

The Berean Christadelphian

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

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

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

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CHRIST IS COMING AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

The Berean Christadelphian

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EDITORIAL

In the Last Days

"If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"—1 Pet. 4:18.

There are a number of things in the Mount Olivet prophecy that are of deep interest to us; but the one that comes up for special attention, at this time, relates to the *"times of the Gentiles."* Jesus had been telling his disciples about the forthcoming siege of Jerusalem, and the great distress that would come upon the land, and how God's wrath would be poured out upon the people. Then he added—

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, **until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled**"—Luke 21:24.

Scripturally speaking, there are but two classes of people in the world—*Jews and Gentiles*. The nation of Israel was brought into being when they left Egypt under the leadership of Moses. At Sinai, they received their national laws, and a system of religion designed to keep God before them in all phases of their individual and national life.

When they entered the land of promise, their occupation of it was conditional upon obedience. This is dealt with at great length in Deut. 28. In the event of obedience, Moses said (v. 1):

"It shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth."

In addition to that, other inestimable blessings are set forth in the following 12 verses. But if they should become disobedient, manifold *curses* would come upon them, and finally—

"The Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods"—Deut. 28:64.

There is no question about the outcome, for the history of Israel reveals their persistent disobedience until, about the year 720 B.C., the 10 tribes were carried away by Shalmanezar, and 150 years later the remaining 2 tribes were taken by Nebuchadnezzar, and Israel as a nation ceased to exist.

In the meantime, the times of the Gentiles had their approximate beginning with the fall of Nineveh in B.C. 607, and have continued until the present day. In the days of Jesus, the people of Israel were still maintaining many of their national characteristics, and distinctive traits; but they were rapidly approaching the time for their final overthrow—

"For **these be the days of vengeance**, that all things which are written may be fulfilled"

—Luke 21:22.

The period, in which the times of the Gentiles are to be fulfilled, is referred to in the Scriptures as "*the last days*" and "*the latter days*." These terms are used by Jesus, the prophets and the apostles. In the third chapter of his second letter, Peter writes in considerable detail of this time, saying in particular—

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?—for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation"—2 Pet. 3:3-4.

That Peter was speaking of the closing times of the Gentiles is evident from what he says in verse 13—

"We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Paul goes much deeper into the subject when writing to Timothy, when he says—

"But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of stress (difficult or trying times). For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, fierce, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God"—2 Tim. 3:1-4 (RSV).

It is evident that he is not speaking of men of the world, for he says in verse 5, that these men will be—

"Holding the form of religion but denying the power of it."

It is not our prerogative to accuse any brother of possessing any of these distinctive traits, nor are we expected to search for them; but Paul says there will be such in the last days, therefore we must not be surprised at anything that happens. As we peruse this list, we realize that *human nature is subject to each of the items enumerated, but in various degrees*. Perhaps the most subtle of them all is the ever-impending danger of becoming "*lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*."

The people of the world are pleasure mad, and many business men cater to it by various methods. In the field of sport, where large crowds assemble, they are carried away through the excitation of feeling to a state of mass-hysteria which satisfies the lust of the flesh. But in all this there is considerable exertion required. Therefore new forms of pastime had to be designed to bring pleasure without effort. This has been accomplished by television, *the most artfully insidious form of pleasure ever created* by which men and women are able to sit comfortably in the home while the desires of the carnal mind are gratified.

Our consideration of Paul's words should excite within us a desire to *check up on our way of living*. As he says elsewhere:

"Examine yourselves, to see whether you are holding to your faith. **Test yourselves**. Do you not realize that **Jesus Christ is in you?**—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!"

— 2 Cor. 13:5 (RSV).

As we view the closing days of Gentile times, and look in faith toward the east for the rising of the Sun of righteousness, may we have the courage to place ourselves under the microscope of God's Word, and proceed with a comprehensive introspection and self-judging of character, and give ourselves no rest until we find ourselves at peace with God. *The standard is high, the requirements are rigorous, the way is narrow, and few there be that find it.*

"If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

—1 Pet. 4:18.

If those words of Peter are not forceful enough to rouse brethren and sisters, and cause them to awake to the responsibilities that rest upon them because of their belief of, and obedience to, the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, then only His voice from heaven peeling forth in tones of thunder, as it did at Sinai, will make them tremble at His presence. —*Editor*

Texas Fraternal Gathering

(If the Lord Will)

At Hye, Texas, from Monday, July 30 to Sunday, August 5

MONDAY, JULY 30

9 a.m.	Bro:	BUSINESS MEETING
11 a.m.	G. A. Gibson	"I will Be Sanctified in them that come nigh Me."
3 p.m.	N. Mammone	"In the World But Not of It."
8 p.m.	O. Beauchamp	"The Restoration of the Kingdom to Israel."

TUESDAY, JULY 31

11 a.m.	G. Growcott	"Psalm 119" (Part 1).
3 p.m.	S. S. Wolfe	"What Manner of People Ought We to Be?"
8 p.m.	F. Higham	"Britain and Russia Will Fight in Palestine."

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1

11 a.m.	H. Sommerville	"Let Us Hold Fast the Profession of Our Faith."
3 p.m.	O. Beauchamp	"The Covenants of Promise."
8 p.m.	N. Mammone	"God Has a Purpose With Man on the Earth."

THURSDAY, AUGUST 2

11 a.m.	F. Higham	"Jacob Was a Plain Man."
3 p.m.	G. Growcott	"Psalm 119" (Part 2).
8 p.m.	G. A. Gibson	"The Real Christ as Revealed in the Bible."

FRIDAY, AUGUST 3

11 a.m.	N. Mammone	"Jesus Calls the Twelve."
3 p.m.	H. Sommerville	"Progressiveness."
8 p.m.	O. Beauchamp	"The Bible Gives the Meaning of Our Times."

SATURDAY, AUGUST 4

9 a.m.		BUSINESS MEETING
11 a.m.	G. Growcott	"Paul's Letter to the Colossians."
3 p.m.	E. Wolfe	CHILDREN'S PROGRAM
8 p.m.	F. Higham	"Way of Salvation: Belief, Baptism, Obedience."

SUNDAY, AUGUST 5

11 a.m.	G. A. Gibson	"The Glory That Shall Be Revealed."
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"I WILL ONE DAY PERISH BY THE HAND OF SAUL"

David was anointed to be king of Israel without any intimation that he would first be an outcast, whose life would be hunted with the whole power of the kingdom. The bitterness came upon him unexpectedly and made him despondent. Said he,

"I will one day perish by the hand of Saul."

They must have been dreary times for David when hiding in the dens and caves of the earth afraid to shew himself to civilized man for fear of his life.

The keenness of his mental sufferings is reflected in many of the psalms written during that time, which, though prophetic of the Messiah, were primarily, the breathings of the afflicted spirit of David, of whom the Spirit made use to foreshadow the experience of His greater Son — the Root and offspring of David — who, before exaltation, was to be a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

—**Bro. Roberts.**

The Morning Star

BY BRO. JOHN THOMAS

"He that overcometh, and keepeth my works to the end . . . to him will I give the Morning Star"
—Rev. 2:27.

To appreciate the importance and value of this great promise, we must know what is signified by the phrase. The Morning Star is, literally, "*the star belonging to the morning.*" This morning is alluded to in Gen. 49:27, where it is written concerning the tribe of Benjamin (styled a "wolf*")—

"He shall tear in pieces. **In the morning** he shall devour the prey, and at the evening he shall divide the spoil."

In these words of Jacob's prophecy of "what shall happen with Israel *in the last of the days,*" we are instructed to look for a period in which Benjamin will devour his enemies instead of being himself devoured, as for the last 1800 years. This is styled "*the Morning*"—an era of triumph and conquest for Israel, as indicated by their "devouring the prey" and "dividing the spoil."

Now, the morning is the beginning of the day, or the *time of the sun's rising.* This is true whether the sun be the "Day Star" of the material, or political, heavens. The morning referred to by Jacob in his prophecy is manifestly the time of the rising of a sun in the political heavens, because he is treating of a great political revolution in the affairs of Benjamin and the rest of the tribes. Israel cannot now "devour the prey" and "divide the spoil" among the people, because, as Moses says—

“Yahweh sees that power hath departed, and none retained or left.”

It is this perfect powerlessness of the tribes before their enemies that excites the indignation and compassion of Yahweh. The scattering of their power having attained its climax (Dan. 12), the morning of their deliverance arrives—

"Yahweh will plead for His people, and show pity upon His servants, when He shall see that power is departed, and none retained or left" (Deut. 32:36).

But the tribes of Jacob are not the *Sun*, or Day Star, of this morning of their glory. In the antitype, as in the type—

"In the morning they shall see the glory of Yahweh appearing in a cloud" (Exo. 16:7-10).
—and *they who behold* are different from the *thing beheld*—this is the Sun who, in his rising, makes it morning-time. He will then give them *bread* to the full, and his *dew* will "lay round about the host."

The life and power of Israel is not in their *own* prowess, but in the Eternal Spirit, YAHWEH, manifested in Messiah and his brethren—the *one Yahweh Elohim of Israel*. It is *he* that makes "their latter end" glorious, and turns the weeping of their long and dreary night into the joy that cometh "*in the morning*."

