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Halfpenny Glad Tidings of Great Joy.

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.”—Luke 2:1-20.

THE message of the angels to the shepherds on Bethlehem’s plains sounds more and more precious to each child of God in proportion as he grows in grace and knowledge. As his eyes and ears of understanding open more widely to the lengths and breadths of God’s great plan of the ages, that prophetic message is the more highly esteemed as an epitome of the entire Gospel. Nor can our attention be too frequently called to the great event which lies at the foundation of that message—our Saviour’s birth.

It matters not that December 25th is not the real anniversary of the Saviour’s birth, but probably the anniversary of the annunciation by the angel Gabriel, the anniversary of the Virgin Mary’s conception, our Lord being born nine months later on the calendar, or about October 1st. One so great, whose birth, death and resurrection_ from the dead means so much to the human family, may be remembered and celebrated any day, every day, by all who appreciate what he has done for our race. Since, then, the majority of Christian people have become habituated to the celebration of December 25th as our Lord’s birthday, we need make no protest, but join with all in celebrating that day with rejoicing of heart, giving gifts and remembrances one to another, thus copying divine favor, which gave to mankind the Son of God as a gift of mercy and love for our redemption.

For four thousand years and more the promises of God, clothed in more or less of obscurity, had been given to mankind, intimating that ultimately the great curse of sin and death which had come upon the world through father Adam’s disobedience in Eden would be rolled away, and instead of a curse, a blight, would come a blessing of the Lord with life-giving refreshment. In various types, figures and shadowy promises this lesson had come down through the ages to the time of our Lord’s birth, especially amongst the Jews, who were the divinely favored and covenanted people. And since the Jews were of a commercial spirit, many of them were to be found in all parts of the civilized world ;and thus amongst every people the faith in the one God and the hope of Israel through a Messiah were more or less made known, so that at the time of our Lord’s birth, we read, “All men were in expectation” of a soon-coming Messiah. Doubtless this expectation was built upon the interpretation of Daniel’s prophecy, which we now see clearly marked the year of our Lord’s majority, when he was thirty years of age and made His consecration to His work and received the begetting of the holy spirit, His anointing as the great antitypical High Priest and as the great antitypical King over Israel and the world.

From Bethlehem to Nazareth.

In olden times there were honorable cities and mean cities. Nazareth was generally recognised as one of the latter, while Bethlehem was distinctly one of the former—the City of David, Israel’s beloved king. The Scriptures explain to us that Mary, our Lord’s mother and Joseph, her husband, were both of the lineage of David, and that in a seemingly accidental manner the prophecy was fulfilled which foretold that Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.—Micah 5:2.

The Roman Empire at that time bore rule over the whole world, the Jews being subject to it, but waiting expectantly, restlessly, for the coming Messiah, who would deliver them from being subject people and make of them the ruling caste in His kingdom, the dominion of the world. Rome’s great Emperor, Caesar Augustus, was in power at this time, and had sent forth his decree for a polling or census of the whole world for the purposes of taxation, etc. Luke informs us that it was in response to this royal decree that Joseph and Mary went up to their native city to be enrolled, and that thus it was that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and on account of the great concourse of people at the same time and for the same purpose, accommodations being scarce, the stable of the inn, or khan, was used by some as a lodging. Joseph and Mary, being of the latecomers, were forced to occupy these humble quarters, and thus it was that the King of glory, whose kingdom is by and by to rule the world, was in the time of His flesh born in a stable and cradled in a manger.

The Angels and the Shepherds.

Noble shepherds those must have been to whom the Almighty sent the angelic message respecting the birth of Jesus, the Messiah, which has rung down the ages and reached our ears—the message which thrills us the more in proportion as we are able to grasp its meaning. First a single angel appeared to the shepherds and allayed their fears, saying,

“Fear not; behold I bring you good tidings.” It would appear that fear is one of the dominating impulses of the human mind, especially in conjunction with any revelations from the Lord. Men realize—even the best of the race—that they are imperfect and that the Almighty and His laws are perfect. Instinctively the world seems to realize that a curse or condemnation of the Almighty rests upon it, and instinctively it fears a further curse and further condemnation, realizing its’ continual and increasing sinfulness. The same is true to-day with all except the comparatively few who are well informed respecting the divine character and plan. Thus the subject of religion is generally obnoxious to the world in general—a subject which they prefer to avoid, because of a feeling of guilt and a dread of further knowledge and condemnation.

