

The Little Flock

EDITED BY MRS. A. R. FLOWER

THE RING OF FORGIVENESS.

"Bring forth the best robe and put it on Him, and put a ring on His hand." (Luke 15:22.)

I wonder how much you know about rings? Perhaps you have never thought about them.

There is a great deal of meaning in some rings. The engagement ring, the wedding ring, the signet ring, are all significant. They mean a great deal.

In earlier times rings were often used to mark the rank and office of the wearer.

Whenever a new pope is elected, he receives what is called the fisherman's ring. It has an engraving upon it of Peter in a boat fishing. This is because the Lord Jesus, when He called His disciples, said He would make them "fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19.)

A bishop, too, after he has been set apart to his office, usually wears a ring as a signet.

The early Christians also wore rings with certain figures upon them, which were emblems of their faith. There were the anchor, the palm branch, the dove, the fish. Each was a separate symbol of the Lord Jesus.

The anchor expressed "hope" in Christ, and the palm-branch "victory" in Him. The dove was an emblem of the Spirit of God. The fish spoke of Jesus Christ as the Son of God the Saviour. * * * I think that all this is very beautiful. It is well to remember it while you are girls and boys.

But it is one ring in particular that I want you to think about now. Jesus Christ speaks about it in what I like to call the 'pearl of parables,' in the Gospel of St. Luke. Luke 15: 11-32.

It must have broken the father's heart when his younger son came to him and asked that his portion of the inheritance might be given him.

He wanted to be his own master. The restraints of the home made him most unhappy. His intention was, when he got his share of the money, to go right away from everybody who knew and loved him, and live just as he liked—make friends, too, of whom he pleased. He was anxious to see the world for himself.

It may be that the young man, when he left home, wore a gold ring as the symbol of his rank as a nobleman. Most likely he soon lost that. But after he had spent all, and being in great agony of soul because of his sin, he resolved to return home and acknowledge fully how bad he had been.

Then, when he had returned, sorrowful, penitent, the father put the ring on his hand, to tell him that he was restored to favor as well as forgiven.

It was just as though the ring spoke of love, favor, pardon, spoke of a blotting out—a putting away of

(Concluded on Page 8)

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

With Pentecostal Notes :-: November 9, 1913

7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing

unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

17 For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

21 It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

ABSTINENCE FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS.

(World's Temperance Sunday.)

Lesson Text.—Rom. 14:7-21.

Leading Thought.—Regard for One Another.

Golden Text.—It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth. Rom. 14:21.

1. **Our personal accountability to Christ.** (Vs. 7-12.) (1.) **We are related to Christ as Lord.** (Vs. 7-9.) His resurrection made Him Lord, both of the dead and the living. (V. 9.) "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." Crowning Him Lord in your heart by the Spirit opens your being to the fulness of Pentecost. (2.) **We are related to Christ as Judge.** (Vs. 10-12.) Saint and sinner are alike responsible to Christ in life and death—after death the judgment. (Heb. 9:27.) God's final attitude is determined by our present treatment of Him. (1 Tim. 5:24.) All judgment of all classes is His, leaving us no place to judge. Our place is individual accountability to God. (V. 12.) Instead of judging others we should watch and pray and labor that we may be counted worthy to escape those things that are coming upon the earth and to stand before the Son of Man. Mark in v. 12 three things. (1) Who gives account—"each one of us"—great or obscure, high or low—all will be summoned and must appear. "No respecter of persons." (2) To whom is account given—"to God." Very solemn to consider, and very blessed. Solenn because God is so holy, so pure, so omniscient that His All-seeing Eye penetrates the most hidden recess of the human heart. No deceit, no imagination, no thought is hid from Him. "Thou God, seest me." Blessed because God is tender, just, forgiving, and the poorest, weakest redeemed one will find love and favor in His presence.

(Psa. 86:15). (3) Of whom is account rendered—"himself." Not our neighbor nor brother in Christ, though many times we shield ourselves behind the inconsistencies of others, or else harshly judge those who come not up to our supposed standard. This should forever end criticism and judging among God's people. We are ever watched; not only by Christ, but men and women around us. (V. 7). "The shadow you cast when unwatched, when intent on no great errand, but just living your ordinary life, speaking and acting without any thought of what comes of it, is helping or harming others. "Life or death are alike to the Christian, if our Lord be not come. Life is leaning on His arm (S. of S. 8:5). Death is sleeping in His bosom. (1 Thes. 4:14.) Paul was in a "strait betwixt two" regarding this. (Phil. 1:21, 23.)

2. **Our relation to the Body of Christ and Members in Particular.** (Vs. 13:21). V. 13 is practically the conclusion of the argument in Vs. 7-12, and only love ruling in the heart can enable us to fulfil it. "Love is a higher principle than liberty, and self-denial is a nobler joy than self-indulgence." Note what should be our concern—"no stumbling block." (1 Cor. 8:9-13). V. 14 shows plainly liberty and lawfulness in regard to every day living. (That which is lawful is not always expedient. 1 Cor. 6:12. We should, by following the Spirit, choose ever "that better part"). Love is always greater than liberty and a true Christian should willingly give up a lawful course rather than by its pursuance cause offense and stumbling to a weaker brother. "If Christ gave up His life for us, we can certainly give up our petty rights for others. Never forget that even a weak brother is a brother for whom Christ died." (V. 15). Sometimes regard for others in temporal things adds weight to the words spoken in spiritual things. (V. 16). That thing which will not perish is the kingdom of God. Thank God (Concluded on Page 8)

TIMES OF REFRESHING

From the Presence of the Lord.