This Eternal Spirit in his multitudinous manifestation is the Sun, belonging to the morning of that great day in which the world shall be ruled in righteousness, and Yahweh's glory shall cover the earth as waters the seas. The Spirit in David, contemplating this One-in-Many, the future ruling body on earth, says:

"There shall be a Ruler over mankind, a Just One, ruling in the righteous precepts of **Elohim**. And as brightness of morning He shall rise the Sun of an unclouded dawn shining forth after rain on tender grass out of the earth" (2 Sm. 23).

This One Ruling Body, the mystical Christ, is the Shiloh, to whom shall be the gathering of the peoples, as the Sceptre of Judah. This is the King that shall be higher than Agag, and whose kingdom shall be exalted—the Star of Jacob and the sceptre or rod of iron that shall smite the princes of Moab and destroy all the children of Sheth (Num. 24). Jesus of Nazareth is the Head of this "One Body," the Head of Jesus is the Eternal Power, whence is effused the anointing of all (1 Cor. 11:3).

Now the Eternal Wisdom is the Revealer of the Revelation. He gave it to Jesus, "whom He anointed both Lord and Christ." Hence, when the Anointed Jesus speaks in the Revelation, it is the Eternal Spirit Who speaks. For this reason it is, that at the end of each epistle the hearer is reminded that *it is the Spirit speaking* to the ecclesias. Thus we see the same rule maintained in the Revelation as the Testimony of John. There Jesus saith—

"My doctrine (or teaching) is not mine, but **HIS that sent me**. If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of Deity, or I speak of myself" (John 7:16).
And John 12:49—"I have not spoken of myself; but the Father Who sent, me, He gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak."

The rule of the Revelation is the same—the Eternal Wisdom speaking through Jesus, himself become spirit in being begotten and born of the Spirit from among the dead. It is the Eternal Spirit, then, who, through Jesus, says in Rev. 22:16—

"I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright and **Morning Star**."

The Spirit, apart from Jesus, could not say this. The Spirit is the *Root* of David, because David and all mankind sprang from the Spirit Who created them. But, apart from flesh and blood, He (the

Spirit) was not the "Offspring" of David. It was necessary for the Spirit to *become flesh of Judah and David's line*, as John teaches in 1:14, to become the "Offspring of David."

When He raised up the dead body named Jesus, He transformed it into spirit-body. This became the Bright Star—the bright *particular* Star—of that galaxy of stars pertaining to that morning when "*Israel shall do valiantly*"; and the wolf, Benjamin, shall devour the prey; and the Beloved of Yahweh shall dwell safely by him, shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders (Deut. 33:12).

The Bright and the Morning Star, then—the Eternal Spirit glorified in Jesus—promises to give the morning star to him that overcomes. In other words, that he shall become a glorified constituent of the "One Body," when it is adopted at the manifestation of the Sons of Deity (Rom. 8:19-24). He will then be a star pertaining to the Millennial Dawn—a *morning star*—

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness **as the stars** 'le-olahm wah-ed'—in the Olahm and Beyond" (Dan. 12).

Or, as Jesus said (Matt. 13:43)—

"Then shall the righteous shine forth **as the Sun** IN THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER."

—which belongs to "the Olahm and Beyond." The redeemed will then be, in the aggregate, a Cloud of Morning Stars, "*equal to the angels*" themselves—

"The Morning Stars that sang together, and the Sons of Deity that shouted for joy . . ." —when the corner stone of earth's foundation was laid by the Eternal (Job 38:7). We look for the Bright and Morning Star from heaven, that he may (Phil. 3:21)—

"Change our vile body, and fashion it like his glorious body."
—and we know that—

"We are now the Sons of Deity, and that when he shall appear **we shall be like him**"

(1 John 3:2).

This is equivalent to saying *we shall be morning stars*—stars that come forth as dew from the womb of the morning, shining in all the glory of the resurrection state (1 Cor. 15:41; Psa. 110).

Of all the Stars of the New Heavens, Jesus will be the brightest; for in all things it is the Father's will and pleasure, not only that "all the fulness shall dwell in him," but that "he also shall have the pre-eminence."

"*There is one glory of the Sun*"—and that is his. And "*there is another glory of the Stars*"—and that is the glory of his brethren individually. And "*there is another glory of the Moon*"—and that is the glory of his companions collectively. As his Bride, they—

"Look forth **as the morning**, fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, and terrible as an army with banners" (Song 6:10).

He that overcomes, to him it shall be given to be one of these —a splendid one sparkling in the glory of the great and fearful Name of YAHWEH ELOHIM.

SINGING SECULAR SONGS

The singing of secular songs, on the part of Christadelphians, has been very aptly designated "a weakness of spiritual childhood." In relation thereto, we want to emulate the great Apostle Paul, who said,

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (I Cor. 13:11).

It is difficult to imagine one aspiring to "a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 14:13) standing up to sing a secular song, or joining with others in singing songs, in which the composer has found no room for God. Certainly no Christadelphian who realizes his or her high calling will join a Choral Society, or a Choir of non-Christadelphians.

The Apostolic injunction is, "Is any merry? let him sing psalms" (James 5:13). Buy the "Christadelphian Hymn Book," and give one to each of your children.—**Christadelphian Treasury.**

The Lesson of the Rechabites

BY BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

"Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before Me for ever"—Jer. 33:19.

Among the many scriptures which have been written "that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works," there is none more efficacious in a certain way than the account of the interview (in Jer. 35) between Jeremiah and the Rechabites. Let us look at it for a moment.

Jeremiah is divinely ordered to send for the Rechabites and then bring them into one of the apartments of the Temple and offer them wine. The Rechabites were so called from their ancestor *Rechab*, whose son Jonadab left various directions for the guidance of their descendants.

Under these directions, they lived a pastoral life in tents in the open field. Their being within the wall of Jerusalem at the time of Jeremiah's message was due to the presence of Nebuchadnezzar's army in the country, from whom they naturally sought refuge in the principal fortified city of the land.

Among other paternal directions for the regulation of their house, was the command to abstain from the use of wine. It was principally with reference to this that they were now sent for. Jeremiah, having assembled them in one of the principal apartments of the Temple, produced wine, and said to them—

"Drink ye wine." Said they: *"We will drink no wine"*—

"Jonadab, the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye nor your sons forever . . . Thus have we obeyed the voice of our father."

It is with the *divine application* of this incident that we have to do. Such an incident, publicly transacted in the courts of the Temple, would naturally attract notice and secure attention to the lesson divinely intended. What *was* the lesson intended? Not abstinence from wine, though *that* is a good thing—

"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder" (Pro. 23).

The lesson intended is conveyed in Jehovah's own words

"The words of Jonadab, the son of Rechab . . . are performed: for unto this day they drink no wine, but obey their father's commandment. But **ye hearkened not unto Me.**

"I have sent unto you all My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, "Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings . . . but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto Me" (Jer. 35:14-15).

The words of a *man* are obeyed; the words of *God* are disregarded. This is the central argument of the incident. This is God's complaint to the house of Israel by Jeremiah. And is it not a reasonable complaint? Whose words ought to be obeyed, if not those of "the High and Lofty One, inhabiting eternity"?

Is it not a complaint that might, with peculiar force, be addressed to this age of the world? The commandments and ordinances of men are submitted to in all ways of life, but the commandments of God have ceased to be an intelligible idea, let alone a practical power, in the habitations of men.

It may be said that if man's commands are obeyed, it is not from the spirit of *obedience*, but in the spirit of the *fear of consequences*. Human law would soon be a dead letter if it were not for the handcuffs of the police and the powder and shot of the military.

Yet the *spirit of obedience* is the noblest spirit under the sun. It was the departure from it in the beginning that led to the world's woes: the return to it will be the salvation of men—

"By one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous (or obedient)"—Rom. 5:19.

God manifests His approbation of the one spirit, and His stern disapprobation of the other, in a special manner in the incident before us. He reminds Israel of the *means He had adopted* to bring them into the path of obedience, and He upbraids them as to the attitude they had shown—

"I have sent unto you all My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them."

In passing, there is something worth notice in the expression —"*rising up early*." It frequently occurs throughout the prophets. It illustrates the *earnestness* of the divine expostulation. When a man is deeply interested in his work, he gets up early. The prophets were early risers; they aimed at making a distinct impression. Therefore they chose the first part of the day.

There is a lesson for us here: give divine matters an early part in your daily program. *Do not wait till your mind is unimpressible through exhaustion*. Hear the voice of God in the reading of His Word when the mind, in the freshness of the morning's energy, is more susceptible to impression than after a day's toil and vexation. To have your daily reading in the morning will actually help to make the day less of a toil and vexation. The reading of the Word acts like oil on the surface of water, making it less liable to disturbance from passing winds. See the result of Israel's heedlessness to God's requirements—

"I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them; **because** I have spoken unto them and they have not heard, and I have called unto them but they have not answered" v.17.

Look, on the other hand, at the way in which the obedient attitude of the Rechabites was estimated (vs. 18-19)—

"Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you, therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want, a man to stand before Me **forever**."

Jehovah regarded with such favor the fidelity of the Rechabites to the paternal traditions of their house that He decrees the continuance of their posterity amid all the circumstances tending to their obliteration. There is little to be known accurately of the state of tribes and families in the East, but doubtless, if we could know matters as they are known to God, we should discover the descendants of Rechab intact somewhere among the people of the East. They will, doubtless, be

revealed in their ancestral identity in the great day of manifestation that comes with Christ, and will as doubtless occupy an honorable place in the mortal arrangements of the Kingdom of God.

But, however this may be, we cannot mistake the emphasis of the divine endorsement in this case of a virtue which is little to be found in our day in these countries of the West—a virtue, not only of obedience, but of *obedience to parents*.

