

# The Berean Christadelphian

*A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the exposition and defence of the Faith once for all delivered to the Saints, with the object of helping to make ready a People prepared for the coming of the Lord. Opposed to the unscriptural teachings of the papal and protestant churches of the world.*

**Edited and Published by:**  
**G. A. Gibson 294 Glebeholme Blvd., Toronto 6, Ontario, Canada**

*“They received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many believed.”—Acts 17: 11.*

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**CHRIST IS COMING AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH**

# *The Berean Christadelphian*

Please send all communications and manuscripts to the Editor—

G. A. Gibson, 294 Glebeholme Blvd., Toronto 6, Ontario, Canada

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## WEST AFRICA

ACCRA (Gold Coast)—James Neal, Box 136.

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## EDITORIAL

### Our Identical Convictions

A careful perusal of the New Testament will show to the unbiased reader that the design, or purpose, of the Gospel that was proclaimed to the people of the first century was to take out from among them a people for the name of the Lord. Those who believed the Gospel, and obeyed it in baptism, were stated to be called to the Kingdom and glory of God. It is also revealed that all who are called are not destined to enter the Kingdom for, said Jesus, "Many are called, but few are chosen." The called are distinguished by their faith and works, but the chosen will not be made manifest until the day in which the Lord Jesus Christ will judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom.

The New Testament also discloses the fact that to belong to Christ in the Bible sense, one must *believe the Gospel of the Kingdom, and obey the commandments of Christ*. These two fundamental principles form the groundwork for the association of the true believers one with the other. To say that we believe the Bible is not enough, because there are thousands of nominal Christians who say the same. It is essential, therefore, that we have the Truth defined, and the definition agreed to must form the basis of fellowship among those professing the Truth. Writing on this subject, bro. Roberts said—

"The history of creeds, which have supplanted the Scriptures in past ages, naturally leads some to feel an objection to this basis in a written form, but it is obvious that there are advantages in connection with a written form that outweigh the sentimental repugnance inspired by ecclesiastical precedents. A mere understanding as to the definitions of truth to be received is apt to become dim and indefinite, and the way is open to the gradual setting in of corruption. So long as it is understood that the written definition is not an authority, but merely the written expression of **our identical convictions**, there is not only no disadvantage, but the reverse, in reducing the faith to a form that shuts the door against misunderstanding"—Ecclesial Guide, Sec. 34, par. 2.

The Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith fulfils that which is required. It does not, in any sense, supplant the Scriptures, because it is scripturally defined in a profuse manner. It leaves nothing in doubt. However, to form a true basis of fellowship, *it must express our "identical convictions."* If we say that we meet on the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith, but hold mental reservations regarding any clause, or clauses of that Statement, then we are not "speaking the Truth in love," but are keeping back, or concealing something from those whose fellowship we are enjoying. That this has been done in the past, has been proven beyond dispute, but the most authoritatively definite case to come to our attention is one that has come to light in recent months.

We desire that it be clearly understood that in reporting this case, we do so without any malice whatsoever. Neither are we making an attack upon any brother, or brethren, or criticizing any group. We will deal only with facts for the benefit of those who are deeply concerned about their eternal salvation, and the welfare of the brotherhood at this critical time.

To introduce this case, we quote from the Washington, D. C, ecclesial intelligence which appeared in the "Christadelphian" magazine for February, 1954, page 64—

"Bro. C. H. J. Miller, rec. bro., writes that the Washington ecclesia meeting at 732 Webster Street, N.W., has adopted the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith and welcomes all brethren to the Memorial Table who meet on that basis . . . This meeting, while accepting the teaching of the Amended Statement, was formerly associated with 'The Faith' fellowship, but now recognizes the advisability of the Amended Statement being made the basis of fellowship. The Washington brethren have already been in contact with several brethren and ecclesias in the Central fellowship. We welcome this report from the Washington ecclesia."

After taking the action reported above, this same ecclesia issued a 3-page circular letter captioned "*An appeal from the brethren of the Washington ecclesia to all brothers and sisters who read 'The Faith'.*" Due to lack of space, we cannot reprint the entire letter, but should anyone desire a copy, no doubt the Washington ecclesia would supply one. The following are some of the striking paragraphs in the letter—

"Those of us identified with the 'Faith' have for nearly a quarter of a century struggled to convince the brotherhood of our understanding of fellowship; and so bring together on a comprehensive yet simple basis the several 'Fellowships.' We had hoped that **our understanding, which we believe is a scriptural one**, would grow and that the Lord would come to find a united body of believers. Our efforts have failed, but this does not mean that there is no way, surely. A few have healed, but after many years conditions remain the same. We are still separated from the main part of the body; and that body is about equally divided in this country; the un-amended and the amended parties . . .

"We knew from the writings of brother Roberts, as well as our recent contact with contemporary brethren of the Central (Amended) fellowship, that we were agreed on all essential doctrine. We, therefore, began discussions with the nearest Central Ecclesia, located at Halethorpe, Md., a suburb of Baltimore.

"Our goal was to close the breach between us as the first step toward unity and we hoped that, if we were able to adjust ourselves to their requirements (for we realized that we were hardly in a position to dictate terms), that our other ecclesias would agree, for the greater good of the brotherhood.

"Finding ourselves in accord in doctrine and practice, our next step was to **urge our position relative to fellowship**. We placed before them 'DIVINE REQUIREMENTS FOR SALVATION,' which we publish and which **we believe covers all requirements for baptism and, therefore, for fellowship**.

"These brethren found the 'Divine Requirements' quite satisfactory, but it was **necessary to conform to the traditional use of the Statement of Faith**. It was not that these brethren were of the opinion that the Statement of Faith brought us into actual fellowship, but because they feel that it is their safe-guard and a bond, holding them together, and it is a requirement which

they, as a part of the whole, are not privileged to ignore. They declare that the inspired Word is their basis, the Statement of Faith being but a summary of the essential truths from the inspired Word.

**"We were strongly prejudiced against it,** for some of its phraseology had precipitated many of the controversies of the past. We discussed the 5th Article and found our understanding of the subject to be mutual, in spite of the **misleading expressions used.**"

The next four paragraphs of their letter are a brief review of the Jersey City Conference. We now quote further—

"We knew, even while that Conference was in session, that our idealistic position concerning fellowship would, to a certain extent, have to be abandoned if we were to close the breach between us. Today, in this country, the body of Christ stands divided into two large factions; the one of the un-amended, and the other on the amended statement; the amendment being Article 31, which reads: 'All who know the revealed will of God and refuse to obey it are amenable to a resurrection and judgment.'

"We do not restrict God's power to raise any from the dead whom He deems responsible to judgment, baptized or unbaptized and we believe that those who understand the great Salvation held out to them and wilfully refuse it are in grave danger of judgment, which can only be determined by God, Himself, who reads the hearts of men.

"Our only obstacle therefore was that in order to unite with this larger part of 'The Body' of which we were but the smallest segment, standing aloof, we must adopt the Amended Statement of Faith to identify us as to our standing on first principles. This posed a difficult operation. Our Ecclesia in Washington is an old one. Several of our members have lived through many controversies.

"Their prejudices were strongly set against the adoption of a statement that had figured in so much controversy, but they were determined to try to overcome their prejudice, having dedicated themselves to 'God's Way.' It has always been our custom, in our several ecclesias, to accept the majority decision, else we become disorderly. And is it not true that the many ecclesias form the 'One Church' in Christ Jesus?

**"We are still of the same opinion concerning the Statement of Faith, as to its faults,** but the decision of our Ecclesia was that the Central Brethren were in agreement both in doctrine and practice with us, and, therefore, as unity in the Church was scripturally required, and as we of the 'Faith' fellowship are but an extremely small minority, we submit to the requirement of the majority and adopt the Statement of Faith.

"Let us suggest that if there be among you brethren who find it impossible to overcome their prejudices, that they exhibit an unselfish spirit and step aside from all discussions in order that an impartial decision may be made."

All of the above quotations are plain and easy to be understood, but it should be noted that although the Washington ecclesia has adopted our Statement of Faith, they have not changed their opinion regarding it. To them Article 5 contains "*misleading expressions*" and, regarding the Statement in general, they are "*still of the same opinion as to its faults.*" But above all, the amazing thing about this whole matter is the thought of the Statement of Faith being adopted on the basis of a majority vote, and not unanimously as it should be in regard to matters of doctrine and fellowship. Those "who find it impossible to overcome their prejudices" against the Statement of Faith are asked to "step aside from all discussions" and leave the decision to the others. This ecclesia, like many Christadelphians throughout the world, have a grave misconception of Clause 5 of our Constitution, which reads—

"That we mutually engage to submit to the ORDER and ARRANGEMENTS preferred by the majority of the whole ecclesia."

This clause refers only to *order and arrangements* of the business side of ecclesial life, and when used as it has been by the Washington ecclesia it leaves plenty of room for reservations on the part of the minority, and, possibly, some of the majority too.

This whole matter is characteristic of the times in which we live. At the present time there is a widespread and deplorable looseness in regard to what should form the basis of fellowship among brethren. The cause is two-fold. It is partly due to lack of knowledge and partly from a strong desire to increase numbers, by which the love of the social side of ecclesial life is mistaken for the love of the Truth. Such a course is certain to lead to trouble because of lowered standards of ecclesial life, and eventually a gradual departure from the Truth.

We have no prophet to cry aloud, nor an apostle to rebuke us sharply; but we do have their writings, and these writings speak to us in plain language easy to be understood. A crisis has developed in the brotherhood and there is a burning need for brethren with courage who will carry the banner of Abraham's God, and not let it fall to the ground. Discipline must be restored in the body, and wisdom must be applied in dealing with wrong principles in doctrine and practice before we can ever expect to be among those who will hear the words of Jesus, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." We can only outride the storm by keeping a firm hold on the hope of the Gospel, and—

". . . looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God"—Heb. 12:2. —Editor.

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## The Mystery of Godliness

*By brother John Thomas*

### PART FIVE

#### DEITY MANIFESTED IN FLESH (Continued)

The chief *Eloah* was now born; and, as the STAR OF JACOB cradled in a manger, received the homage of the wise, and the acclamation of the heavenly host. This babe was the "*body made in secret*" through which "THE ETERNAL SPIRIT"—when it should attain to "the fulness of the times"—designed to manifest himself. That time had arrived when "Jesus began to be about thirty years of age." He was now to be "*sent forth*"—

"Being made under the Law, that them under the Law he might purchase from it, that we obtain **the sonship**" (Gal. 4:5).

