

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.

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“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.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL: "Mine Eyes Have Seen the King"	Inside Front Cover
THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE (Bro. Thomas).....	4
A NAME THAT THOU LIVEST (Bro. Roberts).....	9
TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH	14
EVERY MAN PURIFIETH HIMSELF.....	15
THE AMEN	23
OUT OF EGYPT HAVE I CALLED MY SON (Part 19).....	27
ECCLESIAL NEWS: Boston, Denver Houston, London, Miami, Worcester	30
SIGNS OF THE TIMES: A Year of Great Change.....	32

CHRIST IS COMING AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

EDITORIAL

"Mine Eyes Have Seen the King"

PART THREE

"And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory"—Isa. 6:3.

This ascription is quite similar to that of the living creatures in Apoc. 4, and brings to our minds a principle written deep in the history of Israel, but almost absent throughout Christendom and, sad to say, seems to be forgotten by many Christadelphians. It is first stated in Lev. 10:3—

"I WILL BE sanctified in them that come nigh Me!"

This signifies that if any would expect to receive anything from God, he must conform to God's ways. The natural mind objects to this, and is exhibited in our day in one of the terms set forth in peace plans—"That a man should have the liberty to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience."

Among the things written for our instruction, there are a number of examples to show the result of men tampering with God's will; but none better than the case of Uzziah who fled from the temple smitten with leprosy for daring to interpose with the affairs of the High Priest's office.

Our position *"In Christ"* requires just as much care as was required of Israel under the Law. Listen to Jesus as he speaks:

"Truly, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and robber" (John 10:1).

Belief of the Gospel and baptism are the apostolic requirements. *There is no other way.* But Christendom disregards this and attempts to enter the sheepfold some other way. They have overlooked the lesson so terribly enforced upon Israel, and proceed to do as they please, believing themselves to be in possession of greater knowledge than the apostles.

But the day is not far distant when all human pride will be levelled in the dust, and God's will shall be done on earth as it is now done in heaven. Many Christadelphians could learn a severe lesson in these days as they try to show us a better way by watering down the Word of God, and attempting to make us believe that the way to eternal life is not quite so narrow as the Word proves it to be.

"And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke"
— Isaiah 6:4.

This verse finds its counterpart in Rev. 15:8—

"And the Temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power."

A reference to the type in 1 Kings 8:10-11, is both interesting and instructive—

"And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, the cloud filled the house of the Lord.

"So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord."

Isaiah was overcome with the vision, as we read in verse 5—

"Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

This humility of the prophet is characteristic of many of God's servants. We see it in Abraham, Moses, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and others, and it should be a distinguishing feature in the life of all our brethren and sisters.

"Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."

Jeremiah and Daniel had similar experiences. In the case of Isaiah and Jeremiah, it would appear to be the same—the purging of iniquity in preparation of special missions. Isaiah's was a heavy one.

"And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed"—Isaiah 6:9-10.

God had done everything possible for the people of Israel, as He says in Jeremiah 11:7-8—

"For I earnestly protested to your fathers in the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, even unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey My voice.

"Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do; but they did them not."

Isaiah brought them a similar message in chap. 5:3-4—

"What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

"And now go to: I will tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down."

You will recall that Jesus used the same words as we read in vs. 9-10 of chapter 6. In Matt. 13:13-15, we hear Jesus explaining why he spoke to the people in parables—

"Because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

"And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive."

When men close their eyes and ears, and refuse God's gracious invitation, they fill up the measure of their own iniquity, and place themselves outside the door of God's mercy.

These are some of the things written for our learning or instruction. But do we learn them? or do we look upon them as things pertaining to Israel only as part of their history? If we do, then let us hear Paul as he speaks in Heb. 3:12-14—

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

"But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through deceitfulness of sin."

"For we are made partakers of Christ, IF WE HOLD the BEGINNING of our confidence stedfast unto the end."

In each of these verses, there is a sober thought that stirs us:

V. 12: Here Paul speaks of "an evil heart of unbelief." From a natural standpoint, *each one of us possesses a heart of that kind*, and it is only by daily and constant application of the mind to the things of the Spirit that will keep us from departing from the living God. Therefore, we are urged to exhort one another daily.

V. 13: Here the thought is continued and the reason for the exhortation given. "Lest any of us be hardened through the *deceitfulness* of sin." There is nothing more deceitful than sin, therefore says Paul in another place—

"Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

This leads up to the focal point in V. 14: where the apostle reminds us in a most serious manner that we can only become a partaker of Christ, IF we hold "*the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.*"

What is the beginning of our confidence? It is our FIRST LOVE. And what is our first love? We each can answer that question by looking back into our lives to the day we came to a knowledge of the Truth. There is no human joy so rapturous as that which our first love produces, and that is what the apostle says we must hold fast unto the end. The deceitfulness of sin is the only thing that will cause us to think otherwise.

But we must come back to the vision, and here in v. 11, Isaiah asks an all-important question—

"*Lord, how long?*"

Vs. 11 & 12 give us the answer—

"*Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.*"

This answer is sufficient. We look over the pages of history and see the 10 tribes of Israel carried away by Shalmanezar. 130 years later, the 2 tribes were taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. Later on, we see a partial restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah, and after another 500 years we view the rejection of Messiah, and the overwhelming invasion of the Romans, and the remnant scattered among all nations.

In v. 13, Isaiah hears in veiled language what other prophets heard in plain words, even to the times and seasons. From this, we are able to discern that Israel's desolation nears its end, and the day rapidly approaches when Isaiah's vision will become a reality.

"*But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.*"

The nation of Israel was not to be destroyed. There was always to be a remnant who would eventually come to the state prefigured by the tree of life in the Paradise of God. The Holy Seed are the elect of God, found here and there throughout all generations since the foundation of the ages. Hence, the apostle says in Heb. 11:39-40—

"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

In view of this encouraging and invaluable information, we join with Paul, in Ephes. 4:1-3, and say—

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you may walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love;

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

And again, in the same letter, Paul appeals to us to—

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you."

Therefore, my beloved brethren and sisters, may God have mercy upon us, and help us to overcome the weakness of the flesh, that we may attain unto salvation, and see with our eyes what Isaiah saw in vision. —Editor

"The Bride, the Lamb's Wife"

"We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

BY BROTHER JOHN THOMAS

In writing to the disciples at Ephesus, the apostle illustrates the submission due from wives to their husbands by the obedience rendered to Christ by the community of the faithful in his day—

"As the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything" (Eph. 5:24).

This was an injunction of absolute submission to their Christian husbands as unto the Lord himself; because—

"The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church" (Eph. 5:23).

But, while he enjoins this unqualified obedience, he exhorts their husbands to return them due benevolence, not to treat them with bitterness, but to love them—

"Even as Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it."

If unbelieving wives, however, were disobedient and perverse, and chose to depart (1 Cor. 7:15)—

". . . let them; a brother is not under bondage in such cases."

The love which should subsist between Christian brethren and sisters in the married state, is such as Christ manifested for the church by anticipation (Rom. 5:6-8)—

"While we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

—says the apostle. This is the greatest love a man can possibly show, that he should die for his enemies; and this is the kind of love which Paul commends to the attention of the Ephesians; but always on the supposition that the wives—

". . . adorn the hidden man of the heart with that which is incorruptible, even a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

"For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands: even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord: whose daughters such women are, as long as they do well, and are not dismayed at any threat" (1 Peter 3:3-6).

As he had introduced the subject of matrimonial love and obedience, and had adduced the love of Christ for them all as his church, by way of illustration; he proceeds to show the object for which he loved them even unto death; the relationship which was consequently established between them; and the sacrifice which they ought cheerfully to make for him who had loved them so devotedly.

His object in giving himself for the church before it was formed, was that those who should afterwards compose it—

". . . might be sanctified and cleansed in the laver of the water by the word, that"—at the resurrection—"he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27-26).

"Ye are clean" (said Jesus to his disciples) "through the Word which I have spoken to you"
(John 15:3).

This Word, which is defined to be—

"The Law and the Testimony" (Isa. 8:20).

—is the great instrument of holiness and purification. It changes men's minds; loosens their attachment to earthly things; causes them to place their affection on things above; creates a new right spirit within them; diffuses the love of God abroad in their hearts; separates them from sinners; leads them into Christ; and develops in their lives, fruit characteristic of that repentance which needs not to be repented of. The Lord Jesus styles it—

"The Word of the Kingdom" (Matt. 13:19).

And Peter—

"The incorruptible Seed" (1 Pet. 1:23).

And Paul—

"The Word of the Truth of the Gospel" (Col. 1:5).

And John—

"God's Seed" (1 John 3:9).

And by James it is termed—

"The Word of Truth" (James 1:18).

—with which the invariable and unvacillating Father of Lights begets His children, that they should be "a kind of first fruits of His creatures."