It is for the true children of God to-day, as it was for the angels at that time, to assure the world that God is better than all their fears—that God so loved the world as to redeem them from the just sentence of death, the curse that came upon all as inheritors of Adam’s imperfections and sentence.

“Good tidings” is another translation of our word “gospel.” How beautiful the thought that the Gospel is really and truly good tidings. Alas, for the misrepresentations of God’s plan, under which so many of His professed people misrepresent His character and His Word, and apply the term “Gospel” to their various messages from the dark ages, teaching purgatory and eternal torment as the portion of the race. Let us get away from this false thought and get the truth that the Gospel is good tidings. The angel elaborated, saying that his message was good tidings of great joy, which should be unto all people. Ah, thank God, His plan is wider and deeper and higher and grander than anything we had ever conceived. The Gospel is not merely to be good tidings to the comparatively few that now have ears to hear and eyes to see its beauties, but in God’s due time it is to be good tidings of great joy to all people.

As every member of Adam's race shared in his fall and in the curse of death which came upon him as a result, so every member of the race was included in the great redemptive sacrifice which our Lord Jesus offered and which was finished at Calvary. God's plan in Christ, as it is being worked out and shall ultimately be accomplished, will mean great joy for all people, and the tidings of this were given at the very moment of our Lord's birth, because He was the one through whom all the glorious things of the divine purpose and plan shall ultimately be accomplished.

The Cause, The Logic of the Message.

The message took cognisance of the fact that it was to reasonable people, who would want to know why the unchangeable God, who had once pronounced a curse, should at any time so amend and alter matters as to supplant the curse with a blessing. The messenger states the philosophy of the divine plan, "Unto you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ (Messiah) the Lord." There we have the key to the entire Gospel statement of how God could be just and yet be the justifier of sinners who accept Jesus. The word "Saviour" here signifies life giver, and how beautiful is the thought that as death is the wage of sin, the curse upon the race, this Messiah who was born is to be the One who will rescue the race from the sentence by giving them life again. The explanation of how He would give life was not given, nor was it necessary at that time; but now, in the light of developments, and with the explanations furnished through the spirit in the New Testament we see how that our Lord's voluntary sacrifice of His life, dying the just for the unjust, settled the claims of divine justice against Adam and thus incidentally against all who shared his sentence.

Truly the more we see of the divine plan for our salvation, which began to take shape in the birth of Jesus, the more we feel like shouting with the angelic choir praises to the God of heaven, thankfulness for His mercy to the children of men. It mattered not that the babe born in Bethlehem was the Saviour only in prospect, that He could not even be anointed to do His work until He reached manhood's estate thirty years later; it mattered not that even then it would be necessary for Him to lay down His life gradually through three and a half years of His earthly ministry, to be finished at Calvary; it mattered not either that the resurrection was still three days after that, and His ascension forty days later, and that the blessing in general would be deferred for nearly nineteen centuries thereafter. As the angels could sing and rejoice at the first budding of the divine plan of salvation, so also can all who have faith in the ultimate outcome rejoice with joy unspeakable and give praise to God in the highest and to His Son our Lord.

Although nearly nineteen centuries have rolled away since that angelic message was delivered, it has not yet been fulfilled except in a limited measure by faith to those who have the eye of faith and, the ears of faith, in all a "little flock." But the tidings of great misery for nearly all people has been spread abroad in the name of Christ, much to the discredit of the divine plan and to the dishonor of the divine character. Instead of carrying joy the message has very generally carried grief and sorrow, especially to the kind-hearted and more generously disposed. Indeed we may say that no message of the Lord Jesus either true or false, has ever reached all people. Even to-day, after nineteen centuries of propaganda, only a comparatively small portion of the human family have ever heard of the only name given under heaven and amongst men whereby we must be saved—"nor is there salvation in any other."—Acts 4:12.