His sending forth was subsequent to his immersion, and preceded by his anointing with holy spirit. Though born of "YAHWEH'S *Handmaid*" 6 months after John the Immerser, John said:

"**After me** cometh a man who hath been preferred to me; for **he was before me.**"

Isaiah styles him YAHWEH and *Elohim*, in his prophecy concerning John as "*The Voice*" heralding his manifestation; saying,

"Prepare ye the way of YAHWEH, make straight in the desert a highway for our **Elohim**" (Isa. 40:3).

The Father was one *Eloah*, and Jesus was another; so that in this unity were developed two, who, in the Hebrew plural, are termed *Elohim*. Here, then, was a practical illustration of the phrase, so often occurring in the Scriptures of the prophets, "YAHWEH *Elohim*" most incorrectly rendered in the

English Version, "LORD *God*." Based upon this combination of holy spirit and flesh, Jesus said to Nicodemus,

"I say unto thee, WE speak what we do know, and testify what WE have seen; and ye receive not OUR witness."

Here was *plural manifestation* IN UNITY. This is abundantly evinced in all the New Testament. Hence, on another occasion, Jesus said to the Jews,

"I and the Father are one" (John 10:30).

—one what? We are, in the words of Moses, "One Yahweh." The Jews, who "judged after the flesh," were indignant at this, and attempted to stone him for blasphemy; saying that, "because being a man, he made himself Deity." But Jesus rebuked the charge of blasphemy with an *argument* which was unanswerable:

"Is it not written in your Law, 'I said ye are ELOHIM, and **Sons of the Highest**, all of you?' (Psa. 82:6). If He (the Deity) called them ELOHIM to whom the word of the Deity came (that is, to their fathers), and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, 'Thou blasphemest' because I said, 'I am Son of the Deity?'—Know that **the Father is in me, and I in Him**"—and "He who hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 10:34; 14:9).

Such discourse as this was an impenetrable enigma to the Jews. They did not recognize that "the words they heard were spirit"—John 6:63. They judged after the flesh (8:15), and therefore imagined that his words were flesh; that is, the mere utterances of the thinking of the flesh. But he told them this was not so:

"My teaching is not mine, but His Who sent me" (John 7:16).

And John also testified (John 3:34) that,

"He whom the Deity had sent spake **the words of the Deity**."

—as Moses had predicted in Deut. 18:18 concerning the Christ:

"I will put **My words** in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall be, that whosoever will not hearken unto **My words** which HE shall speak in My name, I will require it of him."

And so when the Word became flesh, the Word-Flesh recalled attention to what Moses had written and said (John 12:47)—

"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words . . . the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For **I have not spoken of myself**; but the Father who sent me, He gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak."

—the "*words of eternal life*."

The words, then, that came out of the mouth of Jesus, are to be received as the *direct teaching of the Eternal Spirit*, and to be interpreted of Him. When, therefore, the utterance saluted the ears of the disciples,

"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

—the Eternal Spirit was communing with them from upon the Mercy-Seat, from between two of the Cherubim upon the Ark of the Testimony (Exo. 25:22). He was speaking of Himself, and not of the flesh which He had anointed.

That flesh was the *caphporeth*, coverlid, or propitiatory, to be sprinkled with blood, as the result of the condemnation of sin unto death in the flesh (Rom. 8:3). It was the Veil which, in regard to the Elohim—Jesus and his Brethren—divides their present and future states. It was the veil rent in twain by the stroke of death, in which the ETERNAL ELOAH "forsook" the *Eloah* Jesus; and they continued "twain" until his post-resurrectional *ascent to the Father* (John 20:17).

Such was "the Faithful Witness," as he was before he was "perfected" on the third day (Luke 13:32). He came into the world to bear witness to the truth that he is King of Israel. To this he was faithful unto death by crucifixion; in which he bare *in his own body* the sins of all who through him become the Elohim of Israel, whether by nature Jews or Gentiles (1 Pet. 2:24). When these come to know the Deity, and to believe His promises with honest and good-heartedness, as initiated in Jesus, and to do His commandments, they obtain participation in "THE SONSHIP," and become, even in this present state, *Elohim*, or sons of the Deity.

In view of this moral manifestation of Deity in flesh, termed by Peter "*the Divine Nature*," one of these Elohim, in writing to others of them, says,

"Behold what great love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of Deity. Because the world knew Him not, therefore it doth not know us.

"Beloved, **we are now children of Deity**; but it hath not yet appeared what we shall be: nevertheless, we know that when he may appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every one having this hope in him purifies himself even as he is pure" (1 John 3:1).

"*We are NOW children of Deity*." He is manifested in them through the truth affectionately and righteously believed. If "the Truth as it is in Jesus" be in men thus, Christ, who is the Truth, is in them; the spirit of Christ is in them; for "the spirit is the Truth" (1 John 5:6): which comprehends the exceeding great and precious promises given to us, that by these heartily believed, they may be partakers of the DIVINE NATURE (2 Pet. 1:2-4).

From the premises before us, I presume that the reader will have perceived the development of "A NAME"—a Name of Deity. The Name is a divine manifestation. The Eternal Increate manifested in Jesus by holy spirit. This manifestation is expressed in the formula of "*the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*" (Matt. 28:19).

This is the "Name which is above every name;" and embraces everything attributable to the Father and the Son. To become an *Eloah*, a believer of the right stamp must be immersed into this Name. He will then be "in the Name;" and, consequently, "in Deity the Father and the Lord Jesus Anointed."

A multitude may be in this Name contemporaneously. They in Deity, and Deity in them, by faith and obedience. Thus, the Name which comprehended only two in the beginning, becomes "a great multitude which no man can number." And in reference to these, Jesus, in the days of his flesh, said to his Father,

"I have manifested Thy Name unto the men (the apostles) which Thou gavest me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them me; and they have kept Thy Word. I have given unto them the words that Thou gavest me, and they have received them.

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me. Holy Father, keep them **in Thy Name** whom Thou hast given me, that they may be ONE **even as we**. Sanctify them in Thy truth; Thy word is truth.

"I pray for them also who shall believe through their word into me; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be ONE IN US that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me.

"And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be made PERFECT IN ONE" (John 17:22).

In conclusion then under this caption, the following recapitulation of the points developed in the testimony in regard to this great Mystery of Godliness may be useful as a remembrancer:

1. There is one ETERNAL UNCREATED SUBSTANCE, which is essentially power, incorruptibility, and life, dwelling invisibly in unapproachable light; and known before the days of Moses by the name of AIL-**Shaddai**, "the Strength of the Mighty Ones;" and from his interview with the Angel at the Bush, by that of YAHWEH, or **Yah**, "He Who will be."

2. This ETERNAL POWER is the **Logos**, or Word, which is identical with **Theos**, or DEITY, glowing in light. SPIRIT substantial and corporeal.

3. From Deity, as the centre of the universe, is intensely radiated spirit or power; which is all-prevailing, and fills immensity, and styled "Free Spirit"—the ocean of life, "in which we live, and move, and have being." So that Deity is not far from every one of His creatures.

4. All things are "**out of Deity**." Spirit, by the fiat of His will, becomes substance, both organic and inorganic; and the former, instinctive, or divinely intelligent.

5. The Deity is Wisdom as well as Power. Hence the Divine Nature is a moral nature as well as substantial; so that His moral attributes are constituents of His glory, equally with those of His substance, in its essentiality and power.

6. JESUS OF NAZARETH, in the days of his flesh, was the reflection of the Moral Attributes of the Deity; as likewise are all his brethren who walk in his steps.

7. Since his ascension, he is consubstantial with Deity; that, the peculiar nature he now has is identical with the original substance of the Eternal Power, between which and his own this sole difference obtains; namely, that the substance of Jesus as it is, was created by the Deity out of His own free spirit—**ek tou pneumatos**—whereas His Own substance was derived from no antecedent power or creator.

8. Jesus is the Chief-Begotten **ELOAH** of AIL; and, when sealed with holy spirit at his immersion in Jordan, the Deity **manifested** Himself in him by the truth the spoke and the wonders he performed.

9. In this manifestation the development of the Memorial Name was initiated. The ONE had become TWO; and YAHWEH **Elohim**, in relation to the human race, had become a fact. But,

10. The manifestation of the Name is only **initiated**, not completed, in the person of Jesus Christ. The manifestation of Deity in flesh, by holy spirit or truth, is **amplified** in the characters of the true believers among men, who are "partakers of the Divine Nature" in its moral constitution, as the earnest of their future participation in the Divine Substance, when they shall be as Jesus is now.

11. All the true believers who have been immersed into the Name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit—not three names, but the **One Name** of the DIVINE MANIFESTATION—are a manifold unit—one in many, and many in One. They are "the One who shall be"—the **Yahweh echad**, the One Jehovah, not yet perfected and glorified; but when so, to be "King over all the earth" (Zech. 14:9; Rev. 5:10).

But in order to reach these things fully, I must request the reader's particular attention to the third division of this great Mystery of Godliness—*Deity manifested in Spirit*.  
(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH, IF THE LORD WILL)

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## The Other Side of God's Character

BY BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

"Behold the goodness and severity of God"—Rom. 11:22.

Both these sides of the Divine character have to be recognised before we get a wholesome and scriptural view of Him with Whom we have to do. Both are amply illustrated in the operations of nature, and in the historic doings of God with His people.

It is with the latter illustration we have more particularly to do on the present occasion. The chapter read from Isaiah (58) brings before us the severe side of God's character, and at the same time reminds us of some important lessons we are liable to forget, and upon the remembering and carrying out of which depends our ultimate individual acceptance with Him. Isaiah is commanded:

"Cry aloud, spare not: lift up thy voice like a trumpet and show My people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isa. 58:1).

The prophet was not sent to the surrounding heathen to tell them of their sins, but to *Israel: God's own people*. Sin is by no means confined to those who know not God. The need for condemning sin exists as much, and in a certain sense, *more*, within the house of God than in the outer darkness.

The outer darkness is insensible to appeal; wickedness is its normal condition, so to speak. It knows not God and cares for none of His ways, and reproof would be altogether objectless.