It is by this Word that an individual is renewed or renovated; so as, in an intellectual and moral sense, to become a "new man"; as appears from what the apostle says to the brethren at Colosse (Col. 3:10)—

"Ye have put on the new man, which is renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him."

This renewing affects the spirit of the mind, which may be known to be renovated, by a man having turned from his natural subserviency to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," to "righteousness and true holiness." When the mental disposition—called "the heart"—is renewed, it becomes a mirror, as it were, in which one skilled in the Word of the Kingdom, can discern the Spirit, or behold a reflection of the Divine Nature.

This image of God in a man's character can only be created by the Word of the Truth of the Gospel of the Kingdom. A man may be very "pious" according to the standard of piety set up and

approved by his fellow-men; but, if he be ignorant of the renewing elements—if he neither know nor understand, and consequently, and necessarily, be faithless of the Law and Testimony of God— "*there is no light in him.*" He is walking in a vain show—

" . . . in the vanity of his mind, having his understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart"

(Eph. 4:18).

Peter styles the Law and Testimony, "*God's knowledge*—

" . . . whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these . . . "
—that is, by the *understanding and belief* of these—

" . . . ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

Now, the "testimony of God" came by the Holy Spirit, by which God testified in His *prophets* (Neh. 9:30) and, in the last days, spoke through *His Son* (Heb. 1:1-2; John 3:34; 5:47; 6:63; 7:16; 12:48-49); and the *apostles* (Matt. 10:19-20). Hence, the effects of the Word believed are attributed to the Spirit; and because the Word sets men to breathing in God's moral atmosphere, it is termed "Spirit and Life." These remarks will explain the apostle's saying to Titus (3:5)—

"According to His mercy God saved us through the laver of regeneration, and renewal of the Holy Spirit."

This is parallel to the saying—

"Sanctified and cleansed in the laver of water by the Word."

—for the reader must not suppose, that any man, woman, or child, who is *ignorant of the Word* can be regenerated, or born again, by being plunged into a bath. The Holy Spirit does not renew the heart of man as he renews the mortal body when through Jesus he raises it from the dead. In *this* case, the power is purely physical.

But, when the heart is the subject of the renewal it is by the knowledge of the written testimony of God, or the Word. "God," says Peter, speaking of the Gentile believers, "purified their hearts *by faith*" (Acts 15:9). And Paul prays, "That Christ may dwell in their hearts *by faith* (Eph. 3:17).

Now, faith comes by hearing the Word of God, (Rom. 10:17); in other words, it is the belief of God's testimony concerning things to come, which are not seen (Heb. 11:1); and without which it is impossible to please Him (Heb. 11:6).

When a man is renewed by the Truth, he is renewed by the Spirit, and not before. *There is no such thing in the Scriptures as a renewed ignorant man.* Ignorance of the testimony of God, and regeneration, are utterly incompatible. *The Truth is the purifier* to those only who understand and obey it (1 Pet. 1:22), and there is no moral purity, or sanctification of Spirit before God, without it.

It is only *believers of the Truth*, then, who can be the subjects of a regeneration by being submerged "in the laver of the water." When they come out of this, they have been—

" . . . washed, sanctified, and justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, by the Spirit of God"

(1 Cor. 6:11).

The Truth to be believed is "*the Gospel of the Kingdom and Name of Jesus Christ*" (Acts 8:12). When this is understood, and heartily received, it produces a disposition of mind, such as was in Abraham and Jesus, and which is called "repentance." Believers, so disposed, are the begotten of God, and have become as little children. They believe "the "exceeding great and precious promises," together with the things testified concerning the sufferings and resurrection of Jesus.

He fell into a deep sleep; and, while thus unconscious and insensible, his side was opened by a spear, and forthwith rushed blood and water (John 19:33-34). Being awakened out of his sleep, he was built up a spiritual body, flesh and bones; and, by his ascension, presented to the Father as the federal representative of his church. This is the aggregate of those who, believing these things, have been introduced into Christ through the laver of the water, according to the saying of the Scriptures—

"Ye are all the children of God in Christ Jesus **through the Faith**. For as many as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ.

"Ye are all one in Christ Jesus . . .

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"
(Gal. 3:26-29).

A community of such individuals as these constitutes the mystical body of Christ. By faith, its elements are "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Hence, they are "bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh"; and therefore, *the beloved Eve of the last Adam*, the Lord who is to come from heaven, and make her of the same holy spiritual nature as his own.

Thus, the church is figuratively *taken out of the side of her Lord*; for every member of it believes in the remission of sins through his shed blood; and they all believe in the real resurrection of his flesh and bones, for their justification unto life by a similar revival from the dead.

"Your bodies are the members" (or flesh and bones) "of Christ . . . and he that is joined unto (the Lord is one Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:15-17).

"I have espoused you to one husband" (says Paul) "that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11).

It will be perceived, then, that the church as defined, is in the present state the espoused of Christ, but not actually married. She is in the formative state, being moulded under the hand of God. When she shall be completed, God will then present her to the Man from heaven, "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white" (Rev. 19:7-8). This is she of whom the psalmist sings—

"Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people and (thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.

"The king's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework; the virgins, her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.

"With gladness and rejoicing) shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace"
(Psa. 45:10-15).

The presentation of Eve to the first Adam was the signal of rejoicing to the Morning Stars; and we perceive that the manifestation of Messiah's Queen will be attended with the "Alleluia" of a great multitude, sounding like the roaring of many waters, and the echoes of mighty thunders, saying—

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to the Lord God omnipotent: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his betrothed hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7).

Such is the relationship and destiny of the true church, styled by Paul, "the One Body." It is forming by the Word; or, taking it as formed in the apostolic age, but not presented, the apprehension of the apostle has been sadly realized—

"I fear," (says he) "lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

The tempter *has* seduced the betrothed. The simplicity in Christ is no longer characteristic of a community. It is corrupted on every side; and the ruin of the transgression alone prevails. Nevertheless, although there be no hope for the professing world, seeing that it is too "wise in its own conceit," too self-satisfied with its supposed illumination, glorifying itself, and saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," and knows not, and will not be persuaded, "that it is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17)—seeing, I say, that this is the irremediable condition of the religious public, yet there remains scope for the deliverance of those who are disposed to obey God rather than men.

If they would become bone of Christ's bone, and flesh of his flesh, they must "leave father and mother, and be joined unto the wife." They find themselves now, perhaps, members of denominations as they happen to be led. These are their parentage according to the fleshly mind. They must be forsaken, and men must become "one flesh" and "one spirit" in the Lord, if they would inherit the kingdom of God.

"This is a great mystery," says Paul, "but I speak concerning Christ and the church"

—Eph. 5:22-32.

To see Christ unbosom his grief to his disciples, and soothe the sorrow caused by his words, is to learn that if we belong to the Christ community, we are not callous theorists or unsanctified dealers in "doctrines" that touch not our feelings and move not our sentiments; but on the contrary, the love of Christ constraineth us—

"Because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead, that they that live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again." —Bro. Roberts.

"A Name That Thou Livest"

BY BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning"—Rom. 13:4

So Paul says, and so the Scriptures themselves show. They are:

". . . profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness"
(2 Tim. 3:16).

This we find to be true. But *especially profitable in those respects are the messages of the Lord Jesus to the ecclesias flourishing in the days when John was an exile in Patmos*. Though sent to seven in particular, it is evident they were intended for all, from the conclusion of each message—

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

And what was intended for all the ecclesias in A. D. 96 must be found to contain some instruction for those existing A. D. 1873. The seven were doubtless chosen as representing *seven different conditions*, comprising all the states in which an ecclesia could be recognized to exist, and, therefore, affording occasion for advice applicable to every age and state.

Sardis is particularly before us in the chapter read. (Rev. 3:1-6). The one body in the city receives first this solemn assurance—

"I know thy works."

Here, at once, is matter for wholesome reflection. Jesus, our High Priest now and Judge to be, is not one who depends for knowledge on what he may see and hear as man sees and hears. He requires not to be told how it is with us—*he knows*: he did this even in the days of his flesh, as it is written—

"He needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man" (John 2:25).

He knows now as he knew then; he knew in his spirit (Mark 2:8) what was passing in the thoughts of the Pharisees. He is now "the Lord the Spirit," without a flesh veil. When he speaks, it is what the *Spirit saith* unto the churches. He designs that all the churches should know this. His words are:

"All the churches shall know I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts" (Rev. 2:23).

We are no less known of Christ than we are known of the Father; he is the Father in manifestation. All things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. We have to do with the Lamb with seven horns and *seven eyes*: omniscience incarnate, great but glorious mystery; none the less credible that we cannot understand it.

Jesus, then, could say to every ecclesia, "*I know thy works.*" This is comfort to all who are laboring with an eye to him, and a terror to such as seek only to make a fair show in the eyes of men and brethren; because Christ not only knows the real state of all cases, but in due time *he will declare it*. There is a day appointed when he will—

". . . bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the heart"
(1 Cor. 4:5).

