

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.

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CHRIST IS COMING AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

EDITORIAL

The High Calling of God

"I press along the line towards the prize of the high calling of God by Christ Jesus"—Phil. 3:14.

At the time we took over the work of editing this magazine, we resolved that we would do all in our power to uphold the historic and scriptural position upon which the Berean fellowship was founded. We determined also, that we would not lower the high ideals of fellowship by careless toleration of error, or by making the duties and distinction of fellowship secondary to other interests and desires.

We are deeply conscious of our failings and shortcomings and, because of this, we have not at any time set ourselves up as an authority. The only authority we recognize is the Word of Truth, and to display its banner in this magazine is our lofty and cherished ambition.

It has been suggested that we are endeavoring to set a standard of life that is too high for the brethren of this age; that such a course would develop self-righteousness and narrow-mindedness among those who would attempt to follow it. But this is not true. Actually, it works just the *other way*—a clear recognition of the height of the scriptural standard develops gentleness and humility.

The fact is, we are not attempting to set any standard of our own, for *it is already determined and set forth in the Scripture of Truth for our guidance*. Our efforts are directed towards that which is written for instruction in righteousness, that the minds of our readers would be stirred up when they are reminded that—

"We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end"—Heb. 3:14.

In view of this, it is only reasonable that we should examine the standard set before Israel in the Law of Moses. When we do this, we must bear in mind that we are but mortal creatures who have been made to live through the creative power of God, and when He sets a rule or law before His people, *it is their wisdom to give meticulous attention and follow His instructions with reverential care*.

Take, for example, the sabbath law given at Sinai,

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy."

This is brief, but later on when concluding His instructions to Moses, the full import of this particular law was impressed upon him (Exo. 31:14)—

"Ye shall keep the sabbath, therefore, for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people."

Could any standard be higher, or more exacting and inflexible? And the penalty inflicted for breaking it could not be more rigidly severe. Some might think the Law was given to create hardship among the people; but that is *not true*! There was a definite purpose behind it, and that particular purpose is specified in verse 13—

"Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you."

The keeping of the sabbath was not fulfilled by merely ceasing from labor—it required mental discernment. From a natural standpoint, it provided physical welfare and comfort. But there was a supremely higher purpose that required the mind to be fixed upon God in an incomparable manner that is eloquently expressed by Isaiah—

"If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

"Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it"—53:13-14.

There were a few who recognized the purpose of the sabbath law, but collectively they considered the standard "too high," and it became a weariness to them. Therefore, they went about to establish their *own* standards, and thereby profaned and polluted the sabbath, even to hiding their eyes to *God's* standards.

But this was only one section of the Law. When a certain lawyer asked Jesus, "Which is the great commandment in the Law?"—he answered—

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."—Matt. 22:36-40.

This was the divine standard set before Israel, to which all their efforts were to be directed. Could anything be higher than this? *Would anyone say that if Israel had kept these two commandments, they would have developed a state of "self-righteousness"?* We are confident they would not, for the Creator of heaven and earth would not establish any law that, if kept, would produce anything but good.

Turning now to the Christian dispensation, we look briefly at some of the standards set before those who profess the name of Jesus Anointed. As we read the New Testament, no thinking person can fail to observe that salvation is contingent on obedience, for, said Jesus (John 15:14)—

"Ye are my friends, IF ye do whatsoever I command you."

The teaching of Jesus begins with the sermon on the mount, in which many commandments are found. They are not mere principles of conduct, but *tests of obedience* by which we are restrained and disciplined, if we seek first the Kingdom of God. When we submit ourselves to the humbling process required of us, we soon learn that the world's way of life is not in harmony with the teaching of Jesus, and if we would be one of his friends, we must walk in the narrow way that leads to life.

In various parts of Paul's writings, he is dogmatically emphatic about the way we should conduct ourselves, and here is a supreme example—

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a LIVING SACRIFICE, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service"

—Rom. 12:1.

