

## January 11

*His Word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay. Jeremiah 20:9*

LET us who are privileged to remain to

### R946 "LIGHT FOR THE RIGHTEOUS

*"Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."...*

Occupying our present position on the stream of time, it is the privilege of the Christian Church to enjoy such views of God's plans and doings as none before our day could possibly have. Yet only this special class, the righteous, are so privileged; and their continuance of the privilege is conditioned upon their faithfulness, both in searching for and in using the light.

It is a very noticeable fact that those who have been greatly blessed with light and have made no use of it, have not been privileged to retain it...

All mankind are unrighteous, they are under the penalty of death. But thank God, a redemption has been provided, and those who lay hold of it by faith, are justified, reckoned righteous in God's sight. And it is for these justified (reckoned righteous) ones, who by faith have accepted the righteousness of Christ, and who in gratitude and love to God for such favor are endeavoring to live lives of obedience and faithfulness, that light is specially sown."

R1949 "The truth was never intended for the listless, nor for the wicked. The former are unworthy of it and the latter are better without it until taught to use and not abuse the liberty it brings. "Light [truth] is sown for the righteous, and joy [the joys of the truth] for the upright in heart." It is just as well that others, especially the wicked, should remain under the bondage of errors which to some extent control them until the strong power of Christ's kingdom is due to take the control of the world... To the listless and selfish who are not grossly wicked, the truth is only made to minister to pride and selfishness, and hence it is the will of God that all such should lose it, as they do in pursuance of their natural dispositions with reference to it. But the true children of God love the truth because they have an affinity for it. They love righteousness, they love their fellow men, and desire to bless and help them... They love the truth and the God who gave it: They treasure it up in their hearts and con it over again and again; and as they look into it, and admire all its symmetry and beauty, they strive more and more to conform their own characters to the same lines of beauty and seek to commend it by word and conduct to others, that they also may be blessed by it.

This is what it is to receive the truth into good and honest hearts. For such the truth was intended; and it is not possible for them to be deceived by the sophistries of error. They know a good thing when they have it, and therefore hold it fast. They cling to it just as steel filings cling to a magnet, because they have an affinity for it. If you run a magnet through a box of sawdust and steel filings it will come out covered with the steel filings. A little sawdust may rest lightly on it, too, just as some people associate themselves with the truth and with those who hold it very dear; but the sawdust

this time of favor, blessing and enlightenment give glory to the Lord, and see to it that the loving disposition of John is manifested in us, and also his energy, his zeal; for while he is called the loving disciple we are to remember also that he was, because

is easily blown off, while the steel filings hold fast. Just so multitudes of those who associate themselves with the Lord's people are easily carried away with a little wind of new false doctrine. And though they do not all disappear with the first breeze, a few more breezes will carry them all away. But the true ones God will not permit to be tempted above what they are able to bear; for he has given his angels a charge concerning them...

The angel or messenger thus commissioned may be some well-instructed brother who has studied to show himself a workman approved unto God, rightly dividing the Word of truth, and ever ready to feed the flock of God, or some faithful sister, ever watchful with motherly interest over the lambs of the flock...

The one thing for all the called to look to first is that they have received, and that they still hold, the truth in the love of it. Freely imbibe its blessed spirit and live in its hallowed atmosphere; "for, if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." "Through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth" you are chosen to the great salvation now shortly to be revealed (2 Thes. 2:13.) But the belief of the truth will avail nothing if it be not permitted to produce its legitimate fruit in a good and honest heart--viz., sanctification of the spirit, a complete setting apart to the divine will and service. Let us lay this lesson well to heart, and so run as to obtain the prize of our high calling. "Buy the truth" at any cost of self-sacrifice, "and sell it not" for any paltry present advantage."

### R5489 "OUR RESPONSIBILITY CONCERNING PRESENT TRUTH

*"His Word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing; and I could not stay."--Jeremiah 20:9.*

THE Prophet Jeremiah is here using a very forceful comparison. He had a burning zeal in his heart, a consuming sense of the importance of the message given him to deliver. His previous declaration of the Word of God concerning Israel had been so despised and rejected that he had become disheartened. He himself declared, "The Word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said: I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name. But His Word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary of forbearing, and I could not stay!" His message *had to be* spoken. The Lord had instructed him to tell Israel that they were about to be given over into the hands of their enemies.