What, then, shall we say of the salvation which is come to those who have truly accepted Christ as their Saviour, and who are to-day rejoicing in Him as such, and who by faith are seeing the salvation of God begun in their own hearts and yet to be fully accomplished under the whole heavens? This the Apostle calls the salvation by hope. His words are, "We are saved by hope." (Romans 8:24.) We are not saved actually; we are still surrounded by sin, pain, sighing, crying and dying; the curse is not yet rolled away. All that the best of the Lord's people have received is salvation by hope, by faith. Yet this anticipation of the future salvation, of the resurrection from the dead, of a participation in the glory, honor and immortality of the divine nature promised to the faithful, is so strong, so clear, that those who possess it

are enabled to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, even in the midst of trials and difficulties and weaknesses and unfavorable conditions incident to the curse upon the race.

A Prophecy of Good Things.

Yes, the angelic message was a prophecy of good things to be accomplished for the Church and also for the world during the Millennial Age. The Church is to have the first blessing. The first resurrection is to be composed only of the blessed and holy who shall live and reign with Christ during the Millennium, the thousand years in which Satan shall be bound, and when the good influences of truth and righteousness shall enlighten the whole earth. The declaration of the Scripture is that the deliverance of the Church will come first, as the prophet declares, “God will help her early in the morning.”—Psa. 46:5.

But much as we rejoice in the glorious hopes of the Gospel set before us who now see, who now believe, who now rejoice with joy unspeakable, we are glad that the divine mercy and love are of such lengths and breadths and heights and depths as to encompass the whole world of mankind, and to provide a blessing for every member of Adam’s race through Him who loved us and bought us with His precious blood.

It will be during the Millennial Age that this prophecy of the angel will have its fulfilment, and the great Saviour who has already redeemed us by His sacrifice will stand forth as the King, the glorified Messiah, and establish His dominion of righteousness in the world for the blessing and uplifting of every member of the race. In harmony with the words of the Apostle, those will be times of restoration, “times of restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3. 20,21.) If the Lord had based the hope of the world upon some works of merit or righteousness of the world’s doing, then indeed we might have feared—indeed the more we know of the world, the less hope we would have. But, on the contrary, the Lord has based the entire proposition for the future blessing not upon our worthiness, but upon the worthiness and sacrifice of His Son—to you is born a life-giver, which is Messiah the Lord.

How it adds to our enjoyment of the coming age blessings to know that the trials and difficulties of this present Gospel Age are subject to the divine supervision in the interest of the little flock that is now being gathered in advance from amongst men—the “elect,” the Church. We see how the present trials and difficulties are the chiselings and polishing necessary to our development in the fruits and graces of the holy spirit in the character-likeness of God’s dear Son, our Lord, our Hope, our Bridegroom. How joyful the thought that soon the elect number called from the world to be the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, will be completed and enter into her glory. How precious the thought that then they shall be privileged with their Lord and Master to extend the divine favor of blessing and uplift to the world. -What higher honor or privilege or blessing could possibly come to any?

It was after the giving of the message of good tidings and great joy by the heavenly one that a host of angels appeared to the shepherds, saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men.” This, too is a prophecy. It is not yet true; but will be fulfilled in every particular in God’s due time, which we believe is now nigh, even at the door. Not yet does God receive glory in the highest, not yet is there peace amongst men. Quite to the contrary. God’s name is blasphemed, not only by those who vulgarly and in ribald jest take the divine name in vain, and not merely by the heathen who worship devils and think they are gods, but even by Christian people, God’s name is blasphemed every day. For be it known that blasphemy is any dishonorable misrepresentation of another. God be merciful to us, for at some time or other every one of us doubtless has blasphemed the holy name in this manner—by misrepresenting the divine character and divine plan, by picturing the God of love and mercy and justice and truth as the originator, the planner, the perpetuator of the eternal torment of the great mass of His creatures, born in sin and shapen in iniquity, born to sin as the sparks fly upwards.

But the Lord had mercy upon us because we did it ignorantly. And we also should have compassion upon others who still ignorantly misrepresent our God, and our energies should be continually bent to their assistance that the eyes of their understanding might open more widely to perceive the lengths and breadths and heights and depths and know the love of God which passeth understanding.

