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Christ and Him Crucified.

“I am determined to make known nothing among you save Christ and Him crucified.”-1 Cor 2:2 (Diaglott).

Here we have a definite statement by the Apostle, which, when fully analysed, presents to us another of his many direct and forcible remarks, beautifully exemplifying his whole manner of life. Harken to St. Paul’s expressions of deliberation and positiveness borne of true Christian fortitude and disciple-hip, and as-praiseworthy as they are commendable: “I am persuaded that nothing shall separate me from, the love of God in Christ Jesus, my Lord” .

-I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is aide to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” “This one thing I do.” “I shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God”—and many other similar utterances manifested a complete reliance upon and rest in Jehovah through our Lord and Saviour.

Viewing our sacrificial covenant in the light of our Christian life and experience, dear brethren. what is your attitude, and mine, respecting this highly desirable characteristic, representing as it does fidelity to God, .fixity of purpose, and a determination to will through! Unless this requisite quality of heart and mind is being developed, and based upon that one foundation truth of “Christ and Him crucified,” you and I can never hope to gain an abundant entrance into the kingdom.

To-day we see very much the spirit of determination, fortitude and sacrifice in the world, some of it more or less praiseworthy. much sadly misdirected, because borne of selfishness. error, deceit and pride. This is not the determination the Apostle verified in his life, and stimulated in others. No, because it was wholly and solely exercised and demonstrated through the power of the Spirit, by which he was begotten as a member of the once crucified but now risen Lord.

Call to mind the time ‘when we made our consecration to the Lord. How decided we were; how loyally and wholeheartedly we entered into the race; how zealous and active in the dissemination of the truth. What determination was ours as expressed by word and conduct. Alas, the words of the Apostle again come to our ears : “he did run well, who did hinder you?”—and as we trace hack the years over the intervening period unto now, what do we find, not hearsay, but from actual happenings and experience d any have lost their first love; a goodly number have wilted under the trying- vet needful experiences sent to test that avowed determination and solemn promise. Brethren, no need to scan the years in the past—what about the present! Are we each and all honestly living up to our vow and covenant with Jehovah?

Do we love the truth with a greater love than formerly, and are we active and alert in its service and promulgation? Do we by word and act shun not to declare the whole counsel of God? Can we be sure that this determination of the Apostle is ours also to the fullest extent, or do we regret a laxity over the twelve months since last we met in happy convention! We are reminded time and again that the time is short and the night far spent. Have we heeded the Scriptural injunction to redeem the time and to so number our days and secure the season for ourselves and so act according to true heavenly wisdom; to preach the word, instant in or out of season to ourselves, to walk circumspectly; that it is high time to awake out of sleep, and to realise that “the Judge standeth at the door”? If so, brethren, what heed are we giving to the warnings as they ring out with no uncertain sound in these last times. Are eye not enjoined to be doers of the Word, and not merely hearers, and thus becoming deceived?

So then, rightly viewing this determination as set out in the words of our text, let us try and gain a little insight into the reason for this commendable quality being exercised by St. Paul. The latter portion of our text reminds us of the Apostle’s unswerving faith in the Anointed One, and the great atoning work to be accomplished through our Saviour.

It is the same beloved Apostle who has written so fully in all his epistles with respect to the only means of salvation through a “resurrected Lord,” and His high station on account of loyalty and obedience even unto death.

No wonder St. Paul, in his appreciation and determination to know no other Name under heaven, expressed himself with such telling significance and effect—“I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life I now live, yes, this life of devotion, determination, and sacrifice. I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” And again, “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain the fruition of my hope in Christ, even a partaker of the chief or first resurrection in power and great glory.” Consequently, realising he was anointed to preach the Gospel, and make known the mystery hid from ages and from generations, the Apostle set himself resolutely and determinedly to fulfil his course without offence until the day of Christ, notwithstanding the fact ‘that he was well aware that bonds and afflictions awaited him in every city, and that as a chosen vessel he must hear his Lord’s name before kings and rulers, amid opposition, persecution, hardship and distresses on account of the cross of Christ, which he was determined to witness to and uphold. “God forbid,” says this loved Apostle, “that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

Brethren, do we grip the Apostle’s faithfulness and zeal, with his sincere heart’s yearning and fervent spirit and desire, that his life might ever be a pattern to the believers! St. Paul did not pin his faith in that which was not real, nor did he ever seek to demonstrate his determination through the arm of flesh. No he had learned what true baptism into Christ that He could do all things through Christ who strengthened him, and he was ever desirous that the same energising spirit of power that raised the Lord from the tomb, might so quicken his earthen -el that thus this same disposition of loyalty and determination, exhibited by our Saviour, might ever be his lot also. The Apostle gloried in the cross of Christ, because he knew it was the power of God unto salvation, and so He preached Christ at every opportunity, and gladly witnessed, by his whole manner of life, the truth of his words when he said, “Christ liveth in me.”