This Word of the Lord to the Prophet Jeremiah was given prior to the seventy years' captivity of the Jews. There were false prophets among them who declared that the King of Judah was to gain a victory over their enemies. The people were glad to hear this assurance; and they despised the true Prophet of the Lord, who gave them the real Message from God. Jeremiah told them that

of his impetuous zeal, styled, with his brother, Boanerges--son of thunder. Let us be full of energy, full of sacrifices which love prompts, that we may glorify the Lord in our bodies and spirits which are His. Z.'01-151 R2808:5

they had failed to keep their Covenant with the Lord; that they had failed in their responsibilities to Jehovah, whose people they professed to be, and whom they had promised to serve faithfully; that it was not too late even then for any to be delivered, who would repent; but that the nation was surely to be delivered to their enemies and carried away into captivity.

### JEREMIAH'S CRUCIAL TEST

Jeremiah knew that the false prophets would encourage the king, and that he himself would bring the king's wrath upon his own head by reiterating the message which Jehovah had commissioned him to deliver. He shrank from the infamy, the reproach and the persecution which by experience he knew would result from loyalty to the Lord. But he overcame the temptation to hold his peace. He would speak as God commanded him, let the cost be what it would. He would tell Israel again the words which had been given him. He would give them a further warning.

If Jeremiah had allowed his fears to overwhelm him, and had withheld the message, undoubtedly he would have been set aside as the mouthpiece of God, and another would have been commissioned to deliver the message. The burning within the heart of the Prophet would have grown feebler and would ultimately have died out. When a fire is kept shut off from a draft for some length of time, it will become extinguished. This is as true in the realm of moral and spiritual forces as in that of physical nature. This is why the Apostle Paul urged: "Quench not the Spirit." We might let the Holy Spirit of God die out in our hearts by a failure to do our duty, a failure to keep our covenant faithfully. The light within us, the holy fire, would smolder for a time, and finally become extinct. The Prophet Jeremiah could not withhold that which God had commanded him to speak; he could not quench the fire within his soul without losing his relationship with Jehovah.

### GOD'S MESSAGE GIVEN

#### US TODAY

Thus it is with us today. God has let us into the secret of His counsels. He has granted us a wonderful spiritual illumination. He has given us a Message of the utmost importance to deliver to His professed people. We have been informed by the Lord that a great change is impending--that the lease of power to the Gentile nations is about to expire. We are instructed that the present religious systems of Christendom are to go down, that the rule of the present order is about to end, and that the dominion is about to be given "to Him whose right it is" to reign. The kingdoms of this world are about to "become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever."

This Message is not to be stated in a rude manner. But it is to be stated, nevertheless. The great King whom God hath appointed is about to come in. In Jeremiah's time, the message was that the Kingdom of God, His typical kingdom, was about to be

overthrown. The lease of power to the Gentiles, under the domination of the Prince of this world, was about to be inaugurated. This order of things was to be permitted to run for an appointed time. That time is now about to run out. The King's Son is soon to receive His long-promised inheritance. (Psalm 2:7-9.) We are glad that our Message is not now the *overthrow* of God's Kingdom, but the very *opposite* of this--the overthrow of the kingdom of darkness and the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

So we are to tell forth this glorious Message. We are to tell it in our actions, in our words, by the printed page, by pictorial presentations to the eye, and in every way that the Lord shall give us the opportunity. If through fear of persecution, of losing prestige in the eyes of men, for love of ease, or for any reason whatever, we should fail to give forth the Message of God, it will be taken from us and given to one who is worthy. The Lord is seeking those who are valiant for Him, for righteousness, for truth. If we prove ourselves weak, we are not fit for the Kingdom.

#### ARE WE FULFILLING OUR COMMISSION?

Is this wonderful Message, this Message the like of which was never before granted to men or angels to tell, burning within us? And are we speaking it forth, that

its inspiration may cause other hearts to take fire? Can we sing with the poet:

"I love to tell the Story,  
It did so much for me!  
And that is just the reason  
I tell it now to thee?"

If we refrain from telling the Glad Tidings, the result will be that the fire of God's Holy Spirit will become extinguished within us. And if the light that is within us become darkness, how great will be that darkness! The possession of the Truth--God's Message--brings with it great responsibility. Shall we prove faithful to it? Shall we show to our God our deep appreciation of His loving kindness in granting us the knowledge of His wonderful Message of Salvation, His glorious Plan, with its times and seasons?...