In that day will be fulfilled the promise made to such in Sardis as should overcome (Rev. 3:5)—

"I will confess his name before my Father and before His angels."

This promise is to all who overcome, not only in Sardis, but everywhere else. The honor of such a confession can scarcely be appreciated now. It will be seen and felt by all then, and by none more than by those who make light of it at present, as a thing not to be taken practically into account; they will, when too late, curse the infatuation that shall have cheated them of the unspeakable honor of favorable mention by the King of Glory in the audience of the Eternal One, and an angelic assembly of immortals.

But *what* did Jesus know of the Sardian ecclesia?—

"Thou hast a name that thou **livest**, and art **DEAD**" (v. 1).

Here sad thoughts arise; for if in the days of the beloved disciple—the gifts of the Spirit still flourishing—an ecclesia could be dead, what may we not fear in the nineteenth century, so far removed from the apostolic fountain?

Sardis had "*a name to live*": the ecclesia would appear from this to have been in good repute among the brethren—known and spoken about as a thriving, healthy, model ecclesia, probably because the brethren would be energetic and friendly. *Yet, by infallible Wisdom, they were pronounced "dead!"*

This suggests the wonder what the Lord's verdict would be were he to speak his mind about the ecclesias of our day. What would he say of Birmingham? We have a name to live. We are spoken well of by brethren here and there in the country as a lively, thriving ecclesia.

But what is the fact as discerned by the eyes of Omniscience? Well, we cannot have the answer now. We must examine our own selves. *What is the criterion of "life" in the case?*

Is it well-attended meetings? *Not necessarily*. Well-attended meetings are so far a good sign; but people may come to meetings from various causes apart from spiritual life. To come to meetings is a pleasant variation from the monotony of home; it is an agreeable stimulus to the sociable faculties; it is possibly an entertainment in some senses. Well-filled benches do not necessarily indicate a spiritually-sound condition, though it is good to see the benches well filled, especially at the appointed hour.

Is great animation and friendliness among the brethren a sign that we are not of those who have "a name to live and are dead"? *Not necessarily*: friendliness as such is instinctive with those who have what the phrenologists call "adhesiveness" largely developed. A man with a good stock of animal vitality and a large social brain, may be demonstratively friendly *without a particle of spiritual life*.

As sister Lasius said in her recent article on "Union and Unity," that, "*Spiritual life does not always flourish accompanied with a high degree of animal spirits.*" We are not, therefore, to flatter ourselves that because we shake hands and smile and enquire cordially concerning each other's welfare, we are full of spiritual life.

God forbid that I should seek to lessen our cordiality in this sense. Rather let us seek to excel in this as in every other excellence. Still, let us not mistake the manifestation of what may be but natural friendliness for that state of mind that the Lord would pronounce "life" as opposed to the death that reigned in Sardis.

Are we to find it in doctrinarian zeal and proneness to controversy in defence of the Faith once for all delivered to the saints? *Not necessarily*. No ecclesia is in a state of spiritual life that gives place to error, or lacks courage and enterprise in that contention for the Faith which is prescribed: but it is possible to argue from pugnacity and to delight in debate on the Truth while in the depths of spiritual death.

Where then are we to look for the indications of the real state of the ecclesia? The answer is, *in the individual lives of the brethren and sisters*. Let us follow them in their dispersion during the week, and ask how they act when thrown upon their own resources.

What do they do with their leisure time and their surplus money? How do they transact their business or do their work? Do they continue instant in prayer, abounding therein with thanksgiving? Are they ready to every good work? Are they merciful to the poor and the penitent? Are they men of truth and honor? Have they the fear of God before their eyes? Are the commandments a law with them which they fear to break? Do they keep their promises, and are they punctual to their engagements? Are they bold to confess Christ before men, and forward to say "come" to those whom God may bring within their reach?

Or, instead of being servants of Christ, are they servants of themselves,—having a name to live and are dead? Do they work only that their business may prosper and their private resources increase? Do they think only of their houses and their families? Do their sympathies never go beyond their own door?

Does the Word of God go neglected in their houses while they bestow all their energies on business or work, or friends or family, or pleasure? Do they never practise thanksgiving? Do they cast prayer behind their back?

Do they never put their hand to disinterested work—work for the good of others or pleasing of God? Do they do as other people do in business, acting as if they had no Master in heaven who will bring them to account? Are they destitute of faith; *absorbed with the question, "What shall we eat, what shall we drink"?*

Is their enthusiasm dead to everything but questions of personal advantage? Have they no likeness of Christ, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister? Do they show no likeness to the Elder Brother, whose meat was to do the will of the Father? Do they, unlike him, resist evil, resent injuries, go to law and take part in the world's politics and social devices?

Do they never realise that they are strangers and pilgrims, and stewards of the goodness of God, and that *that stewardship relates to their private selves and their private affairs*? And if they are not found faithful in these "least" things, they will not be accounted worthy of that calling with which they have been called?

These are some of the questions that would determine whereabouts an ecclesia stands in the matter of having a name to live and being dead. Let us try ourselves by them. They constitute the measure by which the Lord will measure the work of every man when the day of decision comes. If we apply it now, our work will have the better chance of passing then. If we find the work short, let us seek to rectify it. The message to Sardis gives good encouragement in this direction—

"Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain that are ready to die."

Christ is not an austere and unjust judge. Like the Father with Whom he is one, he is long-suffering and slow to anger. He is patient with the erring, and gives them "space to repent," and exhortation too.

His relation to us all may be taken as illustrated in his own parable of the fig tree (Luke 13:6). Three years the proprietor of the vineyard sought fruit on it, and then gave orders that it should be cut down as a cumberer of the ground. The dresser of the vineyard said—

"Lord, let it alone this year also till I shall dig about it and dung it. And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then, after that, thou shalt cut it down."

A fair chance for every fig tree! Let us look around and "*Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain.*" This is Christ's exhortation to every one that "hath an ear to hear." If any have lost their first ardor, or been entangled in sin, or have been discouraged by the evil of the times, *let them take heart again* at the comforting counsel of the Lord—

"Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain that are ready to die."

It may be that the "things that remain" will take root again and recover the life that is ready to die. What even if it is applicable to us what he says to Sardis—

"I have not found thy works perfect before God:"

Let us listen again—

"Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent."

This is the Spirit's counsel, and it is for "him that hath ears to hear." *There is no good to be done by giving in to failure.* Some fall and incline to lie where they fall. This is a mistake. Let them *get up and try again!*

We do not stand where Adam stood. One offence brought ruin on him; he had no High Priest; we have, and we are invited to make confession of our failures and trespasses and try again. Obtaining forgiveness, we are to "hold fast and repent," not losing hope, yet putting ourselves on a strict guard, for, with this, Christ is well pleased.

If on the contrary, we abandon hope and give ourselves up to the world, we seal our own doom; for hear what was said to Sardis—

"If therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come upon thee."

That is, Christ—working in what are called the "*Ways of Providence*"—would invisibly compass their destruction, if they did not take up that position of anxious vigilance which the situation, in all respects, called for. He would cut down the barren fig tree.

This is a lesson to us. If we diligently and anxiously improve our standing in the things of the Spirit—

"Doing justly, loving mercy, walking humbly with God."
—we shall be assisted from behind the veil in ways not visible to man. Blessing will attend us in our spiritual concerns, even though it take the shape sometimes of chastening evil; *ALL things will work together for good.*

But if we are like Sardis, and desert our watchfulness, and become enamored of ourselves and our doings, and forgetful of the Spirit of the calling, which is a spirit of gratitude and humility before God, they will work against us spiritually, and work out our destruction.

This is true of individuals and communities bearing the name of Christ. The seven messages show it. Wisdom quickly points the lesson.

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis that have not defiled their garments."

The ecclesia in Sardis was, probably, a large community, and each member in it would be satisfied with his membership, as giving him a good standing in Christ. Yet here is the Lord's declaration that *only a few among them* were well pleasing to him.

If it was so with Sardis, may it not be so with us? Undoubtedly it may, and *PROBABLY IS SO*. Let us realise the idea, and ask ourselves, what class of believers please him?

In Sardis, it was those who had not defiled their garments. In Birmingham it will be no different. This is, of course, the language of figure, but the figure is plain. Garment, as a figure, represents character. To keep ourselves unspotted from the world is to keep our garments clean. Fine linen, clean and white, is the righteousness of saints (Rev. 19:8).

Those in Sardis, then, who were pronounced "worthy," were those who walked in the Truth, filled with it, governed by it, conformed to it in their entire "walk and conversation," *men who walked with God*, not living to themselves, but to him who died for them—passing the time of their sojourning in fear, in the world but not of it, having here no continuing city, but looking for one to come.

Those in every place who belong to this Sardinian "few" will join them in the great day of muster, and walk with them in white, for—

"He that overcometh shall be clothed in white raiment."
—the symbol of the new and clean nature imparted to all who are made the subject of the promised transformation by the Spirit. If some from Birmingham are found in the company, it will be because they have made the Word their portion, and imitated the few in Sardis, in keeping clean their garments from the surrounding pollution.