This principle is notably different from the Mosaic dispensation. Under the Law, the sacrifices were dead—here the apostle speaks of *living* sacrifices—lives devoted to the service of God. While they live in the world, they are not to be a part of it. Their primary interest must be in the testimonies and precepts of the Lord, upon which they meditate day and night. They soon learn that righteousness

cannot have fellowship with unrighteousness, nor can believers have any part with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:16-18)—

"For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you,

"And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Do we comprehend this Scripture? If we do, have we the courage to face it, and act upon it, or must we reinterpret it in order to justify our own way of living? Is it not a fact that this very separateness, or holiness, becomes the life of sacrifice by which we are expected to "bring into captivity *every thought* to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). Now, Paul says, this is your reasonable (or rational) service. It is therefore based upon reason, and is acceptable unto God. Then Paul continues (Rom. 12:2)—

"Be not conformed (to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

To conform is to adopt, adjust, or accommodate by bringing into harmony with a pattern. The pattern in this case is the age in which we live, and we know it has not improved since John declared that "the whole world lieth in wickedness." Therefore, said John—

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world"—1 John 2:15-16.

Here is a graphic description of that which is soon to be destroyed, and to which Paul says we are "not to be conformed." Then he adds, "but be ye transformed." This signifies a *thorough or radical change*, and comes from the Greek *metamorphoo*, meaning to "change in form," as a caterpillar transformed into a butterfly. No change could be more complete. This transformation is to be accomplished by "the renewing of our minds." Paul explains this too—

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of Truth"—Eph. 4:22-24.

THIS is the standard set before us in the Gospel—that "high calling of God by Christ Jesus."
—Editor.

The Garden of the Lord

"A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse . . . an orchard of pomegranates"—Song 4:12.

BY BROTHER JOHN THOMAS

When Moses penned the words "*in Eden*" (Gen. 2:8), he was westward in "the wilderness of the land of Egypt." From the expression, then, we are to understand that there was a country styled Eden in his day, which lay to the eastward of his position. Adam and Eve were its aborigines.

It was quite an extensive range of country, and in after times became the seat of powerful dominions. It appears to have been well watered by the branches, or tributaries, of "a river that

went"—or flowed—"out of it" (Gen. 2:10). These were four principal streams, whose names, as given by Moses, are the *Pison*, "which compasseth the whole land of Havilah"; the *Gihon*, "the same is it which compasseth the whole land of Khush," or Khushistan; the third, the *Hiddekel*, or Tigris, "that is it which goeth eastward to Assyria"; and the fourth river is the *Euphrates*" (Gen. 2:11-14), frequently styled in the Scriptures, "the Great River" (Gen. 15:18).

On the map before me there are four rivers which flow together, and at length form a river which falls into the Persian Gulf. This indicates the country called Eden, namely, that which is watered by these rivers; so we may reasonably conclude that in early times it comprehended *the land east of the Jordan, Syria, Assyria, part of Persia, Khushistan, and the original settlements of Ishmael* (Gen. 25:18).

This country in after ages, came to be denominated the "*Garden of the Lord*"; and the kings who reigned in it, the "*Trees of Eden*." It was no doubt termed the Lord's garden as a whole, from the fact of His having, in the beginning, planted a garden in it, where He put the man; so that the name of a small part of Eden came to be applied by his family in the time of Seth, Noah, Shem, Abraham, and Moses, to the whole region; *more especially as the future Paradise is to occupy a considerable portion of its ancient limits.*

The plain of Jordan appears to have been part of Eden from the following texts (Gen: 13:10-12)—

"Lot beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere as **the garden of the Lord.**

"Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east; and dwelled in the cities of the plain"

—that is, in the East, or Eden.

There is a prophecy in Ezekiel predicting the overthrow of the Egyptian Pharaoh by the King of Babylon, "the mighty one of the heathen." In setting forth the certainty of his overthrow, God recapitulates the power and dominion of the Ninevite dynasty of Assyria; which, however, was not able to withstand the King of Babylon, and therefore there was no hope for Egypt of a successful resistance.