Noting that peace on earth and goodwill to men have not followed the Saviour's birth thus far, and discerning that this is a prophecy of what is to be accomplished during the Millennium, many have been inclined to change the translation of this verse so as to have it read, "On earth peace amongst men, in whom he is well pleased." However by thus changing it, the statement would not be true, for even the Lord's people have no peace on earth. Whatever peace they have is in their hearts, and based upon their faith in the Lord and in the glorious things which He was promised. Our Lord Himself and the apostles testified to this, assuring us that whosoever in this present time would live godly should suffer persecution, that a man's foes would be they of his own household, etc. (2 Tim. 3:12; Matt. 10:26).

Let us not confuse ourselves nor abridge the testimony of the Word, but with the eye of faith look forward to the day of Christ in which all these glorious things shall have their fulfilment, in which peace shall indeed fill the whole earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, bringing divine favor and rolling away the curse from the entire groaning creation, as pointed out by the Apostle.—Rom. 8:22.

Not even with the inauguration of the Millennium will this prophecy be fulfilled: not until its close, when the human family shall have been lifted by the kingdom regulations out of sin, sickness, pain, sorrow and death, up, up to all that was lost in Adam—not until then will there indeed be glory to God in the highest, not until then will there be peace amongst men. Nor are we to understand that the entire race will be appreciative of the divine love and favor even after they have fully seen the righteousness of God in Christ manifested. On the contrary the Scriptures seem to clearly teach that there will be a class who will then prove unfit for life eternal, unappreciative of the divine favor and it is with pleasure that we learn that all such shall be utterly destroyed from amongst the people in the second death. Thus eventually by the close of the Millennium, Satan and all wilful wrongdoers having been destroyed, the time will come as declared in the Scriptures when all voices in heaven and in earth and under the earth shall be heard praising God, Him that sitteth upon the throne, and the Lamb forever and ever. Hosanna! Glory to God in the highest

! Peace and goodwill to men, will be the final shout of a redeemed race when the great salvation shall have been fully outworked according to the divine plan set forth in the Scriptures.

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The New Year.

Stretching before us lies the coming year
As pure as snow,

Whereon no foot has seen fresh fallen from heaven
To earth below.

We tremble ere we tread on aught so fair
And so unknown!

And dare we, seeing not whereto it leads,
Set out alone.

Go thou before, great Guide and Counsellor “
’Saviour Divine;

So shall we make no footprints of our own
But tread in Thine.
—(F. M. N.)

THE opening of a new year is always an opportune time for the Christian to make a general survey of his position before the Lord; to take stock, so to speak, as to gains or losses incurred over the past year. Not that it is not advisable to make monthly, weekly or daily reckonings of one’s progress and shortcomings but the close of a year gives more scope for “calling to mind the former days,” so that the experiences both pleasant and difficult may be viewed more as a whole and in their true light as blessings and favours to assist us along the pilgrim way to the goal in view.

In considering one’s own progress; it must always be with a deep sense of unworthiness before the Lord; that our standing, however far advanced, is only such because of the mantle of righteousness provided for us by our dear Lord and Head—”To the praise of the glory of God’s grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

From this standpoint of true humility, we may then check up the little steps of progress with praise and thanksgiving to our heavenly Father, with benefit, realising that “we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus,” and that much love and patience has been extended to us, that we may be more and more “conformed to the image of His Son.”

How necessary it is to meditate on the words of our Lord, “Abide in Me, and I in you . . . for without Me ye can do nothing.” Ah yes, and how beautiful and sweet are the lessons we learn as we sit at His feet, to learn of Him, receiving with meekness the engrafted Word. The lines of the poem express so truly this blessed privilege “Christ never asks of us such heavy labour As leaves no time for resting at His feet,

The prayerful attitude of expectation
He oft-times counts a service most complete.

“He sometimes wants our ear—our wrapt attention
That He some heavenly wisdom may impart;

’Tis always in the time of deepest stillness
That heart finds sweetest fellowship with heart.”