The mysteries of God are now opened up to His faithful children, the watchers; and we are granted a clear understanding of "the deep things of God," some features of which were never revealed until the present time, even to the most faithful of the Lord's saints.--1 Thessalonians 5:1-6.

#### "THE DAY IS AT HAND!"

We are also told by the Apostle Paul that the things which were written of the servants of the Lord in past dispensations were written for *our* admonition and instruction and comfort, "upon whom the ends

of the Ages are come." (1 Corinthians 10:11.) Seeing all these things, dearly beloved, "What manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness?" How earnestly, with what painstaking care, should we give heed to the Word spoken unto us! Let us be faithful in proclaiming the Message of our Lord, now due. Let us tell forth the words which He has put into our mouths, whether others hear or whether they forbear--whether our faithfulness bring us the favor or the disfavor of the world and of nominal Spiritual Israel. But let us speak His Word in meekness and love, leaving the results with our great Chief Reaper. "The Day is at hand!"

"He cometh to His own--  
our glorious King!  
Can human tongue or pen  
show forth such glory?  
Through earth and sky  
let our glad praises ring!  
O Saints of God, tell forth  
the wondrous Story!  
"He cometh now to reign.  
What wealth of joy  
To all the world! Thy matchless  
name confessing,  
O Son of God, we sound  
Thy glory forth  
O'er land and sea--Thy promised  
Reign of Blessing!"

R2806 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

### "LOVEST THOU ME MORE THAN THESE?"

--JOHN 21:15-22.--MAY 5.--

WE NOW come to our Lord's fifth manifestation of himself after his resurrection--some would say the seventh, not counting, as we do, that our Lord's manifestation to Mary was the same referred to in Matthew as his appearance to "the women," and that his showing himself to Peter was in the walk to Emmaus. All of these manifestations, whether we count them four or six, occurred within the first eight days after our Lord's resurrection--on the two first-days or Sundays, and were in or near Jerusalem. What we designate the fifth appearance was in another part of the country altogether--in Galilee--and was probably at least two weeks later. No account is given of the doings of the apostles in the interim, but we can surmise them. They probably waited in expectation at Jerusalem over the third and possibly over the fourth Sunday after the resurrection, and were disappointed that our Lord made no further manifestation. They then remembered, perhaps, the message which Jesus had sent by Mary, that he would meet them in Galilee.

Having no business further at Jerusalem, and their Master and leader having thus disappeared, "changed," so that altho they believed him to be no longer dead he was invisible to them except as he would appear for a few moments talking to them, and again disappear indefinitely, they were at a loss what to do, and decided to return to their home country on the Sea of Galilee. More than this, as active men in the prime of life, they must be doing. Several of them had been fishermen, and Jesus had called them from their nets to be "fishers of men," and they had left all to follow him; but now they could no longer follow him. Everything was changed when he was changed, so far as they could see. They could not carry on the work longer, for what could they preach? How could they tell others of their hopes in a King who had been crucified, and whom they, altho he was risen, could no longer see nor point out to others? They had not yet received their new commission; nor were they quite ready for it.

It is not surprising that under these circumstances seven of them with one consent, under the lead of Peter, determined to reengage in the fishing business. This was the one business in which they had experience, and that only three years before. They fished with nets, and the habit seems to have been to do the fishing at night. This was the very occasion Jesus was waiting for. He wished the disciples to reach the extremity of thinking and reasoning on the matter of his resurrection, and what they should now do, in order that they might be prepared to receive definitely and profitably the instructions he had to give respecting their future course. The reactionary tendency to turn from preaching to the fishing business

would be sure to come; and he considered it expedient that it should come while he was with them, that they might be profited to the utmost in respect to it. Now that they had reembarked in the fishing business the time had come for our Lord to demonstrate to them two things: (1) That he had a mission for them to perform in connection with the fishing for men which they had not yet accomplished, and which his death and resurrection would not interfere with, but rather stimulate and make really effective. (2) It would enable him to demonstrate in a most practical manner that the divine power by which he had hitherto provided for their necessities, and had at times fed multitudes, was still his, and would be continually exercised in their interest if they would continue to obey him.