In the Recapitulation, the Ninevite Assyrian is styled, "*a cedar in Lebanon*"; that is, his dominion extended over the land of the ten tribes of Israel, in which are the cedar-crowned mountains of Lebanon. After describing the greatness of his power by the magnitude of the cedar, the Lord says—

"The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him; nor was any tree in the garden of God like unto him in his beauty.

"I made him fair by the multitude of his branches; so that **all the trees of Eden, in the garden of God** envied him" (Eze. 31:8-9).

These trees (Dan. 4:20-22) are representative of the royalties of Mesopotamia, Syria, Israel, etc., which the King of Assyria had abolished (Isa. 37:12-13) and which "could not hide him," or prevent him getting the ascendancy over them.

It is clear, then, from the terms of this beautiful allegory, that the countries I have indicated are comprehended in Eden; that as a whole it is styled the garden of the Lord; and that the trees are the royalties of the land.

That Eden extended to the Mediterranean, or "Great Sea," appears from Ezekiel's prophecy against Tyre. Addressing the Tyrian royalty, he says—

"Thou hast been **in Eden, the garden of the Lord.** Thou wast upon the holy mountain of God.

"Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

"Therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God. Thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more" (Eze. 28:13-19).

The meaning of this is obvious to one acquainted with the history of the kingdom of Tyre. It was a royalty of Palestine in Upper Galilee, whose king Hiram, was in intimate alliance with Solomon. He appears to have been a *proselyte worshipper of the God of Israel*; Whom his successors some time afterwards forsook; and therefore God suppressed the kingdom of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar for seventy years; and finally by the Greeks.

Eden has been a field of blood from the beginning of the contest between the "Seed of the Woman" and the "Seed of the Serpent" until now; and will yet continue to be until the serpent power be broken upon the mountains of Israel. It was in Eden that Abel died by the hand of Cain. There also Abel's antitype was wounded in the heel, when put to death upon the accursed tree. And lastly, to fill up the measure of iniquity of the blood-defiled land, the serpents of Israel slew the son of Barachius between the temple and altar.

But the blood of God's saints shed in Eden, did not cry to Him for vengeance without effect; for as the Lord Jesus declared, so it came to pass. "Behold," said he to the vipers of his day—

"I send you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye will kill and crucify; and some of them ye will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city;

"That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the land, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zecharias, son of Barachius, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar" (Matt. 23:35).

Eden is emphatically the Lord's land, or garden. And from the Creation till the breaking off of Israel's olive branch, it was the principal, and almost only, theater upon which He exhibited His wonders to the nations in the days of old. (Egypt and its wilderness may be excepted for forty years).

Beyond its limits was outer darkness. *Eden only* was favored with light, until the Gospel found its way among the nations of the West; and although darkness covers the land, and gross darkness the people; yet the Lord, its light, will rise upon it and His glory shall be seen there (Isa. 60:1-2).

* * *

"And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden."

While Eden was "the East" eastward of the wilderness, the garden of Eden was eastward in Eden. "Eden the garden of the Lord," and "the garden of Eden," are quite different ideas. The former designates the whole of Eden as the Lord's garden; the latter, as merely a plantation in some part of it.

To plant a garden is to fence in a certain piece of land, and to adorn it with fruit and ornamental trees and shrubs. If unenclosed, and consequently unguarded, it is not a garden. The name of the plantation implies that its surface was protected from the invasion of the animals, whose habits made them unfit tenants of a garden. The place, then, was an enclosure, planted with "every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food."

Its situation, Moses says, was "eastward," having a river flowing through it to water it. I suspect from this, that it lay somewhere between the Gulf of Persia, and the junction of the Euphrates and the Tigris. The text reads.

"And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into 4 heads."

—which I should interpret thus:—a river flowing out of Eden was caused to water the garden on its way to the sea; and from the garden northward, the river diverged into branches, which terminated at four several heads. The heads were not in the garden, but at remote distances from it. The garden at Eden was watered by only one, and not by four rivers; as it is written, "a river went out to water it"; which certainly excludes the four from its enclosure.