Only, dear brethren, as we intelligently understand and grasp the import of this expression, “Christ liveth in me,” can we truly revel in our blessed hope and glorious prospect concerning this revelation or mystery which St. Paul was determined at all costs to preach and to give witness to.

Do we feel we are fruitful ‘branches in the “One true vine”? Does the spirit witness to us of our oneness in Him, whose life was broken for us! Is there a greater depth of sincerity, and a more fervent zeal toward

the cause We profess to value so highly, than there was twelve months ago, or have we been standing comparatively still, or even taken a retrograde step! As we examine ourselves, what room for earnest thought and meditation there is when we compare our lives with the “one true standard,” and the staunch, commendable life of our dear brother, St. Paul. Is it not a fact that he who seeks to water shall be abundantly watered himself — he that soweth bountifully shall also reap bountifully—that the liberal soul shall be made fat, and that there is he that scattereth and yet increaseth? Surely we are enjoined to let our liberality be known to all, for the Lord loveth a cheerful giver, and “it is more blessed to give than to receive.” “To him that bath shall be given” is the Bible record, but what about the counterpart which reads,

“He that soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly”; “There is he who withholdeth more than is good and it tendeth to poverty” : “Take away the talent from him, and give to him that hath ten talents,” is the striking lesson of our Lord’s parable of the talents in their use or misuse.

When the Apostle uttered the words of our text he did not merely mean that he was determined to preach the fact that his Lord came into the world to save sinners, and subsequently died on Calvary’s cross. That was certainly the basis of Jehovah’s atoning work ; but we remember that in his epistle he was addressing the Corinthian brethren, who were well instructed and versed in this great foundation truth respecting the cross of Christ. No, our text suggests a far greater depth of meaning as it would relate to the mystery which the Apostle desired to reveal to these brethren, with its relative, essential, and vital importance to every prospective member of the Body of Christ. “Save Christ (the Anointed One) and Him crucified,” 372 years of faithfulness, loyalty, obedience, humility, meekness, gentleness, patience, kindness, longsuffering, tenderness, sympathy, love and compassion, from Jordan’s river to Calvary’s hill, and for what purpose! Yes, dear friends, “for what purpose?” we ask. Was it not that this testing to the full, in the exercise of all the fruits and graces of the spirit, might prove Him a faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, and to make reconciliation for the sins of the people? Was not this the deeper viewpoint which the Apostle shunned not to declare as he realised that the anointing which came upon our Lord as an earnest of the spirit of sonship, with its attendant hardships, testings and sufferings, was the only means of fulfilling Jehovah’s purpose respecting the Messiah, and a class called to joint-heirship through the same spirit begetting and narrow road of obedience and sacrifice? This was the mystery or testimony which St. Paul longed to preach to those having heard the “glad tidings” amongst the Corinthians, and also to those who subsequently would believe through his word; but with the hearing ear, he well knew that there was to be the understanding heart if that preaching was to have the desired effect.

How very many to-day, like the Corinthians of old, having heard the Gospel of salvation through Christ, and having entered into covenant relationship, seemingly fail to manifest the power of the Gospel in themselves and towards others. They outwardly appear to be living consecrated, God-fearing lives, but somehow or other seem to lack that keenness and alertness, that propelling and compelling influence which savors of a quickened life, energised and moved by the power of the Gospel, and as living stones desirous of being built up unto Him, our “living Head.” This class appear to receive the truth in the love of it, but the same carnal tendencies of the Corinth brethren more or less retard the progress, and so make applicable to them the words of this same Apostle where he says : “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.” “

In the light of our text it is apparent that if we value our standing in the Anointed ()ne, if we highly esteem God’s wondrous grace showered upon us, and have tasted of the heavenly gift and the power of the Age to come, then, too, our witness must, like the Apostle’s, be in demonstration of the spirit. and with power, and based not upon a mere mental knowledge that Christ lived and died, but, on the contrary, “Christ and Him crucified,” and in all the details that constituted Him the Anointed, in a life which revealed this testimony of God, and as a basis for the fulfilling of the mystery, made known only to the

saints.