It is interesting for us to note thus that while our Lord was invisible to the disciples they were visible to him, and all of their plans, arrangements and doings were fully known to him; and he was ready to take advantage of every circumstance and to make all things work together for their good. Thus, by miraculous power exercised in some manner unknown to us, he hindered fish from going into their nets that night. They, not knowing the true situation, were no doubt greatly disappointed, grieved, vexed, at their poor success, and perhaps classed it as a part of failure and tribulation which had in some respects followed them ever since they had espoused the cause of Jesus. And there is a lesson here for each and all of the Lord's people today: <sup>(1)</sup>We know not what is for our highest welfare. Sometimes those things which we crave and desire to grasp, considering them to be good, might really be to our disadvantage. Blessed are they who are able by faith to pierce the gloom of every trial and difficulty and perplexity, and to realize that "The Lord knoweth them that are his," and that he is causing all things to work together for their good. So it was with the apostles: their disappointment became a channel of blessed instruction.

In the dawn of the morning Jesus appeared to them as a man, standing on the seashore. He called out to them to inquire if they had any fish, as tho he would purchase. They replied that they had toiled all night and caught nothing. The stranger then suggested that they cast the net on the other side of the ship, and so humbled were they by their disappointment that they did not stop to argue the question and to declare that they were old experienced fishermen, and that they did not know if he had any experience whatever; they merely concluded that as they had been lifting and casting the net all

<sup>(1)</sup> 1/2 Nov. 2 Manna, 1Sam. 3:18 -- See R2888 for other half.

night they might just as well do it again, and thus demonstrate to the stranger that there were no fish in that vicinity. But behold! immediately the net filled with great fish, so that these seven strong men (Peter, Thomas, James, John, Nathanael, and two others whose names are not given) were unable to draw it, and were obliged to drag it ashore.

Immediately the disciples grasped the thought that the stranger on the shore was Jesus, and none of them more quickly than loving John. The devoted and impulsive Peter whose heart still burned as he remembered the Lord's words, and perhaps as he remembered also his own weaknesses in connection with our Lord's last night of earth-life, could not wait for the boat to take him to the shore, but swam,--apparently fearing lest the Master should disappear again before he would have another opportunity to see and converse with him. When the disciples got to shore with their netful of fish they found, not only Jesus, but a fire and fish thereon already cooked. Here they had the lesson that under the Lord's care and supervision they could either be successful or unsuccessful in the fish business, and that he had the power, not only to give them fish in the ordinary way, but to provide cooked fish by miraculous power if it better served his purpose so to do.

They breakfasted with Jesus, for they knew him --not by any marks of nails, but by the miracle which he had performed. We read rather peculiarly, "None of them durst ask him, knowing it was the Lord;" they were so sure that it was he that they could not think of even seeming to question the fact by inquiry. The conversation while they breakfasted is not recorded, the Evangelist coming directly to the important words by our Lord addressed to Peter, the senior and leader of this new fish-business partnership. He addressed Peter, not as he had been accustomed, by his new name, Peter, but by his old name, Simon, possibly as an intimation to Peter that he had not manifested in the last few days the rock-like qualities implied in his surname, and was now inclined to leave the work for the Church for secular business. And the inquiry was most pointed, "Lovest thou me more than these?"--boats, nets, fishing tackle, etc.? You started out to be my disciple, and now I ask the question, In which place is your heart--with me in the service of the Kingdom, or in the fish business? Peter's answer was prompt, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus responded then, "Feed my lambs" --my little ones--instead of longer following the fish business. Then Jesus said the second time the same thing, and Peter made the same reply, and then our Lord answered, "Take care of my sheep"--give your thought, attention, care, to them, rather than to these fishing implements, boats, etc. Jesus asked him the third time the same question. Peter was grieved with this: it seemed to imply doubt on the Lord's part, and perhaps the third time reminded him that he had denied the Lord three times, and that now the Lord was requiring him three times to confess his love for him. It touched a very tender spot in Peter's heart and experiences, and we may be sure that it was not done by our Lord, even in this delicate manner, with a view merely to pain Peter, but with a view to his blessing, his profit. Peter's confession this time was still stronger: "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