No doubt we have found that this sweet fellowship and communion with our dear Lord has been at the very source of all spiritual gain; that to the extent of our dwelling with Him in His inner presence, so the degree of progress will be in evidence. And as we have been rightly actuated by the sweet moments rich in blessing, and have put into practice the desire for zealous service, such as exhibited by our Master on behalf of mankind, especially His faithful few, this has surely confirmed and increased our progress in becoming copies of God's dear Son. "It is more blessed to give than to receive"; "Freely ye have received, freely give," and so agree the lines from the poet:

"And yet he does love service—when 'tis given
By grateful love that clothes itself in deed,

But work that's done beneath the scourge of duty,
Be sure to such He gives but little heed."

On the other hand, in taking check of any evidence of loss in Christian growth, it may well be considered, from two viewpoints. First, from the standpoint of determining to bring about the corrections necessary, and secondly, with the object of guarding against discouragement.

Some of the Lord's people may need to give much attention to dealing more firmly with themselves, that the new mind may not be overruled to any degree by the human will or flesh, which are counted dead. The degree of faithfulness in keeping down the former aspirations, by the power from on high, given for this express purpose, will determine the worthiness or otherwise of those called ones to be of the chosen and faithful.

Then, respecting the other class who may be discouraged by their failures and be tempted to give up in the race, there is special need that they continually remember, "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," for "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." These must exercise more faith in the Lord—that what He has promised He will surely perform and bring them off more than conquerors if they trust fully and walk in His ways. The suggestion that the Christian way is too hard, too narrow, and that we might as well give up would emanate from the great Opposer, who is to be resisted steadfast in the faith. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

The following quotation seems so fitting in this connection:—"All wish frequently, no doubt, that the testings were all over and that we were accepted to a place amongst the overcomers. But patience and faith and' trust are to do a refining work in our hearts, making us mellow, willing and obedient to the Lord. Let the good work go on. Let us rejoice if our trials have brought us lessons of any kind that are profitable to us; that have tended to make us stronger in character, more firm for truth and righteousness, more aware of our own weaknesses, and more; on guard against the same. Even those conflicts which have resulted in only partial victories have possibly been to our advantage.

Even on points in which there may have been absolute failure, the result may be a strengthening of character, a crystallisation of determination for greater zeal in that direction again, and a humility of heart before the Lord in prayer."

So, dear friends, as the new year is entered upon, let us all give earnest heed to the words of the Apostle—"Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." The wonderful inheritance is intended only for those who "count all things but loss and dross that they may win Christ and be, found in Him." Those who follow afar off, or who put other considerations, of home, or family, etc., however good, before the Lord and His people,

cannot expect to receive the prize of the high-calling in the Kingdom. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. 10:37-39)

Could we but approximate the condescending grace of God in thus granting the inestimable privilege of running so as to obtain the pearl of great price, then "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come; nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." "I want that adorning divine.

Thou, only, my God, canst bestow!
I want in those beautiful garments to shine,
Which distinguish Thy household below.

"I want, oh, I want to attain
Some likeness, my Saviour, to Thee:
That longed-for resemblance once more to regain;

Thy comeliness put upon me.
"I want to be marked for Thine own,
Thy seal on my forehead to wear;

To receive that 'new name' on the mystic white stone,
Which only thyself canst declare.
"I want so in Thee to abide,

As to bring forth some fruit to Thy praise;
The branch that Thou prunest, though feeble and dried,
May languish, but never decays.

"I want Thine own hand to unbind
Each tie to terrestrial things,
Too tenderly cherished, too closely entwined,
Where' my heart too tenaciously clings.

"I want by mine aspect serene,
Mine actions and words, to declare
That my treasure is placed in a country unseen,
That my heart and affections are there.

"I want, as a traveller, to haste
Straight onward, nor pause on my way,
No forethought or anxious contrivance to waste
On my tent, only pitched for a day.

"I want—and this sums up my prayer
To glorify Thee till I die;
Then calmly to yield up my soul to Thy care,
And breathe out in prayer my last sigh."

—(From "Poems of Dawn.")

Approved Unto God.

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.”-2 Tim. 2:15.

