

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

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Please send all communications and manuscripts to the Editor—

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

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EDITORIAL

From Truth to Fables

"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine (teaching); but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables"—2 Tim. 4:3-4.

Devoted adherents of the various churches of Christendom, while willing to agree that Paul's prophecy has been fulfilled, would not, however, admit that any fables could be found among their doctrines. Of course, they will say that Jesus and the apostles were all right in their day, but the reason the teachings of Christendom are at variance with what is revealed in the New Testament is because of further unfolding of light and truth which lead away from that which is primitive.

To those who have confidence in the Bible, a totally different viewpoint is taken. The words of Paul produce a conviction that, instead of further light being revealed, there has been a gradual departure from the truth, and, as a result, the churches of Christendom are now teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. An examination of ecclesiastical history will confirm this.

Last month, we discussed briefly the development of the popular pagan doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul. We now turn to another fable development—equally pagan—the doctrine of the Trinity. *This doctrine does not appear in any part of the Bible*, and it is of significant importance to remark at this point that the word "trinity" does not appear in Christian literature until near the end of the second century. Gibbon, in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. 21, page 238, wrote—

"If Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, was the first who employed the word Triad, Trinity, that abstract term, **which was already familiar to the schools of philosophy**, must have been introduced into the theology of the Christians after 150 A.D."

If, as is so strongly advocated, the Trinity were a Bible doctrine, and had been taught by Jesus and the apostles, *why is it not mentioned in the New Testament?* And why did its introduction cause the *greatest controversy the church has experienced*, and by which Christianity was divided into innumerable sects? Mosheim, writing regarding the fourth century, says—

"The subject of this fatal controversy, which kindled such deplorable divisions throughout the Christian world, was the doctrine of three Persons in the Godhead, a doctrine which in the three preceding centuries had happily escaped the vain curiosity of human researches, and have been left undefined and undetermined by any particular set of ideas."

The very fact that the early believers refused to accept the doctrine, is surely a sufficient refutation of it, for if it had been a Bible doctrine they would have welcomed it. It is worthy of note that *church historians have written volumes regarding the corruption of Christianity during the first three centuries after Christ*, a fact unquestionably established. Here is an example by Milman:

"The Trinitarian controversy was the natural, though tardy, growth of the Gnostic opinions; it could scarcely be avoided when the exquisite distinctness and subtlety of the Greek language were applied to religious opinions of an Oriental origin . . . The first Christians were content to worship, with undefined fervour, the Deity as revealed in the Gospel. They assented to, and repeated with devout adoration, the words of the Sacred Writings of those which had been made use of from the Apostolic age; but they did not decompose them, or, with nice and scrupulous accuracy, appropriate peculiar terms to each manifestation of the Godhead. "History of Christianity," vol. 2, p. 352.

Like the immortal soul theory, the few passages in the Scriptures that seem to teach the Trinity have to be wrested, or twisted, in order to make them appear to support it. Here is one—

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these 3 are one" (1 Jn. 5:7).

The Annotated Edition of the "Westminster Confession of Faith" quotes this verse in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, in spite of the fact that *for over 100 years it has been known that this verse is spurious*. Both the Revised, and the Revised Standard versions exclude it without note or comment. Here is another—

"I and my Father are one"—John 10:30.

But in *what sense* are they one? Jesus answers in the same Gospel:

"Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, **that they may be one, as we are** . . . And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one"—John 17: 11 & 22.

And so the Trinitarian phantom falls before the Word of God. The *unity* of God is the teaching of Moses and the prophets, Jesus and the apostles, and it is consistently so throughout the Bible:

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is ONE1 LORD"—Deut. 6:4.

"I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me . . . Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."—Isa. 45: 5 & 22.

"And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is ONE LORD."

"For there is one God, AND one mediator between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus"—1 Tim. 2:5.

We have seen how the early church was corrupted from the sacred and venerable simplicity of Apostolic teaching by the introduction of doctrines based upon the teaching of Plato which was brought into the body by those who attempted to disseminate knowledge beyond ordinary comprehension. Let us not, therefore, be led away by the learned of this world, who have shot their heads up into the regions of incomprehensibilities, and wrapped themselves in the impervious fogs of

an intellectual culture too preposterous for serious consideration. But let us stand by the Scriptures, which are easy to be understood, and able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.—*Editor.*

"Clothed to the Feet"

By brother John Thomas

While Daniel informs us that the Spirit-Man he beheld was "clothed with *linen*," John states simply that he was "*clothed to the feet*." Now, this clothing is significant of the character and office of the persons represented by the symbol. The holy garments of Aaron and his sons were of linen, "to cover their nakedness," that when they ministered in the holy places, "they bear not iniquity, and die" (Exo. 28:42). "Nakedness" and "iniquity," are convertible terms in Scripture; as it is written—

"Moses saw that the people were naked, for Aaron had made them naked to their shame."

—that is, they had transgressed in worshipping the golden calf:

"Blessed is he that keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

Hence, to be "clothed," and to keep the clothing white and clean, is to be "righteous," or holy. When Adam sinned, "he knew he was naked," and was ashamed, and afraid; but the Spirit appointed for clothing skins of sacrifices, and his sin was covered. Hence:

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

Joshua, son of Josedec, a type of Jesus in the flesh, is first introduced as clothed with filthy garments, representative of the flesh with its propensities and lusts; but when the type is changed to represent Jesus in *pneuma hagiosunes*,—that is, in *Holy Spirit Nature*, such as he acquired after resurrection, Joshua's raiment is represented as being changed—"Take away," says the Spirit, "the filthy garments from him." When this was done, the Spirit says:

"I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment."

And when the time came to do it—to clothe Jesus, and all in him, symbolized in Joshua, and "his fellows"—

"They set a fair mitre (or priestly crown) upon his head, and clothed him with garments."

These are indicated in the visions of John and Daniel. Job says:

"I put on righteousness and it clothed me."

—and in Psalm 132:9—

"Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness."

In Rev. 19 it is said of the community, styled "the Lamb's Wife":

"To her it was given, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, pure, and bright."

Now, they who constitute "the woman," are "called, and chosen, and faithful" (17:14); "they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" (14:4); as his clouds of cavalry, "clothed in fine linen white and pure," which is declared to be "the Righteousness of the Saints" (19:14, 8); who are "purchased from among men," and made for Deity "kings and priests to reign over the earth."

The multitude symbolized by the *Son of Man* attains to this dominion through much tribulation, and by resurrection. When they stand up they have obtained the victory over death and the grave, through him that loved them and laid down his life for them. They are therefore represented in Rev. 7 as "clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands"—robes "washed, and made white in the blood of the Lamb."

Hence, these are robes of salvation and victory. In their mortal state, they put on Christ as a robe, when, having "believed the things of the kingdom of the Deity, and the Name of Jesus Anointed," they were immersed for that Name, and into it. They fall asleep in him; and they arise to partake of the nature of his individual "body, of his flesh, and of his bones," that they may be like him—I John 3:2.

When they are clothed with this Spirit-Nature, they are "clothed upon with their habitation, which is from heaven—mortality being swallowed up under the life or spirit that is poured upon them" (2 Cor. 5:2-4). This is the consummation of their investiture, which begins with their immersion into Christ, and is perfected in their post-resurrectional immortalization by the Spirit through Jesus. They are then the Body Corporate of God's Kings and Priests, the inhabitation of Eternal Wisdom and Power, clothed in the linen garment of righteousness, honor, majesty, and salvation. Then Zion will have clothed herself with them all as with an ornament, and have bound them on as a bride—Isa. 49:18; 41:10; Psa. 132:16; 104:1.

The reader will understand, then, that the linen clothing of these symbols indicates the persons, their character, office, and nature, of which they are representatives. A glorious body of people prepared to execute righteous judgment upon the nations, and to govern them in righteousness when subdued—the Son of Man in glory and great power.

The "Perfect Man" seen by John was "clothed with a garment *down to the foot*." No elemental part of him was unclothed, but he had on his wedding garment, clean, and white, so that in this glorious Son of Man *no nakedness could be discerned*.

* * *

"And girt about the paps with a golden girdle."

This would answer to a *breastband* rather than to a girdle, (which in the dress of the ancients belonged to the loins). The high priestly "girdle of the ephod" was made of "gold, blue, purple, and scarlet and fine twined linen" (Exo. 39:29). These articles represented principles afterwards to be incarnated in the High Priest after the Order of Melchizedec. Aaron wore the *representations* upon his person; Jesus bore them *in himself*.

The gold represents the wisdom of a tried and precious *faith*; blue, a *cleansing* principle; purple, the element of *flesh*; scarlet, the *sin* thereof; and fine-twined linen, *righteousness*. These principles were embodied in Jesus, as "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," *as to character*; yet "the likeness of sin's flesh, in whom sin was condemned" when crucified, *as to nature*, and the purifier unto righteousness of those who become the righteousness of the Deity in and through him.

The gold and fine-twined linen were embroidered through *all* the blue, purple, and scarlet, of this "curious" breastband with which the breasts were girded. In the case of Jesus, though "made sin for us, he *knew no sin*," "yet was he tempted in all points like as we are, but *without transgression*"; wisdom and righteousness were intertwined in *all* his words and actions, according to the type. Thus "the body or substance is of Christ" (Exo. 28: 2-21; Rm. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 2:14; 4:15; Col. 2:17; 1 Pet. 2:24).