God grant there may be such from all parts of the country.
Let us—

"Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain."

"TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH"

Soon the fight will be over, and the race run; and who shall tell the consolation that awaits the victory of "him that overcometh"? Christ will confess him, the angels will rejoice with him, and a multitude of true brethren will give thanks to God for his triumph.

Glory will rest upon him, honor will be poured upon him, and life granted him for length of endless days. A crown will be placed upon his head; the sceptre of righteous rule in his hands; and an exhaustless bounty of blessing placed at his command for those whom his iron rod shall rule.

In the strength of immortal vigor, and the joy of the mantling spirit, and the possession of all divine excellence, he will forget the sorrows of this age of sin except as the background of his eternal joy; and will give thanks to God for evermore that he was privileged to know and do the will of God in the day of his dishonor and shame.—**Bro. Roberts.**

Every Man Purifieth Himself

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves"—John 1:8.

No one, it would seem, would make that bare statement. We all are only too fully aware that we are far from sinless. But there is a kindred frame of mind that is perhaps more common and more deceptive. It is a form of self-satisfaction. It says, "*We are doing as well as can be expected of us.*" In Bible words—

"We are rich, increased in goods, and have need of nothing."

This attitude can too easily indicate a total lack of comprehension of the whole purpose of life and condition of natural man. It isn't a case of just getting through life, like a routine job to be done. Life must be regarded rather as an *opportunity*—not merely a duty. The span of our life is the period given us to accomplish *certain definite results*. These things, if our life is to be regarded as a success, *must be done*, and this is the only time in which they can be done.

We are born in a certain condition—with certain propensities, certain characteristics. In the aggregate these are known as the "flesh." *There is nothing good or wholesome about them.* They are unpleasing, unholy and unlovely—crude, selfish, earthy. That is our nature. It can be pleasant, but its pleasantness is of the thin and self-centered kind that vanishes when it is annoyed. It can love, but its love is rooted in self-gratification. Broadly speaking, where its own interests and pleasures and emotions are not concerned, it is thoughtless and heartless.

The world in general would not concur in this analysis. We ourselves would hesitate to express it if solely based upon our own observation. If we permit ourselves to be influenced by common opinion of the world's general self-approbation, we shall regard *this* view as hard and extreme, but if we fully accept the authority of God's Word, we must accept His appraisal of human nature.

This then is the foundation with which we start. This is the rough material with which we must work. But we are called from it to holiness, perfection and purity. A complete transformation from the ugly, repulsive, selfish thing we first discover ourselves to be, to a lovely, glorious likeness to the character of God. Not as a present achievement, but as the *unceasing incentive of an ultimate goal*.

And it is the apostle John whose name is most closely linked with the powerful agent that is to accomplish this transformation. That agent, of which John speaks so fully, is *love*. The greatest danger, it would seem, in regard to this subject, is misunderstanding, or not fully comprehending, what is scripturally meant by love.

It is not an emotion, It is a far bigger, better thing than that. It is a *principle of life*. It is the adoption, as the determining influence of every action, of the revealed divine viewpoint. God is love. Love is God. No definition of love is true which limits this conception. Love is godliness of character and action. Love is the enlightened expression of the mind of God. It is divinity. *It is the antithesis of everything human*, carnal and earthy.

Love is an expanding, uplifting influence, wholly pleasing and wholly satisfying, based on broad and eternal principles, with all the smallness and pettiness of human nature put away.

How does love transform us? We know that every thought leaves within us a permanent effect for good or evil. As individuals, we are merely the sum totals of all our thoughts. We cannot separate ourselves *from* them, because we *are* them—

"As he thinketh in his heart, **so is he.**" (Prov. 23: 7).

Every thought leaves its actual, physical effect upon our constitution. Thoughts are the small units of construction of which our characters consists. Every good thought is beneficial and works toward the final desired result, every distracting thought is a useless impediment, every evil thought is a ruthless breaking down of what faith is laboring to build. Therefore we are told:

"Bring into captivity **every thought**" (2 Cor. 10:5).

Our thoughts, and consequently our speech and actions, are influenced by many things—our nature, people, and circumstances, among others. Slowly we are moulded by these influences, and upon them our character depends. Of *all* the influences which bear upon us and form our character, there is only *one* which can benefit and improve us to any extent and that is the influence of *God*.

We cannot create goodness or holiness within ourselves. We *become* what we are *made*. But we *can*, to a determining extent, choose the influences which are to make us. That is our responsibility. We cannot be *free*. In the nature of things, we must serve some master. If we choose sin or the world, we become its servants, its slaves, and it gradually shapes us to its hideous pattern of death.

But this is where love can play its saving part, and if submitted to, can mould us to the beauty of everlasting life. Love cannot be separated from God. Love is divinity and godliness—wisdom, holiness, purity, kindness and patience combined.

Above all, *patience*. Paul *begins* his analysis of love by saying, "*Love suffereth long and is kind.*" Patience holds the keys. As long as patience holds open the door, all other virtues may and will develop. As soon as impatience closes it, all hope of peace or advancement is destroyed. John says—

"Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as **He** is pure" (1 John 3:3).
And he continues:

"Little children, let no man deceive you—he that **doeth** righteousness is righteous."

What is John driving at? Is he not trying to impress us with the fact that our effort must show some *tangible* results?—that good intentions are not enough. There must be *visible improvement*—a steady growth of godly attributes and weakening of earthly ones.

"*Unto him that overcometh*" are promised many things but nothing for him that *meant* to overcome. We *must* overcome— we *must* advance. What was acceptable yesterday is not good enough today. Yesterday's goal must be today's starting point. "Therefore," says Paul (Heb. 6:1)—

"Leaving the first principles . . . let us GO ON to perfection."

It is a long way to perfection for the natural man. We have far to go and much to do. We must increase the talents entrusted to us. There was nothing but bitter condemnation for the servant who buried his lord's money in the earth. True, he kept it safely—but that is *NOT ENOUGH*. He didn't *increase* it. The warning is clear. There must be *tangible RESULTS*.

There is no excuse. We know the formula. We have only to make the effort to apply it. It is inevitable that we shall be moulded and shaped by the influences with which we come in contact. It is a universal law. It is up to *us* to choose the influences wisely. **WE CANNOT REMAIN UNCHANGED**. Every experience and action has its effect, whether of death unto death or life unto life.

If we subject ourselves to the influence and thinking of the world, we shall bring forth fruit unto the world. It is a natural law of our constitution. If we subject ourselves to the influence of the Word of God with a consistency and intimacy that permits it to have its perfect work, we shall gradually acquire a godlike character. It cannot fail. *AND IT MUST BE DONE*.

"We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18).

Pretty words indeed—**BUT**—do they really mean anything specific to us?—can we give any *EVIDENCE* of their operation *IN OURSELVES*? Can we point to spiritual fruit?—gentleness, patience, purity and truth? This is the most important question that can ever be asked us. It *will* be asked us *soon*. The world is rapidly approaching chaos. *What have we to show at the final reckoning?*

Talk is cheap—very, very cheap. Fine phrases are sweet, and profession is easy in these tolerant, friendly days. But *the real battle is just as hard*, and just as important as ever.

"If ye **through the Spirit** do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:13).

AND NOT OTHERWISE. Do we even know what it *means*? We shall find out some day if we don't. Some day it will be burned into our minds to exclusion of every thought. Thousands are already standing silently at the Bar, waiting for the number to be made complete. Many of them we have known intimately. Soon *we* shall join them. Let us ponder it well.

Having a smattering of the "First Principles" and being, as the phrase is, "in the Truth," is no stopping point or guarantee. Can *any* be *so* self-deceived? Do any feel that in doing this we have done all that is necessary and can wait in assurance for the final divine approval, in the meantime busying ourselves with such transient things as attract our attention? Is it *that easy*?

We have set our hand to a lifelong work, and have *promised to put it foremost*. The baptismal examination is just to see if we *understand* the promise we are making and the responsibility that we are solemnly taking upon ourselves.

The transformation from the course of death to the course of life is a long and painful process, requiring constant fortification. We promise, at baptism, to adopt an entirely new course of life, based on revolutionary principles. We promise to put away forever the motive of pleasing ourselves and adopt the motive of pleasing God alone. We promise to apply this to every action, knowing that the only way to become godlike, and finally immortal, is to *minutely* and *consistently* follow a God-directed course of action which gradually puts the flesh to death.

This applies to *every* action and decision, particularly the everyday ones, for it is the small, hard-to-control reactions and emotions that hold the balance of power, for good or ill. The smaller an action is, the more fundamental it is and the more it reveals character. It is much easier to key ourselves up for the *big* things than to be consistently true in the *little* ones.