This is a very unpopular virtue in our day. It had become so in the days of Jesus, who condemned the rabbinical traditions by which a man was absolved from all obligation to his parents on the payment of a sum to the Temple. It remains a fact (however men may disregard, or may have *forgotten* that fact) that to the Lord God of Israel, Who is the Creator, Upholder and Proprietor of all things, it is well-pleasing, and a matter of *command* from Him to us, that "*children obey their parents,*" and honor the hoar head, and be respectful and merciful to the aged and infirm.

But the entire Rechabite incident is capable of a much closer application to our case which it is appropriate and profitable to make on this occasion of our weekly surrounding of the table of our Lord. The Rechabites are, of course, a mere accessory to the main purpose of the prophet's message. They are introduced as a lever to the argument. The object was to force home to the consciousness of Israel the absurdity and heinousness of their disobedience of the commandments of God, and to influence them by exhibiting the consequences of their course.

The application lies here: For a time God has departed from Israel and has turned to the Gentiles with an invitation to such as are disposed among the Gentiles to become His people. In response to that invitation we are here this morning in fulfilment of our part as obedient children.

The point for us to consider is: shall we fare any better than Israel after the flesh *if, like them, we are disregarding of the commandments delivered to us?* Paul's answer is very explicit—

"If God spared not the natural branches, **take heed lest He also spare not thee** . . . Continue in His goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Rom. 11:21).

We have not received the same commandments, but *we stand related to the same God, Who changeth not from age to age. We do not stand in the Law delivered from Horeb's summit, amid "blackness, and darkness, and tempest."* We are justified by a faith made perfect in love-prompted works.

Nevertheless, the dispensation of faith is from the same God, Who is a consuming fire, and into Whose hands it is a terrible thing to fall (Heb. 12:29; 10:31). If there is any difference in the stringency of the two systems, Paul makes the difference on the side of the dispensation of faith (Heb. 10:28-29 and 2:2-3)—

"He that despised Moses' Law died without mercy under 2 or 3 witnesses: of how much **sorer punishment** suppose ye shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?"

"If the Word spoken by **angels** was stedfast, and **every** transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, **how shall we escape** if we neglect so great salvation which at the first began to be spoken **by the Lord?**"

Consequently, we do well to realize the *solemn obligations of our position*, while thanking God for its great privileges. Like Israel, we also have received commandments to observe, and if, like Israel, we refuse to obey, like Israel we shall be cast away in anger to destruction.

We have not been commanded to circumcise; we have not been commanded to offer our firstborn to the Lord, with sacrifice of lamb or turtledove; we have not been commanded to observe sabbaths and feasts and times and seasons, and to repair to the priest in Jehovah's sanctuary in the

confession of our sins with the blood of bulls and goats. These appertained to the first covenant, and were done away in Christ.

But we have received commandments for all that, and it will be time well spent to glance at a few of them, by way of bringing them to remembrance, having in full view the declaration of the Lord Jesus (Matt. 5:20) that except our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees we shall in no case enter the Kingdom: and his even stronger words—

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that **DOETH the will of my Father**" (Matt. 7:21).

Such—and such *only*—he says, will he own as his brethren—

"Whosoever shall **DO the will of my Father**, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother"
(Matt. 12:50).

What, then, ARE his commandments? They are various, and there are such as are first and such as are next in order. On the *first* Jesus has expressly placed his finger, saying—

"**This** is the first and the great commandment!"

What is it?—

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with ALL thy heart, and ALL thy soul, and ALL thy mind, and ALL thy strength."

How is it with us, brethren, on this point? It is for each man to examine himself. Of one thing we may be certain—it is not possible to go too far in the cultivation of the love of God, for what is left when one gives "*all* his heart, soul and strength?"

And who can refuse this reasonable service? A man has only to *realize* God as He is displayed to us in the Scriptures—historically, illustratively, incidentally, declaratively, prophetically, doctrinally, preceptively—*every way*—to have his highest adoration enkindled, if his heart be not a piece of stony barrenness.

The love of God is the first characteristic of the family of God. It comes as all love comes—*by acquaintance*. And this acquaintance is only possible in our day in the reading of the Scriptures. Therefore we are on the right road to render the required obedience of the first command in performing the wisdom of a daily reading of the Scriptures.

There is a "second" commandment of which Jesus speaks, but there is another to be mentioned before the second, coming between the first and the second, strange as it may appear. It is a commandment that is involved in the first, insofar as Christ is involved in God.

There is a love of Christ that forms part of the love of God. No man can love God acceptably who does not love Christ. Christ is the way to God. He is the Father's voice to us. We are to love and honor Christ even as we love and honor the Father Who sent him, and who was in him and with him. This, Christ commands and Paul illustrates, saying—

"The love of Christ **CONSTRAINETH** us."

He makes the attainment of the love of Christ the measure of sainthood. His words are beautiful words, forcible words. He prays for the Ephesians (Eph. 3:17-19)—

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded **in love**, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, length, depth, and height, and to know **the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.**"

Labor to know much of this, brethren. While it is beyond the knowledge (*gnosis*) of human faculty as a matter of *understanding*, it is a glorious fact to be acquainted with, and received, and contemplated. The faith of it will warm up and ennoble the mental man, and strengthen the drooping heart of the pilgrim as he threads his way through the chill and darkness of this probation.

Beware of suffering yourself to be robbed of the great consolation. Too much hair-splitting jargon about the nature of Christ is liable to dissipate his noble ideal from your mind, and leave you to wonder in your bitterness how so sweet a matter should generate such a bootless war of abstractions.

Be content with the testimony, and leave philosophy and vain deceit to the dogs which delight to gnaw the bones. Be sure that ye let Christ dwell *in your hearts*: be sure that ye know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, otherwise *ye fail of a commandment which is part of the "first and great commandment,"* the oversight of which will be found serious in the day of account. The "second" commandment is like unto it—

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor AS THYSELF."

This is the root of all true courtesy and good manners. A consideration for your neighbor's wellbeing *at least* equal to what you entertain for your own, will lead to those acts of kindness which differ as much from the "well-bred" mannerisms of polite society as the genuine gold sovereign does from the brass counterfeit.

But the commandment gives us higher ground than the attractiveness of a gracious deportment. A disciple of Christ will shine in this matter—not because it is "the thing," or because it is of advantage socially, but *because it is a matter of command*:

"This I **command** you, that ye love one another."

Recognizing this, a man will be able to persevere amid all the mortifications of the degraded state of society surrounding us. He will, for Christ's sake, do what Christ has commanded, knowing that it is only for a brief season that we are asked to act a gracious part amid all ungraciousness and evil.

And this leads to another class of commandment. The commands to love God, and Christ, and our neighbor, are *comparatively* easy to obey, but there are other commands that are *not easy* to obey, our obedience to which are the test whether we *really* obey those already mentioned. Of this, Jesus says—

"If ye **love** me, keep my commandments . . . He that hath my commandments, and **keepeth them**, he it is that loveth me."

Now it is surely unnecessary to say that when Jesus thus speaks of his commandments, he speaks of them *all*. He does not mean that we may keep some and neglect others. His charge to the apostles concerning the nations (which they were about to go forth and enlighten) was—

"Teach them to observe ALL things **whatsoever I have commanded you**" (Matt. 28:20).

Some of these we have observed. We have believed; we have been baptized; we meet for the celebration of the Lord's death; we read the Scriptures; we love the Lord; we love the brethren. What lack we yet? Perhaps we do not lack; but *perhaps we do*. There are other commandments—

"Love your enemies;"

"Pray for them that despitefully use you;"
"Resist not evil;"
"Avenge not yourselves;"
"Do good to the **unthankful and evil.**"

These are commandments not easy to obey. They go contrary to nature. Because of this, we are liable to give them the go-by in practice. *But they are commandments of Christ for all that;* commands that have been delivered for and to Christ's house.

And for what purpose were they given? Evidently for *obedience*. For no other purpose could they have been intended. It is not according to God's own will—it is not according to His declared purpose—that the evil should have the upper hand, that wrong should have a free course, that righteous men should be trampled under foot of the wicked.

It is only for a season these things are permitted. It is only for a season they are commanded; and being commanded, it is for the proof of our obedience, and for self-exercise and discipline in submission to the divine will.

When God required of Abraham the sacrifice of Isaac, it was not that God had delight in seeing Abraham put his beloved son to death—it was that He might *prove him*. When God asks us to submit to evil, it is not that He has delight in the triumph of evil—it is that we may be chastened and proved under His mighty hand. Wherefore, says Peter—

"Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time"
(1 Pet. 5:6).

Affliction is only for a moment. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. It was for the comfort of all his brethren, in every generation during his absence, that the Lord said to the company of his disciples in Galilee—

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted;
"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth;
"Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness sake; for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven."

"SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD"

Where is the wisdom of so much care for the present life? Where is the wisdom of large aims for present advantage? When death overtakes us the care is at an end, and the advantages exist no longer for us; and meanwhile, the care may have killed us; the riches, and the pleasures, destroyed our prospects in Christ, in having deadened the heart and interfered with a good account for the judgment seat.

The danger in this respect is very great because very insidious, being associated with so much that is legitimate. We are apt to pass from the bounds of what is right and safe to that which is unwise and deadly before we are aware.

The cares and pleasures of life find a powerful response in the instincts of the natural man, which are strong with us all, at the beginning of the race at all events. We have to be on our guard.

