to
the Lamb." (Isaac Smith)

Prayer

I know not by what methods rare,
But this I know - God answers prayer.
I know not when He sends the word
That tells us fervent prayer is heard.
I know it cometh soon or late;
Therefore we need to pray and wait.
I know not if the blessings sought
Will come in just the guise I thought.
I leave my prayers with Him alone