It is worthy of notice that our Lord's words on these three occasions were not exactly the same altho the Common Version so represents them. In the New Testament Greek two words are used for "love," *agapee* and *phileo*. When our Lord said "lovest" in the first two inquiries, he used the former word, *agapas*, which signifies kind love in its strongest, purest and most disinterested form; but in his third inquiry our Lord used the other form, *phileis*, which signifies attachment, duty-love, the obligatory love such as relatives bear toward each other, even when the other, deeper, love is lacking. Peter in all of his answers uses the latter form of the word, thus asseverating his personal attachment and devotion to the Lord, but, in view of recent experiences, he refrained from claiming the highest love for which our Lord inquired. This humility was an excellent sign, as showing that Peter had learned a needed lesson and had ceased to boast, but rather to fear his own weakness. Our Lord's use the third time of the word indicating duty-love grieved Peter specially because by changing the word he implied--Are you sure that you have even the duty-love, Peter? This discrimination as between these two words is borne out by other uses of the same in the New Testament.

#### DUTY-LOVE (PHILEO) ILLUSTRATED

"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.--Matt. 10:37.

Duty-love to our family relatives is right, but it must not equal our duty-love toward the Lord, else we can never follow him as "overcomers."

"He that *loveth* his life shall lose it."--John 12:25.

It is our *duty* to *love* life, in the sense of appreciating it and being unwilling to destroy it or waste it foolishly; but he who has become Christ's disciple and who is pledged to walk in his footsteps even unto death is to remember that he has already surrendered his life as a man, exchanging it for the hope of life as a "new creature," a spiritual being. He is no longer to be controlled by *phileo* or duty-love toward earthly life, but, moved by *agapee* love, he is to willingly lay down his natural life in the service of God--"for the brethren."

"For the Father himself *loveth* you, BECAUSE ye *have loved* me."--John 16:27.

In both of these cases *phileo* signifies duty-love. This was the highest form of love the disciples as a whole could as yet appreciate, as Peter testified. And the Father's love for them was the same *duty-love*: the disciples had not yet received the holy spirit and its *agapee* or higher disinterested love and its character, and hence the Father could not love them for themselves but exercised a duty-love toward them merely *because* they had attained a duty-love toward Christ and had become his friends and disciples.

"If ye were of the world, the world would *love* his own."--John 15:19.

*Phileo* or duty-love is exercised by the worldly parent and child and neighbor on the selfish basis--"*his own*."

"If any man *love* not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be *Anathema Maranatha* [--he shall be accused or condemned to the Second Death when the Lord comes]." --1 Cor. 16:22.

An appreciation of the work of Christ will be expected of all when brought to a knowledge of the salvation which God has provided in him: and whoever refuses to respond in *phileo* or duty-love will be cut off from life early in the Millennial reign. But those who exercise the *phileo* or duty-love will be expected to press forward and to attain the "mark" of *agapee* love, true, disinterested character love,--if they would attain life everlasting. Thank God that the present life does not close the door of opportunity to any that have never known *phileo* or duty-love, nor to *many* who have known this, but have not yet attained *agapee*.

"Love of money," "lovers of their own selves," "loveth to have preeminence," "lovers of pleasure," "lover of hospitality," and *friend*, are from *phileo*, duty-love or a love which has a cause or demand upon it. Peter exhorts that we add to brotherly *kindness* (*phileo*) the next and higher grade of *disinterested love--agapee*.-- 2 Pet. 1:7.

#### DISINTERESTED LOVE (AGAPEE) ILLUSTRATED

"God so *loved* the world that he gave his only begotten Son."--John 3:16.

The love prompting man's redemption was not *phileo* or duty-love, for God had not wronged his creature in the sentence of death; nor had man ever done anything for his Creator which could put the latter under obligation or duty-love in return. God's love prompting to our redemption was *agapee*, or disinterested charity, benevolence, love.

"God commandeth his *love* toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly."-- Rom. 5:8.

This *love* (*agapee*) which God exemplified is the kind he sets before us as the highest standard or "mark" toward which we must run if we would gain the prize; --a mark which is impossible to our fallen flesh, but which is attainable by our renewed minds, wills, hearts. This standard is expressed in the words:--

"Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy soul, mind, strength; and thou shalt *love* thy neighbor as thyself."--Luke 10:27; Rom. 3:9.

"The end of the commandment is *love*."-- 1 Tim. 1:5.

That is to say, the object of all instruction and discipline on God's part is to bring us to this character likeness to himself represented in this word *agapee*-- love; for "God is love [*agapee*], and he that dwelleth in love [*agapee*] dwelleth in God and God in him."-- 1 John 4:16.