A look at a dead friend is a help to this attitude of circumspection. We realise what is wisdom for them, at all events. We think how bootless their anxiety, of say a week before, has been: how well they might have spared themselves the load of their cares; how perfectly wise was their zealous addiction to the works of Christ, which alone remain their property in the eternal prospect.

A reasonable mind will transfer these views from the dead to the living; from a dead brother or sister to one's own still living—but perhaps to be soon dead—self. Such a mind will see and feel and surrender to the force of the apostolic precepts.

Be without carefulness; cast your care upon God, Who careth for you. Have faith in God. Having food and raiment, be therewith content. Labor not to be rich. Mind not high things. Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. Live soberly, righteously, and godly. Be diligent to every good work. Seek first the Kingdom of God. Be counted with the despised.

Be like Moses, who refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. —**Bro. Roberts.**

The Book of Truth

"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Such was the gracious message and invitation given by the Master during his ministry on earth. Could we think of any more acceptable, or gentle invitation?—the promise of rest and peace. Does it not seem strange that the whole world didn't accept such a wonderful invitation? But strange as it may seem, there were but few who accepted; and they were the meek and the lowly, the halt and the blind, the poor and the afflicted; they came to him seeking comfort, care, and salvation.

Who was this that had come to them to offer them consolation, and hope of new life? The Jews looked with ill-concealed wrath and jealousy on this man who did such works of power; and "spake as one having authority," and who looked on the poor with compassion and mercy; and who, despite their bitter opposition, trod the highways and byways of Palestine for three and a half years, offering the Divine invitation.

Then, by one of his own disciples he was betrayed, sold for thirty pieces of silver, and slain by cruel and wicked men. But these cruel men could not stop the message of love, of hope and salvation; and invitation to partake of God's love and mercy. Other valiant voices were raised, and speaking with the authority given unto them by Christ, it has come down through the ages, and humble men and women have heard the call and obeyed with joy and gladness in their hearts. And after 1900 years since the day of Christ, when the times of the Gentiles seem to be nearing the end, Christ's call came to each of us—

"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Even in this century of turmoil and strife, in all the Babel and clamor of a world gone mad seeking after vanities and follies, the still small voice came to our ears; earnestly, urgently, offering us life, hope, comfort, peace, above all, *Faith in God*.

The call came to some in the vigor of youth, with strength in their faculties; some received the call in the evening of their days, when the faculties had become enfeebled in their struggle with the world. Some of us perhaps, were engrossed with the cares of life, and some perhaps were careless of things spiritual; seeking and finding pleasure with all the trumperies and foolishness that can be found on almost every street and highway. But of this we are sure, that without exception, all of us laden with sin, were laboring in transgression and corruption.

Have you—have I—ever pondered on what could be the cause of the circumstances that brought Jesus Christ to the door of our heart, and knocked upon it? For Jesus said—

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:10).

Why did we open the door? Why did we let the visitor come in to us? How did we learn of his virtues? Was it not a blessed and a wonderful thing when God in His unfathomable love and everlasting mercy chose to reveal Himself to us through His Word? And all the mysteries and complexities of human existence were no longer a mystery to us. We found the answer in the BOOK; and no where else can the answer be found. By reading the Scriptures we found that all the longings for something real, something that we could put our hope and trust in, can only be found in God and His Truth.

What a joy to be free from all the make-believe religions, with all their deceit and vanity; all their empty philosophies, all their false teaching! What a relief to be free from the toils that had shackled the most of us to their ignorance and superstition! But let us take heed lest in the fleeting years that go by as on the swift wings of the swallow, that we forget not our great deliverance that a merciful God effected for us.

What would we have been today had not the call of the Truth come to us? We would still be in alien churches, still the fervid idolatrous worshippers, still following after the vain philosophies of man-made creeds, promulgated by apostate theologians, who prefer the pagan works of Greece and Rome, to the Divine teaching of God and His Christ. How thankful we should be that the finger of God, with the way of Truth, beckoned unto us to follow in the road of light and glory.

Brethren and sisters, we are gathered here on this first day of the week, to rededicate ourselves to the service of Truth, to celebrate the feast instituted by our Lord the night in which he was betrayed, to partake of the symbols of him who said, "*Do this in remembrance of me.*" As a Christian body we may be few in numbers, and have but a meagre share of worldly goods; but what is that compared with the opportunities God has granted unto us, of worshipping Him in the beauty of holiness?

And if we keep our ears tuned to the Truth, we will hear the still small voice saying unto us, "*This is the way, walk ye in it.*" For that has been the guide, and the stay, and comfort to all the pilgrims that took the way of God from the beginning of time. Those who are in the Truth have the secret of all the ages,

"For the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him."

We have the Book, on the pages of which are written the words that God has revealed to us in all the riches of His Divine Truth. In this Book can be found all the harmony and beauty of the plans of God for salvation; which is centered in the message brought to the world by Jesus Christ in the Gospel of the Kingdom. From the fall of man in the garden of Eden, to his exaltation to immortality and glory in the Kingdom of God there runs the golden thread that will bind the heart, and the will of those who seek after him who said—

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

And we, with faith and hope, look forward to the consummation of the great and precious promises made to the fathers of old time, and the life giving promises of love given to us by Christ our Lord. By all these promises we can see clearly what has been prepared for those who will be worthy—a plan of Atonement and eternal life.

For us, could there be a task giving greater pleasure, or a finer intellectual study, than to open this Book of Truth, and behold the vision of God in His Words as they unfold to us on its every page? From what other occupation could any brother or sister derive such benefits, as to trace the development of God's purpose from the day of Moses as he looked at the burning Bush; until that day when the Lord will be manifested in a Host of mighty Ones upon the earth, when he comes in great Glory with all his holy angels.

As we read this Book, we find from the beginning to the end, human life revealed, just as it is today; revealed in all its vanity and frailty. We meet the king in all his arrogance and cruelty, sitting on the throne he obtained by the murder of his nearest relatives. We see the loathsome beggar in all his degradation as he sits at the doors. We learn of life in all of its unspeakable bitterness. But seldom is life in sweetness shown to us who desire to follow the Master. In all walks of life we find virtue and vice walking side by side. In this Book we have 6000 years of life in all its phases pass before us.

We meet with the most faithful of men, whose characters were pleasing to God. With them, we are in company with God's elect. We are with them in the family of God. With *Noah*, who in the earliest days went about earnestly proclaiming the Truth to an evil generation; a generation so vile, that in the day of destruction, only a few, which is eight, were saved. *Abraham*, the father of the faithful, who was called to be the father of many nations. *Joseph*, sold into Egypt by his jealous brethren, yet, the loving and compassionate. *Moses*, who was meek above all the men that were upon the earth; yet, was the great leader of the people chosen of God. *Samuel*, the last judge, and great prophet. *Job*, whose patience and trust in God was so amply rewarded by God; whose faith was such, that he cried—

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him!"

Daniel the fearless, and the well-beloved, to whom God revealed so many things, and stopped the lions' mouths when Daniel's life was placed in jeopardy. *David*, the man after God's own heart, the Psalmist of Israel.

And so on down through the ages to that one whose life was matchless among men, who with divine grace and truth moved among the Judean hills, giving freely to all renewed life and strength. The *Lord Jesus Christ*, he it is who should shine in our hearts, for he gave his life that in the future age of glory, we may be with him in his glory and his Kingdom.

He had perfect righteousness, supreme dignity, and spotless purity; he had zeal and earnestness, humility and perfect obedience. *He stands alone on the mount of unassailable virtue*; and all down through the darkness of Christendom, he has been a beacon of glorious Light and Truth.

And as we turn the pages of this Book, we come to one whose dauntless faith, and unswerving zeal reveals to us the valiant *Paul*. Can we read of his steadfastness and courage without arousing in our hearts the eager desire to have but one spark of his faith and courage and determined resolution?

What examples we have in those men of God! But if we would be with them in the Household, then we must cultivate that family likeness, if we would be with them in the family of God. For the Lord will see to it that only those who have excelled in faith and works, can be worthy members of the Household of God. And not only does this Book supply us with the Truth, and many examples of faithful men, but abundant precept to teach us to follow examples of devotion and godliness.

In reading the Proverbs, we cannot fail to notice that these gems of wisdom can give us much food for thought; and instruction in the ways of wisdom; if we will but give heed to them. Consider how emphatic was the wise man on wisdom, humility, uprightness and diligence. If studied in that light, they cannot fail to furnish men and women with help in our present life. Turn to whatever page we will; we can find courage and strength.

In the Psalms we can find inspiration in those wonders of Messianic Prophecy. And we have the divinely inspired prophet Isaiah, who looked down through the mist of centuries, and saw the dawning of the glorious age, when Jesus shall reign on earth.

To read of the terrible trials and sufferings of Job, our minds are stirred, even as was the mind of Job, when the handiwork of God is arrayed before us. And we marvel, even as did Job, when God

challenged him to perform the mighty miracles of Creation, which God had wrought in the earth saying—

"**Where wast thou** when I laid the foundation of the earth? Declare it, if thou hast understanding."

This Book of Truth has everything that man can want. It can set our feet upon the Rock, and establish all our goings. Yea, it can put a new song in our hearts and mouths. Yet how many times we forget to praise and thank Him for all the blessings He has bestowed upon us! Is there really anything in this world that matters, except the Truth? It gives us all that a human being can want, or needs. It gives us comfort, and peace of mind, and a glorious Hope of some day gaining that Crown of Glory.