We must feel, dear brethren, that the subject is all important, and just as the Apostle “preached Christ,” and Christ only, as his constant theme, hope and joy, so his whole manner of life was a living witness to the fact of a life

centred in the crucified, and subsequently risen, Lord of Glory. While we sometimes sing, “All for Jesus, all for Jesus crucified.” can we grasp the measure of love of Him who framed the plan! Does the cross of Christ move us to greater depths. as we would long to show, by word and action, our gratitude in return for that great love? Can we, too, say, “For me to live is Christ,” or are we measuring our esteem by more or less indifferent and luke-warm tendencies?

While our subject relates to St. Paul’s determination to preach the Gospel, we can enlarge with equal propriety on the matter of what constitutes preaching, respecting every earnest disciple of the cross of Christ. We may be sure that the life of St. Paul was not merely set apart to orally proclaim the truth, but in a deeper sense, surely, in the Anointed One, he ever lived, moved, and had his being.—”Though I speak with the tongues of men or of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.” Yes, unless our words are mixed with a strong faith and fraught with the Spirit’s power, backed by a life in conformity therewith, we will be constituted empty vessels, like unto that great Babylonish system, from whose mouth proceeded unclean spirits, designated “frogs” by the revelator, speaking loud, swelling words, having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage, and vainly puffed up by imaginations, pride, hypocrisy, and deceit.

Brethren, let us during the year 1932 be awake and alive, not only to our privileges, but also our responsibilities as prospective fellow-heirs in the Body—”Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel,” was the beloved Apostle’s realisation of his position, and just so with us. He named the name of Christ, and well knew just what this confession signified. He had covenanted to live for Christ. “Baptism unto death” to St. Paul was no fanciful undertaking, but a stern reality. :He found no comparison whatever with the richness of the inheritance to that of this world’s vain, en:, show, to which formerly he had been so largely associated. Do we feel likewise, and can we say in so many words, “Since my eyes were fixed on Jesus, I’ve lost sight of all beside”? If so, let us all resolve during the coming year to manifest that appreciation by a fuller Christian life, in all its characteristics, as displayed by this faithful and loved Apostle, and thus living nearer to our God, and expressing a closer walk with Him. as we journey along side by side with our great “Burden Bearer” and sympathetic High Priest, and Elder Brother, we shall steadily, but no less surely, he found reflecting the “true light,” and thus he changed from glory to glory even unto the likeness of our Lord and Head. Let us, then, make our boast ever and only in the cross of Christ, boasting in His finished work, glorying in our standing of justification through Him, glorying in the rich provision and lot of the saintly class, called and chosen in our great High Priest, rejoicing in every opportunity of spending and being spent, that our covenant be not only carried into effect, but finally consummated in and through our Head.

Yes, brethren, let us rightly and earnestly make our boast as it is written—”He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord,” and again, “God forbid that I should glory, save ill the cross of Christ. my Lord, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” (See Jer. 9:23, 24.) To natural Israel, Jehovah said, “Prove Me now herewith.” If any feel themselves spiritually lean, and not enjoying such fellowship with the Lord as they would desire, that they are unable to_ draw as closely to Him as they would like, to all: such the Lord says, “You have neglected your covenant; here are My words, Prove Me’; fulfil the terms of your covenant, and see if I will not be faithful, and do for you exceedingly and abundantly more than you could have asked or thought.”

It behoves us to look about us to note to what extent we have been faithful to our vow of sacrifice, and to

remember that it is not a sacrifice for a day or a year, but “even unto death.” A little while the trials will be over, but until that little while is past we are in the trial time, and it is proving us either worthy or unworthy of the glorious favours which we seek, the chief blessing, “joint heirship.” If we appreciate it, let us seek it in the Lord’s way, let us see to what extent there are other things in our lives that we might render unto the Lord, and which He will accept, not through any worthiness of the deeds or the sacrifice, but through the merit of Christ. Let us see if the days and hours as they pass are spent in a consecrated manner, let us note to what extent moments and days are spent in some selfish manner, or visited upon others beyond the reasonable requirements of duty as marked out in the Divine Word. Let us see to what extent we perform our vows unto the Lord ; let us take note of what time, or influence, or money we are using in the Divine service, and what proportion this bears to the whole.