Testimonies, Requests for Prayer, Reports of Meetings and General Fellowship.

HEALED AND BAPTIZED.

Along about the middle of February, 1913, I was badly afflicted with a tumor in my side which caused a hemorrhage. I also had dropsy and rheumatism, suffering so that I could not lift the covers to make my bed without my side paining. Our physician said there would be no relief without an operation, and the tumor taken out. He had talked to the operating physician at the hospital about it; but my people objected, thinking I could not stand an operation.

Someone told me that Elder Brennan, who was holding meetings in the Pentecostal Mission Hall at Plymouth, believed in Divine healing. While visiting my daughter there I went to the hall, was anointed and prayed for, thus fulfilling the Scripture of James 5:14. After anointing me Bro. Brennan asked me if I would seek the Baptism, provided the Lord convicted me for it. Such a hungering took hold of me for the Baptism I lost sight of healing and everything else only my great need of Jesus. I began seeking the Baptism and got stronger in body all the time. The hungering for Jesus and the Baptism was the one great desire of my heart.

On the night of April 22 I was in the Mission Hall. The Lord took such hold of me I felt I could never leave the hall until I received the Baptism. As soon as I got to the place where I fully yielded, trusted and believed, Hallelujah! Jesus wonderfully baptized me and such a flood of glory swept over my soul. I praised Him all night, sleeping only about an hour. I was too happy to sleep. I heard the precious words spoken in my soul, "Jesus is coming soon." Glory to His precious name! Two weeks later I spoke in tongues. That was six months ago. The glory shines brighter in my soul today than it did then. Hallelujah! The prophet's words are mine, "Arise and shine for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon thee." Isa. 60:1. Here are some verses I wrote while seeking the Baptism.

THE ROD OF FAITH.

Oftimes in the morning
When all seems fair and bright,
A Red Sea of difficulties
Will rise before our sight;
We find ourselves in the wilderness,
O'erwhelmed on every hand
By sin and fiery trials,
Not by rocks and barren sand.

It seems sometimes the heavens
Were almost made of brass,
When through doubts and persecutions
Our sky is overcast;

But if we hold to Jesus
We'll find joy on every hand,
Faith's rod will smite the waters
And we'll pass thro' on dry land.

Now, I believe God's people
Thro' the wilderness must go,
Of trials and afflictions,
Batting ever with the foe;
When we are all surrounded,
Fiery darts on every hand,
Faith's rod divides the waters,
And we pass thro' on dry land.

There is a mighty conflict
Requiring soldiers brave
To fight the hosts of Satan,
Precious souls to save;
But the hosts of God are mighty
If His saints will firmly stand;
Faith's rod divides the waters,
And we pass thro' on dry land.

Cut loose from every shore-line,
Launch out into the deep;
'Gainst sin in heav'nly places
We'll make a mighty sweep;
Jehovah is our captain,
For Him we'll make a stand,
Faith will separate the waters
And we'll pass thro' on dry land.

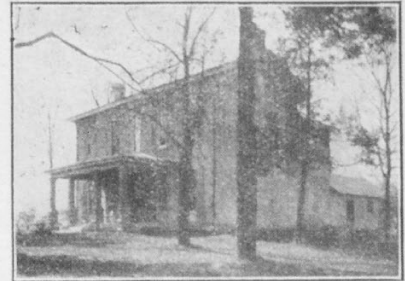
—Mrs. Mary E. Thomas.

Plymouth, Ind., R. F. D. 7, Box 26.
October 17, 1913.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON.

(Continued from Page 7)

it is within us. Its revelation is logical in its order—**righteousness, peace and joy**—then the cement which holds all in place—the **blessed, abiding Holy Ghost**. This is Christ's standard and we who measure up to it should be forever past quibbling over things which perish. To follow Christ in the enlightening and enabling of the Holy Ghost will mean the fulfilling of the higher law of love of which the first was but the forerunner. Questions of dress, food and drink, with a hundred others which Satan uses to bring discord are not as vital as we imagine, and ought never to bring division among God's people. These are only outward, and affect our outward relation to man; that which pertains to God is "the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." That there are and should be restrictions the Word teaches us, but nowhere does the keeping of the law bring us eternal life. Environment, circumstance and personal conviction largely control our understanding and leading in these matters. The law of love plainly forbids the exercise of any privilege which brings moral or spiritual loss to another. (Vs. 20, 21). "Let brotherly love continue." A. R. F.



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Take Christ in His enabling, then you can follow him in his example.

(Continued from Page 7)

all the black and dreadful past. It seemed to whisper the one great word "forgiven." It was as though it repeated more than once: "forgiven, forgiven!"

Would not you like to wear the golden ring of God's favor—God's forgiveness?

I wonder whether you ever had a punishment for bad conduct at school? Do you remember how you blushed when it was found out at home? Your mother's eyes filled with tears as you explained how it was.

It is a much worse thing than that to deserve a bad mark from God, to have sinned against Him. I am afraid all of us deserve many bad marks from God because of our wilfulness and wickedness. We condemn ourselves in His sight many times a day. He is grieved when we go astray, as we often do, like lost sheep.

But if, when you know that you have grieved God by some wayward, sinful word or action, you look up into His face and say: "O Father, I am so sorry that I have grieved Thee. I wish I had not broken Thy laws. I am so troubled at my disobedience. I have not kept my Saviour before my sight. Oh, forgive me for His dear sake. My sin is before me. Pardon me graciously through His shed blood!"—if you really mean it, He will put the ring of His own forgiveness upon your finger. Your tears will be wiped away. He will receive you graciously and love you freely. —Selected.

"He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander is a fool." Prov. 10:18.

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