In the Septuagint of this text, the word "garden" is expressed by *paradeisos*, which is transferred into our language without translation. Paradise is a Persian word adopted into the Greek, and expressed in Hebrew by *parades* or *pardes*. It signifies a park, a forest, or preserve; a garden of trees, a delightful grove, etc. It is found in these texts:

"A garden enclosed (a paradise) is my sister spouse, thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates" (Song 4:12).

"I made me gardens (paradises) and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits" (Eccl. 2:5).

The latter text is part of a description of Solomon's vineyard, representative of that part of Eden over which he reigned; and metaphorical of its beauty, fertility, and glory, when the Heir of the vineyard, the "greater than Solomon," shall come to Zion, and "marry the land" of Eden, as defined in the everlasting covenant made with Abraham (Gen. 15:18) For—

"Thy land, O Zion, shall no more be termed desolate; but thou shalt be called **Hephzibah** (my beloved is in her), and thy land **Beulah** (married): for Jehovah delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.

"For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee" (Isa 62:4-5).

When the marriage, or union, takes place between the sons of Zion, and their king, with the Land of Promise in Eden, it will again become the garden of the Lord, or Paradise, which His own right hand hath planted. For—

"The Lord shall comfort Zion: He will comfort all her waste places; and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody" (Isa. 51:3).

Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off (Isa. 55:13). At that time—

"I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

"I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle tree, and the box together: that they (Israel) may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it" (Isa. 41:17-20).

These testimonies reveal a future state in regard to Eden, of which its primitive garden is a beautiful and appropriate representation. Once the seat of a paradise on a small scale, it is destined to be transformed from its present desolation into "the Paradise of God." The country of the four rivers, even to the west from sea to sea, is predetermined to shine forth as "the glory of all lands."

Paradise hath no other locality. Other orbs may have their paradises: but as far as man is concerned, the Paradise of God will be by Him planted in Eden according to "*The Promise.*"

"In that day, shall Israel be the third with Egypt and Assyria, even a blessing **in the midst of the land**"—that is, of Eden—"whom the Lord of Hosts shall bless, saying,

"Blessed be Egypt, My people, and Assyria, the work of My hands, and Israel, Mine inheritance" (Isa. 19:24-25).

To the congregation at Ephesus, the Spirit says (Rev. 2:7)—

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

The simple import of this is as follows:—The saints of God are termed in Scripture, "Trees of Righteousness," which bring forth good fruit; and the King of Saints, the Tree of Life. This, then, is the symbol of Christ as the giver of life.

"As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that **eateth me**" (says Christ) "even he shall **live by me**" (John 6:57).

Hence, to "give a man to eat of the Tree of Life" is for the Lord Jesus to **raise a true believer from among the dead to incorruptible life**. He will then eat, or partake, of that life which he is ordained to bestow who said of himself—

"I am the way, and the truth, **AND THE LIFE**."

But none of the believers, or heirs of life, can partake of the life-giving Tree *until it is manifested in the Paradise of God*; that is, until the Lord appears in his Kingdom (2 Tim. 4:1, 8). When it is manifested, it will be established *in the Lord's land*; that is, in Eden. Hence, the promise, interpreted into plain English, is—

To the believer that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4) will I, the Lord, who am the Life, give glory, honor, and immortality, when I come to stand on the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4) and to re-establish the kingdom and the throne of David, as in the days of old (Amos 9:11).

There is no immortality, nor Paradise until then; neither can any attain to them unless they "overcome the world"; for the promise is only "to him that overcometh" (Rev. 2:5-11).

But to this doctrine sceptics object, that Paradise must have a *present* existence somewhere; seeing that, on the day of his crucifixion, Jesus told the thief that he should be with him in Paradise *on that day*, as it is written (Luke 23:43)—

"I say to thee, today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

I admit, that it is so written in English; but I *find there are various readings and punctuations in the Greek*. In the first place, the thief's petition is differently worded in some manuscripts. In the common version it reads—

"Remember me, Lord **when thou comest** in thy kingdom."