We are to recognize as "brethren" those who have only the *phileo* degree of duty-love, as Paul did when he wrote, "Greet [for me] all that *love* [*phileo*] us in the faith" (Titus 3:15); but we are to see to it that we "*love* the brotherhood" (1 Pet. 2:17) with *agapee* or higher love, which counts not present life precious and to be saved, but gladly lays down life for the brethren --in daily and hourly sacrifices of time and money and all earthly interests on their behalf.--1 John 3:16.

Peter contrasts the two loves in one verse, saying, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit unto [the extent of] unfeigned love [*phileo*] of the brethren, see that ye [go on to] *love* [*agapee*] one another with a pure heart, fervently."-- 1 Pet. 1:22.

"Love [*agapee*] worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love [*agapee*] is the fulfilling of the Law."-- Rom. 13:10.

It is *agapee* that is mistranslated "charity" in 1 Cor. 8:1 -- "Knowledge puffeth up, but *agapee* buildeth up."

It is *agapee* that is misrendered "charity" in the Apostle's great discourse on love in 1 Cor. 13:1,2,3,4,8,13; 14:1. Here he styles *agapee* love the principal thing of Christian character, the crown of all Christian graces, telling us that without it all sacrifices and self-denials would be valueless in God's esteem, while with it as the inspiring motive our feeblest efforts are acceptable through Christ.

#### PETER WISELY AND GENTLY REPROVED

So far as the record shows these questions respecting his present love were the only reproof our Lord gave Peter on account of his temporary deflection and denial of his cause; and here we have a lesson which many of the Lord's people will do well to lay closely to heart. Many feel as tho they must exact from a brother or a sister a very decided apology for any act of discourtesy, even tho much less important than Peter's misdeed. <sup>(2)</sup>Let us learn well this lesson of reproving others very gently, very considerably, kindly, by a hint rather than by a direct charge and detail of the wrong--by an enquiry respecting the *present* condition of their hearts, rather than respecting a *former* condition, in which we know that they have erred. We are to be less careful for the punishments that will follow wrongdoings than for the recovery of the erring one out of the error of his way. We are not to attempt to judge and to punish one another for misdeeds, but rather to remember that all this is in the hands of the Lord;--we are not in any sense of the word to avenge ourselves or to give a chastisement or recompense for evil. This is not to be understood as annulling parental obligation to judging and chastening children; tho the principle of love is to have full control there also, to the extent of our judgment. We are to have kindness, love and benevolence toward all, especially toward those who are followers of Jesus. As for Peter and his denial of the Lord, and as to the offences which may come to us through brethren, we may know that under divine providence some corrective penalty or discipline, direct or indirect, always follows; but we are not to attempt to inflict those penalties, nor to impress a condemnation, upon those who are in error and who realize their error, but rather to sympathize with them wisely, by helping them to learn the good lessons.

On the other hand, however, we would all have considered it a noble act on Peter's part had he fallen at our Lord's feet at his first opportunity and entreated his forgiveness for the weaknesses of the past. We would have loved and honored him the more for so hearty a manifestation of his repentance: indeed, altho the account does not so state, he may have done this. And brethren who at any time trespass upon the rights, interests or feelings of others, however unintentionally, should be prompt and hearty in their apologies; even tho brethren filled with *agapee* would not demand this as a condition of fellowship.

In replying to Peter our Lord uses three different Greek words in his three different exhortations: the first time he exhorts him to feed the lambs; the second time to care for or tend the sheep; the third time to feed the weak or delicate sheep. This gives us three views of the Lord's flock. There are the young, the beginners, the lambs, the babes in Christ, undeveloped in Christian *character*, and who need special feeding with the truth,--"the milk of the Word." Secondly, there are the more matured sheep of the Lord's flock, of riper knowledge and character, who have learned to attend to their own feeding upon the precious truth, but who, nevertheless, need tending or guidance, direction, oversight. Thirdly, there are the weak sheep, who for the time ought to be strong, ought to be able to feed themselves upon the bounties which the Lord has graciously provided in his Word, but who, through weaknesses of the flesh, or besetments, or bad provender, or some reason, have not made progress, and are therefore weak in the faith. These are to be fed, cared for. And all of these matters are parts of a bishop's or overseer's duty in the Lord's flock.