But when Jesus and his Brethren shall all have attained to the Divine nature, even as Jesus hath already, the gold and the linen of the girdle will alone remain. The blue, the purple, and the

scarlet, made no part of the garments for glory and for beauty of the Son of Man, as beheld by John, because what John saw pertains not to the sufferings, but to the glory of the Christ, or Anointed Body. In regard to the girdle, Daniel tells us that the Spirit-Man symbolized to him was—

"Girded with fine gold of Uphaz."

This *Uphaz* is the "Ophir" of other passages. In the days of the prophets it was the gold region of the earth, whence the most abundant supplies of the finest gold were obtained. The Mosaic "patterns of things in the heavens" were all of gold, or of precious woods overlaid with gold. Mere "wood, hay, or stubble" found no place there, any more than "in the heavens" themselves.

The Cherubim, the Ark of the Testimony, the Mercy Seat, the Altar of Incense, the Seven-Branched Lampstand, the Table of Show Bread, spoons, tongs, censers, hinges, staves, and so forth, were all of gold, or overlaid with gold.

And beside all this, "the holy garments for glory and for beauty" worn by the High Priest, who officiated in this Temple resplendent with gold, were brilliant with the shining metal and precious stones. Gold was chosen as the most precious of all known metals, to represent the most precious of "heavenly things" before the Eternal Spirit, namely, FAITH PERFECTED BY TRIAL, which is "much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be refined by fire," and "without which it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6; Jam. 2:22; 1 Pet. 1:7; 2 Pet. 1:1). It is the basis of righteousness unto life eternal; for "we are justified by faith"; the fine linen robe of righteousness is girded about the saints by the golden girdle of a tried faith. Saith Job,

"When God hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

Thus David, in celebrating the future glory of the New Order of Elohim, consisting of the King and his Brethren, styles the latter "the Queen," in Psalm 45:10, saying to His Majesty—

"The Queen hath been placed at Thy right in fine gold of Ophir."

He then addresses the Consort of the Great King, who, being the Eternal Spirit manifested in David's Son, is both Father and Husband of the Bride . . .

("Thy Maker is thine Husband; Yahweh Tz'vahoth is His Name; the Elohim of the whole earth shall He be called"—Isa. 54:5).

. . . saying—

"Hear, O Daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; and forget thy nation, and the house of thy father; and the King shall greatly desire thy beauty; for He is thy Lord, therefore do thou homage unto Him.

"So the Daughter of Tyre with tribute, the rich of the people, shall supplicate thy favor. The Daughter of the King is all glorious **within**; her clothing is of interweavings of gold.

"In embroideries she will be conducted to Thee; the Virgins, her companions, following her, shall be brought to Thee. They shall be conducted with joyous shouts and exultation; they shall enter into the palace of the King."

Thus David sings of "the Spirit and the Bride," clothed in the holy garments of righteousness and of a tried and perfected faith, for glory and for beauty. They are apocalyptically represented as "like a Son of Man"; and "a great city," styled "the Holy City, New Jerusalem, having been prepared as a Bride adorned for her Husband"; "a city of pure gold, like to transparent crystal."

"The precious sons of Zion," saith the prophet, "are comparable to fine gold"; for in their glory they are the Spirit-Incarnations of a tried and precious faith, which is the shining *girdle of their ephod*.

"WHEN PRIDE COMETH, THEN COMETH SHAME"—Prov. 11:2.

If we believe the Bible, that should be sufficient to rule out pride. It is a guarantee that pride inevitably will lead to shame—the very thing that pride fears most. Pride is one of the most common and active characteristics of natural man. The Bible groups the activities of the mind of the flesh under 3 heads—lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and **pride**. The lust of the flesh is all the physical desires of the body. The lust of the eye is the desire to possess and accumulate.

All the rest is pride—the desire to nourish self-esteem and attract the notice and praise of others. It causes people to paint their faces and wear showy clothing and jewellery, and to talk about themselves and their possessions and accomplishments, and to struggle to achieve social and economic advantages in the world. The proud glory in activities that would shame and embarrass the wise. Pride wears people out, and leaves them unhappy and unsatisfied. If we lose our temper, that is pride. If we think our feelings are offended, that is pride. If a man is truly wise and humble, it will be impossible to offend or annoy him. The more you try, the more sorry he will be for you and want to help you become wise.

The most dangerous and hopeless form of pride is when it invades the spiritual realm and disguises itself as zeal and godliness. The apostle warns, "Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth." This is not to say that we should refrain from seeking scriptural knowledge—the whole exhortation of Proverbs is the exact opposite of that—but we must seek, not merely the bare facts of knowledge but the **basic principles of wisdom**.

There is no danger of true scriptural wisdom fostering pride. The purpose of scriptural knowledge is to teach us the naked truth about ourselves. It will drive out our pride—it will expose it and make it offensive to us. This is the great difference between the healthy effect of **Divine** wisdom and the blighting, puffing-up effect of **worldly** "wisdom."

"I Will Not Be Enquired of by You"

EZEKIEL CHAPTER TWENTY

By brother Robert Roberts

This chapter will be found on reflection to be *one of the most extraordinary compositions ever submitted to human consideration*. It is a historical review with comments. There are many historical reviews to be found among books; but they are all human: here is a historical review by the Creator of heaven and earth. It is a review of Israel's history from its starting point in Egypt, down to the days of Ezekiel. There may seem nothing very extraordinary here at first sight, but this view changes on reflection.

In the first place there could be no more intrinsically interesting subject of review historically considered. All other histories are insignificant compared with the history of Israel. What other history occupies so large a space in the field of time? There are other histories of a certain importance, but they are all short-lived. They are either of recent origin (if relating to nations important now), or of very short existence if of great antiquity.

The history of England is of yesterday, as compared with Israel. The history of Babylon is a short story though going back to ancient times. The broad belt of Israel's history comes down all the way from the earliest beginning, when modern Gentile nationalities were not, to the present moment, when Jewish affairs are an active element in Gentile problems—the strangest nation of the continent. No historical topic can compare, on even common grounds, with the history of the nation that wanders the world today in all lands after ages of national adversity that more than once threatened their entire extinction.

And to have such a history reviewed by its Originator, its Mover, its Molder! To have such a history commented on and elucidated for us by God! Only incredulity of the fact—*barbarous incredulity*—could make the heart and judgment insensible to the greatness of this piece of literature.

We have histories of the Jews—by Gentiles and by Jews; but how different are these histories from this—how different in tone, spirit, and complexion! How different in the views presented! How *necessarily* different is a history written by the short-ranged vision of a mortal, from a history written by the all-embracing Penetration that sees everything at a glance, and knows the universe to its utmost depths, and the furthest bearing of all occurrences. Accordingly, we find this history, written by Ezekiel at the mouth of God, of a totally different character from anything written by Jew or Gentile.

A number of the elders of Israel had come on a visit to Ezekiel, recognising his character as a prophet and seeking through him to approach God and make enquiry of Him. It is this visit that furnishes the occasion for the remarkable historic sketch contained in the chapter. The way the visit was received is quite striking. At first sight, it would appear a meritorious thing on the part of these elders to seek to enquire of God—a something that might be expected to be pleasing to God.

In point of fact it was otherwise, and received a rude rebuff. There was something in the nature of their approach that made it offensive. Ezekiel was divinely directed as follows—

"Speak unto the elders of Israel and say unto them, are ye come to enquire of Me? As I live, saith the Lord God, I WILL NOT BE ENQUIRED OF BY YOU."

—from which we may profitably draw this lesson, that it is *not sufficient that men be willing to approach unto God*. There is a way of doing it that is necessary for it to be acceptable. God Himself had indicated the way and the spirit (Isa. 66:2)—

"Broken and contrite in heart, and that trembleth at My Word."

A man need not hope to be accepted of God unless he recognizes, with a deeply reverential mind, God's immeasurable greatness and absolute sovereignty; and unless he correspondingly realizes his own utter smallness, both as to his belonging to the dust and as to his having no rights, being in fact *a sinner whose being allowed to live at all is due to God's great patience*.

These elders of Israel did not approach God in this spirit. They approached Him in the spirit that has characterized Israel in all their generations, so far as the bulk of the nation is concerned. They came to Him *thinking themselves to be somewhat* on account of extraction and on account of the Divine favor shown to them in days past. They came to Him in a spirit of self-importance, while at the same time having no adequate or reasonable discernment of God's goodness, and little habit of obedience to His commandments.

Therefore, Ezekiel is commanded to declare to them that God refused their advances; and he is further commissioned to exhibit to them the history of their nation, as it appeared in God's eyes. It is in this way that we get God's view of the most wonderful history on earth, and an explanation of God's own objects, in the various steps He took, or did not take, in the course of that history.

"*Cause them to know the abomination of their fathers,*" says God: and He takes the recital right away back to Egypt—

"In the day when I chose Israel and lifted up Mine hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made Myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, saying, I am the Lord your God. I said unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt.

"But I wrought FOR MY NAME'S SAKE that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made Myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt."

"Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness."

Here is a keynote struck which governs the rest of the chapter. Israel were brought out of Egypt, *not because they were an interesting and obedient race*. So far were they from being this, that they deserved wholesale destruction, and God felt inclined in this direction. But He refrained Himself and preserved them, and brought them out of Egypt that His Name might not be dishonored before mankind, who knew He had taken Israel by the hand.

This is the *very last explanation that occurs to a Jew or Gentile*. A more unwelcome explanation—one more nauseous to the natural taste—could not be put forward. Men could understand the prowess of Israel as an explanation of the exodus, if inclined to disbelieve it Divine, or if more reverential to the Mosaic record, they could understand the excellence of the Jewish race, as inciting the Divine favor in their behalf.