Of the Jews the Lord required a tenth, “ a tith.” Of the spiritual Israelites He makes no positive requirements, hut leaves it for us, that by the degree of our sacrifices, according to our abilities, we may demonstrate the measure of our love ; but who would say that one-tenth of time, influence and talent would be enough for the spiritual Israelite to render to Jehovah for all His benefits’ Surely all would agree that one-fourth, even, would be a very small measure, indeed, as compared with our true obligation.

All should feel that the sacrifice is a “whole” burnt offering, a complete sacrifice of every item and element of our talents, power and privileges, all should feel that they may keep for use upon themselves, and for use upon those dependent upon them, only such measure as would seem to be necessary to decency mid reasonable comfort, and not for what might be termed luxury or waste. Those who accept the Lord’s proposition heartily, and render to Him their all to the extent of their ability, will find their leanness departing and their joy of heart increasing more and more. “I am determined to know nothing among you but Christ and Him crucified.”

“He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

EASTER CONVENTION,

A preliminary message is to hand from the Secretary of the Adelaide Class intimating that it is their intention to arrange for the usual Convention in that City at Easter time. Further particulars relating to the days of meetings and other arrangements will appear in our next issue, and may also be obtained from Miss H. E. Copping, 70 Fairford St., Unley, South Australia.

GOD WORKETH IN YOU.

“Not yet thou knowest what I do
Within thine own weak breast;
To mould thee to my image true,
And fit thee for my rest;

But yield thee to my loving skill,
The veiled work of grace,
From day to day progressing still,
It is not thine to trace.”

“Yet walk by faith and not by sight
Fast clinging to my hand;
Content to feel my love and might
Not yet to understand.

A little while thy course pursue,
Till grace to glory grow;
Then what I am and what I do
Hereafter thou shalt know.”

F. R. Havergal.

PEOPLES PAPER.

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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.

Convention News

IT is with grateful hearts and thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father that the Melbourne Ecclesia report the very encouraging, happy and helpful occasion of their Christmas Convention, extending over three days, and terminating on the Sunday evening with the usual farewell, "Love-feast" and appropriate hymns.

We desire to express our deep gratitude and appreciation of the loving services of the dear brethren who travelled long distances in order that our assembling together might prove profitable, and thus it surely proved to be. Many beneficial thoughts were given that indeed were a stimulus and an incentive to more earnest endeavour in running for the great prize held out only to the truly faithful. We were constantly reminded and enjoined, as we viewed the life and experience of our Lord and the Apostles, and examined their attitude and oneness of purpose, of the increasing narrowness of the way, and the great necessity of touching lightly the things of this earth, and to have a deeper and yet truer sense of our rich and blessed inheritance as prospective members of the Body of Christ.

The theme selected for our Convention was a most important one, and was taken from Romans 12:11, relating to the fervency of spirit which must characterise the life of every true follower of Christ. All present desired that throughout the coming year, this needful quality would more and more be manifested in themselves and toward the brethren.

The studies in Psalm 46, Isaiah 53, and 2 Cor. 6:1-10, gave rich variety and diversity of thought, and reminded us forcibly in the first instance of the unstable and chaotic condition of the world to-day with the governments and people in that restless, discontented attitude which gives strong evidence of the near approach to the setting up of God's righteous Kingdom, according to the many prophecies cited, showing that the world at that time will have to learn righteousness and submit to the requirements of Jehovah as His law of love and truth would gradually extend world wide.

The study in Isaiah proved the wealth of meaning in the prophetic truth contained respecting the Head of the Church and His humiliating experiences necessary in order to provide for man's redemption, and as the basis of the great atonement work. We noted, too, the rich assurance that, on account of our Leader's sacrificial death and subsequent resurrection through the power of Jehovah, a special class, invited to walk in the same narrow road of self-denial and obedience, would, if faithful to their Covenant, share the wonderful blessings of joint-heirship with their Lord as Jehovah would "divide the spoil with the strong"—the overcoming Church. It was good to note again in this chapter that our Lord, on account of His loyalty, obedience, suffering and death, would eventually see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied the whole world of mankind brought into subjection through Jehovah's reconciling work, by the medium of our Lord and Saviour, together with the earth restored to Edenic perfection to be again the glorious habitation of a perfected race through Christ.