This requires a continuous absorption of incentive and direction and power from the Spirit of God, through His recorded Word. This is the whole secret. Success or failure depends directly upon it. If we put ourselves, by constant study and reflection, in permanent contact with godliness, we shall be gradually transformed by it. If we don't, then it won't happen. Everything is the result of cause and effect—

"As a man soweth, so shall he reap."

"Think on these things," says Paul, "Meditate on them—give thyself *wholly to them.*" GIVE THYSELF WHOLLY TO THEM. That leaves room for *nothing* else. Such other activities as are necessary for the sustenance of life and the fulfilment of legitimate obligations, instead of being interruptions or violations of these principles, should be made opportunities of practising them and putting them into actual service.

How can holiness and godliness and purity and faith be applied to officework and factorywork and housework? Does it seem incongruous? If it does, there is something wrong—there is something warped and clouded about OUR VIEWPOINT. The command is—

"**Whatsoever ye do**, do it heartily, AS UNTO THE LORD, and not to men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward" (Col 3:23).

We may get *part* of the reward now, a small meaningless part of it—enough to keep our bodies functioning—but the *real* reward is later. The less we get now, the more we have in store—THE MORE WE GET NOW, THE LESS WE HAVE IN STORE. Of some it is said, "*Verily, they HAVE their reward.*"

This is a vitally important point. It lifts our daily work out of the dull mundane sphere of carnal things and brightens it with the opportunity of serving God in the Spirit while attending to necessary temporal burdens. John says (1 John 2:15-17)—

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."

This is not an arbitrary prohibition. It is the guidance of wisdom. We are not taught arithmetic at school just to rob us of the pleasure of figuring incorrectly. That would be a childish, petulant way to view helpfully-intended instruction.

So with *God's* instruction. None of it is harsh or unnecessary. It is meant to *help* us—to put us on the right road to life and happiness and well-being in a real, permanent, substantial sense. John does not stop with the bare command; he gives the *reason*:

"All that is in the world is not of the Father"—it is alien and out of harmony—"The world passeth away, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

The world passeth away and takes all its friends and participators with it. Its fellowship is the sinister fellowship of death.

Many worldly things are not in themselves *wrong*. Many worldly acquaintances are not specifically *wicked*, but they all belong to a state of things that is ready to vanish away. To take part in their interests warps and cramps and beclouds our perception. We cannot hope to ever be part of a large and eternal *heavenly* order if we think small petty *worldly* thoughts.

The Old Testament chapter in the same daily readings (Isa. 40) brings this even more vividly into focus. The prophet urges upon us a conception of God and the purpose of life that is overwhelming in its immensity. If we can, by a supreme effort, get in tune with his view-point, present things shrink into their true insignificance.

"Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure?" (v.12).

"Behold the nations are as the small dust of the balance."

"Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding" (v 28).

"Lift up your eyes on high and behold who hath created these things . . . by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power" (v 26).

This is the scale of conception that it is wholesome to dwell upon, and get away from the pettiness of our present surroundings. It is strengthening. It is uplifting. It engenders a sober, godly frame of mind.

This is the true state of affairs. The world but a handful of dust—its troubled history an insignificant fraction of eternity—the seemingly real and actual present but a brief interlude that will pass like shadows before the rising sun.

This is the sphere of thought that is comforting and worthwhile. Keeping our minds in *this* channel will result in a course of action in harmony with these things and which will fit us for a place in them.

We are told by well-meaning but worldly-minded counsellors that if we want a better position we must fit ourselves for it. We must fill our thoughts with its responsibilities and requirements. We must, as it were, mentally live in that sphere and accustom ourselves to it.

Now of course this is entirely out of the question for those whose minds, in obedience to the counsel of the Apostle, are wholly given to *better* things—they just haven't the time for it—but it illustrates the effort we must make on a higher and more satisfying scale. Often, sadly enough, the children of this world show more wisdom and initiative and energy in *their* aspirations than the children of light do in things eternal.

The human mind is not bound to its immediate surroundings. If it were so life would often become unbearable. But consciousness is largely made up of memory and hope, beside that which is present to the senses.

Many people choose their solace by living in the past, comforting themselves with reminiscence and recollection, escaping monotonous or unpleasant reality by absorption in what is gone.

Most are wrapped up in the immediate present and the very limited future which comes within the scope of present undertakings. But such a course does not satisfy the contemplative mind. "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die" is the universal doctrine, but only the shallowest, dullest minds can find merriment satisfying under such circumstances. Such an attitude requires the cruellest, bitterest form of self-deception and wilful blindness.

But, in the mercy of God, there is a third alternative for those who feel the need. *How is one brought to feel the need?* By a recognition of the sadness and perversions of the present dispensation, due to the incapability and inhumanity and physical frailty of man. Is this brought home to us easily or quickly? Usually not. At first the world is a place of bright promise, of comradeship and love, of gay and thoughtless adventure. This is the impression of inexperience's innocence and buoyancy.

How do we learn differently? What prompts us to turn for comfort and satisfaction elsewhere? Usually it requires the rough hand of misfortune and disillusionment to make us fully appreciative of the vanity of present things. We are aware, it is true, of the vast preponderance of sorrow over joy in the world, but we feel nobody's troubles as keenly as we do our own. This is in the very nature of

things. Our minds can only work on what is being continually presented to them in some form or another. Unless constantly reminded either by circumstances or direct efforts of our own will, we soon forget, and our attention is taken by other things.

This, too, demonstrates why we must constantly supply our minds with material for thought from the Word of God. If we don't, our minds will feed on other and unwholesome things that so easily present themselves to them.

What is the course of mental satisfaction that is offered, to counteract the depressing effect of present considerations?

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished and her iniquity is pardoned" (Isa. 40:1).

Such are the opening words of the reading from Isaiah. "*Her warfare is accomplished and her iniquity is pardoned.*" These things have been recorded for over 26 hundred years—and the end is not yet. Some may be reminded, perhaps a little bitterly, of the statement by Paul to the Romans (4:17) that:

"God calleth things which be not as though they were already."

Clearly there could be no more striking example. To speak assuringly of warfare being over when it still had a cruel course of over two thousand years to run may seem poor and misleading comfort—but *is this the truth of the matter?* Thoughtful consideration shows this but a narrow, unreasonable viewpoint.

Comfort depends upon the *state of the mind*. The comfort offered by the Scriptures is not dependent upon immediate fulfilment. It is the *assurance* of an ultimate reign of peace and good, that is separated from no individual by more than the brief span of a human life-time. Its comfort is not that distress is *finished*, but that distress is a *controlled and necessary ingredient of the final result*.

This is the viewpoint that prophet and apostle exhort us to maintain. We must live in patience and godliness, buoyed up by hope. We must center our minds resolutely upon that which is to come and face all present troubles in the confidence of this expectation. "*Sorrow endureth for the night,*" says the Psalmist—and the night may be long—"but *joy cometh in the morning.*" The course of wisdom is not to ignore or belittle the sorrow, but to balance the whole picture. We shall not be overwhelmed by the one if the other is kept brightly in mind.

Then we can enter into the spirit of these words of Isaiah and reap the comfort intended. We are not to regard the delay with skeptical impatience or lagging faith, but we are to build our lives and hopes upon these things in the quiet and calm confidence that they represent the realities and that in God's good time all will be accomplished.

6: "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry?"—What good tidings is there?—"All flesh is grass. The grass withereth . . . surely the people is grass."—Where is hope?

This is the thoughtful, but purely natural, view. It sees things only as they *appear* and leaves out the most important feature. V. 8 answers: Truly "the grass withereth"—truly present things are a shadow—

"**BUT** the Word of our God shall stand forever . . . Lift up thy voice with strength; Lift it up, be not afraid. Say, Behold your God! Behold He will come and His reward is with Him."

Then the chapter breaks into the long, exalted eulogy to the power and greatness and unchangeableness of God, of which we have spoken. What is its purpose? *To raise and broaden the mortal conception of the meaning and purpose of life.* To train the mind into channels that give a proportioned outlook.

The human mind can be engrossed in the meanest and most trivial matters, or it can be devoted to the highest and loftiest considerations of divinity and holiness. The natural tendency of gravity pulls it downward, but the magnetism of the Spirit draws it upward.

As the mind thinks, so it becomes. A man is but the aggregation of his own thoughts. Therefore sons of Adam may be transformed into sons of God by a gradual displacement of the natural by the spiritual.

Every spiritual thought is an ingredient of the new creature—a strengthening of the spirit—a step towards life.

Therefore, says Paul (Phil. 4:8): "Whatsoever things are true, lovely, gracious and just, **THINK on these things.**"
—and thereby gradually become like them. John continues—

"Every man that hath this hope purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3:3).

"*Be ye holy,*" we are commanded (1 Pet. 1:16): "*for He is holy.*" Cleanliness, holiness, purity—these are attributes of *entirety*. A man is not *clean* if he is partly dirty. *Half* pure means *impure*. Perfection is demanded. Jesus said—

"Be ye therefore **PERFECT**, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

"*BE YE PERFECT.*" How *can* we be *PERFECT*?