But the house of God is *professedly* founded on submission to the expressed and enjoined will of God. And the people composing it are in danger of resting on this *collective profession* while *individually* acting inconsistently with it. Thus it was with Israel:

"They seek Me daily **and delight to know My ways** as a nation that did righteousness and forsook not the ordinance of their God" (Isa. 58:2).

They crowded the Temple at the appointed times: they brought the sacrifices and kept the feasts, and took a certain delight in these things, but *privately* they acted in opposition to the spirit on which the whole institution was founded. Jesus tells us what this spirit was. He says (Matt. 7:14),

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets."

Or, as he on another occasion expressed it (Matt. 22:40)—

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself: **on these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.**"

That is, the whole framework of the Divine work on earth hitherto owes its form to the need there is for *these two principles* obtaining the ascendancy. The whole object of the Law and the whole end of the things revealed to the prophets is the establishment on earth of—

"Glory to God in the highest: peace on earth, goodwill among men."

In view of this, we can comprehend the odiousness in the Divine eyes of religious exercises devoid of the double-sided animating principle which is the very root and spirit of—

". . . pure religion and undefiled" (James 1:27).

Israel gloried in the Temple: boasted of their Law, attended with a certain delight on the Divine institutions connected with them; but they gave not God the glory; they took it all to themselves, which is the universal weakness of human nature. Their boasting was carnal; their pride was a fleshly pride altogether as it is at this day; their satisfaction was with themselves. *Therefore God took no pleasure in their approaches to Him.* In Isa. 1 He says,

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts. Bring no more vain oblations. Incense is an abomination to Me.

"The new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies I cannot away with. It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and appointed feasts My soul hateth; they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them."

Or again (Zech. 7:5)—

"When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months . . . did ye at all fast unto Me? When ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did ye not eat for yourselves?" (Zech. 7:5).

So that as regards what Jesus declares to be "the first and great commandment," Israel's approaches to God were lacking of one element which above all other makes God take pleasure in the worship of His people. With their *lips* they drew near; but their *heart* was far from Him.

Consequently, their attendance at the Temple and offering of their sacrifices, though actually required of them, were in vain. Their rendering of them was to an extent obedience, because they had been required, but it was obedience without the right intention. There was no intelligence of love towards God. It was salt without savor.

And as regards "the second commandment which is like unto it," their religious observances were equally devoid of the acceptable spirit. They were not controlled by a benevolent regard for their neighbor's case,

"Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness . . . Is not **this** the fast that I have chosen—to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

"Is it not to deal bread to the hungry and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" (Isa. 58:4-7).

Now, is there no lesson for us in all these things? Doubtless there is. Paul tells us these things were "written for our learning." And is it not plain as the noonday that like Israel, we may deceive ourselves as regards our standing towards God, if we content ourselves with a merely technical compliance with the instructions of the house of God?

*Is there no possibility that we may presume too much upon our knowledge of the Truth, and our baptism, and our breaking of bread from week to week?* These ways are Divine, and in their right place indispensable: but what if at the same time it is man more than God that is before our eyes in the doing of these things? What if we sing and pray merely as the right sort of thing to do without opening the heart to God in sincerity, fervency and fear?

What if the glory of God be but a phrase on our lips, and a sentiment in reality foreign to our hearts? What if we shut up the bowels of our compassion towards those who suffer? What if with plenty in our hands, we think only of our own need, and our own comfort, and our schemes are shaped and burdened only and continually with our own cares and our own interests?

What if we never help the heavy burdens under which so many around us are staggering to the grave? What if we practise a habit of absolute indifference to the yokes and the oppressions and difficulties which are crushing our neighbors on every hand?

Is it not obvious that in that case, we are in the exact position of Israel, "delighting in Jehovah's ways" after a fashion, but to no profit, because He takes no pleasure in us? It is a frequent thing in the New Testament for reference to be made to the experiences of Israel as affording lessons for those who have come into the bond of the covenant through Christ in baptism.

A Calvinistic and unscriptural theology has destroyed the force of all such allusions for the majority of persons; but it is our privilege to have been delivered from this as well as other corrupting forms of human tradition. Let us therefore seek to realize the full import of Israel's experiences as bearing on ourselves. Paul says (1 Cor. 10:6) the things that happened unto them were—

"Our examples to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. . . All these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

This last sentence is the whole point of Paul's allusion to Israel in writing to the Corinthians. In writing to the Romans (11:20- 22) he says something substantially the same—

"Because of unbelief they (the Jews) were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee.

"Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

Again, in writing to the Hebrews, he says (3:12; 4:1)—

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God . . . for some (Israelites) when they had heard did provoke . . . so we see they could not enter in because of unbelief.

"**Let us, therefore, fear** lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

With these apostolic instances before us, we see how warrantable and wholesome a thing it is to *judge ourselves* in the light of what God has said so largely in the prophets concerning Israel's position and behavior before Him.

From this source, we shall be able to draw large supplies of practical guidance and instruction on points that even the New Testament may have left dim; and in this treatment of the prophetic Scriptures, we shall see new force in Paul's declaration that all Scripture (by which he referred particularly to the prophets) given by inspiration of God, is—

". . . profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16).

Returning to the point which this was introduced to illustrate, it is very *possible for us to be in the position of Israel*. We may be zealous of the Divine ordinances in the same way. We may have a

liking for the Gospel theoretically; we may attend and enjoy the meetings: and *in a manner be as strongly in with the Christadelphian position as the Jews were with their Temple*, and yet be lacking in the spiritual element that makes these things acceptable to God as part and parcel of a faithful service.

They are good in their place: Divine in their place: indispensable in their place: but if unaccompanied by the sentiment toward God which sincerely offers ALL to Him, and that disposition toward man which prompts to *deeds of blessing and mercy*, it may be all in vain, for "on these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets," and therefore, all the Gospel and all the meetings and the whole machinery of the Divine service of our day. Therefore, what can we say more to the point than what Paul says?

"LET US, THEREFORE, FEAR."

Jesus says—

"Salt is good; but if the salt have lost its saltness, it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be trodden under foot of men."

The connection in which he said this shows his meaning, and his meaning strengthens the idea before us. He was being followed by a large multitude of people (Luke 14:25)—

"And he turned to them and said, If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple . . .  
"Salt is good, but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor fit for the dunghill."

—which was as much as to say, "This coming after me is good, *but not if it is disconnected from the state of mind which I require in my disciples.*" This latter is the savor or saltness of the salt.

The appropriateness of the simile must be apparent to all who have any experience of men in spiritual things. The man of spiritual understanding in whom this understanding has developed spiritual affection or a decided, pronounced, and fervent affinity for the things of God, in all their relations and manifestations, is a man of saltness, pleasant to the taste.

But how *often* it is that, with a *knowledge* of the Truth, there has failed to come the loving espousal of Divine views of men and things. The man knows the Gospel intellectually and has a faint desire to be saved, but his affections are with the thoughts, ways, aims, movements, men and things of the present evil world.

There is no fervent submission to God; no adequate appreciation of Christ. Dull and irresponsive to spiritual things, *he is quick, active, intelligent and enterprising in all directions of self-interest*. The salt is there in the profession of discipleship, but it is a mere powder without taste, of no use for the King's table.

The great object of the Gospel is to bring men into the well-salted state in which their relation to God is a *very thorough, hearty, pronounced and UNCOMPROMISING thing*. Christ is the illustration of what is wanted. He is the first-born among many brethren, to whom all the rest are pre-required to be conformed as to the likeness of an image. Now there is no mistaking his case, and *we are in no danger of going beyond him*. He declared in simple but expressive terms—

"I am not of this world" (John 8:23).

—and his whole course illustrates the meaning of the language. He stood aloof from men in so far as they stood away from the Divine foundation. He took no part in their movements, patriotic or

otherwise. The duties of citizenship he discharged passively, as in the case of paying taxes. His attitude towards the world was that of protest and dissociation.

He "testified of it that the works thereof were evil (John 7:7)," by which he earned hatred and destruction. *He had no apologies or spare sympathy for the enemies of God.* He pursued a perfectly independent course, as insensible to the censure of the world as he was above their favor. He never took public opinion or public criticism into account. His one simple aim was to do the will of Him who had sent him—a will utterly inconsistent with popularity and favor.

*Now his testimony concerning his disciples is that their part is to try to follow in the course he has pursued before them—*

"I have given you an example" (John 13:15);

"If the world hate you, ye know it hated me before it hated you;"

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24);

"No man is worthy of me who loves himself or friends more than me."

Consequently, there is no room for the contention of those who are fain to think that Christ's case is no standard for us to go by. *Christ's case is the standard and the ONLY standard: and those who speak of it as "too high," are speaking against the Word.* There will be no other standard in the great day of Christ which will shortly come upon us all.

The so-called "churches" have so lowered and bedraggled the Gospel in the mire of human sentiment, that it has become almost constitutionally difficult with many to receive the Truth on this point. Well, there were disciples in Christ's own day who, when they heard him on certain topics, said—

"This is a hard saying: who can hear it?" (John 6:60).

—and from that day, turned back and walked no more with him. It is not wonderful, if in our deserted day, there should be a similar resistance to the claims of the Eternal Spirit speaking in the Holy Oracles.

*It will be found at last a terrible thing to fight against God.* The only course of sane men is to receive and follow Christ without the least reservation, regardless of disadvantage to themselves or misconception on the part of others, knowing that it is written:

"Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls unto Him in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator."

They cannot do more than lose their life for Christ: and *thousands have done this before them,* concerning whom Christ says, they shall be saved in the day of his power when all merely human hopes and schemes and honors will be wrecked for evermore.

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### TRIBULATION WORKETH PATIENCE

*"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered"—Hebrews 5:8.*

It is God's method of perfecting character and laying the foundation of lasting joy. We may be quite sure there is no mistake about it. We may be quite sure that God's way is the best. We may be quite sure that goodness will be all the sweeter and salvation all the more precious, and glory to God all the more fervent, for the prelude of suffering and weariness and waiting that goes before.

We know from experience that no one is ripe till he has known trouble. He may be good, but he is unsympathetic. He may be interesting, but he is not entirely disinterested. There is always a

degree of refined selfishness (and sometimes not very refined) about those who have only known of pleasure. Trouble, if there be the right stuff to work on, removes the dross of the character, subdues and purifies and refines and ennobles, and makes fit for the kingdom of God.

Therefore it is that the community of the glorified saints, as a whole, are described in the Apocalypse as "those who have come out of great tribulation.—Bro. Roberts.