In our final study we were again reminded of the Apostle Paul's love and faithfulness amidst severe persecution, suffering and hardships, borne so commendably and with fixity of purpose on account of the cause of truth and the brethren, and were encouraged and exhorted as he would beseech the justified believer not to receive the grace or favour of God in vain, to count it a wonderful privilege to suffer for the cross of Christ, and to esteem the rich inheritance as surpassing wonderful and our fondest hope.

Addresses by visiting brethren and others were much appreciated as the various topics relating to the great "Shepherd of the sheep," and His loving watchcare over the "Flock" in needful experiences, that His people might be led to enjoy the rich pastures and to drink deeply of the "water of life" provided for His "little ones," who attentively and meekly hearken to the good Shepherd's voice and seek ever to have a

closer relationship under His protecting care. Another encouraging address was along the line of what constitutes an “immovable Christian life.” We were exhorted not to be moved away from the “hope of the Gospel,” and to exercise those characteristics of fortitude and determination exhibited by the Apostle Paul as he “shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God.” Emphasis was given to the great need of energising ourselves in the Christian way, and just as an athlete would strain nerve and muscle in an earnest endeavour to gain his objective, so in the Christian race, we were reminded that there must be no relaxation, but that every possible effort must be put forth if we would obtain the prize held out to those who earnestly and zealously seek the desired goal.

All present much appreciated other subjects of importance and interest brought forward by four brethren who spoke respectively on the necessity for greater “fervency of spirit”; a fuller sense and realisation of our great inheritance, exhorting us to “constancy of hope”; the desirability of understanding just what is represented by the fruit of patience in the Christian life, that each member of the Body of Christ must not only merely endure patiently, but that it must be a cheerful, willing submission, as each and all would be found possessing their souls in patience, as it is written--“Let patience have her perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing; for ye have need of patience, that, after having done the will of God ye might receive the promise.” Last of all, yet by no means least, we were reminded of the greatest asset the Christian has, as he journeys along the “pilgrim way”—and that was the blessed privilege and power of prayer. We were made to realise again that without prayer the Christian could never hope to succeed, that full advantage must at all times be exercised in our daily need to supplicate the “Throne of Grace,” and to seek Divine assistance for our every hour of necessity.

Appreciating the studies and discourses as we did, the friends were not unmindful of the love and zeal displayed by the sisters, who so faithfully attended to the many necessary little details which go to make convention arrangements complete, and spared no effort in seeing that the temporal as well as the spiritual interests of the brethren were served.

The Melbourne friends greatly appreciated the messages of Christian love sent along from our South Australian and other brethren, and in their desire to reciprocate unanimously agreed to convey to the various classes represented by the gathering, their warmest Christian love and greetings, together with verses I-1(1 in 2 Cor. 6.

We pray that God’s richest blessing may be with the dear ‘brethren who so gladly journeyed to our city in order to help and encourage the friends here, and our fervent desire is that the good lessons received may bear rich fruitage as all would strive to put the valued instructions into practice, in an earnest endeavour to do all things with a single eye to the praise and glory of our loving Heavenly Father.

Correspondence,

Sydney, N.S.W.

Dear Brother, 17/1/32.

Greetings in the Lord's name. I have been procrastinative for some days regarding writing you re the Christmas Convention. I may say that we had a very prosperous time spiritually, there being about 25 present, although some of our brethren were absent for various reasons. We invited other friends, and some availed themselves of the opportunity, and the number was very encouraging for our class at Rawson Chambers.

We held a praise and testimony in the afternoon; such meetings always seem very spiritual, bringing all in close touch with each other. At the evening service a discourse was given by a brother on the evidences of the Lord's presence, and although he had nothing new to give us, nevertheless, he stirred up our pure minds, and one felt it was a special blessing to God's children to have the privilege to be living in the end of the age.

The world seems to be in a morass, men's hearts failing them for fear; our wise men all suggesting what has brought us to our present trouble, and some pointing to a way out, as they think; but alas! the wisdom of our -wise men will perish. May we keep our hearts in love for the Lord and the brethren and our sympathies warm for the world of mankind.

I sincerely trust you had a blessed time at your convention. I was with you in spirit, and it would have taken very little persuasion to have sent me over to you. If the Lord spares us another year I may avail myself of that privilege and see the dear faces of the brothers and sisters of the Melbourne class.

I now close with Christian love to all the dear friends at your end from sister and myself, not forgetting the Rawson Chambers class friends included.

Remaining in the one hope. J.H.T.

N.S.W.,
The Secretary, 18/1/32.
Berean Biblical Institute.