THIS Text does not say, “Study the Scriptures,” but “Study to show thyself approved”—study to know what God would approve. And yet it means, first of all, to study the Revelation He has made. Then, after having come to some knowledge of the Scriptures, we must meditate upon them and consider how the Word is applicable to all of life’s affairs. Thus we would study the nature of everything that we come in contact with, as to whether it is good or evil.

The word “study” here is used with very much the same thought as when the Apostle says, “Study to be quiet.” Evidently the central thought of this expression is the approving of ourselves to God, not to men. It is proper enough that we should have the approval of all good men and good women. But our study, primarily, should not be along this line. First, we should study to please God—to be approved of God. We notice that there is a contemplative study, such as David speaks of when he says, “I meditate upon thy Law day and night”—to see how that Law would work out its height and depth, its length and breadth of influence upon himself. And so the Apostle’s thought here is that it should be our chief aim to please God.

“Rightly dividing the Word of Truth” would signify the proper application of the Word of Truth; the understanding of how and when and where it should be applied and what was the purpose and thought. and Plan of the Divine Mind in the giving of this Word of Truth, the Word of God’s Message. Up to the advent of our Lord, God’s Message had been given chiefly through the Old Testament Scriptures. Then God’s Message was attested by Him who came from heaven. Additionally, our Lord left twelve chosen Apostles to be His special mouthpieces, to increase the Word of Truth, to increase the Word of knowledge, to increase the Word of explanation of the Divine Plan. Everything, therefore, that Timothy could recognise as being the Lord’s Message he was to give heed to. For instance, one part of God’s Message applies to the past, a part applies only to the Jews, still another part applies to Christians in the present life, • and yet another part to their future hopes.

And so, as we get the matter rightly divided before our minds, we get the true understanding, the special enlightenment needed in our day, and we are enabled to rightly divide the Word better than did our fathers, so that today we can see, as our fathers did not see, the teaching of God’s Word respecting the “high calling” and “restitution”— the spiritual portion of blessing for the Church and the human portion of blessing for the world. We also see something about the times and seasons—which apply to the Church and which to the blessing of the world.

Thus, in our Day, to rightly divide the Word of Truth necessitates the taking cognisance of everything that seems to be of the Lord and that throws any light upon the Word, and thus we may be able to “rightly divide” it. We must always bear in mind that in the Scriptures of the Old Testament “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit,” and that the Lord also said of the Apostles: “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in, heaven.”

We are not to forget that the Lord promised that He would guide His people in the way of the Truth and show them things to come. We are to “study” to show ourselves approved—study the doctrine and endeavour to have our course of conduct harmonise with it—study to perform faithfully the duties of a loyal soldier of the cross of Christ.

The Christian soldier must study to perform even the smallest duty in a manner creditable to his calling;

he must not permit himself to become entangled with other things which do not relate to his duties as a soldier and thus be side-tracked, The Christian soldier who turns aside to seek some personal, temporal advantage to the detriment of his duties as a soldier is to that extent an unfaithful soldier and likely to be drawn out of the ranks entirely.

“Study to show thyself approved.” Study the Word; study yourself, that you may become well acquainted with yourself; that you may know your talents for service—in what direction they lie, and what are your weak points and how they may be guarded against—that you may know both your abilities and your shortcomings. Then study to avoid error and to shun all foolish questions and profane and vain babblings. Remember that only “the foundation of God standeth sure”; that all other foundations are worthless and that all other theories must come to naught. But “The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, ‘The Lord knoweth them that are His.’ And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”-2 Tim. 2:19.

There is much significance in the word “study” and it is important to note that this Divine injunction is given to the Church, to those who are believers in Christ and who have consecrated their lives to His service. Having been reckonedly cleansed from sin, we are to give all diligence to the work of studying to make this reckoned cleansing, this imputed righteousness, an actual thing, to the extent of our ability. It is purely of Divine grace that we are reckoned righteous before we are actually so. Looking at our hearts and seeing in them not only our good and honest intentions, but also our desire for righteousness and our efforts to become righteous in the way He would approve God accepts the will for the deed. Accordingly, He counts us as righteous now and treats us as His children, since we have been redeemed from the curse and have accepted His gracious provision for reconciliation.