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## The Image and the Stone

### PART FIVE

*"The stone sank into Goliath's forehead"—1 Sam. 17:49*

Here is typically fulfilled the Edenic promise that the woman's seed should bruise the serpent's head. The antitype stretches from Calvary to the destruction of Nebuchadnezzar's image. Smiting the *feet* of Nebuchadnezzar's image indicates the time and circumstance of the smiting. Smiting the *head* in the case of Goliath indicates (as in the Eden promise) the mortal, final nature of the blow.

The location of the blow teaches us that, to illustrate another aspect, the application of the time symbol is reversed—Goliath's *head* represents the same latter-day period as the Image's *feet*. Perhaps one thing this indicates is that in the time of the end human knowledge will have reached its apex, as Daniel was caused to prophesy (Dan. 12:4). Looking at the race in the figure of a man, the present is the period of its greatest mental accomplishment—the forehead period. It is very fitting that the Little Stone should strike it there—at the height and culmination of its pride.

Goliath was six cubits—and *a span*. The striking down of the image is at the end of the 6000 years of human rule—the transitional *span* period, when, like the original head-kingdom of Babylon, it was "*measured and found wanting*" (Dan. 5) and therefore given into the hand of Cyrus who proclaimed the return of the captives and the rebuilding of the Holy City.

"And he fell on his face to the earth" (v. 49).

To fall on one's face is an indication of the humblest subjection and obeisance. Such will be the position of all who constitute the kingdom of men when the Little Stone's work is done.

Christ destroys the kingdom of men, but he does not destroy all the individual people that make up that kingdom. So we can see a little more in this stone *sinking into the forehead*. The forehead represents the mind. To be sealed in the forehead (as in Rev. 7:3) is to have something impressed on the mind. So the Little Stone impresses itself into the minds of all people—

"The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord."

"All shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest."

—and this knowledge and recognition will bring them to the position of humility and worship: they will "fall upon their faces to the earth."

"But there was no sword in David's hand" (v. 50).

He had no military weapon. His sling was just that of a shepherd—just designed to keep prowling animals from his sheep. He faced Goliath with just the equipment of his natural, peaceful occupation. Two principles are here emphasized—one applying to the first advent of Jesus and our present dispensation; the other to the future manifestation of divine, irresistible power.

"The weapons of **our** warfare are not carnal" (2 Cor. 10:4).

It was David's *faith*, rather than his skill or strength, that slew Goliath. Indeed, for this combat he deliberately *refused* the armor and weapons of warfare, realizing that his only hope lay in complete dependence on the help of God. As he himself said:

"The battle is the Lord's ... God will deliver thee to me" (vs. 46-47).

It is the lesson of Gideon, reiterated by Jonathan (1 Sam. 14:6)—

"There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few."

But the cryptic remark about there being no sword in David's hand applies also to the day of Christ's power (Zech. 4:6-7)—

"Who art **thou**, O great mountain?"

—"Who is this *uncircumcised Philistine*?"—

"Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain... not by might, nor by power . . ."

—that is, not by *human* might or power—

". . . but by MY Spirit, saith Yahweh of Hosts."

*"There was no sword in David's hand."*

\* \* \*

"Therefore David ran . . . and drew out Goliath's sword . . . and cut off his head therewith" (v. 51).

In the destruction of the great day of God's wrath—

"Every man's sword shall be against his brother" (Eze. 38:21).

The armies of the great image are cut up by their own weapons. Then shall be fulfilled the warning and the promise—

"All that take the sword shall perish with the sword . . . Here is the patience and faith of the saints" (Matt. 26:52; Rev. 13:10).

\* \* \*

"And David brought the head of the Philistine to Jerusalem."

Heads stand for rulerships. This is the obvious and natural meaning—often used in the Scriptures. So David's act symbolized the cutting off of all ruling power, and transferring all the world's headship and authority to Jerusalem—"city of the Great King."

"But he put Goliath's armor in his tent" (v. 54).

This is recorded in *contrast* to the taking of the head to Jerusalem. It surely must have some significance: what is the point in it? Perhaps the connection of thought in Isa. 2 gives the answer:

"Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem . . . Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. 2:3-4).

Here the rulership being centered in Jerusalem is connected with the worldwide abolition of war. Throughout the Bible, "*tent*" signifies a passing, impermanent condition of things—something temporary. Paul points out in Heb. 11 that because of faith Abraham, Isaac and Jacob dwelt all their lives in tents, thus testifying that they were but pilgrims in a passing state of affairs.

The Rechabites in Jeremiah's day dwelt in tents instead of houses like the rest of Israel (Jer. 35:7) as a testimony to their separation and pilgrimage among the corruptions of Israel; as a witness that the present was not permanent—that *it was not the promised eternal Rest of God*.

So to put the armor and weapons of war in the tent, in contrast to taking the head to Jerusalem, shows that they represent a passing state of affairs—that war must pass away and be superseded by eternal peace—

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord" (Isa. 11:9).

The final verses of this chapter (1 Sam. 17) have occasioned difficulty to some—the fact that Saul does not appear to recognize David, though David had formerly been with him, and had been accustomed to play before him to soothe his troubled spirit.

But there are several possible factors that could explain these circumstances. A year or two (perhaps more) could have elapsed between. This would be most likely the time that David would be changing from a beardless youth to a full-grown, bearded young man. Moreover, Saul's mental condition was subject to violent changes, involving recognition.

Possibly, too, the spirit of Saul's enquiry may have been: "Who is this person who has such fearless faith, and through whom God has wrought such wonderful deliverance?"—after the spirit of the disciples' awed exclamation (Matt. 8:27):

"What manner of man is this, even the wind and sea obey him!"

Whatever may be the solution of this point, this closing incident forms a striking and fitting conclusion to a chapter of great figurative significance. *David comes before the rulers of Israel after having wrought deliverance in the face of a menace that had terrified the nation*. Saul the ruler says to Abner the captain of the host: "Who is this?" Do not our minds turn irresistibly to a similar event?—

"**Who is this** that cometh from Edom?" (Isa. 63:1).

—that comes from the slaughter of the oppressors of Israel.

"What are these wounds in thine hands? . . . Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zech. 13:6).

David had previously appeared before Saul in the position of a healer whose ministrations were designed to soothe Saul's mind and banish his evil spirit. On later occasions we know that in these fits of evil, Saul more than once attempted to slay David who was trying to heal and help him. It is quite possible, therefore, that Saul had made similar attempts before, for we know that something had caused David to leave Saul, though Saul's malady and need for David's help continued. How fitting, then, is this final scene in which the mighty deliverer reveals himself as the one who had previously been among them as the gentle healer from Bethlehem!

"And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (1 Sam. 18:1).

Jonathan—the faithful, unselfish, spiritually-minded member of Saul's household—his soul was knit to the soul of David. His love for David was greater than the love of women (2 Samuel 1:26).

This spiritual union of Jonathan and David, following David's great labor of deliverance—*the most striking instance of mutual love in Scripture*—is it not typical of the joyous marriage supper of the Lamb? "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David."

"Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul" (1 Sam. 18:3).

We have been called out of the perishing world to be a party to a love of which this—however wonderful—is but a shadowy type. There is no power in the world like the ennobling, transforming love of God—

"God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

Let us therefore draw near to God with a pure heart—eager to receive, and absorb, and deeply enjoy the full measure of the power of divine love.

*"For the things which are seen are temporal:  
But the things that are not seen are eternal."*

—G. V. G.

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## **"The Barren Hath Borne Seven"**

*"I am a woman of sorrowful spirit . . . out of the abundance of my grief have I spoken"*—1 Sam. 1:15.

Living as we do in the closing days of the Gentile dispensation, we can derive good exhortation from the lives of many individuals of whom God's servants have spoken. The closing days of the time of the Judges have their counterparts in our own generation. God has intended that we should be thoughtful hearers of His word. He knows that we sorely need these lessons:

"He knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are dust."

He Who was so long suffering with Israel, shall He not take thought for His elect, though He have to bear long with them?

Israel spiritually had come a long way from the implicit faith in God shown by Abraham. It was also a different Israel that had stood round Joshua in his old age and witnessed to their faith—

"The Lord our God will we serve; His voice will we obey."

God had brought them very low many times in the succeeding 250 years; only to exalt them when they turned with penitent hearts to seek His grace. But as God declared through Isaiah—

"Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass . . ."

—therefore He was leaving them to their own devices once again. And God's servant was caused to record of their times (1 Sam. 3:1),

"The Word of God was precious in those days; there was no open vision."

As the people turned from God, so He turned from them:

"I will be nigh unto those that draw nigh unto Me" (James 4:8).

Conversely, as God told Eli,

"They that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. 2:30).

The Israelites had an outward show of righteousness; the offerings of the Lord were still performed, the yearly feasts were still observed, but *spiritual values were ebbing away*. Formalism, ritualism, indifference and show had displaced that robust faith that the ordinances of God were designed to develop.

It is in such a time that we find a family of Levites brought before us as examples; a man and his two wives; Elkanah, Hannah and Peninnah. And as we look in upon their lives we might be looking in upon the lives of many families in Israel—spiritual Israel—today; or even the ecclesia together.

We find two women working side by side, each having the same opportunity to serve God faithfully. Peninnah was blessed greatly by God. Hannah it appears was forgotten. To the natural mind would come this conclusion. But let us look a little closer. God works in various ways in the lives of those whom He selects as His jewels.

Peninnah, though being blessed with many children, was not thankful to God in respect of her blessing. The consideration shown to her by the Lord caused the development of untoward characteristics in her breast. She gloried in her position and even taunted her partner in the matter. Pride and arrogance became the motives of her life. Probably imperceptibly to start with, gradually more and more, until open hostility was manifest in her every action toward Hannah. *This was going on in an apparently godly family*. She had a name to live but was dead spiritually.

Should we chastise ourselves so repeatedly by making the application to ourselves? In our mortal state it is very evident that we must. We cannot trust ourselves for one minute, without the danger of swerving from the narrow path. Peninnah's attitude happens many times in spiritual Israel. We are all in degree blessed by God. Many times however we lose sight of the Giver of all gifts and appropriate the honor for our possession unto our efforts.

We may feel sometimes that we have worked very hard to attain what we have, but we must always remember that there are many others who have worked equally as hard and harder who have not been so blessed as we. God is the disposer of all things. He giveth and He taketh away; so said the patient Job, "*Blessed be His name.*"

"The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: He bringeth low, and lifteth up" (1 Sam. 2:6-7).