This Book of Truth has the most profound thoughts. It gives to us the Glory and Majesty of the Law that at one time ruled the children chosen of God. And it gives to us the sublime teaching of Jesus Christ. And these riches are given to us, that we may dwell and meditate on his love and patience with his people. And if we would attain to a nobler attitude in our dealings with the brethren and sisters, then we can glean the essence of virtue from the words of the Master who said, "*Learn of Me.*"

If we would drink of the living waters, then we can have our fill with that greatest of all sermons, given by the Master on the Mount—the Truth that cannot be gainsaid, for it is assertive, given with the authority of God — given to cultivate in us humility, mercy, and purity, so that we may attain to that state of blessedness which will exist in the Kingdom of the future age.

When we turn to the Epistles, and study the reasoning skill of the Apostle Paul, and read his letters to the different ecclesias, we marvel at the wealth of encouragement given by his teaching, and of his thanks and praise to God—how he spent his life teaching and setting on record the precepts and examples of righteousness, to help the brethren that they may attain to glory.

In this Book of Truth there is guidance for every eventuality of life. All the problems of pain and suffering and uncertainty are resolved. For such is the chastisement of the Creator, for the purpose of molding and refining the character. Even the sorrows of isolation are greatly helped by a loving Father's assurance—

"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

When we are perplexed by all the problems that press upon us in this age in which we live; we can, through the Words in this Book envision the Kingdom that will stand forever; for in that Kingdom there will be security, and joy everlasting.

And while we pass through this weary world of confusion and disruption and strife, we can find in this Book the words that will give us that wonderful peace in the innermost depth of our being. Though the surface waters may be convulsed by the storms raging around us, yet we can be peaceful as the depth of the ocean if we have love and peace with God in our hearts.

Every brother and sister has in this Truth riches far beyond the dreams of avarice; they have at their disposal a storehouse of treasures which, if used rightly, will assure for the worthy, a life of glory and power in the age of refreshing under Christ.

And this earth which has been marred so cruelly by the hands of evil men, will be blessed with splendor and grace. And as it was at the dawn of the world, when the angelic host sang with ecstasy as they beheld the handiwork of God, all the splendor will be renewed and increased a thousandfold; for—

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

War and confusion may disrupt and convulse the world; wickedness and vice may flaunt themselves in all their vile tawdriness. But if the brethren will hold firmly to the Truth as they know it in Jesus Christ, through the mercy of God, have they anything to fear? No. Why? Because they can look beyond the murky darkness of this world, and discern the "Light of the world," shining in all his beauty.

Brethren and sisters, if we are to be at the death struggle of this out-worn savage world of blasphemy and sin, then let us give heed to it, that we so live to be worthy to be at the birth of the new dispensation in Jesus Christ. None can tell the day or the hour when the Son of Man cometh. "Watch therefore," for he will surely come to make his ransomed Bride his own, for on the Hill of Calvary he died for her. That is the picture we see in this Book of Truth.

"He that **overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end**, to him will I give power over the nations" (Rev. 2:26).

All things in the Truth are perfect for the Glory of God. His wisdom, His law, are in the pages of this Book, which should be the priceless possession of all of us. Cherish it above everything, for by it we can be raised into the regions of peace, and communion with God. Its Divine wisdom can guide our steps to the everlasting Kingdom. If we will make this Book motivate our lives, in that day when the Lord cometh, we shall, by the mercy of God, be in that cloud of witnesses, who shall behold the Son of man, crowned with Glory, Righteousness and Honor.

God grant that we may be gathered together in unity in that Glorious day of Christ, to ascribe—

"Blessing, and glory and honor, and power unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever."
—C.H.T.

"TOUCHED WITH THE FEELING OF OUR INFIRMITIES"

Paganism has glorified the doctrine of indifference, and the world accounts stoicism as heroic. But this no more savors of true wisdom than the many other doctrines of the ancient schools, which Paul has pronounced to be "foolishness with God."

An exquisite nature like that of "the Holy One of God," which the sins and miseries of men alone weighed down with sorrow and made acquainted with grief, was not likely to be insensible to so great a woe as was then about, to overwhelm him.

The desertion of friends, the withdrawal of the divine presence and protection, the triumph of hypocrisy and barbarism (though but for a moment), and the agonies of outraged nature, were terrible to his soul just in proportion as the reverse of all those conditions were his delight. He was not insensible to the sorrows of our common nature.

"We have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are."

He groaned under the weight of his load. He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. He prayed earnestly, that if it were possible the cup might pass from him (Luke 22:44). He did not refuse to drink it, if the plan of divine love required it—

"The cup my Father hath given me to drink, shall I not drink it?"

And in view of the suggestion that the hour might pass from him, he said:

"For this cause came I unto this hour" (John 12:27).

It pleased the Lord to bruise him; to put him to grief (Isa. 53:10), and grievous was the burden of his sorrow which cast a mantle of gloom over the days of his flesh, when with strong crying and tears, he offered up prayers to Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared (Heb. 5:7).
—Bro. Roberts

The Tabernacle in the Wilderness

PART FIFTEEN

Seven altars were but the invention of idolatry; and the sacrifices offered by idolaters are but fading reminiscences of the true worship established in Eden. Continuing at Num. 23:4-5—

"And God (Elohim) met Balaam . . . and the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak."

Balaam's experience had taught him that he was under the special surveillance of the angel of God wherever he might be, and in all that he might do in this matter; and that he might not move his tongue in the direction he desired without endangering his life.

The narrative suggests to us the reason why Balaam retired into secrecy from the king, but he was not honest enough to put the king into possession of the reason for this secrecy. Neither was Balaam wrong in anticipating the Divine presence; and, after the interview, he returned to the expectant king as he stood by his burnt sacrifice, he and all the princes of Moab—

"And he took up his parable, and said, Balak, the king of Moab, hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel.

"How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, THE PEOPLE SHALL DWELL ALONE, **and shall not be reckoned among the nations.**

"Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" (Num. 23:7-10).

Under the same Divine impulse how sensibly did Balaam's ass speak! And under the same preternatural influence how eloquently does the owner of the ass give utterance to the Divine mind as to "the purpose of God according to election," as expressed in His choice of Israel. *Balaam could no more—of himself—have spoken these words than could his ass apart from the same power have spoken "with man's voice."*

In the selection of such an instrument as Balaam for the communication of His mind, what marvellous evidence God has afforded of the fact that He spake, even by Balaam. What could be more convincing to the sceptical mind than these utterances of a man notoriously the mouthpiece of witchcraft, ignorant of both God and His purpose, and seeking if perchance he might, for the sake of reward, be able to curse the very people whom he is made to bless to his own utter confusion! A man without either power to express, or having the slightest sympathy with, his utterances!

Let us take first the announcement which fell from his lips—

"The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (v. 9).

How impossible it was for Balaam even to imagine such a thing! Moses, speaking by the same spirit, concerning the same people, refers to this fact in the words of blessing addressed by him to Israel just before his death, saying (Deut. 33:28-29)—

"Israel then shall dwell in safety alone; the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.

"Happy are thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the Shield of thy help, and Who is the Sword of thy excellency; and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

While, however, the words above cited from Deuteronomy may have had a *preliminary* fulfilment in the facts connected with their entrance into the land under Joshua, they can only receive their *complete* fulfilment in Israel's second exodus (Isa. 11) under their God-appointed King and Lawgiver, Jesus.

Israel's past history, connected with its deliverance from Egypt, is but a typical representation of their coming greater deliverance from the lands of their enemies, whither they have been driven, not for destruction, but for correction—Rom. 11:2:

"God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew."

This utterance of the Spirit through Balaam was a most distinct and emphatic announcement of the Divine severance of Israel from all other peoples, that they should be *His*—a holy and special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth, that He might keep the oath. *He had sworn unto their fathers* (Lev. 20:26; Amos 3:2; Deut. 7:6-8; 9-5).

By this prophetic utterance we are led to a consideration of God's purpose with Israel, and the relation of that purpose to the oath which He swore unto their fathers—

- (1) To make of Abraham a great nation;
- (2) In him to bless all the families of the earth;
- (3) To give to him and his seed (Christ—Gal. 3:16) all the land wherein he sojourned for ever (Gen. 12:2-3; 22:18; 13:14-17; 15:7, 8, 18; 17:8).

This covenant with Abraham was renewed to Isaac (Gen. 26:3-4); and to Jacob (Gen. 28:3-4; Heb. 11:8-9). These "good things" thus covenanted to the fathers of Israel have had no fulfilment as yet, as they belong to the New Covenant, and not to the Old, which has passed away (see Gal. 3:16-19; Heb. 11:8, 19, 13, 39, 40; Mic. 7:20; Luke 13:28; Acts 26:6; 28:20,23,31).

But even the past history of Israel affords a most striking illustration and confirmation of this Divine oracle of Balaam, as the reader will know. And if this is so, what shall we say to their condition now! Insulated from all other peoples, for 2000 years without a country—a family without a home, scattered among all peoples, having none assurance of life, with trembling of heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind, without ease, or rest for the sole of their feet, amid multitudes of people but not of them.

All these evil things having come upon Israel as a punishment for their sins, there yet remains to be fulfilled that New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, when God will put His law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be His people (see Jer. 31:31-27, 10-14).

Balaam then refers to God's covenant with the fathers concerning the promised great nation as expressed in the words,

"I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered" (Gen. 13:16).