Let us, then, study our hearts to see that we are striving daily to cast out all the old leaven of sin; to be sure that we are not content to allow it to remain in us and work in us; otherwise we prove by our course that our love for righteousness is growing weaker. Happy are those who find that they are not merely working down the leavened mass occasionally and allowing it again and again to ferment, but are casting it out, by constantly resisting sin, by cleansing their thoughts, words and deeds with the Truth and cultivating the blessed “fruits of the Spirit”—love, joy, peace, etc.

Only the studious find the way to Divine approval and acceptance. Let us study to see that our lives are an honor to the cause we have espoused; that we abstain from even the appearance of evil; that we are circumspect in all our conversation, in our conduct—watching our thoughts, our lips, our lives. Let us study to be diligent in every duty, performing it with a ready mind and with joy and gladness of heart. Let us never lose sight of the fact that we are soldiers, and that as true soldiers we are to learn to “endure hardness.”

A soldier has many trivial duties to perform and he is as really doing his duty as a soldier when he is polishing his armor, foraging, cooking his meals, cleaning camp or building bridges for the army to pass over, as when he is fighting the enemy. Such things are incidental work, but are necessary and entirely consistent with his commission as a soldier and should not be regarded as entanglements and hindrances. These duties cannot be disregarded nor carelessly done without a measure of unfaithfulness.

So with the Christian soldier. The routine of life—housework, shop work, daily toil, anything, everything, incidental to a proper and honest provision of “things needful” for ourselves and those dependent upon us for support as well as for provision for the prosecution and care of the Lord’s work—all this is a proper part of our engagement as soldiers of the Lord.

The Apostle Peter was as truly serving the Lord when catching the fish from whose mouth he got the coin with which to pay his Master’s taxes and his own, as when proclaiming, on the day of Pentecost, the

“raising up” and ascension of the Lord. The Apostle Paul was as truly a soldier of the cross and doing his proper work as such when making tents (rather than be chargeable to any) as when at Mars Hill he preached Jesus and the resurrection. Whatever is done with a view to the glory and honor of our Lord, the Captain of our salvation, or for the benefit of any of our fellow-soldiers, or for our own preparation for this warfare, or in the discharge of obligations which our Captain has recognised and approved, is proper work for us as soldiers and is not entanglement in the affairs of this life.

Correspondence.

To the Brethren of The Berean Bible Institute,

Melbourne, Australia.

Beloved of the Lord,

Greetings of love and peace in the precious name of our Beloved Redeemer and King, the Lord Jesus, our Head.

A copy of "Berean Bible Student" published in San Francisco, Calif., has just been given to me, and in that paper,

I see the announcement that you brethren are going to publish a "Covenant Book" and are now taking orders for the same. I would like you to add my name to your list of orders, please.

I have been using this book, kindly loaned to me by a Sister of our Class; and it has been a great blessing to me, so would like a copy of my own. I have not been very long in the truth; just a little over two years, but the truth is very precious to me. You may understand what I mean when I tell you I was a minister in the nominal systems. But step by step I see the leading hand of a loving Father. First, I saw the error of eternal torment; this led me to the First Day Adventists, but when the truth was presented to me, as given us by that faithful servant, our Beloved Pastor Russell, I knew I had at last reached my heart's desire, to know my Lord in all His fulness. And as the beauty of the Divine Plan of God was revealed to me I found out how little I knew of God's love for mankind.

So to-day finds me in humble worship at the feet of my Blessed Redeemer, seeking to learn of Him who was meek and lowly of heart. Till, my lessons learnt in the School of Christ, I shall hear the call to come up higher, where I shall see my Saviour face to face.

May the Lord richly bless you brethren is my earnest prayer and with much Christian love, I am, by His divine favour.

Your Brother in Christ, M.E.P,

Dear Brother, Victoria

Will you please send me half a dozen cards of the best variety.

I have tread the two English friends views of Present Truth, and although very impressive, I agree with the presentation in the December "P.P." To some it does seem an unreasonable time and nothing done, since the Second Advent. But there has been a great harvest work done, and "the harvest is the end of the age." Surely we are now "in the day of His preparation." Nah. 2:3.