Let us remember that God besides giving can also take away. It is of prime importance that we understand, that we have been called by God and that He is using us and fashioning us as jewels for the adorning of the new Jerusalem. The manner in which He fashions us rests with Him.

"Shall we then say, Why hast Thou made me thus?" (Rom. 9:20).

We have the assurance that we shall be provided for. Beyond that, God works His will in the development of character. If in the polishing process there are manifest flaws in the rough stone, which are irremovable, or which are aggravated under the grinding wheel, finally the cutter will discard the product as useless. Therefore said Hannah (1 Sam. 2:3)—

"Talk no more exceedingly proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed."

Where Peninnah lacked in a knowledge of the working of the Divine Hand, Hannah excelled. She sorrowed because of her lot, but it was not a sorrow of despair. We all grieve under the chastisement which God brings upon us (Heb. 12:11)—

"No chastisement for the present seemeth to be joyous, but the trial of our faith worketh patience in them who are rightly exercised thereby."

Hannah realized, as few of the earth's inhabitants do, that God was very active in the affairs of His servants. This was a fundamental which was shown in the lives of all the faithful. The circumstances which came upon them were overruled by a Divine hand, and they recognized it.

But this principle had grown dim in the minds of Israel as their interest in their Creator ebbed and flowed while under the Judges. It was, even at its strongest period, only keenly understood and grasped by the few. Of some of those few God has caused a record to be preserved as evidence to strengthen the thoughtful.

Is God in the minutest happenings of our every day lives? Is there a servant of His who would doubt it? But do we just give nominal assent unto the principle, while forgetting its bearing upon us from the beginning of the week unto the end? There can be no true conception of God which would eliminate His presence from our inmost thoughts, our minutest concern. Gradually this truth should become a living reality with us. It must form the basis for all we do.

We must come to reason that—with God's presence so nigh, with His influence over us so great, with His concern for us so gracious and merciful—He is guiding our lives into channels which will refine us for His use in the Kingdom. The evidences of these things are clearly visible for all to perceive who possess His Word.

And so we find Hannah chastened sore by God, yet never despairing that His mercy would follow. Trials vary in length; some are greatly extended, others are short and severe. God knows which is requisite for each heart.

To Hannah there came years of unhappiness, and particularly at the season of year when the people should be rejoicing in the goodness of the Heavenly Father. As they journeyed to Shiloh to the yearly feasts, so her adversary provoked her. Just when her heart should have overflowed, and no doubt wanted to rejoice in the knowledge that God had saved His people from Egyptian servitude—a sign of the Divine deliverance of the race in Jesus Christ—even then was Hannah burdened with the anguish engendered by an inconsiderate partner.

Yet we see the faith and courage of this woman. The bitterness of the journey which had become commonplace did not deter her from the undertaking. The law of God required the observance of these feasts. She did not excuse herself on the basis of the difficulties or conditions. Obedience came first, personal considerations must be subordinated. So she obeyed. And so must we. She did not run away from the ordeal, for she knew it was from God.

Therefore because it was from God she took the matter to Him. And while her family was eating the feast with gladness she stole away to the confines of the Tabernacle, there to pour out her aching heart unto the Lord.

And she was entirely oblivious of her surroundings. She knew in Whom she trusted. She realized His power. She knew that He who could open the sea to permit the passage of a nation, could answer her simple petition if it were His will. *If it were His will.* Our minds go to Christ's final words,

"Not my will, but Thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

—a humble recognition of a Divine plan and a subordination of self that it may be accomplished. Can we ask of the Lord those things which are contrary to His wishes, and anticipate their fulfilment? James warns us in this respect,

"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3).

While John instructs (1 John 3:22)—

"Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because (or if) we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John 3:22).

It might be thought that Hannah wished to be in position of glorying over Peninnah, due to the persecution she had received. But her thoughts were far from malice and anger. Her petition bespeaks the noble character of the woman, well acquainted with the hand of God:

"O Lord of Hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of Thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget Thine handmaid, but wilt give unto Thine handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life."

She was no doubt conversant with the nature of Isaac's birth, how Sarah was strengthened in her old age to bring forth a son. Other key men in the Divine plan have been born due to the Creator's intervention—Samson, John the Baptist, and even our Lord and Saviour, of whom the others were types.

The very thing that Hannah wanted most she promised to give away. This action on her part reveals the motivating force behind her keen desire for a son. She wished to be of service unto the Creator. She felt that she wanted to make some direct contribution to the plan of God, to be a mother in Israel. It remained for the Master to clearly delineate the Father's concept of a true mother:

"She that doeth the will of my Father, the same is my mother."

Did Hannah measure up to this standard? Do the mothers in our ecclesial family reach this standard? It is a question that must reach each breast, and search each heart. There must be an introspection on the part of each, to see that they are truly *mothers* in the Divine sense. Hannah was a mother in the eyes of God in far greater measure than her partner. So she was caused to utter:

"The barren hath born seven; (the symbol of perfectness), while she that hath many children waxed feeble (spiritually)."

There was no rancor in Hannah's heart; this was spiritual understanding of the Divine mind.

Let us look at Hannah again. In the midst of her fervent petition to God she is sharply rebuffed by the High Priest. Was not the affliction of a malicious associate enough to try her faith beyond endurance, without the misunderstanding rebuke of the Lord's anointed? Surely God knew her heart. Yes, He knew, as He knows each heart here present.

How human it would have been to have retorted sharply to the unjust charge of drunkenness on her part! To some such a course might easily be justified and deserving.

This incident shows how slow we must be when judging appearances or formulating conclusions without possession of all the facts. Let us be very reticent to speak of others' faults in any

way, in view of our entire lack of the power of the Spirit. If Eli, in such an elevated position over God's people, could err in judgment, let us beware of our human nature.

Offences of this type are bound to come while we are compassed about with infirmity. But a soft answer turneth away wrath, and what could amount to an unremediable breach, may turn into a bond of affection of enduring worth.

It is in the power of each to lend their unlimited energies to this Divine characteristic, and it must be exercised if we would preserve ourselves, our families, and our ecclesial life as a wholesome unity to serve God.

Hannah once again manifested her humble character, and established a basis for the development of her plans for the future. If she had acted otherwise in the discourse with Eli, the acceptance of her son under Eli's care would have been very difficult.

How little we know of the future in respect of our own lives! How increasingly important then it is for us to guard our every action! What today may appear unto us as entirely justifiable and right, may, if not measured by the Word of Truth, prove to our shame and embarrassment in the future, even in this life. Human nature is most unreliable. Let us not trust to ourselves.

*What to Hannah appeared at first as reviling, turned to her as a blessing*, and that from the highest court in her land, even the mediator between God and His people:

"Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thy petition."

Yes, and God *did* grant her petition. She had proven that she was a worthy mother in Israel, and suitable to instil the first important lessons of godliness within the babe Samuel. God chooses His servants well; He proves them, though He knows their frame; He refines them and brings out the nobler and richer hues of their characters. *He makes no mistakes.*

He still continues the process. We too, are under His care. Is He a real living God unto each of us? Are we conscious of His closeness—that we are really guided and directed? If we truly believe His words that we are called His "sons and daughters," how can we feel otherwise? This being so, must we not submit ourselves under His mighty hand, and accept without complaint the portion He has selected for us? *Any other course is an obstruction of God in His consummation of our eternal salvation.*

Hannah was faithful to her promise, regardless of how difficult the carrying out may have been. God's blessings require a reciprocation on our part. The love of God toward his children can only grow by a responsive reflection of Divine attributes. Hannah returned unto God what she had received by petition, her son Samuel (*Asked of God*).

We leave her as she performs the yearly sacrifices and brings a little coat for her firstborn son. Insignificant though this loving and tender act on the part of a righteous woman may appear, yet how full of meaning and understanding on Hannah's part! It carries the mind to the consummation of all our hopes, and no doubt was in the mind of Hannah as she clothed her son. Did she not look forward in faith to the day of earth's redemption, when God—

". . . raised the poor in spirit out of the dust, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: when the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth and give strength unto His King, and exalt the horn of His Anointed."

So she rejoiced in God her Hope, while clothing her son with a typical *garment of salvation, and robe of righteousness.*

As we leave Hannah, let us retain her beauty of character. Let us strive to emulate her humble everyday life. She no doubt was in the Spirit's mind when the words of Hebrews 11 were recorded, among the cloud of witnesses, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises. *Are we also in the Father's righteous family?* —E. F. H.

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## Through Much Tribulation

*"But the Jews raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas . . . and the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit"*—Acts 13:50-52.

How often it is that adversity dulls the cravings for worldly things and sharpens the pleasures of divine joy! We are many times told how the disciples found this unearthly joy in the midst of trouble and distress.

Those things which naturally seem to be blessings—ease, luxury, comfort, prosperity, and men speaking well of us—usually prove the greatest dangers and pitfalls and yield a large harvest of sorrow; while those things that are shunned and despised by men—toil, distress, persecution, necessity, and the opposition of the world—are rich, fruitful soil for the seeds of divine joy and peace.

Why is it so? Why is prosperity degenerating to us? Why are times of luxury always times of laxity? Why does it take tribulation, as Paul says, to work patience and godliness (Rom. 5:3)? Why must we "*through much tribulation enter the Kingdom of God*" as we read in v. 22 of this 14th chap, of Acts?

The answer lies in our very constitution. That which *gratifies* the flesh *stifles* the spirit. The more the flesh, with its lusts and ambitions and pleasures, is catered to, the more *sickly* the spirit becomes. In proportion as the eye of lust is satiated, the eye of faith is dimmed. The *more* we have, the harder it is to regard it as *nothing*, which we must do.

Therefore Christ said on one occasion, as he sorrowfully watched the rich young ruler depart,

"How hardly shall a man that hath riches enter the kingdom!"

Christ was not angry or bitter—rather he *loved* the young man (we are told) and was *sorry*, intensely sorry, for him. Only *one* thing he lacked! He had faith; he had an earnest desire to follow Christ; he tried to be righteous in all he did (Mark 10:20); he had enthusiasm and zeal. All this is clearly shown by the narrative.

A poor man with the same qualities would have had no difficulty in deciding. We are distinctly told that it was his *possessions* that stood in his way and were the basis of his only shortcoming. Therefore Christ was sorry for him.