But that a stubborn and unacceptable people should be tolerated, and favored, and protected, for the honor of Jehovah's Name, is an idea entirely out of the range of human sympathies. The Jews liked such a doctrine no better than the Gentiles do. And yet it is *God's own explanation*. Here it is, without obscurity or the least dimness. It is not only the authentic explanation, but it is a rational explanation.

It throws light where otherwise there is darkness; for look you—is it not the *fact* that Israel, at the time of the exodus, *were* unbelieving and rebellious? Did they not say to Moses—

"Let us alone that we may serve their idols."

When he brought them out, did they not seek to stone him? This being the undoubted fact, of what explanation is the miraculous Egyptian exodus susceptible, if it were not that God was aiming at some *other* object than the mere well-being of the race of Israel? Apart from this, the Divine favor to Israel is inexplicable and mysterious, and a stumbling-block, as many people have found it to be. *God's* explanation explains all:

"I wrought FOR MY NAME'S SAKE."

So it was at every subsequent stage, as the chapter goes on to exhibit. Redeemed from Egypt and brought into the wilderness,

"The house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness . . ."

"Then I said I would pour out My fury upon them in the wilderness to consume them. But I wrought for My Name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight I brought them out. . ."

"Mine eye spared them from destroying them, neither did I make an end of them in the wilderness. But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers . . . Walk in MY statues . . ."

"Notwithstanding, the children rebelled against Me; they walked not in My statutes, neither kept My judgments . . . Then I said I would pour out My fury upon them . . . Nevertheless I withdrew My hand and wrought **for My Name sake.**"

Then the recital follows Israel into the land and shows that the same thing happened then. The nation disobediently went aside into ways displeasing to God and stirred Him to continual anger. As He said by Jeremiah concerning Jerusalem—

"This city hath been a provocation of Mine anger from the day they built it unto now."

Then He brings the matter home to the elders standing before Ezekiel, accusing *them* of following the evil ways of their fathers:

"Ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day, and shall I be enquired of you, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord God, **I shall not be enquired of by you.**"

Here, then, is a historical elucidation quite unlike anything we read of in Jewish or Gentile literature, but which has the advantage of being authoritative, reliable, and true, which can by no means be affirmed of ordinary historical disquisitions.

Let us consider it a moment. At first sight, it seems a repulsive exhibition of the Divine attitude. It seems all stern, unsympathetic, and discouraging. This constant jealousy of the Divine honor, this constant anger at the people's waywardness, does not excite those gratified feelings which we associate with the sentiments of adoration and praise. Some, in fact, have been so oppressed in spirit from this cause as to have come to the conclusion that the chapter and much else in the Bible is the ebullition of human bitterness and not the disclosure of the Divine mind.

This is a mistake altogether. The Divinity of these writings is beyond all doubt and cavil, for reasons we have looked at in times past and need not now repeat. We must find some other explanation of the sternness than the wild suggestion that it is human and not Divine—a suggestion altogether inconsistent with common experience of men. It is not in man—Jew or Gentile—to conceive, still less to assume earnestly, such an attitude of uncompromising severity on God's part as is here illustrated. Its Divinity is proved, among other things, by the severity, and letting our reason act, it is not difficult to see the reasonableness of it.

God is love, but *not that only*; He is also a "consuming fire." God is kind and merciful, but not *unconditionally* so. He must be held in reverence; He must be obeyed. This is revealed, and is it not according to reason? It is according to reason in two ways; first, heaven and earth are His; He made them all. There is not a thing in existence that is not the concrete form of His own eternal invisible energy. There is not a faculty or power or excellence possessed by any creature but what has its roots in God—

"Who giveth unto all, life and breath and all things."

If, then, it be true that—

"Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things."

—is it not the most *elementary maxim of reason* that His praises should be uppermost; and that if this reasonable honor is not conceded by the creatures He has made (but disobedience, insult, and insubordination instead), He should deal with them in anger?

The force of this argument is lost on the modern ear by reason of the conceptions of God that have become current. Men either join with David's "fool" and say "There is no God," but only "things"—"stuff"—and "force"—that manage somehow or other to arrange and evolve themselves in wonderfully wise order; or, if they profess to believe in God, they regard Him as a passive element, such as oxygen or electricity, to be utilized by wise manipulation for human benefit.

If this fog could be cleared away—if they could see the one great idea crystallized in the Mosaic economy—that *God is a personal Majesty, an Individual Reality*—with keener consciousness and a deeper intelligent versatility than all men put together—Who from His central habitation of glory in heaven fills immensity by His Spirit, radiant from and one with His resplendent and indestructible Person in the heart of the universe—Who has *for His pleasure* embodied His eternal

power in the splendid system of the universe, with the purpose of *associating created intelligences in His own joy*—I say, if they could *realize* this revealed conception of the Creator, their minds would be open to the evident conclusion that God should be jealous of His Own honor, and that rebellion against Him should be a ground of His displeasure.

The other way which shows it to be according to reason is this: *it is the indispensable condition of human well-being that God should be known, loved, and revered in the highest*. Apart from this knowledge and reverence, man degenerates to darkness and misery. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, even as regards the little happiness that is possible in this mortal state. About this it is impossible for a reflecting mind to have the least doubt in view of either his own experience or the general experience of mankind, so far as an individual may have access to that.

The highest happiness of man is to be found in the exercise of those faculties which give us relation to God, faith, mercy, and futurity. That God, therefore, should insist, by stern dispensation of His will, upon His honor being in the ascendant, is to perform the *truest kindness it is possible for Him to show to man*.

The light, therefore, which we see glowing in this chapter—the burning light of the Divine glory, though a painful light to look at with the naked eye—is a *beneficent* light, like the Sun, which though scorching in the wilderness, is a generator of life and beauty where water, soil, and the other conditions of life exist. The doctrine of God's *supremacy* by itself, would be hard and burdensome for fainting flesh and blood; but it does not come by itself, it cannot come by itself. There is a *blessing* connected with it, as Moses earnestly shewed to Israel in the wilderness, at the end of their journeyings.

There is nothing but curse and blight, and ruin, and death, away from God's supremacy. Therefore God aims at establishing His supremacy in all He has done. *This is His whole purpose*.

"As truly as I live, the whole earth shall be filled with My glory."

He spared Israel in all their backslidings, because He wrought for His Name's sake. He spared them that the true seed in their midst—men of Abraham's faith and deeds—*might be developed for His glory*, generation after generation. For the same reason, He endured the wicked of these passing centuries, kind alike to all, in patience of the day when He will root transgressors out of the earth, and give the earth into the hands of His tried and faithful people at the resurrection.

The lesson of the chapter is by no means confined to the pre-Ezekiel history of Israel. It was written for those who should come after. It is an explanation for all time, in all the relations into which God may come with the human race. It has force here in our midst this morning. It is the explanation of this bread which we break: this wine which we drink:

"I wrought FOR MY NAME'S SAKE."

This might be written over and under the cross of Calvary, by which the world—the godless world of men upon earth—was crucified unto us and we unto the world. When we come unto God by Christ, we approach Him in a temple, as it were, having these words inscribed on the portals. They are the explanation of the bleeding lamb, which by faith we bring in our hands; away from them there is no explanation. By all natural thoughts, the shed blood of Christ is a distressing mystery—

". . . to the Jews a stumbling block, to the Greeks (modern as well as ancient) foolishness."
—but, adds Paul—

". . . to us who are saved, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

Natural thoughts ask, "Why was a sinless man put to death? Why must blood be shed before God could be approached for eternal fellowship? Why could not the goodness of God come forth in unmixed beneficence? Why not our sins be forgiven of His own prerogative of mercy? Yea, why death, why evil, at all?"

The word of wisdom answers natural thoughts. Natural thoughts are but the meanderings of mental power unsupplied with facts to work on. *There are higher facts than the unenlightened natural brain of man can know.* The history of Israel is the illustration and enforcement of these facts.

The first and great fact of facts which the natural mind disrelishes is that Jehovah is Maker and Possessor of heaven and earth, and will be approached by man in such consummate deference as He requires, the forms whereof He Himself appoints. We look on the extended form of Christ transfigured on Calvary, and behold the way of our approach.

What did that crucifixion do? It declared the righteousness of God! (Rom. 3:25). How? By the condemnation of sin *in its own flesh* (Rom. 8:3). Was Jesus of that flesh? Undoubtedly: he was son of David, son of Abraham (Matt. 1:1); seed of David according to the flesh (Rom. 1:3); of the same flesh and blood as his brethren, made in all things like unto them (Heb. 2:14-17).

Was he a sinner then? No: Son of God and Son of Man, and though tempted in all things like his brethren, he was without sin as to character, *though made sin as to nature* (2 Cor. 5:21). Though on his mother's side he partook of the sin and death-stricken nature of Adam's race, on his Father's side, that nature had such impress and mold as made him Jehovah's Holy One, fitted by his righteousness to bear away the sin of the world in death and resurrection.

Was it *instead* of us he died? No, brethren. It was *for* us, on behalf of us, on account of us—that God's righteousness might be declared as the basis of forgiveness and reconciliation. God's righteousness would not have been declared in substitution; that would rather have been a concealing or obscuring of His righteousness. And forgiveness in such a case would have been an illusion, for how can God or man be said to forgive a debt another has paid?

No, this is not substitution; for we have to *take part in it and be one with it.* We are buried *WITH HIM* in baptism; we are planted in the similitude of his death; we are made to partake in His crucifixion; and on this condition our sins are forgiven. He went through it all for us as our *representative*, only that in him was done that which could not be done in us.

In him, death was abolished by resurrection after suffering, because of obedience. In us, death would have closed our eyes forever, because of disobedience. In him, righteousness was declared both in death (because possessing our nature) and in resurrection (because having accomplished a perfect obedience).