"Look now toward heaven and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them . . . so shall thy seed be" (Gen. 15:5).

Well, therefore, might Balaam exclaim—

"Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?" (Num. 23:10).

In their preservation as a distinct people amid the relentless persecutions to which Israel has been subjected by the Gentiles for ages, we behold the hand of God; and although they have been left "few in number" (Deut. 28:62) as the result of the Divine chastisement, it is written (Isa. 49:20)—

"The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too straight for me: give place to me that I may dwell."

As to the expressed desire of Balaam (Num. 23:10)—

"Let me die the death of the righteous; let my last end be like his."

—(that is, *Israel's*), who can wonder at this, beholding, as he did, by the Spirit, God's promised goodness to Israel, which, as he saw, was not *then* to be realized, but at Israel's (political) resurrection (Rom. 11:15; Eze. 37:11-14), which will be the time the true Israel of God of all ages shall be raised from the dead to receive the promised inheritance of life everlasting in God's Kingdom and glory. This expression, therefore, forms an important item in understanding the period of Israel's history to which he calls attention.

We can readily imagine the surprise of Balak at this response, which was so entirely opposite to what he had expected, and at which he was highly incensed (v. 11)—

"**What hast thou done unto me?** I took thee to curse mine enemies, and behold thou hast blessed them altogether!"

What could Baalam answer other than what he said:

"Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth?" (v. 12).

Ah! Balaam, no thanks to thee for the precious truths which fell from thy lips in purity and holiness, unpolluted by the channel through which they came—thou wast altogether *forced* to give utterance to them, and we wait to hear more from thee, as occasion shall serve, after the change of position to which thou art now to be brought. So Balak—

". . . brought him to the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar,"

—doubtless thinking a change of view might have a different effect on the prophet's spirit. And while the smoke of the sacrifices was ascending in clouds from the altars of Baal, Balaam again went forth to meet the Lord. At this meeting, like the former, Balaam would again urge as a reason for granting his request, the seven smoking altars, as if this pollution of the Divine original institution would bend God's will. So the Lord—

". . . put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus. And when he came to him . . . Balak said unto him, What hath the Lord spoken?"

"And he took up his parable and said Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor: God is not man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent. Hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or, hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?"

"Behold, I have received commandment to bless, and He hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.

"He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn."

"Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel; according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!

"Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain" (Num. 23:11-24).

Now while these utterances of the Spirit are a direct reply to the importunities of Balak and Balaam, and a foreshadowing of Israel's prowess under Joshua, they have a much wider range than to the time and men then addressed. The declaration:

"God is not man that He should lie,"

—has formed the keystone of faith in all the ages since. It is the seal of the living God upon every promise that He has made, and was intended to be added to them. His promises concerning Israel are therefore unchangeable. Precious truth!

"God is not a man that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent."

Who can doubt God's royal promises after this blessed assurance from the great and beneficent Being Who is essentially goodness, wisdom, and power? He made the same declaration through Samuel the prophet 400 years afterwards, saying,

"The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for He is not a man, that He should repent" (1 Sam 15:29—see also Psa. 89:35; Mal. 3:6; Tit 1:2).

Stiffness of neck, and hardness of heart are no bar to the fulfilment of the declared purpose of God with Israel. Their restoration to the Divine favor and blessing in their land is not contingent upon their "conversion" by any human effort in that behalf. God will effect this in His own way at the appointed time, and about which we may learn from the prophets—as an illustration, see Eze. 34:11-16, 23-31; 36:8-15, 22-32; 20:30-38.

(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH, IF THE LORD WILL)

The Fruit of the Spirit

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law"—Gal. 5:22.

Joy and peace follow love here, even as they always do. Without love, *Joy* is fleeting and peace precarious. The joy that is not the result of love is at best a vain and transitory pleasure. Temporary joy, the effect of some present occurrence, is of no value, for soon it is over and its impression, if any, is negative, upon our permanent peace of mind.

Conversely, joy that is a state of mind resulting from true love fully pursued and knowledge of effectual service lovingly performed, is ever fruitful, for it can be enjoyed whenever a few quiet moments afford opportunity for meditation.

And *Peace*, too, that is not the fruit of love is valueless and vain. The peace we are taught to seek, disregarding and even *avoiding* any other, is that which follows the unvarying service of God—the peaceful and comforting assurance that there is, if we are faithful, "laid up for us a crown of life."

Present peace we are not to hope for. It is insidiously disarming, and weakens our hope and prayer for Christ's early return. There is an ever-present danger in snug security, for it robs the glorious promised peace of that attraction which should spur us on to eventual perfection.

Future peace must be our goal, as must also be future joy. For the joy that was set before him, Christ endured all things, and unless we in our lesser degree do the same, we shall be forgotten in that day when "peace on earth" is at last an accomplished fact.

There is but one way to assure for ourselves that strengthening peace of mind which elevates our vision above this life's temporary ills; the peace Paul must have known when he said:

"I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

What a wonderful way to end this life! All his sufferings were now seen in their true and beautiful light as jewels in this crown. This crown of life, we are told by James, the Lord has promised to them that love him.

The next spiritual fruit is *Longsuffering* and this, too, we see is but a temporary product of love, for we are told by Paul that love suffereth long and is kind—temporary in the sense that the time will at last come when longsuffering will not be needed.

The succeeding two fruits, *Gentleness* and *Goodness*, are also dependent upon love for their performance.

"Love vaunteth not itself and thinketh no evil."

Following these is *Faith*. Earlier in the same chapter we read, "Faith worketh *by love*." Without love faith is dead, as are all virtues in love's absence. John tells us in his second epistle, v. 6:

"**This** is love, that we walk after His commandments."

That is, love is *working* and *doing*; and James completes the argument with the warning that—

"Faith without works is dead, but by works is faith **made perfect**."

Paul closes his beautiful eulogy of love with the following:

"And now abideth faith, hope, and love, these three, but the greatest of these is love."

This verse is a summary of the whole chapter. The theme is that love is paramount. On the one hand we read, "If I have not love, I am *nothing*" and on the other, "Everyone that loveth is *born of God*."

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews records the great deeds wrought through *faith*, and it was for the *hope* of Israel that Paul stood in bonds before Agrippa, but he values love above both faith and hope. Consider these three:

Faith requires a promise, some anticipated good, some future benefit. When this is fulfilled, faith ends in sight and so is lost.

Hope, too, infers future realization—a goal which, when reached, converts hope into accomplishment and so hope ceases.

But *love* gives all and asks nothing; love seeketh not her own but endureth all things, and faileth never. As long as life is present, it cannot perish. It is the foundation and keystone of the Scriptures, and the writings of John are an unequalled epitome of Divine expression on this subject.

He tells us that God is love, that He dwells in love, and that love is of God. All the inspired writings testify to this. Even as God in all His works was motivated by love, so do we find it the keynote of His messages to man.

It is, perhaps, difficult to realize and appreciate, to the extent which we should, the great love that God has demonstrated. We may not easily regard our all-powerful Author from this point of view. We see Him as great Jehovah—omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent—Creator and Sustainer of all.

But let us dwell on the marvellous extent of the *affection He bears His children*. Through His love, in the beginning, He made man in His own glorious likeness, placed him in pleasant and beautiful surroundings, gave him dominion over the whole earth and provided him with welcome and delightful companionship. In short, He gave him all he could reasonably desire, and more than he proved himself worthy of, for it was not long before he manifested both disobedience and ingratitude.

He fell, but in administering the forewarned punishment, God's love was again evidenced by tempering the sentence of death with a ray of hope and the assurance of the ultimate extinction of sin.

But man fell again, and so the history follows. God, with love and patience inconceivable, repeatedly returned to him, as repentance was manifested, and led him anew to the way which, if faithfully pursued, would bring him life.

This Divine affection led Noah into the Ark, and called forth Abraham to become a great nation. It guided this same nation, not always appreciative or obedient, into the promised land, and watched over them there. They were assured of His protection and love, but it did not inspire them to obedience.

"Because the Lord *loved you*," Moses was instructed to tell them, "He hath brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of bondmen." But even before they had reached the land, and while miraculously sustained by food from above, they murmured against their divine Deliverer.

We cannot but marvel at the infinite patience that the Lord revealed—humoring them, comforting them, and ever protecting them, when in a moment, He could have destroyed them all, but did not for the love He bore their fathers.

And continuing on, His love completely pervades their subsequent history throughout the Old Testament, in which, too, is apparent a continuous and beautiful foreshadowing of the greatest manifestation of that all-embracing love, the fulfilment of which is reserved for the New—

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."

This is from the writings of the beloved apostle, who also says:

"Herein is love, that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins"
(I John 4:10).

Although it assumes such magnificent proportions, it is far from a blind, misdirected indulgence as is often the unfortunate case with earthly parents. It is love administered with an incomprehensible intelligence, chastening when necessary, rebuking when necessary, but always for our ultimate benefit.

It is ever-vigilant, guarding and guiding, but it does not rob the recipient of character. It is true that God is our Refuge and our Strength, but we must remember that "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth," and it is "by much tribulation that we must enter the Kingdom."

No less remarkable is the love that controlled every act of our great High Priest, His perfect Son, who—at the end of a life spent in untiring and unselfish service for his brethren—submitted to crucifixion that these brethren whom he loved might have life and have it more abundantly. Here, too, we find the words of John the most pregnant and expressive—

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” . . . “Hereby perceive we love, because he laid down his life for us.”