The young man was no worse than many others. Doubtless he was far more earnest and honest than most, but his trial was great and he yielded to it. The flesh offered so much, so easily, and without delay—the present was so bright that the future was dimmed and obscured.

Therefore, says Paul, we must through much tribulation enter the Kingdom. It takes tribulation to wrench us out of spiritual indolence—to give us clear perceptions of the flesh and spirit—to turn our minds and hopes and aspirations to a higher, firmer level—to each of us the vanity and insecurity of present satisfactions. So we read, as the chapter closes—

"But the Jews stirred up the chief men of the city, and raised **persecution** against them . . . and the disciples were **filled with joy** and the Holy Spirit" (Acts 13:50-52).

\* \* \*

Acts 14:1—"and it came to pass in Iconium that they went **both** together into the synagogue."

Why is "*both together*" inserted here? Clearly our attention is deliberately drawn to the fact, and our thoughts are directed to the tremendous value of *companionship*; and conversely, the tremendously added burden of standing alone.

The Master, we recall, sent out his disciples *two* and *two* (Luke 10:1; Mark 6:7) and this is the usual course in Scripture.

Of course, many of God's servants have labored alone, as necessity has required. "*I, even I only, am left,*" said the prophet Elijah, "*and they seek my life to take it away*"—and the prospect appalled him. Not solely the imminent danger, for that was not new, but the feeling of utter isolation and desertedness.

Paul was often reduced to this condition, or close to it:

"All they which are in Asia be turned away from me . . . Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world. Only Luke is with me" (2 Tim. 1:15; 4:10-11).

Today all Christendom would be glad of the distinction of Paul's recognition, but during the period of his labors, many so-called "brethren" were ashamed or disdainful of his poverty, his unpretentious speech and demeanor, and his humiliating chains.

Doubtless they said he was a fool to be so outspoken when a little worldly wisdom and discretion would have so often eased his situation. *But a few there were who perceived the true values*, and for these Paul fervently thanked God. Without such, even he might have found the effort too great to sustain.

Jesus, too, during his supreme trial, was entirely alone—and not merely alone but forsaken by those he should have been able to count upon, but it was the will of God and he found God all-sufficient for his needs.

We can see, however, the value of the disciples to him during his ministry. True they were at times weak, often disappointing and sometimes quarrelsome. True too there was no comparison between his and their mental level and perception. These things must have often tried his patience sorely, but their earnest, intense, though dimly-perceiving devotion and companionship filled a void that might otherwise have been insufferable.

With the wise, the learned, the great men of his day, he had nothing in common. No fellow-feeling—no bond of communion. How often one looks, and looks in vain, for spiritual strength and help from those whose mental powers, it would seem, most qualify them to give it!

But we discover that it is the lowly, simple, earnest individual that seems to perceive things most clearly and who strikes a responsive chord within us. Why is it that those most capable and best informed in *worldly* matters speak with such limited perception about the things of God? The Scriptures tell us the answer—*no one can advance very far along two divergent paths*.

"The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Cor. 3:19).

Paul was not superhuman. He was no mental wizard—no intellectual giant. That was not his secret. We are given no reason to suppose he was exceptional in this respect. Rather the reverse, for it is he who repeatedly emphasizes the fact that God chooses the *weak* things of the world to confound the things that are mighty (1 Cor. 1:27). His secret lay in his *singleness of purpose*—a burning and fanatical singleness of purpose.

“This ONE THING I do: forgetting that which is behind . . .”

—casting aside every other interest and consideration—counting all else but worthless rubbish—

". . . **I press forward** to the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14).

*Burning earnestness and enthusiasm in spiritual things*—that is what we must pray for and ceaselessly pursue! It is not easy to awaken in our sluggish pleasure-loving natures. It will not come of itself. It is contrary to our natural inclinations. It must be carefully grafted in and diligently cultivated.

It will not seize us and transform us as we go our normal course, so *very, very* busy with passing worldly things. There is no magic carpet to effortlessly transfer our interests to the things that will endure, and sweep us serenely through the gates of the Holy City. We all have the flesh to contend with every day of our lives, right up until the end.

We must be careful that our faith is not a spare time, easy-going compliance grounded on flesh with its roots in our own desires and inclinations . . . just a pleasant religious hobby. What happens in a time of trial to a shallow faith based on personal convenience and vague emotion? The parable of the seed tells us plainly enough. It is a fair-weather faith. It has no staying power. It gives no strength or comfort in time of need. The glare of the sun scorches and withers it because *IT NEVER TOOK THE TROUBLE TO DEVELOP ROOTS*.

It is all on the *surface*. We know what is represented by the roots. It means the knowledge, the perception, the grasp and insight and stability that is the result of constant study and application. We may deceive ourselves for a while and have no feeling of need for effort in this direction, but *there comes a time to each brother and sister when the roots are tried to the limit of their strength, with disastrous results to those which have been neglected*.

The importance of a firm foundation is illustrated very clearly in Acts 15. We sometimes ask ourselves why so much importance is attached to matters of belief and doctrine, which do not *seem* to have any bearing on conduct. The natural view is to regard discussions about points of creed and doctrine as bickering and dogmatism, at the expense of the far more important principle of the spirit of love, but that is not the apostolic *view*.

Paul views matters of belief in a very serious light, and he urges his hearers and readers to cling fast to what they have learned and contend earnestly for the faith as delivered to them. We cannot escape the fact that the Scriptures place very great stress on TRUTH—true belief, true hope, true doctrine, and we do not have to go very far to see why.

Without a concrete foundation of fact and truth we are at the mercy of every whim and fancy of the mind of man—every wild superstition that may be concocted or imagined. We would have no defence against "being tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine." We would have nothing sure or certain. We would be veered and turned from day to day as our emotions and imaginations buffeted us.

We must have a clear and well-defined platform of fact and hold tenaciously to it. True, such an attitude is regarded as narrow-minded and bigoted by the wise of this world. To say that a man has no chance of salvation unless he believes just certain things may seem unreasonable to many pious and broadminded people, but a careful consideration should show that there is *no other way*. Truth is truth. Facts are facts. If we do not act in agreement with them we suffer.

A false belief, a false viewpoint, a false conception is valueless and destructive. We know we can accomplish nothing in this life unless our opinions about how to do it are in accord with the facts. Divine things are no different. If a man does not see the necessity of believing that the rising tide will

drown him unless he gets out of its way, that won't help him any. If he persists in his disbelief of truth in the face of facts he will surely drown.

God has made certain revelations concerning His purpose. What He has revealed is *truth and fact*, and He has revealed it so that man may have a necessary foundation of truth to guide him. It is sheer presumption to assume that it is superfluous. God alone is the judge. "Many false prophets have gone out into the world," says John (1 John 4:1), and the Word of God is the only defence against them. We must have the facts as surely as a ship's pilot must have a true chart of the course he is to follow. Otherwise we have no stability, no security, no assurance. We read (Acts 15:11),

"Certain men which came down from Judea said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."

Here is a case in point. There are always men rising up and saying we must do this or that. To withstand them and follow a straight course, we must know the facts. Only the Truth can make us *free*—free from the shackles of self-deception and baseless imagination. The fuller our knowledge, the deeper our understanding, the keener our perception, then the freer and safer we are. *Truth* is precious above all things—not only truth in knowledge but in *life and character*—

"Thou desireth truth in the inward parts" (Psa. 51:6).

Returning to the original consideration—the blessing and comfort of true spiritual companionship, as illustrated by the co-labors of Paul and Barnabas—we find that there is much food for thought in the concluding verses of this 15th chapter.

Truly there is no greater joy than to take sweet counsel together with others who realize and appreciate divine values, and to work with them, but this blessing, like many others, must be subject to the best interests of the Spirit. There are times, as we have seen, where companionship must end and an individual course must be followed. There are times when higher considerations intervene.

We refer in this instance to the separation of Paul and Barnabas over the question of Mark. *For 10 years these two men had labored together in God's service*, through privation and hardship, in spite of severe physical abuse and often in imminent danger of death. Here each saw his duty differently and joint action was no longer possible.

Men like Paul were no special creation exempted from the weakness of the flesh. They worked under the same limitations as we do. Revelations from God and possession of the powers of the Spirit did not smooth or soften the rough road they trod. Paul, beside the physical handicap of his "thorn in the flesh," often felt and expressed the need of his brethren's prayers for courage.

Truly he was a rock and a pillar, but his strength was no foregone conclusion. Rather, as he says, did he *learn strength through weakness*—discovering among his own doubts and failures and misgivings the fact that of himself he was nothing but that through Christ who strengthened him (Phil. 4:13) he could steadfastly run his course and fight a good fight of faith. Paul was but a willing and devoted, though weak, vessel through whom this work was accomplished. He said, and it reveals much—

"Brethren, pray for me that I may open my mouth boldly."

According to *human* standards, he was an unsuitable vessel, as his remarks in various places indicate. His presence was not commanding—it required a spirit of understanding and forbearance on the part of his hearers, which at times he mentions thankfully.

His power was exclusively in *what* he said: the *way* he said it exercised no spell. His hearers, if moved at all, were *convinced*—not swayed with unstable sentiment and emotion.

"My preaching was not with persuasive words of **man's** wisdom."

—no eloquence or oratory—

". . . but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:4-5).

"Ah, Lord God!" said Jeremiah (1:6), "Behold I cannot speak, for I am a child."

"Who am I," said Moses, "that I should go unto Pharaoh?" "*You are nobody*," is God's answer, "That is why you have been chosen, that no man should glory in men (1 Cr. 3:21). You are but a tool"—

"It is GOD which worketh IN you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

Until we realize our own intrinsic valuelessness and learn to submerge ourselves, we are of little value in God's work.

The issue upon which Paul and Barnabas divided was a matter of considered and legitimate difference of opinion. Barnabas wished to take Mark on their proposed circuit of the newly-established ecclesias: Paul objected to this because Mark had failed them on a previous occasion.

As to which of them was more justified in the viewpoint he took it is impossible to determine, though our sympathies would favor Paul's view. Paul's outlook was the more impersonal one. *To him the paramount consideration was the success of the work.* He was completely imbued with the inner conviction that he was a vital tool in the vast and eternal operations of the Spirit and he felt he dare not allow any personal motives to jeopardize the result.