Therefore *in him only is life*, and God has given to him the power to bestow life on all who own themselves dead with the crucified Christ and alive only by his resurrection power.

God, in Christ, has "wrought for His Name's sake"—for His honor—for His exaltation—for His unquestionable supremacy.

His righteous law made man mortal because this supremacy was set aside in the beginning; and He sets not this law aside, but has it carried out in the Son of His own providing, in a way that while opening the road to salvation, *exalts God in the highest and abases man to the uttermost.* This is the lesson of the cross—that God is great and dreadful and holy and unchangeable, though kind and merciful and forgiving to those who tremble before Him: and that man is small and insignificant and sinful and mortal, though invited to equality with the angels in glory and honor and immortality.

The *death* of Christ tells us that the way of immortality is closed impenetrably against all sinners; and his *resurrection* tells us that God will only be approached through him who has been made by Him, "righteousness and sanctification and wisdom and redemption" for all who humble themselves obediently to His way. Such only are forgiven; such only justified, and made heirs according to the hope of eternal life which God Who cannot lie promised before the world began.

What is our wisdom, then, dear brethren and sisters, but to remove as far as possible from the example of the elders who waited on Ezekiel. Let us abandon the abominations of ancestry, sanctioned howsoever it may be by numbers and learning in the generations that are past. Let us recognize and conform to the Divine rule in history—that sinners are spared only because of the Divine purpose to fill the earth with His glory: and that the safety of the righteous is only to be found in a *close and humble and contrite-hearted observance of God's will as revealed by Moses, the prophets and the apostles*—a will that we should be lowly and meek and thankful and obedient in all things.

"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glorieth glory in this, THAT I AM THE LORD which exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth; for in these things do I delight."

"A FALSE BALANCE IS ABOMINATION TO THE LORD: BUT A JUST WEIGHT IS HIS DELIGHT" (Proverbs 11:1).

A balance is a device for measuring and judging. It represents itself as rigidly fair and unprejudiced. **A false balance is deceit making a special claim to honesty.** Let us not, as we read the Proverbs, pass over these various points as something that could never apply to us. Let us not dismiss them with the thought that we would never dream of deceiving or cheating. Let us go a little deeper. These Proverbs all represent important principles of life. They define the difference between the natural way and the divine way.

Deceit is ingrained in human nature; ingrained so deeply that **many aspects of it are not recognised as bad at all**, but as commendable and clever. Can we claim to always be strictly fair and just and straightforward, never deviating a hairsbreadth from the truth, regardless of pressure, danger or self-interest? Can we claim never to be influenced in our conduct and decisions by any consideration other than the perfect Law of God? If we cannot, then this Proverb is for us. As Christadelphians, we make a unique claim to lofty principles. It is very easy to be a false balance, parading itself as truth.

A false balance—anything in any way off true center—anything that is not exactly as it represents itself to be—is an abomination to the Lord. With God everything must be honest and pure to the core. There is beauty and comfort in this thought. We may fail and twist and stumble and hesitate, but "There is that changeth not." "With Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

God is the one eternally-dependable and unchanging Reality. We either build wholly and exclusively on this, or we build on the shifting sands of the present world of false balances.

"But a just weight is His delight." It is interesting that the original Hebrew for just weight, as we see from the margin, is "a perfect stone." There is only one perfect stone. Isaiah says (28:16)

"Thus saith the Lord, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation . . . Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies."

Here the principle is elaborated. Only perfect and pure Truth will stand the test of eternity. All else must be swept away. "A false balance is abomination to the Lord." To stoop to deception is to cheapen and degrade ourselves, and to repudiate our holy calling as sons and daughters of the majesty of God.

Christ's Death the Devil's Destruction

"In my flesh dwelleth no good thing"—Rom. 7-18.

Among the fundamental principles of the One Faith, there is none of deeper interest to us than the death of Christ. The greatest importance must ever be attached to this subject by all who are interested in the truth. Those who would know Jesus Christ, whom to know *aright* is *life eternal*, must have a thorough comprehension of this most vital element of our faith.

Considering the simplicity with which the theme is so beautifully unfolded in the apostolic writings, and also the clear and lucid manner in which it has been explained and brought to light in these latter days, all those who understand the things concerning the Kingdom should also be well rooted and grounded on this great question. However, such is not always the case. Some do not "*give the more earnest heed*" that is so necessary, and others are forgetful—they let things slip; and the danger of the situation is apparent when we remember the statement of Paul, that salvation depends upon our *keeping in memory* the things which were preached by Jesus and his apostles (I Cor. 15:2).

We have all heard of *Renunciationism*, but perhaps all do not understand what is meant by the name, yet those who have the desire can easily acquaint themselves with its origin and history. I do not now propose to give a lengthy explanation of that system which originated in the renunciation of the true doctrine of Christ's nature and death. But some, while they repudiate and denounce Renunciationism in *name*, unwittingly uphold and promulgate renunciationist theories in *argument*, because of the indefinite ideas they entertain with regard to the death of Christ.

I wish, for the benefit of these and all who are investigating the subject, to call attention to the fact that the statement that "*Christ did not die for himself, but could have entered eternal life alone without dying*," is most erroneous, and is the very center and core of Renunciationist doctrine; and those who say that there was no *physical* but only a *moral* change in Adam at the time of his condemnation are making one of the most misleading and objectionable statements resulting from that theory.

Those who are earnestly and patiently investigating the Truth will not consider this a hard saying, for all who are familiar with the apostolic writings well know that the duty of all who understand the Truth is to contend earnestly for the One Faith so precious to all the true children of God.

While our efforts in this direction should be marked by courtesy and consideration for the feelings of others, they should never be wanting in *definiteness* and *firmness*, indicative not only of the solidity of the foundation on which we stand, but also of our intention not to be moved from our position by the unfriendly criticism of any.

We cannot have a proper understanding of the death of the *second* Adam unless we have a clear perception of the cause of the death of the *first*. In the Mosaic account of the creation of man, Adam is described as being "*very good*," and if there was no physical change in him at the time of his condemnation, he remained so throughout life, and in that case his posterity, who inherited the qualities of his physical organization, would surely be described by subsequent writers as having at least something good dwelling in their nature; but the contrary is found to be the case, for Paul in Rom. 7:18 wrote:

"In me (that is, **in my flesh**) dwelleth NO GOOD THING."

When Adam roamed in the beautiful fields of Eden he was not hampered with the shackles of sin, groaning under the bondage of corruption, with sorrow of heart and bodily pain. No; his home was one of "joy and gladness," and he "a living soul," *neither mortal nor immortal*, but *entirely free from "the power of death."* But the transgression brought both a moral and physical change. His flesh and blood nature was then no longer free from the principle of death. There was infixed in it the seeds of decay, which ultimately brought forth death.

His flesh became *diabolos* flesh, or "sinful flesh." Sin became a *law of his being*—a physical principle in his constitution. This principle was denominated "sin in the flesh," and it was transmitted to *all* his descendants, *Jesus Christ* included, whose genealogy is traced back to Adam in Luke 3.

In being born of Mary—"made of a woman"—he was "made sin," he became a partaker of the nature that had sin in its constitution—the *law of sin and death in its members*; and as that law had not been abrogated, his obedience could not exempt him from death—he could not enter eternal life alone without dying.

In Matt. 19 we read that a young man, in asking the Savior a question, addressed him as, "Good Master." The Savior replied—

"Why callest thou **me** good? there is none good but One, God."

In view of this statement we may ask: *what was there about the Son of God that was not good?* His moral character was peerless in perfection, and unparalleled in history. The excellence of his life and conduct was such as extorted from Pilate the declaration:

"I find no fault in him."

What was there in him, then, that was faulty or *not good* in the eye of the Spirit that spake through Jesus? Obviously, it was his defiled and unclean nature inherited from Adam through Abraham, David, and Mary. That nature, originally "very good" and free from the principle of death, had been physically changed in this respect by the introduction of the "law of sin and death in its members," and as Jesus was born with this nature, we can see how he, while being perfect morally, was yet not "very good" constitutionally or physically.

Had he been as perfect physically as Adam was before the Fall, death would have had no claim on him whatever, and consequently there would have been an injustice committed in giving such an one over to death. And had he been as imperfect morally as he was physically there would have been no resurrection and consequently no salvation. Both features were required in the plan of redemption that God—

". . . might be just AND the Justifier of him that believeth."

"Sin in the flesh," when personified in Scripture, is called "*the devil*," and it was a part of the mission of Christ to *destroy this devil through death* (Heb. 2:14), which would have been impossible if sin, as a physical element, had had no existence in him. But having sin in him constitutionally, we can see how he "put away sin by a sacrifice of himself." This *diabolos*, or devil, being in all Adam's posterity, is styled "our old man," and "the old man."

In mankind generally we see "the old man *with* his deeds" (Col. 3:9), but in Christ the "old man" existed *without his deeds*, that is, without evil-doing. In his death the "old man was crucified, that the body of sin might be destroyed"—the enmity in himself was slain and abolished (Eph. 2:15).

There was *justice* in his death, and *justification* in his resurrection. In his death there was a declaration of God's righteousness, by showing man's sinfulness even by nature; and in his resurrection an illustration of the fact that God would not suffer an holy one even in sin's flesh to see corruption.

When Christadelphians say that Adam's nature was not changed or altered, they mean to say that it was not changed from immortality to mortality, as some of the "orthodox" teachers suppose, but they do not mean to say that death was inherent in Adam's nature from his creation.