While the Lord's words were addressed specially to Peter, as the leader of the group, undoubtedly the instructions were meant also for all of the "eleven," for the apostles were all bishops, all caretakers of the Lord's flock. And the same message is applicable, tho not in the same degree, to all ministers of the truth today; whoever, by the grace of God, is placed in a position of opportunity to feed the Lord's flock should consider it one of the highest privileges of life, and should gladly lay aside every weight and hindrance, that he might thoroughly enjoy and perform this service. Thus the Apos-

tle said to the elders at Ephesus, "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the holy spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God."--Acts 20:28.

These three classes of the Lord's flock are to be found today: the young, the advanced and strong, and the weak and delicate, who need special assistance. Of this latter class many today are in Babylon, and need the helping hand which the Lord's people are able to extend to them--they are weak, impoverished through lack of nourishment, through a famine, not of bread nor of water, but for hearing of the word of the Lord. (Amos 8:11.) They have been hearing the words of human theory and "tradition of the elders" for a long time, and have been starving upon its inconsistencies; and so, wherever found, they are hungering and thirsting for the truth, and need that Peter and all of the Lord's followers shall do with their might what they are able to do to deliver such from the chains of error and darkness by which they are held--to liberate them and bring them in contact with the spiritual food which the heavenly Father is now so abundantly supplying.

In view of Peter's prompt and unhesitating answers respecting his filial or duty-love, the Lord gave a prophecy indicating that he would indeed be faithful to the last; and implying that he would be a martyr by crucifixion, his hands being extended. And tradition tells us that Peter was faithful even unto death, and that being ordered to be put to death by crucifixion by Nero, at his own request he was executed head downward, as being unworthy, according to his own statement, to be crucified as was his Lord.

Our Lord's words, "Follow me," referred not merely to a spiritual following, but he walked along the shore of the sea, the disciples following. Peter having heard the Lord's prophetic declaration respecting himself, seeing John near, inquired respecting his future -- "What will he do? What will happen to him? Will he be faithful unto death, and will he also be a martyr? Our Lord's refusal to answer may be considered rather in the light of a reproof to Peter and a lesson to us all. We are not to question divine providence, but rather to submit ourselves thereto. It seems to be a trait of human nature to think of companionship even in trouble, persecution, etc., and many, like Peter, have wondered why they should have trials and difficulties different from those which came upon some others of the Lord's flock. The Master's answer to Peter is his answer to all such: "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." Each of us should learn the lesson of reliance upon the Lord's wisdom in all of our affairs, whether he has particularly indicated them or left them still obscure. We may know of his love and wisdom and power, and may trust him where we cannot trace him, and be contented whatever lot we see, since we know it is his hand that it is leading.

#### "IF I WILL THAT HE TARRY TILL I COME"

These our Lord's words respecting John, seem to have raised the suggestion in the minds of the disciples that John would not die--that while the others would die he would remain alive until the second coming of Christ. But John himself tells us that Jesus said nothing of this kind; it was purely an inference on the part of the disciples. We may see in John a figure of some of the Church living in the end of the Gospel age--unto the second presence of the Lord. John is not alive, but a class whom he represented has continued and still remains and will then be "changed," etc. <sup>(3)</sup>Let us who are privileged to remain to this time of favor and blessing and enlightenment give glory to the Lord, and see to it that the loving disposition of John is manifested in us, and also his energy, his zeal; for while he is called the loving disciple we are to remember also that he was, because of his impetuous zeal, styled, with his brother, Boanerges--sons of thunder. Let us be full of energy, full of sacrifices which love prompts, that we may glorify our Lord in our bodies and spirits which are his. To this end it will be well that we remember the Lord's words, which applied to the entire seven as well as to Peter, tho he was spokesman for the entire number: "Lovest thou me more than these?" The same question arises with all of the Lord's people today. It is necessary that we have more or less contact with the world, with business, with home duties, with social amenities, etc., and the question is, How shall we discharge our duties, balancing them with our duties toward the Lord, as "new creatures," his "royal priesthood"? Shall the Lord see that we love the earthly things better than him? If so, he declares that we are not worthy of him, and he will not recognize us as members of his Bride. He will have in that select little flock only such as love him supremely--more than they love houses or lands, husbands or wives, or children, or any earthly thing.--Matt. 10:37.

<sup>(2)</sup> Jan. 12 Manna, Gal. 6:1

<sup>(3)</sup> Jan. 11 Manna, Jer. 20:9