Mark *had* failed them, and doubtless it had been a serious and discouraging handicap and inconvenience at the time. Paul felt that he could not knowingly take a chance of a similar occurrence again and that, for the dangerous and arduous work in hand, he must take someone with a record of resolution and steadfastness.

There is no evidence on Paul's part of personal feeling against Mark, and knowing Paul's loving and sympathetic character from his writings, we can be sure he found it very difficult to take the unpleasant stand that he felt it was his duty to maintain.

Barnabas, on the other hand, was moved by other considerations. It seems clear that he viewed the matter more from the angle of Mark's position and welfare. Mark, of course, was his sister's son. Barnabas would know his characteristics very intimately. He would feel able to judge his position much better than Paul could.

He must have had strong reasons for believing that Mark could redeem himself, and strong assurances from Mark that there would be no repetition of his earlier desertion. He doubtless felt that to refuse to give him the opportunity of offsetting his former failure would leave a permanent and unjustified stigma upon him and might discourage him to the extent of affecting his future.

That Mark *did* subsequently prove faithful and illustrate with what "hardness he could endure as a good soldier of Christ" does not necessarily prove that Paul was wrong. Paul's principle was that the work should come *first* and that *any* doubts should be resolved in its favor.

And he probably thought too that if Mark had the disposition and qualities that were required for the rigors of the proposed journey, then he would be able to see the reasonableness of Paul's stand, and would not be permanently deterred by this unpleasant but necessary setback.

Perhaps, furthermore, Paul's clear-cut attitude at this time, bitter though it may have been for Mark to receive, furnished the incentive for the faithful labors with which he later retrieved himself.

At least we have positive assurance (Col. 4:10-11; 2 Tim. 4:11; 1 Cor. 9:6) that a full reconciliation between these 3 men was later effected on the firm basis of mutual labor and respect in the work of the Lord. And so though a conscientious difference of opinion unfortunately separated them for a time, still an honest and God-fearing pursuance of steadfast endeavor finally reunited them in firmer and deeper companionship, for Mark was of much value and comfort to Paul in the end. God did not permit the incident to erect a permanent barrier or cause permanent damage, but rather "all things worked together for good" and "turned out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel" by 2 parties setting out instead of one.

In Acts 14:21 we read: "When they had taught many," or as the margin gives it, "had made many disciples . . ." What was it that convinced these people of the truth of Paul's teaching when the great majority were hostile and unreceptive?

There was no *natural* advantage or incentive to belief in *those* days. It meant certain peril, persecution and ostracism from friend and kinsman. True, the apostles wrought miracles, but miracles of themselves do not convince. They did not convince the many others in these places who saw them performed. They invented other explanations for them.

But even in these outposts of the empire there *were* those who were receptive to revelation and instruction. Humble, simple people with reverent, God-seeking minds and a depth of spiritual perception which through the ages has distinguished the handful of chosen vessels.

To these, Paul's teaching was not foreign and unintelligible—it *was the divine answer to a long-felt search and need*. Their minds having long pondered the evidences of invisible divinity around them (as Paul describes in the opening chapters of his epistle to the Romans), they received with eager gratitude the God-provided explanation and solution.

These were no haphazard converts captivated by novelty and emotion. The present disadvantages of conversion would call for careful consideration and firm resolve. They had long sought for God if haply they might feel after Him and find Him (Acts 17:27). Therefore while the vast majority, as always, despised and ridiculed the uncouth and unattractive preacher, a few *prepared vessels* perceived and responded to the divine power of his message.

"As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed" (Acts 13:48).

*Are we among such?* Are we, in the sight of God as He scans the broad and turbulent expanse of human history, among those *very, very few who stand out* as His servants, His friends, His children? If we are, it is wholly on the basis of a vast difference between ourselves and the world—not just a difference of detail or circumstance or interest—that is not sufficient to mark us out where myriads are forgotten. It requires an *entirely different course of life*. We must directly reverse most desires, must be completely submerged in devotion to Him. The "living sacrifice" that He demands can mean no less than this.

*Does this condition exist within and among us?* Upon this—and this only—depends our union with these devout disciples of so long ago. Outward appearance—profession—long familiarity, mean nothing . . . absolutely *nothing*. God is no respecter of persons. His choice is made upon rigid and inflexible principles. The countless millions are allowed to die. The few who are chosen to life must be very, very different to justify the choice. Many are called but very few are chosen. What a tragedy to confuse the *call* with the *choice*!

Let us, above all things, avoid this tragic error—the error of the Jews. “We have Abraham for our father,” they said (Matt. 3:9), “We are the chosen of God!” No error could be more fatal.

"Think not to say to yourselves, We have Abraham to our father, for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

That which they counted on so highly meant *nothing* in the sight of God. They thought to ride into the Kingdom on the strength of their position and affiliations. Can it be that *we* suffer from this same delusion to some degree, forgetting that God plays no favorites and that acceptance is strictly an *individual* affair and responsibility—that only an outstanding handful are chosen?

"*These things,*" said Paul, "*were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come . . . Wherefore,*" he continues, "*let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*"

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### **GOD IS A SUN AND A SHIELD**

It is profitable to let the mind rest in the contemplation of what God has revealed concerning His goodness. It is a stay and a comfort and a defence in the present time of evil. It is a star of hope in the midnight sky, a great uplifting power in the present depressing animal state of existence. It acts with the mighty influence of well-founded hope, purifying and ennobling the mental man, and saving us from the slavery of petty temporal life.

It is a soothing balm and a stimulating cordial. It comes even closer than hope; it gives faith in a present beneficence. It is a pledge of present goodness. God is a sun and a shield even now. It is to the present time peculiarly that these same words apply. They were written concerning those who walk uprightly in a time of evil; in the ages to come there will be no evil to be protected from. It is NOW, when the wicked walk on every side, and when "snares through all our way are strewn," that the Lord God is a sun and a shield. What an expressive figure it is! How cheerless and gloomy is the earth without the sun! Let the sun arise, and what a change! There is healing and joy in his beams.

—Bro. Roberts.

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### **1954 ANNUAL TEXAS FRATERNAL GATHERING**

(If the Lord will)

At Hye, Texas, beginning at 11 a.m., Tues., July 27 and ending after the Sunday morning meeting, Aug. 1. For full information write: Bro. E. W. Banta, 7012 Sherman St., Houston 11, Texas.

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### **Ecclesial News**

**BIRMINGHAM, England—174 Edmund Street—Memorial 11 a.m.; Lecture 6:30 p.m.; Bible Class Thursday 7:30 p.m.; Sunday School 11 a.m.**

**BOSTON, Mass.—581 Boylston St.—Bible Study 10:30 a.m.; Memorial 11:45 a.m.**

**BUFFALO, N. Y.—O. F. Temple, Kenmore & Myron Aves.—Memorial 10:15 a.m., Sun. Sch. 11:45; Bible Class Wed. 8 p.m.; Public Lecture 3rd Sunday of month 11:45 a.m., Oct. thru May.**

**CROYDON, Eng.—Ruskin House, Wellesley Road.—Memorial 11 a.m.**

**DENVER, Colo.—432 South Emerson St.—Memorial 11 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 10 a.m.**

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**DETROIT, Mich.—15586 Normandy—Memorial 10 a.m.; Sunday School 11:30.**

We have been refreshed and upbuilt by the company of: bre. & sisters Charles Banta and John Packer, and sisters Michael Banta and Glenda Caldwell, all of the Houston ecclesia.

Our own meetings together here, though at present very small, have been very upbuilding and enjoyable, and we feel we have been wonderfully compensated in spiritual comfort for the disappointments of the past year.

By weekend travelling, we have been able—in the mercy of God—to frequently enjoy the fellowship of the brethren and sisters of Hamilton, London and Toronto.

We extend our fraternal greetings to the Household throughout the world.

—bro. G. V. Growcott

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**GLENDALE, Pennsylvania.**

**GRANTS PASS, Oregon, Route 2, Box 471.**

**HAMILTON, Ont., Canada—YMCA Building, 79 James Street South, Hamilton.**

**HAWLEY, Pennsylvania.**

**HOUSTON, Texas—8008 Junius St.—Sunday School 10 a.m.; Breaking of Bread 11; Public Lecture every first Sun. 7:30 p.m.; Wed. Eureka Class 8 p.m.**

**KIDDERMINSTER, England.**

**LAMPASAS, Tex.—Christadelphian Hall, Avenue I East—Bible Study 10 a.m.; Memorial 11 a.m.**

**LETHBRIDGE, Alta., Can.—633 7th St.—Memorial 11 a.m.; Sunday School 12:30 p.m.; Lecture 7:30 p.m.; Bible Class Wednesday 8 p.m.**

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**LONDON, Ont.—Orange Hall, 388 Clarence St.—Sun. Sch. 10:15 a.m.; Memorial 11:30; Lecture 7 p.m.; Bible Class Wed. 8 p.m. at WCTU Hall on Clarence St., ½-block north of Dundas St.**

As announced in previous issues of the Berean, and with the kindness and love of our Heavenly Father, we were able to hold a Fraternal Gathering on Apr. 16, in the Orange Hall. It was a delightful and inspiring gathering of many brethren and sisters from Boston, Hawley, Houston, Coraopolis, Buffalo, Detroit, Hamilton, Toronto and Montreal. The theme was: "Thy Word Is a Lamp Unto My Feet," taken from Psa. 119. It was divided into four subjects:

Bro. Gilbert (Buffalo) spoke on "The Light of the Word in Prophetic Times." He called our attention to the importance of light in the natural sense—in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, then to the importance of spiritual light—a knowledge of God's revealed will and glorious purpose to the spiritual man in Christ. He stressed the importance of being careful of details in the obedience to God's holy Word, giving such examples as the case of Uzzah. He reminded us that these little details make up our life in the Truth, and advised us not to be blind to these things but to watch our walk, talk, work, praise and prayer in the Truth.

Bro. Growcott (Detroit) spoke on "The Light of the Word in Apostolic Times." His remarks centered around Christ as the Light of the world— John 1. He spoke of the Father's great

purpose of self-manifestation; of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; of the seven-branched Lampstand and the golden oil of the Spirit-Word kindled into flame by the love of the Father extended through His beloved Son. Bro. Growcott then dealt with the portion of Psalm 119 (vs. 97-136) on which the theme of the Gathering was based. He showed the depth and beauty of the expressions of the Psalmist, and the full impact of the meaning of "Thy Word is a Light unto my feet."