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

But it is not a perfect *obedience* that is expected. Our perfection is a *gift*, not a personal accomplishment, for John goes on to explain (1:9)—

"If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and **CLEANSE** us from **all unrighteousness.**"

"If we walk in light . . . the blood of Jesus Christ **cleanseth us from all sin.**"

This is the secret of perfection. We cannot approach Him acceptably unless we are clean and pure in His sight. The Law of Moses teaches us this. Therefore *we must at all times maintain our purity from worldly thought and contact by the merciful cleansing of humble repentance and forgiveness.*

And so we meet together clean and pure and perfect and acceptable before him—not sinless, but repeatedly *washed from sin*. How merciful a provision—but let us never abuse it. Should we regard sin with less fear, because God cleanses us so freely? "God forbid!" says the Apostle Paul (Rom. 6:2). Rather should His mercy be an incentive to greater effort.

It is a grave and solemn calling—the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Tremendous privileges—tremendous responsibilities. Of him who treats it lightly, it will at the last be said: "*Better were it for that man if he had never been born.*"
—G.V.G.

The Amen

"*He who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the Elohim of Amen*"—Isaiah 65:16

In Daniel 2 we are shown a word picture of a great image, the substance of a dream by the king of Babylon. This was a representation of four world empires to take their places in the earth's

history prior to the establishment of God's kingdom. The destruction of the elements of this great world man-image is envisioned by Christ (as a stone) striking the image on the feet.

Immediately after this dream, the king of Babylon erects a literal image and commands all men to worship it. Three faithful servants of God, Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego, maintained their integrity and suffered the fiery vengeance of a world monarch, only to stand vindicated before the king and all the world, by the power of God on their behalf.

Their high station in the empire did not immunize them from the trial of their faith. It rather exposed them, yet giving opportunity for outward display of confidence in God which redounded to the glory of the Creator. Said Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 3:29)—

"There is no other God that can deliver after this sort."

We cannot worship the world's images in any respect, whether they be literal or worldly kingdoms or theories, unless we lose faith in the Creator of heaven and earth.

The 6000-year struggle of the Spirit against the flesh is developing another image of a man. This has been pictorialized throughout the Scriptures in various ways. This image is comprehended in the expression "THE AMEN." Let us look at this a little closer.

In Rev. 1 the apostle John is shown "*One like the Son of Man.*" The description of this man is given by John, even as Nebuchadnezzar described his image. John said the image spake "*as the voice of many waters.*" Verse 15 indicates that the representation stood for a great multitude of people. This symbolism is explained by Rev. 17:15—

"The waters are peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues."

"*He was clothed with a garment down to the feet*" (v. 13). Here is a covering over of nakedness, that necessary garment portrayed from the Garden of Eden by shedding of blood.

In Zechariah, Joshua the high priest (typical of Christ) is shown as having filthy garments changed with a change of raiment, indicative of clothing with glorious spirit nature, while in Psa. 132:9 we read—

"Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness."

This symbolic man of Rev. 1 is the *Multitudinous Son of Man*—Christ and the saints together, all linked in the descriptive expression "*The Amen*"—the Faithful Man, the Man of Truth, or as we read in Rev. 3:14—

"These things saith The Amen, the faithful and true witness."

But this image can only be created through suffering and trial, by enduring as did our head, even Jesus Christ—

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, unto the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

We must "*grow up*"—not remain as babes—but—

"Grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:15-16).

This Spirit-man was *girded with a breast-band of gold* (Rev. 1:13). After the type of the Aaronial dress it was worn under the arms. But where Aaron's girdle was composed of gold, blue,

purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, characteristics antitypically portrayed in Christ's flesh, and those whom he represented—the girdle of the Spirit-man was of *gold and linen alone*; the elements of mortal flesh and the principle of suffering to the end of endurance of faith were swallowed up of life everlasting. Job said (23:10)—

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

"*His head and his hairs white like wool, as white as snow*" (Rev. 1:14). Isaiah gives us the key to this descriptive form by telling Israel that though their sins were as scarlet they should be as wool (Isa. 1:16-18). The head of the image is Christ. As the head has been cleansed as snow, so the body partakes by association the like characteristics—

"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow"
(Psa. 51:7).

The further aspects of the image speak of the work which is to be accomplished by those who are symbolized. The *eyes as a flame of fire, a double-edged sword* coming out of his mouth, his *appearance as the sun* shineth in his strength, all tell of the hostility against the Man-image in the last days.

All this is graphically portrayed in other parts of Scripture. The cherubic forms of the prophet Ezekiel, the four in the furnace unharmed by the fire of Nebuchadnezzar, the Appearance of a Man of Daniel's visions, the Four Living Creatures and the Rainbowed Angel of the Apocalypse, all tell the same message, the glorification of a group of individuals, developed by trial and chastisement, to be associated in the judgments of God against a wicked world and in bringing in the era of peace and righteousness over all the earth.

This is what is known as "*The Amen*," that which is "Faithful and True." *It is no coincidence that this word appears so repeatedly throughout the Scriptures.* Its transposition to our language, as well as to the Greek, untouched carries the aspect of the origin of our faith as that of Abraham, father of the Hebrew race. We recall Paul's words:

"They which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."

They are comprehended in the seed, and as such are heirs according to the promise. All through the Scriptures this group have been shown as crying for deliverance.

The Creator, making the contrast between the righteous and the wicked of Israel, declared that the wicked should—

". . . Leave their name for a curse . . . but the Lord God shall . . . call His servants by another name, that he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the **God of Truth**"
(Isa. 65:16).

The original Hebrew for "the God of Truth" is *Elohim Amen*. The literal translation is Mighty Ones of Faithfulness, or Truth. This is the new Name conferred upon all those who are classed as God's servants (v. 17)—

"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."

Here we find New Rulers of a Divine Nature, united in the expression, "The Amen." Then the prophet continues to show that their former troubles shall be forgotten (v. 19)—

"I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her."

The cry of the souls under the altar will then be silenced forever (Rev. 6:10)—

"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

From the repose under the altar they will have risen with the Glorious Sun of Righteousness. This is referred to by the Psalmist (19:1-5-6)—

"The heavens (the Amen—the Mighty Man of Faithfulness—the Elohim Amen) declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork. In them hath God set a tabernacle for the Sun (for the Amen) which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race."

Here is the strong man of John's apocalyptic vision going forth—not now as a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" as under the probationary sojourn, but exercising the power of God against the wicked, and bringing the law of God to the ends of the earth—

"His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof."

The whole earth shall feel the effects of this *Man of Faithfulness* comprehending Christ and the glorified saints.

Finally we notice the attitude of David, the man after God's own heart. Though a king, his life was filled with trials and sorrows, and he confessed his need for salvation, and yearned for the day of deliverance from the weakness of the flesh (Psa. 70)—

"Make haste, O God to deliver me, make haste to help me, O Lord. I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: Thou art my help and my deliverer; O Lord, make no tarrying"
(vs. 1-5).

Then he turns his remarks to that glorious prospect when the earth shall be blessed in his seed, when—

"All nations shall call him blessed" (Psa. 72:17).

This happy event for which David longed so intensely, will be all his desire, though then God made it not to grow—

"Blessed be his glorious Name for ever" (Psa. 72:19).

This Name is named upon all of God's saints, as we are told in Rev. 3:12—

"To him that overcometh . . . I will write upon him the Name of my God . . . and my new Name."

"His Name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. 22:4).

The final result is anticipated and earnestly desired by those who are striving to overcome (Psa. 72:19)—

"Let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen."

This glorious condition is the consummation of David's fondest desires. When this state has become a reality—

"The prayers of David (the Well-beloved), the son of Jesse (the Strong) are ended"
(Psa. 72:20).

It will be the realization of all his prayers. This is the condition to be brought about by the conflict between the Image of Nebuchadnezzar and the Image of John's Vision, the Man of Faithfulness. The conflict begins during the mortal sojourn as we aspire to a part in "*The Amen*." It is consummated by those in aggregate who have been found approved by the Head for association with him. Therefore they join in prayer, "*energetic, zealous*" prayer with John—

"AMEN, TRULY (EVEN SO) COME, LORD JESUS."

—F.H.

"Out of Egypt I Called My Son"

"*The commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death*"—Rom. 7:10

PART NINETEEN

The greatness of the terrible scene connected with the oral delivery of the first covenant was such that the children of Israel said unto Moses—

"Speak **thou** with us, and we will hear: but let not **God** speak with us, lest we die.

"And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come down to prove you, and that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not" (Exo. 20:19-20).

Their awe-inspired request found favor with God, as Moses subsequently informed them, saying—

"According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying—

"Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not."

"And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken"

(Deut. 18:16-17).

So the Law—which was *'added because of transgressions till the seed should come"—was "ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." This limitation of the existence of the Law "*till the seed (Christ) should come,*" was made still further apparent by the declaration of God to Israel through Moses, saying—

"I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

"And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto My words, which he shall speak in My Name, I will require it of him" (Deut. 18:18-19).