Those who maintain that mortality was a law of his being previous to the transgression, and that as a result of his disobedience he was simply driven from the Garden and allowed to die when his nature wore out, cast a reflection on the work of the Deity, by teaching that that which works death in us was in Adam before he sinned, and that consequently *death did not come by sin as stated by Paul in Rom. 5:12*, but rather by the law of nature as at first constituted.

It also *destroys the force of the Apostle's reasoning in Heb. 2:14*, as to why Christ was a partaker of our nature, by nullifying his statement that the power of death lay in the diabolos, or sin in the flesh, unless it is affirmed (which is virtually done by some) that the diabolos existed in Adam before the Fall, but in that case it must have been a "very good" diabolos, and if "very good," we may ask—why destroy it?

But as has been shown, *there was no diabolos in Adam's flesh previous to the Fall*. The infixing of the law of sin and death in his members by the sentence, was the introduction of a something that did not previously exist there: and that something, having in it the power of death, was transmitted to all born in him, *causing death to pass upon all*, and the only way of salvation for any of the descendants of Adam who were passing away under this irrevocable law of their nature, was by the *destruction of this evil principle in their nature by death*, after living a morally perfect, upright and holy life, keeping and honoring all God's commandments, which would entitle all such to a resurrection from the death they had been subjected to for the condemnation of sin in the flesh and the destruction of this evil principle in their nature.

But this was a moral impossibility with mankind, because of the depravity of their nature, caused by indwelling sin. None were able to keep the law of God perfectly and sin not, and consequently, none were able to secure a resurrection. God, Who understood this and knew what was in man, saw the weakness of the flesh, and in infinite love and wisdom developed a plan of redemption by "*sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.*"

Concerning the working out of this plan, we read that God was *in Christ*—in him by His Spirit, which dwelt in him without measure. It was God in Christ that enabled him to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, or sin in the flesh. Through death he destroyed this devil, and by the shedding of his blood offered a sacrifice for sin's flesh, and therefore could and did thereby obtain eternal redemption for himself because of his perfect life.

This was God's purpose from the beginning, namely, *the perfecting of one of the race for the salvation of many*; making by him a declaration of His righteousness, and showing thereby the justice of His dealings with the human race; and having done this, He, through forbearance, remits or passes over the sins of all coming unto Him through this perfected Son, whom He has constituted a Mediator, and in whom He has been sanctified—on condition of their belief or faith in certain promises relating to this work, and a manifestation of their faith by obedience to certain commandments and ordinances which He wisely instituted.

Thus God has opened up a way through His dear Son whereby many shall be redeemed from death. As in Adam we die, so in Christ we shall be made alive. In Adam we partake of his sinfulness, and in Christ we are covered by his righteousness. Christ having had our nature, "Our old man was

crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed;" and God through His forbearance having remitted our sins, we can understand that—

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are **in Christ**, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

The law of the Spirit in Jesus Christ maketh us free from the law of sin and death. And so it is that—

"As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rm. 5).

But it must be the obedience of *one of the race that was under the condemnation of death*. This was the case with Jesus Christ, who was the Son of Man as well as the Son of God, and consequently it was not possible for him to enter eternal life alone without dying.

Some when they hear these things, cry out in dismay that such a theory belittles Christ, but the argument really turns the other way; for it is truly honoring Christ and the Father to say that a life of perfect obedience was forced, as it were, out of a nature encompassed with the infirmities of our flesh.

This was the case with Christ. Hence the apostle wrote that—

"By reason hereof he ought as for the people so also for himself to offer for sins" (Heb. 5:3).
And—

"This he did once when he offered up himself" (Heb. 7:27).

Those who maintain a contrary opinion do not comprehend the glorious plan of redemption that God has wrought out in Christ. Paul wrote to the brethren in Corinth saying,

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the **same mind** and in the **same judgment**" (1 Cor. 1:10).

John wrote in his second epistle—

"Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house ('spiritual house,' see 1 Pet. 2:5), neither bid him God-speed."

Thus saith the Lord—the Spirit—by his apostles: and experience teaches us that we cannot compromise the truth on this question without introducing an element of discord that would ultimately cause not only the disruption, but the entire obliteration of the unity of the One Faith. Therefore, we are persuaded that whenever the false doctrine is boldly put forward it is incumbent upon every child of God to oppose it with resoluteness and earnestness, and to maintain the Truth in its purity.

—*B. J. Dowling, Christadelphian, January, 1889.*

"There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty"—Prov. 11:24.

Are we small or big? Do we naturally tend to scatter or to hoard?—to give or to take?—to serve or to require service? It is natural to be small and grasping and fearful. It is considered wisdom by the world—"Men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself" (Psalm 49:18). One of the greatest beauties of the Truth is that—when truly understood and accepted—it **frees men from the pettiness and limitations of the present**. It gives them a nobler, larger and healthier outlook. It

relates them, and the range of their thinking and planning, to the boundlessness of eternity. It delivers them from the frenzied scrabbling for present gain and advantage.

How small and cheap the average man will make himself for present gain! How he will stifle all feeling of kindness and principle and conscience when his possessions are at stake! When he feels secure, he gets a cheap satisfaction from superficial and well-advertised charity, but appear to menace his security and advantage and all the ugliness and evil comes to the surface!

But the Scriptures show unto us a more excellent way. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth."

The Seal of Righteousness

"At that time the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the Children of Israel"—Josh. 5:2.

The emergence of Israel from the waters of the Jordan provides an interesting historical background for the people of God's choice. It laid a foundation for trust in God by the contemporary generation. It had the effect of instilling fear in the hearts of all the surrounding nations:

"When all the kings heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan before Israel, their heart melted" (Josh. 5:1).

But are we to gather no more than this from a record of such miraculous events? Divine wisdom has preserved these records for our instruction. Are we not instructed that "God will do nothing but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets"? We are impressed with the similarity of the entrance into the land of Canaan to the glorious resurrection which will soon take place at the return of Christ. It does however have a two-fold application, the other being to the resurrection to a newness of life after passing through death in baptism.

"Circumcise again the Children of Israel" (Josh. 5:2).

The subsequent verses, 3 to 9, tell us that the generation of Israelites who were entering the land had not been circumcised, that the token of the covenant between God and those associated with the faith of Abraham had been omitted. The Covenant was:

"I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

"Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And the uncircumcised man child shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant" (Gen. 17:7-14).

The wording of the end of this agreement is very emphatic. Moses reiterated the Divine injunction to the nation, the seal of the covenant made with the Patriarch. That this covenant, sealed by circumcision, was very far-reaching and was of fuller meaning than national Israel realized is impressed by the changing of Abraham's name from Abram when the agreement was made—

"A father of **many nations** have I made thee" (not only of Israel).

If Abraham was to be the father of *many nations* the inheritance was to be given to many nations or to those of many nations. We conclude then that circumcision, the seal of the covenant, has a deeper significance than at first appears. There does not appear to be any Divine instruction that the act of circumcision should have been discontinued during the wilderness journey, yet we find that it

was not carried out during the probationary 40 yrs. sojourn. Certainly it was not an *oversight*. The command was too specific.

Looking at the wording again in Joshua we may detect a note of authority for the omission, "All the people that were born in the wilderness, they had not circumcised." If it had been a personal forgetful omission, some would have received the seal and some would not. It appears as a *wholesale omission*. There must have been a reason, and it seems to be wrapped up in those notable words of Paul to the Romans, ch. 4. In the early part of this epistle, Paul has been stressing the point that natural circumcision will avail nothing without the faith of Abraham—

"He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit; not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

We are thus instructed that the *preparation of the heart* is the most important thing which should concern the faithful in the age of their probation. Moses very briefly mentions the circumcision of the flesh but he is very emphatic about the inward circumcision of the heart. Among his final admonitions to Israel we find him stressing this necessary requirement. He asks them—

"What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul."
He continues—

"Circumcise therefore your heart. . . Love ye therefore the stranger."

Now Paul shows in Romans 4 that Abraham's faith was clearly manifested unto God *before* he was circumcised, and he makes a strong point of this fact, stressing that—in his state of *faithfulness* — though uncircumcised, it was an evidence of his righteousness:

"Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

"How was it then reckoned? . . . He received the sign of circumcision, **a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised**: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed unto them" (Rom. 4:10-11).

So we see that Abraham's faith and righteousness were reckoned or accredited to him before he was circumcised. We conclude that righteousness does not depend on circumcision, but precedes it. Circumcision, coming after a manifestation of faith and righteousness, tells us that it is a token or seal of righteousness. The word "seal" which Paul used in v. 11 concerning circumcision has the root meaning "*impressed stamp of genuineness*."

These thoughts instruct us of the reason for the omission of circumcision through the wilderness wandering. They add more force to the conclusion that Israel's sojourn for 40 years was a *type of the probationary career of all God's people*—

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the age are come" (1 Cor. 10:11).

Circumcision then becomes a type of the change from mortal nature to everlasting life. It is a removal of the impulse to sin when the elect shall have risen victorious over sin and death. This was why the type would have been broken if Israel had been circumcised in the wilderness. This appears to be the reason why there was no Divine disapproval for the rite being omitted. How significant then is the meaning of Paul's word "*seal*"—"the impressed stamp of genuineness"! Those who have the antitype of circumcision impressed upon them, even the change to spirit nature, will have the stamp of genuineness of God's servants forever embedded in their constitutions. It will be a token or sign for all

to see, that they have been faithful and obedient to God during their wilderness wanderings. Again we are struck by the significance of the words of God addressed to Abraham—

“The uncircumcised man shall be cut off from his people; **he hath broken My covenant**” (Gen. 17:14).