Whenever we consider the extremes to which the faithful followers of Christ were led by their love for him and the Father, we are invariably pursued by uneasiness and misgivings as we compare our meager services with theirs. Christ's requirements of his followers are clearly given in Luke 14:26-27—

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

"And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

This they gladly and unhesitatingly did, and we find them saying in childlike faith, as he showed them the Father's purpose:

"Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee."

Are we not disquieted by the unfavorable comparison of our sacrifices with theirs? They made God's service the only interest in their lives. For it they were reviled, despised, persecuted, scourged, imprisoned, stoned and often put to death. What do we do to compare with this, with our many pleasures, peaceful lives, and unmolested worship? Consider especially the sufferings of Paul. We are all familiar with them as they are enumerated in 2 Cor. 11:23-27—

"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and day I have been in the deep.

"In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren.

"In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

For the Truth's sake, and in the service of God, have any of us ever even *once* had an experience like this? But *Paul's* weary existence was *full* of such. And he says—

"I have suffered the **loss of all things** and do count them but dung that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3:8).

Looking back twenty centuries to the far distant scenes of Biblical history, is it not *much too easy* to regard the things said, done, and endured in an illusionary and unreal light? We read of them persecuted and pursued from city to city, but always preaching, without fully realizing the magnitude of their distress, but if we picture them as men whose love of life and pleasure was just as strong as is ours; and to whom hardships, sacrifices, losses, pain, and weariness were just as difficult to bear as they are for us; men who enjoyed reviling, scorn and contempt to no greater degree than do we; and to whom the world was just as hard and real as it is to us—then the *full measure of their love is apparent*.

It may be argued that these early brethren received greater strength, greater signs, greater guidance and greater revelation than we—but *were* they really so much more highly favored?

Which is more comforting—to see Christ disappear in the clouds, and look forward to a persecuted existence of painful waiting, or to have irrefutable assurance that his return is imminent, and our redemption draweth nigh?

Which is more encouraging—to see the Jews scattered and dispersed in God's wrath, or to see them regathered by His guiding love?

Which more strengthening—to have God's purpose foretold or to see it *fulfilled and almost completely consummated*?

True, theirs was the comfort of the presence and companionship of Christ, but if our faith is as it should be, *his spiritual presence should be as comforting to us*; and remember, too, they carried on after he had left them, and were faithful unto death. John confidently wrote—

"There is no fear in love, for perfect love casteth out fear."

Ample proof this is, to be sure, of the vital importance that the disciples attached to the possession of this quality, but it is not necessary to resort to inference to draw such conclusions, for divine command is stronger on no other subject. That we must *evidence and exercise love continuously*, is the theme of countless exhortations in the New Testament.

Consider the reply of Christ, when asked which was the greatest commandment. He told his interrogator, a querulous Pharisee, to love the Lord with all his heart, soul and mind, and his neighbor as himself, for on those two commandments the whole Law rested. "Love," said Paul, is the one word that fulfils all the law.

Quotations such as these are innumerable and how could it be otherwise when love was the nucleus of the Gospel they preached? Do we wonder why John was particularly cited as the disciple whom Jesus loved? We need not if we consider his character.

No other gospel than his evinces such a deep and loving understanding of the Master, no other epistles are so replete with exhortation and commendation of love, and no other disciple was more wholly animated by the fervor of his affection for the Lord. What better example could be cited of the fulfilment of Christ's assurance that—

"He that loveth Me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him."

It was to John, we remember, that Christ made his last and most wonderful manifestation—the visions of the Revelation.

Thus is love established as the primary and paramount virtue, the most nourishing and up-building of the fruits of the Spirit. Though none would doubt, in the face of the foregoing evidence, love's essentiality, there may be diversity as to its interpretation. In fact, the general conception is far from that love idealized by the Scriptures.

There are many that think that love is completely fulfilled if a benevolent and kindly but passive attitude is maintained before all, and who consider their duty to God amply discharged if they worship Him and ascribe to Him all wisdom and power. True, these are inseparable from love, but this is not what love fundamentally means.

Love is not merely worship, adoration and awe. It is not that passive quality it is all too often represented as. It involves and necessitates unquestioning obedience, unselfish sacrifice, unswerving devotion and untiring service—

"**This** is love, that we walk after His commandments."

The love God requires is pre-eminently *service*. "By love serve one another," we read, and this is the true meaning of "Love thy neighbor as thyself." John pleads (1 John 3:18)—

"Let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in **deed and truth**."

If God merely looked upon us with tender and affectionate regard, and took no further care for us, our plight would indeed be a sorry one. But God, to whom the nations are as a drop in the bucket, has highly favored and shown us the way of life.

When we think of the millions who live and die in ignorance of these things, we realize how greatly blessed we are. Ours is a very responsible position, for each of us has been chosen from thousands to receive this revelation from God. And it is a saddening and sobering thought that the handful who are called are many when compared to the few who are chosen, but John assures us that we may have boldness in the day of judgment *if our love is made perfect*.

If Christ had been content to preach charity and goodwill, and had not the love which led him to lay down his life for his brethren, our hope would at best be meager and dim. But Christ's interpretation of love conformed perfectly with God's, which is lifetime service.

It may appear absurd to say that all that is required to be recipients of God's promised glory is *love*, but not when it is realized *what that love entails*. It must be of the same purity and high caliber as that which the Father Himself has evidenced.

Such love is not a natural human attribute. It plays no part in the mind of the flesh, but it must be the result of a victory of the spiritual over the carnal.

Love bestowed upon one who returns it brings no credit or reward to the donor, for, Christ tells us, even *sinners do that*. But, he continues, "Love your enemies," by which he means, "*Do good to them that hate you,*" not just *think* or *wish* good. This to all men, and much more so to the brotherhood.

As incidents arise to test our character and fitness as vessels for God's glory, the *human and natural impulse* which immediately presents itself knows nothing of love, but would seek instant vindication and redress.

This *must* be overcome, even as must be the invariable tendency to interpret doubtful actions in a bad light, for—even assuming that this interpretation be the correct one (as it rarely is)—still our course is clear, and love practised at such a time affords the only reliable proof that our battle with the flesh is a winning one.

The whole scriptural theme is summarized in the words of Paul, "*By love serve one another*"—continuously and without respect of persons or thought of thanks or appreciation, remembering that if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and that service to the least of these is service to the Lord.

It will not always bring joy as the world conceives joy; it will not always be productive of peace as it is now known, but if this course is truly and faithfully pursued, the quiet, comforting joy of a loving and malice-free heart, and the tranquil, confident peace of a conscience pure before God, will be ours in this present time, and in the world to come, life everlasting.

In conclusion, let us remember Paul's admonition to be *rooted and grounded in love*, that Christ's parting words to his faithful followers may be fulfilled in us.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." —G.V.G.

"FOR LOVE'S SAKE"

"I might be much bold to enjoin thee that which is convenient, yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee"—Phil. 8.

Why might Paul have assumed the attitude of command? Because he was an apostle, and because Philemon, equally with Onesimus, was his son in the Gospel. But Paul does not take the attitude he might have taken. Why? "FOR LOVE'S SAKE."

Very well, if Paul abstained from the dictatorial and resorted to the persuasive—the supplicatory—the courteous—the respectful, then which of his poor copyists in this late century will justify the adoption of a different style?

Few would care to justify such a thing **theoretically**, and yet many practise what they would be ashamed to preach. In their dealings with men and brethren they are not gentle and courteous, but imperious, abrupt, dogmatic and disrespectful. This ought not to be so.

Followers of Paul must be what Paul was if they are to follow him into the Kingdom. They must be kind, gentle, courteous, easy to be entreated; and not austere, haughty, unfeeling, harsh, implacable, selfish, overbearing, and unkind. **These** are the features of the old man, whose children "shall not inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God."
—**Bro. Roberts**

THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR

The gospel of Christ exactly supplies our need. It gives us hope and joy in our need. It gives us hope and joy in heaven and earth. It enables us to feel even now in the Father's house. True, it is only faith; but faith must come before sight; so it pleases God to appoint. Without faith it is impossible to please Him, and we must please Him before He will admit us to the riches of His glory.

But let us realize what faith is. It is not the thing some people talk about. It is not a thing taken for granted without certainty. It is not a mental phantom; it is not a sentiment; it is not a fancy. It is "the SUBSTANCE of things hoped for," and the things are hoped for because they have been promised, and we are SURE they have been promised, and we KNOW that He is faithful that hath promised. **It is conviction founded on facts.**

The man of unbelief looks with contempt on the man of faith. The facts would justify the contrary relation of things. The man of unbelief is such because of ignorance, and his ignorance is due to a bias in favour of present things, which prevents him from subjecting himself to the agency of knowledge.
—**Bro. Roberts**

Signs of The Times

"Blessed is he that watcheth, AND keepeth his garments."

In beginning a series of articles on the subject of the signs of our times, we are now faced with such an abundance of evidence that Christ is near, one hardly knows where to begin.

We look back to something like a half century ago, and recall the first lecture we ever had heard on the "Signs of the Times." The brother spoke for two hours; we do not recall having heard any criticism as to the length of the address, but we do remember that there was much earnest discussion afterward.

His lecture differed little from the average lecture on the same subject today, except that the "signs" to which he called attention at that time were pitifully dim, as compared to the present astounding developments. Let us draw attention to the vast and rapid development of these signs in the past 50 years:

* * *

RETURN OF THE JEWS TO PALESTINE (Eze. 37)—At that time the brethren were greatly exercised over the then recent organization of the *Zionist movement*, but at that time there were only a comparatively few struggling Jewish settlements in Palestine, still under the domination and rigid restrictions of Turkey, with a population of only a few thousand.