This limitation was necessitated also by—

". . . the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the Law made nothing perfect"

(Heb. 7:18).

It was weak *through the flesh*; for it was impossible for the flesh, left to itself, to keep the Law inviolate: hence was provided a situation in which the kindness of God in the gift of His Own Son, might be made effective in—

"Redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:7-6).

The purpose of the Law is clearly stated thus (Rom. 5:20)—

"The Law entered that the offence might abound."

Again, says Paul (Rom. 7:7)—

"I had not known sin but by the Law; for I had not known lust, except the Law said, Thou shalt not covet."

And again—

"By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20).

The apostle then tells us of the effect of the Law in his own case, saying—

"Sin taking occasion by the Commandment (Law), wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the Law sin was dead."

"For I was alive without the Law once (did not know its far-reaching aims); but when the commandment came (in the full force of its spirituality); sin revived, and I died.

"And the commandment which was ordained to life I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

"Wherefore the Law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin, by the commandment, might become exceedingly sinful" (Rom. 7:7-13).

Thus the Law stood before Paul in all its purity, majesty, and stern inflexibility, and would not accept anything short of perfect obedience; but this was impossible, not only in his case, but also in the case of every son of Adam, save he who, in his own person, combined both human and divine sonship.

Under this holy, just, and good Law he was made, and the righteousness of God developed. In his absolutely perfect obedience to its commands it was completely fulfilled; and in his death and resurrection it was taken out of the way. And to participation in the results of this glorious achievement under the divine help, the death-stricken sons of Adam are invited by the Gospel of this dear Son of God.

Thus we are enabled to see how that this holy, just, and good Law was "ordained to life." And we are admitted to the benefits accruing to Christ on the ground of his perfect obedience upon the condition of *faith in him, and submission to his will*. Let us therefore bear in mind the apostolic explanation, that the operation of God in the condemnation of sin in the flesh was (Rom. 8:4)—

"That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us."

So then, the object of the Law being to exhibit the exceeding sinfulness of sin, it behoves us to take heed to ourselves by the reflected light of this heavenly mirror, for in beholding ourselves in the light of it we shall be able to discern not only what manner of persons we *ought to be*, but of what manner we *are*.

If this "candle of the Lord" had not shone in upon the situation, darkness and death would have prevailed. While, therefore, the Law reveals to us the awful depravity of our nature, and makes known to us the utter helplessness of our position as the children of wrath, it points us to him who, in the mercy of God, has met all its just and holy claims on our behalf, and in the faith of whom the Father forgives and loves us, providing that we walk in the light, even as He is in the light.

And if, in our weakness, we fall short of that perfect obedience to His holy, just, and good law, which we must inevitably fail to accomplish, we have a throne of grace to which we are invited to—

"Come boldly, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

The people of Israel having agreed to enter in covenant with God, Moses, as their mediator, was summoned to—

"Come up unto the Lord, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off.

"And Moses alone shall come near the Lord: but they shall not come nigh.

"And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said.

"All the words which the Lord hath said will we do."

But the matter could not end there (Heb. 9:16-17)—

"For where a testament (covenant) is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator (it is necessary to produce the dead victims appointed for its ratification).

"For a testament (covenant) is of force after men are dead (over dead victims): otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator (the appointed victims) liveth."

Accordingly (Exo. 24:4-8)—

"Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

"And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord.

"And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons: and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

"And he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.

"And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words."

The first covenant having thus been dedicated with blood (death), we discern in it the typical representation of the *condemnation of sin in the flesh*, whereby the covenant made with the fathers was antitypically confirmed in the shedding of the blood of Christ: and in the scene which followed the dedication of the first covenant we are introduced to a *pictorial illustration of the gathering together unto Christ of the first fruits unto God and the Lamb*. To this the Spirit in David makes reference, saying (Psa. 50:5-6)—

"Gather My saints together unto Me: those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God is Judge Himself."

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

Ecclesial News

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

As another year draws to a close we look back with pleasant memories, yet to some extent mingled with sorrow, dwelling as we are in this tabernacle of flesh.

Our greatest joys, of course, are those with whom we are associated in the Truth. The joint Fraternal Gathering of the Boston and Worcester ecclesias, held at Boston on Oct. 12 & 13, was a source of spiritual uplift and edification.

We had with us on that occasion: bro. & sis. Dan Gwalchmai Sr., bro. & sis. Harry Gwalchmai, bro. & sis. Cartlidge, bro. & sis. Sutherland, bro. & sis. Philip, bro. & sis. Pridham, sisters Barber, Boyce and Sparham (London); bro. Gilbert (Buffalo); bro. & sis. Joe Jackson and sis. Beasley (Toronto); bro. Growcott (Detroit); bro. Baines and sis. Irene Baines (Montreal); bro. Mammone (Hopatcong, N.J.) and bro. & sis. Harry Sommerville (Lake Ariel, Pa.)

Bro. Gibson was scheduled to preside, but he was unable to attend. Bro. Mammone presided in his place.

The subject of the afternoon program was "THE GODLY MAN." This was divided into three parts—

"Showing Thyself a Pattern of Good Works"—bro. Cartlidge

"In Doctrine Showing Uncorruptness"—bro. Gilbert

"Sound Speech That Cannot Be Condemned"—bro. Growcott.

Each part supplied us with much spiritual food to take home and remember for a long time to come.

On Sunday morning bro. Sommerville gave us the word of exhortation. On Sunday afternoon bro. Baines presided and bro. Gwalchmai gave a lecture on the subject: "Man's Inhumanity to Man." He pointed out the difference between Christadelphians and their belief as taught in the Bible, and the powers-that-be who believe they can establish peace and goodwill by means of power and dominion obtained by greed and merciless slaughter.

As we enter the new year we wonder what it will bring forth, for the signs and prevailing conditions on earth are indicative of the near return of Christ. May we be found watching and prepared to meet him.

—bro. Edgar Sargent Sr.

* * *

DENVER, Col.—432 S. Emerson St.—Sunday School 10 a.m.; Memorial 11 a.m.; Wednesday Bible Class, 8 p.m.

With sorrow we record the death of our Sis. Dessie Maude Hamilton of Hammond, Ind., after many months of suffering. She was sister to our Sisters Ethel Hoage and Icle Osborne of this ecclesia. We sorrow not as those without hope of a resurrection. Our sister rests from labor and trial and awaits the trumpet call to meet the Master.

* * *

HOUSTON, Tex.—8008 Junius St.—S. S. 10 a.m.; Breaking Bread 11; Public Lecture every 3rd Sun. 7:30 p.m.; Eureka Class Wed. 7:30 p.m.

Bro. & sis. Pat Cassidy were with us at the Breaking of Bread service on December 1. They were on their way from Lampasas to Miami, Fla., where bro. Cassidy will be employed for about a year before returning to Texas. They will be associated in the ecclesia at Miami with bro. & sis. T. S. Lumley. The love and best wishes of the Texas brethren go with them, with the prayer that God will care for them in all their way.

Sis. Mildred Banta is yet in the hospital, having undergone a major operation. We pray for her early recovery that she may be restored to us as a ministering hand in the truth's work.

May we all live worthily of the great Name which we bear as brothers and sisters of Christ, so that when he comes, we shall be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.

—bro. Chas. Banta

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LONDON, Ont.—Sunday School 10:15 a.m.; Breaking of Bread 11 a.m.; Lecture 7 p.m. in Orange Hall, 388 Clarence St. Wednesday Class in WCTU Hall on Clarence ½ block north of Dundas.

We are pleased to report the marriage of sis. Evelyn Howard to bro. Arthur Pridham on Oct. 5, 1957. They have the best wishes of the brethren and sisters in their new relationship.

We had a special lecture effort in October—special advertising brought fair results. Bro. Fred Higham of Detroit gave the lecture on the subject of: "These Are the Latter Days—The End of Human Rule Is Near." Slides were used to illustrate parts of the lecture. Bro. Higham very ably set forth the important points of his lecture. He gave the word of exhortation on Sunday morning.

We have had the following visitors: bro. and sis. Higham, bro. Ellis Higham, bro. Fabris, bro. Growcott of Detroit; bro. and sis. Jos. Jackson of Toronto and sis. Graysn of Hamilton. Bro. Growcott also gave us words of exhortation.

We welcome all of like precious faith to meet with us around the Table of the Lord.

—bro. W. O. Gwalchmai

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MIAMI, Fla.—3428 S. W. 65th Ave.—Sun. Sch. 10 a.m.; Memorial 10:30.

At the close of another year we raise our voice in thankfulness to our Heavenly Father for His many blessings toward us. We are appreciative of the company of all the brethren and sisters who have visited us, and of their labors for us in the work of the Truth.

We are also happy to announce the return to Miami of bro. & sis. Pat Cassidy. We know they will be missed by those of like precious Faith in Lampasas, Texas.