Dear Brother,

Your welcome letter to hand the other day, also the books and "Herald." I was going to answer before but kept putting it off, being too much taken up with the books, and I thank you very much for them, as they are great helps.

Since reading Brother Russell's works I often wondered how he knew that some words were not in the early MSS., but now it is all clear to me, not that I doubted him, but you see I did not know about those three early MSS., and used to wonder how he knew that he had the early manuscripts.

You see the Scriptures are something I have only taken up lately, in fact early last year, although it is about eight or nine years since I got the Studies and tried to read them, but somehow I could not understand them until early last year; so after putting them aside all those years it seems hard to understand now why I could not see through them then.

I wish to sincerely thank you for all your kindness to me in letting me know about these secondhand Helps, for I now have more wonderful Helps than I thought I would ever have, and it is due to you being so thoughtful that I was able to get them. So hoping you receive no end of rich blessings from the Lord for all your trouble and work. With much Christian love,

Yours in the one hope. B.C.M.

Dear Brethren,
17th January, 1932.

I am enclosing in this letter, and I would like you to send a Manna Text Book to an address I will give you. To the same address you may also send one copy of "Hopes Beyond the Tomb," and you may send two copies of the same to me, and the balance you may use for the Lord's work in the way you think best.

I went to Sydney at Christmas time and met with the brethren there at Rawson Chambers, and all at that meeting seemed to have the Lord's Spirit, and it seemed good to be among them. I was sorry when it all ended and had to return home to these lonely parts, where I never hear anyone praise the Lord or sing a spiritual song. Some of the brethren are better situated, so that they can meet together, than others who are on the lonely outposts.

I called at the doctor's as I was on my way to Sydney, having not been too well for some time. My eyes have been tired and weary; at times I could scarcely see to read. But when we know the Lord we can rejoice in every experience of life. How cheering is this morning's Manna Text and comments, and as we have the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord, how grace and peace is multiplied unto us. There is nothing can comfort our hearts more than the words of the glorious Gospel of Christ, which it has pleased our Heavenly Father to reveal unto us by His spirit, for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. Wishing you continued blessing from our Father.

Your brother in Christ. B.J.

Sons and Daughters of Comfort.

(Continued from January issue.)

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” (Rom.15:4.)

THE holy Spirit comforts the Church in various ways.

(1) It comforts us by enabling us to come into such unity with the truth and with the Lord, that we can, to a considerable extent, see matters not only from the divine standpoint, but also can appreciate and feel from the same standpoint. For, although the spirit of the truth is in the Word of Truth, there is, nevertheless, a necessity that the eyes of our understanding should be opened to comprehend the Word of Truth; and this double comfort is ours through the possession of the holy Spirit, in proportion as it abounds and is shed abroad in our hearts. It, of course, abounds and is shed abroad in the Word, but this is not sufficient. It must also be in our hearts, a living power. Thus we read in Acts 9:31, of the early church “Walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the holy Spirit.”

2. It comforts us through the Scriptures, and through the promises of God. The Word of God as the channel of the truth is to comfort us in proportion as the holy Spirit guides us into an understanding of it, as our text reads.

3. The Church, the brethren, in proportion as they become imbued with the holy Spirit and with the knowledge of Truth, which it brings to their appreciation and comprehension, thereby become representatives of the spirit in the Church—comforters. This is the thought of the Apostle when he says: “Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus.”

Reversing the foregoing order and considering the way in which the brethren are to comfort the Church, we note that it is as the channels of the Spirit and as the mouthpieces of the Word. No one is competent to be a comforter unless such a one has received comfort from God. So to speak, the Lord’s people begin receiving their comfort from the time they accept the assurances of God’s Word respecting His mercy and love as exhibited in Christ Jesus. In their appropriation of this Divine favour to themselves by faith, they had their first taste of comfort, peace and joy. As they then proceeded and learned the way of the Lord more perfectly, the door of access into a still further grace was opened unto them, the grace of invitation to joint-heirship with Christ in the Kingdom and its glorious work of comforting and uplifting mankind in general; and as the door of favour was entered, additional comfort, peace and blessings were added and understood and appreciated. And then, as the favoured ones progressed under the ministries of the Truth,

supplied by the holy Spirit, and became more and more able to rightly divide the Word of Truth, and to appreciate the different features of it, in the same proportion, their faith grown stronger, and their comforts and joys multiplied through increasing and deepening knowledge of His plan.