Today there are more than a million and a half Jews in the land, vast agricultural and industrial expansion, a government of their own, and having met and defeated the armies of their enemies, the Arabs, better armed and outnumbering them ten to one. *The brethren of 30 years ago never dreamed of seeing such things previous to the return of Christ.* Now we can know that they were viewing just the first dim rays of light which has now burst into dazzling brilliance.

* * *

MILITARY SIGN (Joel 3:9)—Fifty years ago the brethren rightly pointed to the growth of military might in the world, the increase in the size of military and naval forces, and the creation of more powerful weapons as a fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, "*Prepare war!*" At that time they pointed to the machine gun, the long-range rifle and cannon, the torpedo boat and the 3-million dollar battleship as fulfilling "*Beat your plowshares into swords, etc.*"

But today these weapons could be likened to cap pistols as compared to modern weapons, and armies then numbered by thousands are now computed in millions. Nations then reckoned among the weak (as China) can now say, "*I am strong.*"

* * *

INCREASE OF KNOWLEDGE (Dan. 12:4)—A half century ago, what then appeared to be marvellous inventions and great strides in scientific knowledge; what then was considered fantastic speed in transportation and communication, has been so thoroughly dwarfed by the present increase in knowledge, that what had been accomplished at that time pales into insignificance by comparison. There has been more "progress" in almost every field of human activity during the last 50 years than in all previous history combined. We live not so much in a *changed world*, as in a *different world*, in which almost all previous devices, systems and methods have been discarded, and we have witnessed a complete revolution, which has changed the political, industrial and social beliefs and customs of the whole world, even among many peoples who, fifty years ago, had undergone no change in these things for 2000 years.

* * *

MEN'S HEARTS FAILING WITH FEAR AND PERPLEXITY (Luke 21:25-26)—Fifty years ago, there were few things that could be pointed to as definite fulfilment of this prophecy of Christ. But during the past 50 years these signs have multiplied. The powers of the (political) heavens have been shaken so thoroughly that the student of geography a half century ago studied an entirely different map of Europe and Asia than is used today, and most of the governments then existing are either gone or else have undergone a complete change.

Perplexing, insoluble problems drive the political leaders to madness or the grave, as the world's affairs grow more complex and frightening, as its leaders seek to pierce the blackness of an ominous future which to them is unknowable. As a prominent magazine writer of the world expressed it:

"We are puny, frightened men. Look about the earth today, and what is the spectacle you see? Little men with little minds throwing little words against gigantic problems."

* * *

There are few signs definitely foretold in the scriptures which were not at least dimly present 50 years ago, but they have suddenly broken into startling brilliance during the present generation. But we are now witnessing another sign which received little notice, and was only dimly envisioned 50 years ago: **THE LATTER-DAY FALLING AWAY FROM THE FAITH.** True, the brethren of that time were aware that the teaching of Jesus Christ and his apostles had painted a word picture of not only a world in darkness at his coming, but they warned that *the Household would be in a state of laxity and apostasy*, with but a few ready to meet him at his coming. This state of things also appears to be rapidly developing, and may be the last, and to us, the most fearful sign of the times. Never before could we realize the full force of Christ's repeated warnings about preparing for his coming, and the many exhortations to 'stand fast.'

During the past few years we have seen a complete change in the attitude of a large group who, a few years ago, appeared to be firmly rooted and settled in sound doctrine and fellowship, who have now completely revised their views on the matter of sound fellowship, so as to justify compromise with error. They make but feeble protests as more and more teachers of error are accepted into fellowship, on the basis of ambiguous statements, while false teaching is toned down, sugar-coated and condoned.

The Statement of Faith is discredited; the Truth's literature is being "modernized" to suit the ideas and the tastes of the "liberally-minded"; scientific rubbish is being substituted for the facts concerning God's creative work. Loose fellowship, general laxity, and perversion of the Truth is on the march, and gaining momentum. Let us therefore *watch!* —O.B.

Ecclesial News

DETROIT, Mich.—12954 St. Marys—Memorial 10 a.m.; Sunday School 11:30.

Since our last item of ecclesial news we have passed through the winter season of our hemisphere and are again in the season of the springing forth of flowers. During the recent months we have also seen the budding forth of the purpose of God in many ways, as the nations of the earth have assumed their allotted positions in exact accord with Divine foreknowledge. Certainly we live in the springtime of the new day of earth's redemption!

With these things in mind it is encouraging to see the activity and loving concern shown amongst the brotherhood, and a zealous realization that the return of the Lord is imminent. Living as closely as we do to the time of the sounding of the "trump of God" brings grave responsibilities and a necessity for watchful care—watchfulness of ourselves, our thoughts and our deeds.

Faithful are the hands that labor in the service of their brethren, who show hospitality without grudging, and hold aloft the banner of truth and righteousness in all parts of God's service.

Upon several occasions we have joined in joyous association with our brethren and sisters in London, Ontario, at their memorial services and lectures. And the opportunity of meeting together with them and others at their Sunday School entertainment at the beginning of the year, and at their Gathering in March, has given courage and strength to our small group.

We have also rejoiced in the assembly of brethren and sisters around the table of the Lord in our midst—bro. & sis. Gibson of Toronto, and bre. & sisters J. Cartlidge and H. Gwalchmai of London. Bro. Gibson gave us good words of exhortation.

Upon the occasion of the visit of these brethren and sisters, ELLIS HIGHAM of our Sunday School was examined and gave a good confession of the things concerning the Kingdom and the Name of Jesus Christ. Through the loving co-operation of our brethren and sisters of London, Ellis

was immersed into the Saving Name and received the right hand of fellowship from the London ecclesia on May 27. We pray that he may grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord, and continue faithfully in patience unto the return of the Master.

We have also enjoyed the company of bre. & sisters H. A. Sommerville, O. Beauchamp, and C. Banta, and sis. Michaelle Banta, passing through to the London Gathering. Associating around the Daily Readings on that occasion, we profited by a consideration of the order and arrangement of the camp of Israel as they camped and journeyed according to the Divine commandment—always ready to move; never knowing when the signal would come—what an impressive lesson for our present pilgrimage!

And Israel's wanderings impress, too, the comforting lesson of Divine provision and care for us as we pass through the wilderness of the nations. May these treasures of wisdom and exhortation not be lost upon us as they were upon the natural seed!

While rejoicing in so many ways, we note the aspects of sorrow and pain amongst the brotherhood, and recognize the fact that the "Rest which remaineth for the People of God" is yet for the future, that the relationship of the Adamic nature is still our lot.

May the day soon dawn when the Lord shall wipe away the tears from all faces, and the last great enemy shall be destroyed. We join in fraternal love to all the Household of Faith.

* * *

HARVEY, West Australia—14 Sir James Avenue.

On Dec. 26, 1955 my sister-wife and myself were present at Esperance to witness a good confession of the One Faith and the baptism of LEONARD RAYMOND HODGES, 18 years old. Our new brother is the eldest son of bro. & sis. K. H. Hodges.

Our young brother showed a sound knowledge of the Truth. After the baptism a breaking of bread meeting was held and the right hand of fellowship extended.

Although it was a hurried trip—three days, in which we travelled nearly a 1000 miles by car, we thoroughly enjoyed the meeting and our short stay with the brethren at Esperance.

The position of things in the Middle East should be a spur to our faith; however, there is the danger—being human as we are—that, having looked for these things to come to pass, we may be inclined to be a little complacent about them when they do take place. Everything seems so natural. It is easy, if we are not on our guard, to become one of the unwise virgins and to be sleeping when the Master cometh. It is the Daily Readings and articles in the magazine that jolt us and help keep us from this complacency. Your brother in Israel's hope, —Ray Hodges.

* * *

HAWLEY, Penna.—Memorial Service at home of bro. H. A. Sommerville, Lake Ariel; Sun. Sch. approx. 12 m. Thurs. Bible Class, house to house.

We have resumed our Thurs. eve. Bible Classes at Hawley, house to house alternately. Visitors whom we have welcomed have been: bro. N. Mammone (Hopatkong, N. J.); bro. & sis. R. Frisbie (Baltimore); bro. & sis. O. Beauchamp (Pomona).

On Sun., Apr. 29 bro. Mammone exhorted us, and bro. Beauchamp lectured on "The Jew and Arab Controversy over the Holy Land." Eight members of the Central meeting attended. Both meetings were held in the Glendale Meeting Hall.

Our hearts fill with hope as we behold the increasing signs of the Master's return. We "pray for the peace of Jerusalem"—not the "peace" that the nations are frantically attempting to arrange to prevent that great conflict that is soon to come, but the enduring peace that will be established when the Prince of Peace (Isa. 8:7-8) shall speak peace to the nations and—

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his Kingdom."

Fraternal greetings to all of like precious Faith,

—bro. H. A. Sommerville

Fraternal Gatherings

HYE, Texas—Monday, July 30 to Sunday, August 5.

Write to: Bro. E. W. Banta, 7012 Sherman St., Houston 11, Tex.
Details on back cover, May issue. Proposed program, p. 163, this issue.

TORONTO, Ontario—Saturday and Sunday, October 6 & 7

Write to: Bro. Gibson, 294 Glebeholme Blvd., Toronto 6, Ont.

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