With brotherly love, I remain, yours in the one hope of our calling. P.K.D,

Bible Class Assemblies.

All interested friends will please note the addresses and times of meetings held in the various cities. These gatherings are unsectarian, and all able to attend will be very welcome.

Melbourne.—Clyde House, 182 Collins Street (near Town Hall). First Floor, Room 7—Sundays, 3.30 p.m. and 6.45 p.m.; Thursdays, 7.45 p.m.

Adelaide.—Liverpool Buildings, Flinders Street—Sundays, 3 p.m. and 6 30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 7.30 p.m.

Perth.—The Basement, Druids' Chambers 459 Hay Street East—Sundays, 3.45 p.m and 6.45 p.m.

Sydney.—Child Study Rooms, 75 Liverpool Street—Sundays, 3.30 p.m. and 6 p.m.

The Great Salvation.

“How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?” Heb. 2:3.

THIS question is addressed to Christians, and not to the unconverted, as is often supposed. This the context proves. The writer of the epistle addressed it to the church. It seems particularly adapted to converted Jews, who were familiar with the writings of the Old Testament. We have in this epistle some of the most earnest exhortations to be faithful to the Lord, and the very best reasons and motives given for our encouragement. The text and context are of this character and if we are Christians we will find such applicable to us. It is important that we should, in order to get the benefit of the exhortation, remember that it means us. “How shall we escape, if we neglect?” On account of certain facts referred to in the first chapter, the second opens with: “Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.” This certainly must refer to Christians; and there is danger of losing what we have received, unless we do give heed.

The idea is suggested that neglect of the truths would cause them gradually to slip away from us. Backsliding is a gradual process, caused by neglect of truth and neglect of duty in obeying the truth. These are related to each other, and it seems that either may come as the cause of the other. The only safeguard against backsliding and consequent falling away, if persisted in, is to advance. Standing still seems to be impossible. In the sixth chapter the apostle seems to make falling away the alternative of going on to perfection. The Lord has arranged our life as a current against which we must row if we would go up, and He has placed the reward, the Great Salvation, at the head of the stream. If we would gain the prize, we must “run,” “strive,” “fight” or “overcome.” If we fold our arms, we shall glide downward. It is easy to go with the multitude, but is difficult to stem the flood, and we may be sure, “This vain world is not a friend to grace, to help us on to God.” What is worth having is worth striving for, and God has in both natural and spiritual things placed the valuable out of sight, or where it can be gained with difficulty. Our appreciation of the value of anything is shown by the earnestness with which we strive for it. We should be constantly seeking to know more of the truth of God for the purpose of obeying it. If we seek for truth merely as a theory to gratify our own curiosity, or for the purpose of showing our ability to cope with those who hold error, our intellect may be filled at the expense of our affections. Religion without love to both God and man, is as the body without the spirit—dead.

Charity or love is the crowning excellency of Christianity, and is necessary to fit for the Great Salvation. . . “Add to your faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness; and charity.” 2 Peter 1:5-7. Love is last and greatest. These additions secure the abundant entrance into the Kingdom of God. (Ver. 11.) Without the last all is vain. Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels and have

not love I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have (the gift of) prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. (Cor. 13:1-2.) There is a kind of knowledge that cannot be gained from books, but comes by experience as a fruit of the indwelling of the spirit of God. "He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love."

Love is an experience, and includes in it an earnest desire for the well-being of the object loved. Until we have sympathy and love for mankind, such as would prompt us to do all in our power for their salvation, we cannot know God. To know Him thus is to be in unison or fellowship with Him, and hence is eternal life.

Day by Day and Hour by Hour

God broke our years to hours and days
That hour by hour and day by day,
Just going on a little way,
We might be able all along
To keep quite strong.

Should all the weight of life
Be laid across our shoulders, and the future rife
With woe and struggle meet us face to face
At just one place We could not go,
Our feet would stop; and so
God lays a little on us every day,
And never, I believe, on all the way

Will burdens bear so deep,
Our pathway lie so threatening and so steep;
But we can go, if by God's power,
We only bear the burden of the hour.

—Anon.

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