Those who have not during their probation adhered to the commandments of God, who have *not circumcised their thoughts and minds and actions to God*, will not be made subject to the change to spirit nature, they will be as uncircumcised and will only be fit to be cut off from their people (2 Thess. 1:7-9)—

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels . . . taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

The exactitude of these types is also carried forward in the fact that Israel had to emerge from the waters of Jordan, *the "Descender,"* before the act of circumcision was undergone. This speaks to us of the resurrection, before the change to spirit nature; and it establishes our faith and understanding that when we emerge from the grave we shall not come forth immortal, but shall stand in our natural bodies resurrected. Then shall we receive in body whatsoever we have done whether good or bad.

* * *

"Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the Children of Israel"—Josh. 5:2.

The use of the word *"again"* cannot mean a second rite upon the same people, but a *reinstitution of that which had been discontinued* during the wilderness wanderings. This is also clear by what is stated later, that these people had not undergone the operation before.

The expression, "sharp knives," carries our minds to the thought of judgment, *just and righteous judgments*, at the hands of a judge whose ways are just and equal. The word translated "knives" in this verse is "*chereb*" and is almost always rendered "sword" elsewhere—5 times as "knife" and 402 times as "sword."

Moses, declaring God's intention to judge the nations for the persecution He knows they will bring upon His people, states:

"For the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants when He seeth that their power is gone. . . If I whet My glittering sword (*chereb*) and Mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to Mine enemies and will reward them that hate Me" (Deut. 32:36-41).

There are numerous occasions when the word "sword" is associated with the day when God undertakes to vindicate His glorious Name. Isaiah, referring to the day of resurrection, declared—

"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

Then he indicates that God will judge the nations—

"In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, and He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea" (Isa. 27:1).

Again we associate the thought of the "sword" with judgment when we find Solomon calling for a sword ("*chereb*"), in the discerning of the rightful mother of a child claimed by two women:

"The king said, Bring me a sword (**chereb**); and the king said, Divide the child in two" (1 Kings 3:24).

The result of this display of Divine discernment was expressed:

"And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment" (1 Kings 3:28).

We are impressed with the rite at Gilgal being a wonderful type of the judgment seat of Christ and the sword of God's judgment, executed by the righteous hand of him who knows the thoughts and intents of the heart. The judgments of that day will be according to that which each man or woman has done. *The judgments will be based upon those things which have been commanded.* Responsibility will be based upon a knowledge of the words which have been spoken of the Gospel message—

"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

Paul the Apostle, writing to the Hebrews, exhorts us to strive earnestly to enter into the rest of which Israel's occupancy of Canaan was a type. Israel's past possession was not the fulfilment of the promise, but Paul impresses his hearers that they are to consider Israel's history and thus be prepared to go with the antitypical Joshua into the rest which remaineth for the people of God.

"Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (Heb. 4:11).

Here again we see the application of the *sharp sword of circumcision*, and used in a connection both with personal inward present-day judgments and that which is to come.

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

In the Revelation we are given a picture of the glorified multitudinous Christ effecting the wrath of God against an apostate world following the dictates of Rome. The pictorial symbol in this place is a mighty angel having a sharp sickle (Rev. 14).

With the words of the Master, of John and of Paul impressed upon our minds, we do well to judge ourselves in the light of the commandments of God, to analyse our position, our mode of life and our thoughts. We must equip ourselves with the sword of the Spirit, *pruning and cutting away from our hearts those things which tend toward the world.* Our baptism was the first act of circumcision in this respect. Paul told the Colossians (2:11) that—

"In Christ ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh."

He urges us to continue in this condition by—

". . . seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-2).

For Paul told the Corinthians that if we would judge ourselves now in this our probationary walk we shall not be judged unworthy in the day of Divine judgment. Circumcision of the heart now will make us amenable to circumcision to the spirit nature at the fast-approaching judgment, when the sharp sword of Divine truth will discern the real thoughts and intentions of our hearts. It will be a just

judgment, cleaving between truth and error. The question is "Shall we then be circumcised or shall we be cut off?"

"This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day"—Josh. 5:9.

The name "Gilgal" means "rolling" or "wheel." These memorable events marked a change in Israel's condition from a despised slave race to a nation feared by all around them. Earlier we have read in Exodus 1:8,

"There arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph."

The blessings which were brought upon the land of Egypt because of the sojourning of God's people in their midst were lightly esteemed with the change of government, and the circumstances for Israel's exodus were laid in affliction and cruel bondage. The determined counsel of God in the next stage of His purpose, previously declared to Abraham, was put into action—

"That nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance" (Gen. 15:14).

The reproach of Egypt was to be removed from their name and from the Name of God by a series of events spread over a 40 year period. We have been impressed with the period of time bounded by 40 being the symbolic age of *trial and preparation* for the people of God. During this time the tribulations which a Divine hand brought upon His people had as their basis the development of characters which would reflect glory and honor to His Name.

When a people who have been called to Divine service, who are in the world, but commanded to remain separate, who bear the name of the Father, become *submerged with the world in its activities*, they cease to witness for God and they witness for the world. They bring the reproach of the world upon the Name of God. "Israel" means "*a prince with God.*" The glorious name with which Abraham's descendants were honored could not be lightly assumed. Nor will the Creator permit His majesty to be tramped under foot. In the process of vindication of that honor and righteousness the offenders have to suffer and be tried as by fire. Though the process may seem slow, yet it is exceedingly sure and accurate. The rebels are ground to powder by it but the saints are purified and made white.

"Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord."

The generations which had born the Name of Yahweh down to the dust of Egypt perished in the dust of the wilderness. The plagues of Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea and the destruction of the Egyptian army were the beginnings of a new generation who saw the marvels of Divine provision and protection. The passage of Jordan after the overthrow of Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites and Bashan, ended these typical probationary events.

Egypt is synonymous with *sin, darkness and, wickedness*. It is that from which the faithful are called. While they are in the world, they esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the pleasures of sin. They refuse to run to the same excess of riot as the world; therefore it reproaches them. Remember Christ was:

"Despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3).

We are advised by him (Luke 6:22) that,

"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake."

But there is another aspect to the reproach. Even the faithful come under the reproach of sin, due to the weakness of the flesh. If faithful during their pilgrimage this reproach shall be removed, by being made equal unto the angels, in which state they will be freed from the power of sin and its attendant reproach. It is at the same time that the reproach of service to Christ will be changed into honor and glory and blessing. Those who have despised them will then come bending as suppliants and their fear shall fall upon all the nations.

* * *

"The Children of Israel encamped at Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month"—Josh. 3:10.

The incidents of Jordan and Gilgal had brought Israel into a *New Year!* The Passover was kept in the first month. How striking is this observance upon their entry into the Promised Land! It speaks of angelic deliverance while the sons of darkness were slain! It memorializes the protective hand of God while we remain covered by the blood of Christ, our Passover Lamb! *But why should it be partaken of once the prize was attained?* To natural Israel it was to call to their minds their origin in Egypt and how they were delivered. And it was to lay before the faithful a vision of a greater deliverance yet to be effected through a Lamb of Divine provision.

In line with this Passover, the antitype is designed to teach the all-important fact that our salvation, does not depend on our own efforts; that our deliverance from sin and its effects has been accomplished by the merciful provision of a loving Father in heaven. These things add more point to the words of Christ addressed to his disciples and also to those who will live godly—

"With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God" (Luke 22:15-16).

Such a glorious assembly is illustrated in the Revelation ascribing the honor unto him who has accomplished that which man unaided has found impossible. Of the Lamb of God they sing,

"Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation."

The whole development of history is thus shown to have hinged upon the *sacrificial work of the Savior*. Without the Lamb, there could be no covering over of those who strive to serve the Creator faithfully. And those who are liberated will freely confess that the mercy of a loving Father has brought about the glorious result, a passing over of the Divine vengeance against them. They will stand approved in the presence of Jesus.

* * *

"They did eat of the old corn of the land . . . after the Passover, unleavened cakes and parched corn"—Joshua 5:11.

The expression, "the old corn," appears to be limited to this one place in the Bible. Wherever else "corn" appears it is never translated from this same original. The sense of the expression is, "that which has been set aside or preserved in store." These enactments of Israel in the borders of the land continue to teach us of the order and sequence of resurrection and salvation. With a covering over of the sins of the righteous and the removal of the sin nature, there comes a partaking of everlasting life. This will only be partaken of by those who have eaten freely of the "Bread of Life" during the wilderness wanderings—the manna from heaven.

"This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven... Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him at the last day."

The righteous actions on the part of the faithful are a storing up of life-giving food which they shall partake of when they enter the land. Paul told Timothy to exhort the brethren—

"That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; **laying up in store** for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:18-19).

James tells us to be as patient husbandmen waiting for the precious fruit of the earth (James 5:7).

"... *unleavened cakes* . . ."—Joshua 5:11.

Leaven speaks to us of corruption and death. This fermentation was absolutely excluded from the sacrifices under the Law. Paul tells us to partake of the Passover supper excluding all malice and wickedness from our hearts. Eating therefore of unleavened bread signifies the change to spirit life. These feastings are stated as taking place "on the morrow after the Passover," with the declaration on the part of the judge—"Thy sins be forgiven thee."

"This mortal shall put on immortality and this corruptible shall put on incorruptibility. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

"... *and the manna ceased* . . ."—Joshua 5:12.

In the natural circumstances of Israel, there was no further necessity for the provision of manna. The produce of the land was in the fields before them, and fruit upon which they could be satisfied was laid up in store for their use. That which they had gone out in faith to gather for 40 years had served for the probationary period to develop confidence in God's provision.

