

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS

REMINISCENCE OF THE OLD BIBLE HOUSE HOME

(Copy of a type-written letter received by a brother.)

A LESSON IN NATURES DISTINCT

Bible House
Arch Street, Allegheny, Pa.
January 10, 1904

Dearly Beloved in the Lord:

On Christmas morning, last, the members of the Bible House Corps were gathered in the parlor of the Watch Tower Home, on our fourth floor, where we were cheerily greeted with the season's good wishes, and after some choice hymns, expressive of our joys and hopes, suggested by the day, and a brief prayer, we were addressed by Brother Russell in such a practical way that it occurred to me that other dear friends who could not participate in person might enjoy the relating of the remarks, and a reminder of the illustrations given, to make them the more pointed.

Brother Russell held in his hand a tiny brown leather purse, and referring to its contents, remarked upon the fact that copper is frequently suggested in the Scriptures as a symbol of human nature—bright, shining and spotless, as a brand new “penny” may be, nevertheless its character is the same—it is copper—subject to tarnishing, possibly, and not of more value than the denomination stamped upon it. So the human nature is subject to change, decay and death—tarnished with sin, and subject to evil conditions in the present state of the race's history, and having no power of itself to be transformed into a better and more enduring and desirable state.

On the other hand, gold is a symbol of the divine nature—permanent, constantly bright, and having the valuable qualities in its very nature, exceedingly desirable. A very small piece of it would be much more valuable than a huge pile of the copper pennies; and with a proper understanding of the value of each, we would be more desirous of obtaining the small bit of gold than the great mass of the copper.

Realizing the fact that we have been, by the grace of God, begotten of the Holy Spirit, to a share in the divine nature, the thought suggested is that there is a small bit of gold represented in our present composition—surrounded, no doubt, by much tarnished copper, but with the gold still there, and very much more precious than all the human nature put together. So, as when opening the little purse, if we should know that a piece

of gold was within, it would be our special desire to search for it, even though it were surrounded by many pennies. We, as new creatures, should be on the lookout for evidences of the new nature in ourselves, even though so small an evidence might be given that we should have to look for it carefully amidst many evidences of the still-clinging human nature; and when in contact with others of like precious faith, our interest should be in the gold nature within (the new creature), and not in the human (copper) side which might be the more prominent.

Suiting his actions to his words, Brother Russell emptied the little purse in his hands, and displayed a shining mass of bright new “pennies”, in the midst of which a gold piece was concealed, but which soon manifested itself by its own superior value and color. Then, as a Christmas token of his love for all of us, he presented to each a similar purse, with many pennies and one gold piece, and the valuable thought which the two metals brought to us.

Subsequently, as a further working out of the symbolical lesson, Brother Russell suggested that those who desired to make a “perpetual investment” of their “pennies” might return them to him, as illustrating the consecration of our human nature to the Lord. Brother Russell said he proposed to carry out a certain project which required a sum of money, and while our pennies were not at all necessary to this work, we would be given the privilege of sharing in it if we desired to make the “sacrifice.” This suggested the thought that while the Lord himself is fully capable of meeting the entire debt of the world, and his ransom-sacrifice could have been so applied had it been desired, yet God has graciously permitted that our poor sacrifices, unworthy and unnecessary as they are, may be added (Col. 1:24) to his great one and thus we be permitted to have a share in the glorious work he has undertaken to do.

We very gladly contributed the pennies, retaining the gold piece, of course, representing the fact that we do not sacrifice our claims to the divine nature, which are ours from the time of consecration, and remain with us into the kingdom.

On New Year’s even, at the general meeting of the Allegheny Church, when new officers for the year were elected, Brother Russell announced the fact that a contribution had been made for the purpose of presenting to all the members of the committees for the past year a framed motto. This was the work in which we had contributed, and in which our pennies, small and slight, had had a share, so that we might be made participators in the gifts that were made. So, as new creatures, offering our little human all, we have the privilege of realizing that we thus participate in the great gift which shall ultimately be made to all the world of mankind.

But there was still another lesson in this matter, which was revealed to us on New Year’s morning. Brother Russell reminded us all of the Lord’s words, “He that forsaketh father,

mother, sister or brother, houses or lands, for my sake, in the present time, shall have an hundred fold, with persecution, and in the world to come life everlasting.” Then he presented to each of us the equivalent of the pennies sacrificed for the motto-gifts, with a percentage added to represent increase of opportunities in the present life, because of faithfulness in using previous ones in sacrifice for the Lord.

As a reminder of the precious lessons thus received, I am enclosing to you herewith one of the pennies returned, with the suggestion of the Lord when he left the “pounds” with his servants—“Trade herewith until I come.” Let us be faithful in using the gifts which the Lord has bestowed upon us, and let us seek day by day in this New Year that we so faithfully trade with the blessings he has given us that our portion shall be a precious word of approval when the work is done and the King shall call us home.

With much Christian love, Your brother in our Redeemer,
A. F. W.