We extend our united love to the Brotherhood in the Hope of life eternal,

—bro. Thomas Lumley

* * *

WORCESTER, Mass.—Grandview Hall, 21 Grandview Ave.—Sun Sch. 10 a.m.; Memorial 11; Lecture 7 p.m. 2nd and 4th Sundays in month; Bible Class twice a month on Wednesday evening.

We held our annual Sunday School entertainment on Sunday, Dec. 22. The weather was mild, sunny and beautiful. We had the pleasure of the association of the following brethren and sisters from the Boston ecclesia: bro. & sisters Russell, John Davey, Sargent Sr., Sargent Jr., bre. Duerden and Thompson and sisters Hilda Davey, Lancour and Willey.

Bro. Thompson gave the word of exhortation, reminding us of thankfulness to our Heavenly Father for His merciful kindness to us in so many ways. His words stirred our hearts to joyfulness and praise.

Our Memorial Service was at 10:30. Dinner was served at 1:30, and the Sunday School program started at 3. Bro. Prentice, our assistant superintendent, presided and bro. Edgar Sargent Jr. of Boston gave an introductory talk which both the scholars and brethren and sisters found interesting and instructive. This was followed by recitations and selections from Psalms 119. The program was concluded by the awarding of prizes according to their marks during the year.

Sorrow has filled the heart of our sister Collins. Her 17-year-old son was instantly killed in an automobile accident on Dec. 3. Our hearts go out to her in sympathy and we are sure the prayers of the Brotherhood will be with her that our Heavenly Father will give her faith and courage to overcome her grief. Sister Collins is the only one of her family that is a Christadelphian.

The Spirit through Isaiah tells us that "The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

In this present dispensation of sorrow, we of the Household of Faith look forward fervently to that time when, in the love and mercy of God, there will be joy and gladness alone and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Our ecclesial love to the Household.

—bro. Russell Waid.

Signs of the Times

We merely express a common opinion when we say that the year 1957 was the most marvellous year in the modern history of mankind. It was the year when scientific knowledge and accomplishments reached a peak of perfection never thought attainable just a few years ago

But there is little comfort for the masses of mankind in what has been done. It is called "progress and "advancement," but in what does this progress consist? Has world peace been brought nearer? Has the poverty of starving millions been relieved? Have better, friendlier relations been established between the various nations and peoples on the earth? A thousand times, No, but the very reverse.

On the other hand, the scientific accomplishments which have reached an epochal stage during the past year, have **brought the world to the very brink of a war which could, except for the grace of God, annihilate all humanity.**

The only comfort to be derived from the accomplishments of 1957 is to be had by those who can look upon it as the dark hours before the dawn; the time of the end; the hastening of God's purpose to end human misrule on earth and establish peace, equity and righteousness, and fill the earth with His glory. It is not only that which has occurred during the past year that is wonderful and ominous; the most frightening thing is what may yet come out of what has already been done.

A Dismal Picture for 1958

A prominent statesman once said that the course of true wisdom lay in knowing the worst and preparing for it. That appears to be what the leaders of the nations are trying to do, but they work in a state of perplexity and confusion. In the Dec. 29 issue of the New York Times, the editor says:

"The year 1958 may prove to be one of the most critical in the history of modern man."

A summary of how the world situation stands today gives no promise of any lessening of the tension, distress and perplexity that has characterized the past year.

It has proved to be a dark year for the Western powers. The revelation that Russia has surpassed all nations in certain vital fields of scientific accomplishments, and has definitely taken the lead in the psychological "cold war," has produced a feeling of fear and apprehension throughout the "free world."

Even among Russia's satellite allies, the elation caused by the tremendous Soviet successes gained in many fields during the year, is tempered by the realization that the chains which bind them to Russia are drawn tighter, their independence made more remote, and their enslavement to the "Colossus of the North" made more sure.

Russians Elated and Confident

Thinking only in terms of power gained, the Soviets can look upon 1957 with pleasure, satisfaction and confidence. It was the year when they did what men of science have for ages dreamed of doing, but were never able to accomplish—they have leaped into space. They have created an

epochal era in which the scientific outlook has been changed, and as great a revolution created in military weapons as the change from bows and arrows and battering rams to rifles and artillery.

But what took centuries in the past to accomplish has been done in a very few years. Surely the prophecy of Joel, "Prepare war!" is nearing complete fulfilment. And it is significant that this **phenomenal advancement has been sparked by a Power foretold in Eze. 38:7, of whom it is said:**

"Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them."

During the past year Russia, more than ever before, has been supplying arms to nations friendly to her and showing a willingness to back them in any move they make favorable to Russia and detrimental to the interests of the Western powers.

However, it should not be overlooked that this is also the policy of the Western nations, which amounts to the creation of two huge military camps composed of great and small nations in which the weak can say, "I am strong."

The news analysts today are unwittingly giving testimony to the "sure Word of prophecy." A prominent news commentator, in speaking of Russia's recent accomplishments, says:

"Its new strength and its propaganda might do more than the previous four decades of Soviet rule to advance Moscow's position in the world."

Everywhere we turn, we see evidence of Soviet gains. As a net result of her political manoeuvring in the Mideast, we see Egypt and Syria definitely spinning in the Russian orbit, while the Western powers lose face and prestige with all the Arab peoples.

Through her cunning diplomacy, threats on the one hand and overtures of peace on the other, Moscow has been able to frighten and confuse the NATO nations and defeat their purpose to establish a strong and workable coalition in opposition to the Soviet group.

Clever propaganda, coupled with her scientific achievements, has sapped the strength of the U. S. propaganda build-up so that, as one analyst says,

"A decade of absolute confidence in the power and steadiness of the United States is at an end."

U. S. Not Resigning to Defeat

We would be committing a grave error to assume that the U. S., Britain or any of the Anglo-Saxon powers are to be resigned to allow Russia to retain the lead in military scientific advances. The "Lions" may recognize that they have received a serious setback, but while licking their wounds and growling resentment, they are preparing for a more vigorous and determined onslaught.

This is as it should be, in harmony with prophecy, for, while it is evident that Gog, or the King of the North (Eze. 38, Dan. 11:40-45) will have the upper hand in the war of Armageddon, there will be formidable resistance by "Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof—all of which describes another mighty coalition of nations capable of challenging the great Gogian confederacy from the North.

This leads us to believe that, in a general way, the Anglo-Saxon group are now capable of offering formidable resistance to the Russian coalition, even if the conflict should begin immediately, and if the time is longer, will be able to keep pace with Russia in the production of atomic missiles.

The most frightening, and the most astounding and revealing thing about Russia's recent accomplishments, is the fact that it has become known that Russia has equalled, if not surpassed the U.S. in the scientific field in which she was supposed to be far behind.

There is one point on which there is unanimous agreement throughout the "free" world—**1957 has seen the shadows grow darker**. World peace and friendship has grown more remote; tension, perplexity and fear have increased; hate, suspicion and military rivalry has been augmented by the events and developments of the year just ended.

What of Palestine?

During the year more bitterness and rivalry has been evident among the Arab countries than formerly, but it seems so far to have resulted in nothing more than to further complicate the Mideast picture and turn sentiment more favorable toward Russia and increase resentment against the West.

On one thing all Arab peoples are agreed—they unite in their hatred and opposition to Israel. And one of the reasons for their resentment against the Western powers is the fact that both the U. S. and Britain are basically and morally committed to the support and defence of Israel. This is generally recognized by both the friends and the foes of Israel, which is in perfect harmony with Eze. 38:13, from which we gather that, no matter what happens, the Anglo-Saxon group will attempt to hold Palestine and defend Israel in the great Armageddon crisis, though they will fail (Zech. 14:1-5.) But **"the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations"** (the Gogian host), saving Israel and thwarting the last attempt to destroy her.

Though fraught with many difficulties, disappointments and fears, Israel continued steady progress during 1957. Their crushing defeat of the Egyptian armies in the fall of 1956 doubtless has had much to do with the comparative peaceful conditions, with a minimum of molestation, which Israel has enjoyed for the past year. For, much as they hate admitting it, the near-miraculous victory over the Egyptians has instilled something like superstitious fear among the Arabs for Israel.

Israel has made the Western powers aware of the great part she must play in any of the affairs of the Mideast. Their belief that the Western powers now recognize that it is imperative that they support Israel in their conflict with the Arab nations gives them confidence that they will not be abandoned in favor of the Arabs.

During the past year 80,000 new immigrants have been settled in Israel. Many acres of new land have been brought under cultivation, irrigation projects have been developed in the Negev desert, new industrial ventures have been launched, oil pipe lines have been extended and the port of Elath has been enlarged and improved.

The present year will be the 10th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. Surely they have reason to celebrate an event unique in human history and around which centers the fulfilment of prophecies uttered ages ago, that "He that scattered Israel will gather him"—an indication that "the time to favor Zion" is at hand. —O.B.

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