These daily provisions of bread, this opening of the Divine hand and satisfying the desire of every living thing is intended to draw men to an appreciation of the higher provision which He has made for man's spiritual hunger.

At present the Savior is a matter of faith being concealed in the heavens. He is the *Hidden Manna*. Yet he told his disciples—

"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:53-54).

This partaking of the flesh of the Son of Man brings a man into relationship to Christ, in the highest sense. Though the servants of God may die, they await in sleep the end of the long night of the ascendancy of sin. In such a state they also are the Hidden Manna. As in the natural order, the dew rising out of the ground, contained the manna, to be revealed by the action of the sun's rays, so the righteous servants of God will experience the action of the rays of God's Son of Righteousness and will be revealed for all the world to see. They with the Master, returned in glory, will constitute the multitudinous Christ, the Revealed Manna, no longer hidden.

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Hidden Manna."

There will no longer be a necessity for the manna to be gathered by them. The journey is over; the land of promise has become a possession. *As manna of the Sabbath day they will corrupt no more.*
—F. H.

We recommend reading of the beautiful exposition upon the subject of "The Hidden Manna" by bro. Thomas in Eureka, Vol. 1, pages) 309-314.

"The Likeness of a Man"

EZEKIEL, CHAPTER ONE (continued)

Now, each of these 4 living creatures had not only 4 faces, but 4 wings, and we read (vs. 8-9) that—

"They had the hands of a man under their wings on their 4 sides . . . their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward."

The presence of human hands in such a symbol is suggestive no doubt of the fact that what is here represented is connected with the race to which we belong. That is to say, the company of the redeemed have been taken out from the multitudes of Adam's posterity. The work of setting up the kingdom of God will not be done by angels, but by an instrumentality developed from among men. God could indeed do it all Himself without making use of any agency whatsoever in the work; but He graciously invites cooperation, and by the ministry of the Apostles He has extended the invitation even to us Gentiles, who are naturally "aliens from Israel's commonwealth, strangers to the covenants of promise."

Moreover, as hands are used to take hold with, their presence in this symbol may be indicative of the fact that the divine work of which we are speaking will not be seized upon by any loose or yielding grasp, but that they who do it will not let it go till *fully accomplished*, and God's will is done in earth, even as in heaven!

And as wings are used for locomotion in the air, they may here stand for the idea that in the future aerial of political power the saints will not have their movements curtailed by any law of gravitation, but will accomplish whatever locomotion may be needed in any given case. In fact, as v. 12 has it—

"Whither the Spirit was to go, **they went.**"

They will just be the vehicles of the Divine Power. Wherever that Power takes them in the process of establishing the kingdom, *there they will go*—and go "straight forward"—no diplomacy necessary in their case, and no turning aside from their purpose by reason of obstacles great or small.

All who stand against them will be as "the chaff of the summer threshing floor which the wind driveth away." And so multitudinous will be their power that it will resemble the rush and roar of great waters.

The voice of the symbol which John saw was like unto the sound of many waters (Rev. 1:15). Waters are the recognized figure in Apocalyptic symbolism for vast concourses of intelligent beings, as we learn from Rev. 17:15. The noise of the wings of these living creatures which Ezekiel saw, was (v. 24)—

"Like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, as the noise of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood they let down their wings."

—and so the sound of battle ceased. V. 14 is very suggestive—

"And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning."

—which we will notice before we pass on. This may give us some idea of the possibilities of the immortal nature. Perhaps Jesus intended a hint of the same sort in his conversation with Nicodemus (John 3). To be "born of the Spirit" is clearly a very different thing from what some people take it to

be. It is to be able to come and go like the wind—to appear and disappear like a flash of lightning. No flesh-and-blood power can withstand the force that is capable of running and returning in this wise. It is the power of God, and it will in due time receive embodiment: and manifestation upon the earth, in a glorious host who will act as the executors of His judgments, administrators of His will—doing His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His Word.

V. 13 presents a further aspect of a very striking kind—

* * *

"Burning coals of fire, lamps of fire, moving about among the living creatures."

What may we understand by this? I think we may regard it as a manifestation of the Spirit of God, in the act of preparing the saints for the great work to be accomplished by their means.

In the Apostolic age we learn there was a distribution of the gifts of the Spirit to every man according to the will of God. Some were more highly endowed than others, as we read in 1 Cor. 12:7. Now these spiritual gifts are to be the possession of all Christ's friends in the immortal state. It will then be literally true that nothing will be impossible unto them. The Spirit will energize them for their work, and the lamps and coals of fire will not cease to burn in their midst.

We gather that there are special positions and functions to be assigned to those for whom they have been prepared in the Kingdom of God. Some are to occupy places in close proximity to Christ, sitting on his right hand and on his left.

"One star differeth from another star in glory; so also is the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15:41-42).

Everyone will fill his appropriate place, and be endowed by the Spirit with the precise forms of qualification which it may demand. The fire will, first of all, move about among the living creatures, and so there will result the precise adaptation of every member of this glorified and immortal company to the particular function he may be required to fulfil.

We next find in v. 15 that this symbolism develops other details of a curious and interesting sort. A wheel with four faces, presenting the appearance of "a wheel in the middle of a wheel." When they went, they went upon their four sides, and they turned not when they went. They were large, and full of eyes.

We associate with a wheel the idea of *rapidity of motion*; and as the eye is the symbol of intelligence, we may suppose the interpretation of this part of the vision to lie in the fact that all the movements of the immortal host, which will be controlled by the Eternal Spirit, will not be of a haphazard description, but that perfect wisdom and discernment will guide their rapid locomotion.

The wheels to the prophet's eye, did not seem to revolve as they went—their revolution being too swift for his perception. Motion on an inconceivably quick and gigantic scale, for purposes connected with infinite wisdom, appears to be the thought which may be most properly attached to this part of the prophet's vision.

The idea is not too improbable to find practical illustration in the work of establishing the Kingdom of God. We live in an age when the importance of rapid intercommunication is universally felt, and when very wonderful provision is made for it. We can flash our messages in a few seconds across 3,000 miles of ocean, and ourselves go the same distance in comparatively short time.

There will be no diminution of such facilities in the period to which the vision refers. The immortal rulers will in no case find distance an impediment to the effective prosecution of their work.

They will never find themselves outdistanced by the fugitive transgressor, even though he should "take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea."

The ends of justice are often defeated now by the limitations of the present condition of existence. There will be no such barriers in the kingdom of God to those whose function it will be to detect and arrest rebellion, and to see that the will of God is done. Jesus discerning Nathaniel before he was visible to the eyes of sense, is an illustration of the mode of perception which finds its symbol in these wheels so full of eyes.

Their beryl-like appearance, their beautiful sea-green color, may suggest the harmony of their movements, so rapid, yet so unerring and free from confusion. No unseemly crossing of each other's path. No misunderstanding of anything that relates to the glorious purpose of God. And no lack of moral fitness and beauty in their aims. There could scarcely be a more charming thought in connection with the subject. Swift for retribution, *and for succor too*. In the present order of things how many deaths occur and evils happen, because immediate assistance is not available!

And often, in our very haste, what delays take place! The joyful day is coming, however, when beneficence and skill will have wings and wheels that will outspeed the shafts of morning light, and there will be no breakdown on the road, for the Spirit of Life will be the motive power.

It may also be that these wheels with four faces are intended to represent *the house of Israel after the flesh, as arrayed in military form, under divine direction*. We have noted the Israelitish significance of the four faces, which belonged to the wheels as well as the living creatures.

There are several passages in the Prophets which teach that God will make a military use of the nation of Israel in the subjugation of the Gentiles to His sway; as in Zech. 9:13, where the sons of Zion are to be raised up against the sons of Greece. And, again, in Zech. 10:3, where the house of Judah is spoken of as Jehovah's goodly horse in the battle. He has promised that he will get Israel "praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame" (Zeph. 3:19).

* * *

"When the living creatures went, the wheels went by them."

This statement may be indicative of the close connection which will exist in the future age between Israel according to the flesh, and the immortal saints. In the early stages of that Divine program there will apparently be concerted action of both parts such as we have described—the mortal nation operating in the hands of the Lord Jesus and his glorified brethren as the "battle-ax and weapons of war" (Jer. 51:20), for the purpose of effecting the conquest of all might and dominion under the whole heaven, and placing Christ in the position of glorious supremacy which the concluding part of Ezekiel's vision assigns him.

The result of the whole is (vs. 25-28), that the entire sphere of their movements assumes a crystal-like translucence. They are arched over by a firmament bright and clear, the wings of the living creatures cover their bodies—no longer needed for the purpose symbolized in the earlier part of the vision. Christ and his friends are enthroned in their seats of undisputed power. There is fire and brightness round about, to indicate that light and heat and incorruptibility and life are incorporate in the substance of him who occupies the throne, and become the source of a blessedness that is (v. 28)—

"As the appearance of the bow in the cloud in the day of rain."

The rainbow is ever associated in our minds with Jehovah's "Everlasting Covenant" which guarantees the permanence of that Great Salvation which will result from the establishment of Messiah's throne upon the earth. It is an *everlasting* covenant—a covenant that relates to a period concealed, but none the less certain—a *covenant of life and peace which shall never end*.

Ezekiel relates that when he saw this wonderful appearance of the likeness of Jehovah's glory, he fell upon his face. It was a gorgeous and dreadful, and yet *most comforting spectacle*—a "vision of Elohim," as he says in v. 1—a symbolic representation of the Eternal One, manifested in a mighty host of Adamically-descended, but now permanent, forms, for the purposes of His Own praise and glory in the earth.