Bro. Kling Sr. (Buffalo) spoke on "The Light of the Word in the Latter Days." He emphasized that the light is the understanding of the Truth in the love thereof. "Let your light so shine before men"—keeping that light shining comprehends much effort by brethren and sisters, and requires a fearless and straightforward stand in the Truth—a strenuous effort on our part, being convinced of the rightness of the cause wherein we stand. He then called our attention to the divine specifications for the administration and preparation of the anointing oil under the Mosaic Law; great care was to be exercised that exactly the right proportions of the right ingredients be mixed together. All this emphasis on carefulness and attention to instruction was as a schoolmaster to us to teach us reverent carefulness in every aspect of belief and conduct.

Bro. Gibson (Toronto) spoke in the evening on "The Light of the Age to Come." He filled our minds and hearts with the joyful anticipation of the Age to Come, calling attention to the beautiful arrangement and order of the Kingdom of God when established upon the earth. The light of that age will enlighten the world. He particularly called attention to the many changes that would take place in contrast to the present; order, the world today being pleasure-mad, running restlessly after every form of empty amusement and diversion and entertainment. All this is to be swept away; the pleasures of the Age to Come are to be entirely different and centered in holiness and worship of God. He reminded, us that we should not participate in the world's vain pleasures today: if we do, we cannot logically expect to be among those called upon to destroy them and teach the world a more excellent way of life.

Tape recordings of these addresses were made by bre. Packer (Houston), Sargent Jr. (Boston) and Jackson (Toronto).

On Saturday evening the brethren and sisters who stopped over, together with our own ecclesia, assembled in the WCTU Hall to sing hymns of praise and prayer and do the daily readings; also we saw a film of the latest activities of the regathering Jews in Palestine, portraying how beautifully the long-dry bones of the House of Israel are at last in our day coming together. Truly the day of redemption is at hand! Let us renew our zeal.

On Sunday morning we all assembled together in the Orange Hall to enjoy the mutual fellowship of one another in the comforts of the Truth—the singing of praises and united thankfulness to our Heavenly Father. We listened to the words of exhortation by bro. Fred Higham of Detroit, who so beautifully set forth our solemn position in Christ, calling our attention to the serious but glorious truths that, having been baptised into Christ, we died—are to remain dead—to the world, but are alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. These stirring words helped to prepare us to partake more thankfully and thoughtfully of the memorial emblems of our Lord's suffering and death.

It was indeed a pleasure to have so many brethren and sisters on that day. Also (previously) on Apr. 4 we had the company of bro. G. Growcott and sis. Anne Growcott (Detroit). Bro. Growcott gave us the word of exhortation, which was very upbuilding.

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We are pleased to report that Mrs. Marjorie Hudson (daughter of bro. & sis. Clubb), after a good confession of the Faith, was baptized on Sunday morning, May 23. Our earnest hope and prayer is that she may have a place in our Father's glorious Kingdom.

Our sis. Grayson has recently moved to Hamilton. We commend her to the love and care of the brethren and sisters there.

—W. D. Gwalchmai

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**MELBOURNE, Australia.**

**MIAMI, Florida—3428 S. W. 65th Ave.—Sunday School 10 a.m.; Memorial 10:30.**

**MONTREAL, P. Q.—YMCA Bldg., 1000 Gordon, Verdun—Memorial 11 a.m.**

**NEWPORT, Eng.—Clarence Hall, Rodney Rd. (opp. Tech. Col.)—Memorial 11 a.m.; Lecture 6:30 p.m.; Suppl. Breaking: Bread 3rd Sun. of month after lect.**

**NEW TREDEGAR, Mon., Eng.—Workman's Lesser Hall—Memorial 6 p.m.**

**PAPAKURA, New Zealand.**

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**TORONTO, Ont.—294 Glebeholme Blvd.—Memorial 11 a.m.; Bible Study 7 p.m.; Bible Class Wednesday 8:15 p.m.**

We regret to report that in August 1953 the majority of the brethren and sisters constituting the Kimbourne Hall Ecclesia voted to leave the Berean fellowship and joined another group. Another brother and sister have since been breaking bread in their own home. It has been a sad experience to thus find ourselves separated from many with whom we have worked together for a number of years. We remained in the established Berean position that we have maintained since 1923, because we were firmly convinced that the cause of our separation had not been removed. Subsequent events have proven this conviction to be right, and it is now our earnest prayer that others who are deeply concerned about their eternal welfare will come to realize the truth of the present state of affairs of special significance in the household.

On March 28, several of us visited the Hamilton ecclesia, and this was repeated on May 16 when we were joined by the brethren and sisters of the Detroit ecclesia. We were also privileged to attend the Fraternal Gathering that was held in London on April 16, and to remain over the week-end. This has been fully reported by our London brethren.

Since our last report, we have had the company of bro. & sis. Roy Sutherland, and sis. Louise Martin of London. On May 30, bro. Sutherland refreshed us by words of exhortation based on the letter to the Hebrews. This part of the New Testament contains many heart-searching words, and we will do well if we give heed to that which is written therein. "It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." —bro. G. A. Gibson

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**WHANGAREI, New Zealand.**

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**WORCESTER, Mass.—Grandview Hall, 21 Grandview—S. S. 10 a.m.; Mem. 11.**

It is with sorrow we have to record the falling asleep in Jesus of sis. Olin Shead on May 17. She had been in ill-health for some time, but was gradually improving, as we reported to our bre. & sis. on Sunday the 16th. Her death on the 17th was a shock to us all; we shall all miss her. Sis. Shead was baptized in Nov., 1918. She would have been 68 on July 7. Our deepest sympathy is extended to those who are left behind.

Sis. Shead is the third member of our ecclesia who has fallen under the hand of the dread enemy death in the last five months—bro. Preece on Dec. 5, his sister-wife on Feb. 3, and now sister Shead (who was sister to sis. Preece). They all now await that call to come forth, and as we watch for the Master's return we are cheered by the hope that we shall see her again soon, with others of like Faith, as we stand before him who said—

"I am the Resurrection and the Life . . . And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and, believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

This was the hope we shared with our sister, and we pray for the realization of it. The signs of the times and the movements of the nations are indicative that we shall not have to wait very long. His commission to the Household is—

"Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh . . . What I say unto you I say unto all—WATCH!"

We have been cheered and strengthened by the following visitors: bro. Thomson and sis. Lancour (Lowell, Mass.); sis. Lavesseur (Nashua, N. H.); bro. & sis. John Davey and sis. Hilda Davey (Boston). Bro Thomson gave words of exhortation by which we were refreshed and comforted.

Sis. Lavesseur is a member of our ecclesia residing in Nashua (her place of employment). The rest of the bre. & sis. mentioned above are among those who were left because of holding steadfast to the Berean Christadelphian standard of Faith, being convinced that it has been the policy of the "reunion" movement to obscure the main issue of the necessary separation that occurred in 1923 in an effort to preserve sound fellowship.

The reports sent out from time to time by our neighbor Berean brethren in Boston have now been fully vindicated.

Sisters Barabeault, Sarah Prentice and Lawton have joined another group.

Much love to the Household from the bre. & sis. in Worcester,

—bro. R. A. Waid

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## A Letter to Our Children

Hello, dear children! This month we are visiting the palace of the Queen of England—Buckingham Palace. It has 600 rooms, many of them very large. The White Drawing-Room is 48 feet long, the Blue Drawing-Room 68 feet, and the State Ballroom is 120 feet long and 45 high. Several houses could be put inside this room.

The Bible tells us of a true Queen and a true Palace. In the beautiful Psalm 45 we read about the "Queen in gold of Ophir" standing at the right hand of the righteous King (who is Jesus). This Queen is to be made up of all who love and obey Jesus now. To this Queen God says, "The King shall greatly desire thy beauty." Think of being greatly desired by Jesus! This is not speaking of outward beauty that we can see with our eyes (see Prov. 31.30), but beauty of kindness and goodness to others, and obedience to God.

We come now to the Throne Room. This beautiful room has white walls, richly ornamented with gold. The curtains, throne canopy, and upholstery are all crimson. Seeing these colors in a "Throne Room" brings many thoughts to our minds. Colors are used in the Bible to mean various things. Crimson (red) stands for sin, white for righteousness, gold for faith—look up Isa. 1:18. Solomon's throne was ivory (white) and gold—1 Kgs. 10:18-20.

When we look at the gold on the walls, we think of Solomon's Temple. This was all overlaid in gold—gold everywhere, walls, ceiling, furniture, everything covered with pure gold. And everything in his palace was gold. Yet, with all this splendor and wealth, righteousness did not remain with Israel. And because of their unfaithfulness to God, the wonderful buildings and riches of Solomon's time were soon after plundered by enemies that God sent on them.

This teaches us that fine things do not mean anything to God if there is not righteousness with them. To the people of the world, such places as this of the Queen are impressive and important, but let us remember the true King of the earth was born in a stable.

We turn our attention back to the Throne Room we are in, and on the ceiling we notice the most beautiful light fixture we have ever seen. It has 54 lights and is 8 feet across. This is in the center of the ceiling—all around it are 6 smaller ones. Together these 7 lights fill the room with brilliance. Think what a wonderful thing light is! How terrible it would be if everything were always dark and we could never see! Do you remember what God made on the first day of Creation? But the **true** light is to understand God's will.

We now walk down the Principal Corridor of the palace—a hallway over 20 feet wide and 240 feet long—making us think of the great mile-long halls in the House of Prayer to be built at Jerusalem.

The last room we visit is the State Dining Room. Can you imagine a table to seat 60 guests? The table before us can do just that. It is over 8 feet wide and can be expanded to contain 27 leaves—each 3 feet wide. As we look at this table, and think of it growing and growing to seat more and more people, we think of how our lives in Christ must be like it. We start, at baptism, with just a little knowledge, but we must continually expand our understanding.

This wonderful table, that grows and grows to such a great length, gives us another thought. We picture in our minds the "Table of the Lord" in the Kingdom—the great fellowship feast of all whom Jesus accepts as his brethren and sisters. And we think of how this glorious company has gradually grown larger as time has passed and God has—one by one—taken them out for His Name. We can have a place at that Table, if we are faithful and obedient.

So as we leave this lovely home of a mortal queen, we think of the far more wonderful home of Christ when he comes back to earth to set up his Throne. —Uncle Joe.

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