As His people behold in the glass of the Lord’s Word His glory, the reflected light of His glorious character illuminating their hearts and enabling them to comprehend with all saints the lengths and breadths, heights and depths of the divine love, it brings still increasing confidence and comfort. Every one of these steps of progress rightly received and every additional element of character developed prepares the favoured one for the exercise of his privilege of being a comforter to others. It was his duty and privilege to begin, to comfort others as soon as he received the first element of comfort himself, and to continue distributing the comforts as they came to him. Indeed, we know both from experience and from the Word that unless he thus made use of the favours and blessings, and showed his appreciation of

the Grace of God by shining it forth upon others. his light thus being obscured would grow dim and eventually lie extinguished. But the point we need to impress is that ability to be a comforter depends upon growth in grace and knowledge, for none but those who themselves are comforted dispense this grace to others.

Notice the Apostle's exhortation on this subject, and along the lines marked out. In 2 Cor. 1:3-7 he says "Blessed be God even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulations that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ, and whether we be afflicted it is for your consolation and salvation. and our hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation (comfort)."

Ten times in these verses does the Apostle use this word "comfort." He evidently had a keen appreciation of how much the Church needed such consolation, and how much the God of all comfort wished to have His faithful ones comforted, and how even the strongest in the Church needed comfort. What better evidence could we ask than that the Spirit of comfort which the Heavenly Father manifested, which the Lord Jesus manifested, which the Apostles manifested, and which all the faithful are called upon to exercise is indeed the very spirit of the truth. Consequently, those who are making greatest progress in this direction as comforters in Zion are growing most in grace, and so, we may be sure, will lie best able to grow also in knowledge and to be helpful to the Church in every sense of the Word. and to be used of the Lord as mouthpieces in the ministry of His Truth.

A little further along in the same epistle (2 Cor. 7:4-13), the Apostle uses this word "comfort" seven times, saying. "I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation, for when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side ; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless, God that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming; only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted of you, when he told US your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoice the more. Therefore, we were comforted in your comfort." Here we see illustrated in the Apostle's language the mutual helpfulness of the Church in this matter of comfort. Titus had a part in it ; Paul had a part in it; the Church at Corinth had a part in it; every member possessing the holy Spirit and exercised by it had a share; and the Apostle declares that all this comfort was of God. And he expresses it as though this were God's general disposition. in every such circumstance of His people when he speaks of Him as "the God of all comfort," and "the God that comforteth them that are cast down." We may safely understand, therefore, that wherever we find one of the Lord's followers, however great his weakness, however much cast down, we have, in his case, presented to us an opportunity of serving the Lord, of being channels of His mercy, and carrying to the downcast one, something of comfort. consolation and helpfulness.

Speaking respecting his own course, the Apostle, in his first letter to the Thessalonians (2:11), gives us a little insight to his methods, and shows us that he neither domineered nor tyrannised over the Church, nor continually harassed, threatened and upbraided them. On the contrary, he says, "We know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you as a (proper) father doth his children." This familiar spirit in the Apostles, which enabled them, as fathers and brethren in the Church, to comfort and assist, should be a guide now to all who would be servants of the Lord, and helpful children of comfort—sons of consolation.

It is those who enter into this real spirit of God who are thereby proportionately prepared to comprehend the meaning of the prophecies and revelations of the Lord. which are hidden to the worldly wise—hidden to all who have not the spirit of Christ, of sympathy and love. Possibly, this is one reason why so few of the professed expounders of the Word of God meet with any success in interpreting it; probably this is

one reason why so many are in darkness. They have not received the spirit of comfort and love, and, therefore, cannot appreciate the loving, gracious plan which God's Word upholds. Perhaps it was not by accident that the Apostle, when stating that we are to "grow in grace and in knowledge," put the grace first.

We have seen what it is to have the comfort of the brethren through the holy Spirit; let us now inquire what it is to have "the comfort of the Scriptures." which we are enabled to comprehend by the possession of the holy Spirit of comfort. We note again the prophetic statement of (Isa 61:1). and that while this applied primarily to our Lord, the Head Of the Body. it must, therefore, necessarily also apply to every member of the anointed. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon all the members coming down to them from the Head.

As it is not our commission to break men's hearts, even the worldly, hard hearted ones. but to leave them for the Lord to break through various disciplines and judgments; so likewise it is not appointed unto His to comfort those who do not mourn; nor is it our commission to specially cause mourning that we may comfort it. Our commission is to seek out the meek and the mourning ones, who have appreciated their own 'shortcomings and weaknesses, and who are

looking for refuge and deliverance.