As such it was a fitting preliminary to the mission on which the prophet was sent—a mission to an impudent, stiff-necked, rebellious people—at a time, too, when God's affairs upon earth, were all in a state of apparently hopeless confusion—His nation dispersed and down-trodden, His city desolate, His Temple a ruin.

To Ezekiel himself, this symbolism must have furnished a most opportune, and impressive and consolatory assurance, that *better days were yet in store for all those who were waiting for God*, and hoping in His Word, and that a triumphant and glorious destiny was appointed for Israel, in the day of the full accomplishment of Jehovah's great purpose, when He will no longer require to be approached or apprehended by symbolic means, but when His Tabernacle will be with men, and He will dwell among men, and be their God, and wipe away all tears from their eyes, and the last page of the history of the earth's exile from Him shall have been written, and its immortal population shall rend the air with songs of praise to Him who sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb.

—*Christadelphian*, 1884

One Hundred Years Ago With Bro. Thomas

At KING WILLIAM, CORINTH, ALBEMARLE, RICHMOND (Virginia)

The affairs of the Gospel of the Kingdom are not brilliant at King William. Its affairs are brilliant nowhere, nor do its friends expect them to be till their Lord appears "in power and great glory." The progress of the Truth is like the moving of a house. It makes many dead halts, and when it moves it is with much straining, and tediously slow. The obstacle to the Gospel in this county is the worldly prosperity of the people. There is plenty of marl to enrich their lands, fish and sora are abundant, fish-fries and barbeques not few, good cheer at home and gayeties abroad; what more could heaven give, and what more there to be desired by—**an animal man**? Yes, that's the turning point—

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

This is the difficulty wherever the Gospel of the Kingdom is introduced. It is comprehensive of the "things of the Spirit," which are foolishness to our contemporaries. They not only do not **study**—but scarcely **read**—the prophets. This is the great obstacle to our progress everywhere. The people hear us **prove** all we affirm; still they remain faithless, for they have no true faith in the Bible. Therefore, as the Lord said to- his hearers—

"If ye believe not Moses and the Prophets, how can ye believe me?"

I spoke 5 times at King William; then I was forwarded toward Richmond in a cranky and ancient bi-rotal car. Next morning, at half-past six, I was on the way to Louisa by the Virginia Central, where we arrived about 10 a.m. We set out for Corinth, about 10 miles from the station. We arrived here about 12:30 and found quite a gathering. They were getting doubtful of my arrival, but had not become impatient. It was not amiss to travel 70 miles to an appointment by half-past 12.

I believe I can truly testify that on this occasion the influence of the Word was stronger than the flesh. I did not see any asleep during my address. All seemed to be wide awake—if not to conviction—at least to the hearing of the "New Doctrine"—new to this generation, though old as the promises of God made to the fathers thousands of years ago.

Next morning I took the cars for Charlottesville, where we arrived in 3 hours. No impression has been made upon the population of this place by the Gospel of the Kingdom. The Pride of Life has a little kingdom here of its own. We did not therefore think it worthwhile to expend time, money and labor in pressing the Gospel for the poor and meek again upon their attention. This has been so often done without effect, that we concluded to pass them by and direct our attention once more to the Piedmontese of Albemarle.

At Albemarle, about 25 persons, the greater part brethren, came to hear what the Scriptures taught as "the wisdom that is from above." And of these few, 2 or 3 were unable to keep their minds fixed on the Divine testimony to the end of the discourse.

Having spoken about 2 hours to the very few who cared not to run after the multitude, we returned to Charlottesville. On the following Tuesday I returned to Richmond. The Pride of Life, after the order of the Old Man, reigns High Priest of the kingdom of vanity as imperiously in this city as can be conceived of in Rome itself. Yet there is a great profession of religion here. But it is that sort of "religion" that practically ignores the Bible.

It was in such a city as this that a few personal friends were desirous I should address the people. From my knowledge of Richmond I was very loath to make any such attempt. It was here that Mr. Campbell's partisans had done their utmost to make me a byword and a reproach among the people. I had been held up to popular scorn and contempt in newspaper advertisements, denounced and ridiculed from the pulpit, etc., until many had really concluded I was mad and had a devil.

But Mr. Sutton was indefatigable in canvassing his acquaintances, many of whom, since the breaking out of the eastern war, had expressed a desire to hear me. By dint of his efforts a very respectable and intelligent audience (as I was informed) was got together, notwithstanding many obstacles that had to be surmounted.

A second discourse concluded my operations in Virginia. On the following morning at 6 a.m. I departed for Baltimore, where I arrived about 3 p.m. It has been uphill work for the Truth in this "Rome" of the United States, and but for bro. W. P. Lemmon it would have no public advocate in that city. Greatly to his honor he has stood by it with mouth and means in its lowest estate there.

He has not held back, like some, to see if the Gospel of the Kingdom would become popular and "respectable" and might be safely embraced without hindrance to temporalities or social position. He came to see the Truth, and having seen it, heartily obeyed it; and as a consequence, found himself alone—a solitary pillar in a howling wilderness.

He had for some months been calling the attention of the public to the Gospel of the Kingdom. Besides some of his own family, he has immersed other 5 into Christ. I spoke here 3 times on Sunday. What was the effect I know not. Seed does not germinate immediately it is sown, neither does the Truth spring forth into enlightened action in an instant. Something must be left for God to do.

Thus was brought to a close my visit to the South for 1854, after an absence of 6 weeks, during which time I spoke 25 times. This concluded my journeyings for the year, having travelled—since June—a distance of 5500 miles.—

Bro. Thomas, Herald of the Kingdom, January, 1855.

Ecclesial News

LONDON, Ont.—Orange Hall, 388 Clarence St.—Sun. Sen. 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.

Since our last report, we have had the pleasure of the company and fellowship of: bro. & sis. Charles Banta, and daughter, sis. Michael Banta of Houston, Texas (bro. Banta lectured for us); bro. & sis. Fred Higham, bro. G. V. Growcott and sis. Anne Growcott of Detroit; bro. & sis. V. C. Gilbert of Buffalo; bro. Joseph Jackson of Toronto, and sisters Clara and Marilyn Sparham of Hamilton. Bre. Higham, Gilbert and Growcott have all given us the word of exhortation and comfort on more than one occasion. We are grateful for their labor in the Lord's vineyard.

We are sorry to announce the death of our bro. Wm. Robson, who died on Dec. 7 at the age of 78, and was laid to rest in Mount Pleasant cemetery beside his sister-wife who predeceased him 37 years ago. He was baptized in 1898. The writer did what was necessary in laying him to rest. It was his earnest endeavor to keep the Truth pure amidst our troublous times. Surely his sleep will not be long for the Lord is even at the door.

Our Sunday School outing was held at Springbank Park on July 1 and was enjoyed by all. We plan, if the Lord will, to have our Sunday School gathering on Jan. 1.

As another year comes to a close, and we review our ecclesial situation, we take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the time and effort put into editing and publishing this ecclesial voice of those in the Berean fellowship. The excellent reprints of the writings of bre. Thomas and Roberts, and the fine articles on the Truth by other contributors, are greatly enjoyed. May the blessing of our Father in heaven strengthen their hands to continue. —bro. W. D. Gwalchmai.

Pleasures Forevermore

"In the way of righteousness is life, and in the pathway thereof there is no death"—Proverbs 12:28.

Why are we so concerned with these things? Why do we meet here week after week? Why do we continually study God's Word? We do these things because we desire something better and more enduring than the present. In the natural course of events, we shall all die before very long. If any are satisfied with that, and desire no more, all well and good. Let them eat, drink and make a pretence at being merry.

It is not just immortal life itself we are interested in. That alone could be very monotonous. It is the **personal aspect** of the love of God and of His Son, and the guarantee of eternal and worthwhile **satisfaction of living** beyond what we can possibly conceive. It is not just eternal existence—it is eternal marvel and activity and experience and adventure.

Happiness is a very indefinite quality. Outside of Divine things, it is quite an insecure and fleeting thing. Much time and effort are spent pursuing it and planning for it, buoyed up by hope, but how rarely, and how briefly, if ever, can we sit back and say, "This is it, and I am satisfied." Jesus said:

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

If the Word of God is to be depended upon as true, then an UNENDING "fulness of joy" IS possible and attainable. The Proverbs are a very practical part of the Divine instruction leading thereto.

*"Thou wilt show me the path of life.
In Thy presence is fulness of joy.
At Thy right hand are pleasures forevermore."*

Some will be there, simply because they have followed the clearly defined "path of life" that leads there. Each day, and many times a day, we make the choice between the natural way and the very rare and unusual spiritual way—the "path of life"—in thought, word, action and attitude. Let us make every effort not to be among those who, after following the crowd in the natural way all their lives, will wake up with unhappy surprise to discover that they have arrived at the well-advertised destination which that way leads to—

"Lord, Lord, open unto us; surely you know us! We belonged to the ecclesia at . . . for many years."

The time to get to know the Lord is now. And to know Him and be known of Him is to become unified with His mind and character by deep study of His Word. We are given Divine assurance that— if faithfully continued in—this will be a joyful and transforming experience, far surpassing any of this world's shallow attractions, giving earthly man a heavenly character of wisdom, gentleness, holiness and truth.

"In the way of righteousness there is no death."

"THE NIGHT COMETH WHEN NO MAN CAN WORK"

Mortal opportunity cannot last always. Our days have a fixed number; every sunrise and sunset takes away one, and brings on the "night" when no man can work. If Jesus applied this to himself, how much more we may take the application to ourselves. "Redeem the time."—Bro. Roberts.

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