It is the wrong thought which some get that the Lord's people in this present time should be gloomy, morose, sad—mourners for sin. Whoever has heard the Gospel message has cause for rejoicing. When the Lord said "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted," He said it in the Jewish age—under the Law which condemned all imperfection, on account of which, therefore, all who were hungering and thirsting after righteousness and seeking to walk uprightly were necessarily in mourning for their sins, because of their inability to come up to the grand standard of the perfect law of Cod, and hence their inability to gain everlasting life under the conditions of that Law. The Apostle represented not only himself, but all sincere Israelites groaning under the when he cried out, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this dead body?"- (Rom. 7:24.) He was mourning, and the Lord appointed that all mourners in Zion should lie comforted—comforted with the assurance that, while they were sinners and imperfect and could never justify themselves before God under the Law, nevertheless, God himself had found a ransom, had redeemed His people. It is in view of this comforting assurance of the Gospel that the Apostle, after representating himself as the Christian, has found the deliverance, and exclaims, "Planks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Lord's people, having embraced the Truth, find themselves beset on every hand with oppositions from the Evil One and his servants; and were it not that they have the comfort and consolation of the Scriptures and the joy and peace which the world can neither give nor take away, heirs would be a sad lot indeed. But, under conditions as the Lord has arranged them, it is their privilege, even while suffering the loss of earthly things for righteousness' sake, to rejoice in tribulation, and in everything give thanks.

What is the secret of this rejoicing in tribulation? Whence comes so great comfort as this? It comes through the comfort of the Scriptures, made luminous by the holy Spirit. For instance, take the inspired prophecy respecting Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are not. (Jer. 31:15-17.) The Lord's message of comfort to Rachel and to all who have suffered loss through the great penalty of death is, "Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears; for thy little ones shall come again from the land of the enemy." Does this speak peace and comfort to the wounded heart? Yes, it brings a consolation, a comfort, with which no error can compare. There are, indeed, various delusive fancies which picture themselves before the minds of the bereaved, in which they fain would trust and hope; but they are weak. are intangible they have no foundation in the Word of God. 'Hence, they cannot give real rest or peace in such a time of trial.

We notice that the Apostle implies in some of his statements, that the comfort and peace of the Church are dependent largely upon unity of the Spirit of the Lord in the various members : and that we, from experience, should note that this is the case. He says, Finally, brethren. farewell. lie perfect, be of good comfort. be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall lie with you” (2 Cor. 13:11), and again (Phil. 2:1-2). “If there be any consolation (comfort) in Christ. if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. What exhortations these are to unity, peace, brotherly kindness! How they suggest to us patience, forbearance, gentleness. helpfulness and comfort. one to another in the Church ; that thus the Spirit of the Lord may abound in all, that each may make the greatest possible progress in the right way. It is for us all to strive more and more to be Worthy of the name of Comforters of the brethren. Let us have the holy Spirit abounding in us more and more. for this is the Lord’s good pleasure, that with it dwelling in us richly we may be all sons and daughters of comfort in Zion. representatives of our Father, and channels of the holy Spirit. as well as of the Truth.

(Concluded)

OUR SUFFICIENCY IS OF CHRIST.

Where’s the day that I’ll call dreary While His favor shines so bright?
Where’s the time in which I’ll weary Of His loving words of light ?
Where’s the test of faith that’s greater Than the measure of His grace ?
Where’s the loss of goods more precious Than what’s given in its place ?
Where’s the stone on which I’ll stumble While I trust to Him my hand ?
Where’s the fear to make me tremble When His words the winds command. ?
Where’s the cross that is too heavy When His strength cloth lend me aid ?
Where’s the crowned head I’d envy While He’s having my crown made.

Benj. F. Barton.

A man’s pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.—Prov. 29:23.

A humble heart is a vessel of all graces. It cloth better the soul and make it holy, for the soul is never fitter for God than when it is humbled. It is a fundamental grace that gives strength to all other graces. So much humility, so much grace; for, according to the measure of humiliation is the measure of other grace, because a humble heart hath in it a spiritual emptiness. Humility emptieth the heart for God to fill it. If the heart be emptied of temporal things, then it must needs be filled with spiritual things; for nature abhorreth emptiness, grace much more.—Sibbes.

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