But in others, it is various, though in sense the same, as—

"Remember me when thou comest in the day of thy coming."

Now the Lord "comes in his kingdom" "in the day of his coming"; therefore, I say, the two phrases are in sense the same, only the latter more plainly suggests to "the unskilful in the word of righteousness" (Heb. 5:13) the import of the term "today," in the answer to the petition.

In the next place, Jesus did not evade the thief's prayer, but gave him a direct and intelligible reply. He told him, in effect, that what he requested should be granted: in other words, that when he was *himself* in his kingdom he (the thief) should be there too.

But does the reader imagine, that Jesus told him the time when the Jewish State, as constituted by the Mosaic code, should be abolished?

And, till this was set aside, he could not come in his Kingdom; for *then* he is to sit and rule, and be a *priest upon his throne* (Zech. 6:12-15) which he could not be co-existent with the Law: because the Law of Moses would permit no one to officiate as a priest who was not of the tribe of Levi, and Jesus was descended from Judah (Heb. 7:12-14). "Heaven and earth," or the Mosaic constitution of things in Eden, "shall pass away," said Jesus—

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man—no, not the angels which are in heaven, **neither the Son**—but the Father" (Mark 13:31-32).

Furthermore, does the reader suppose, that the Lord informed the thief of the time when he would come in his kingdom; or that it could possibly be, that he came in his kingdom on the day of his suffering; seeing that on the forty-third day afterwards, he refused to tell even the apostles, the times and the seasons when he would "restore AGAIN the kingdom of Israel"?

"It is **not for you to know** the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power" (Acts 1:3-7).

This was his language to the apostles. The Kingdom could not be restored to Israel under the Mosaic code. This had—

". . . decayed, and waxed old, was ready to vanish away."

It was to be "cast down to the ground," the daily sacrifice was to be taken away, and the temple and city to be demolished by the Little Horn of the Goat, of Roman power (Dan. 8:9-12, 24). To tell them of the time and the seasons of the kingdom, would have been to have informed them of this national catastrophe; of which, they were kept in ignorance, that they might not fall asleep, but continually watch.

But, though Jesus did not *then* know the times and the seasons of the kingdom, he knows them *now*; for, about thirty years after the destruction of Jerusalem—

"God gave him a revelation of the things which shortly must come to pass" (Rev. 1:1).

And in this apocalypse, the times and seasons are set forth in order. But, to return to the case of the thief. In saying "today," Jesus did not, and could not, tell him the precise time when he should be with him in Paradise. In some translations, there is a various, and no doubt the correct, punctuation. The comma, instead of being after "thee," is placed after "today"; as,

"I say unto thee today—thou shalt be with me in the Paradise."

That is—

"**At this time**, or I now say to thee, thou shalt be with me in my kingdom in the day of my coming."

Touch Not the Unclean Thing

"Be not conformed to this world"—Romans 12:2.

BY BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

There is not much danger of mistaking the meaning of this. The world is the people, as distinguished from the earth they inhabit. Peter put this beyond doubt in calling it—

"The world of the ungodly" (2 Peter 2:5).

Jesus also makes it plain in speaking of the world as a lover and a hater—

"If the world hates you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own" (John 15:18).

This could only apply to the *people*. The command is to be not conformed to the world of people upon the earth as it now is. Jesus plainly laid it down that he did not belong to such a world, and commanded his disciples to accept a similar position in relation to it. "The world to come is the world of *their* citizenship. Of their position in the *present* world, Jesus said in prayer (John 17:16)—

"They are not of the world even as I am not of the world."

By John he commanded them (1 John 2:15)—

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world."

By Peter, he indicates their position in the world as that of "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Pet. 2:11) and their life in it as a "time of sojourning" (1:17), to be passed in holiness and fear (vs. 14 and 17).

The world that hated Jesus was the Jewish world. Consequently, we are saved from the mistake of supposing that by the world is meant the extremely vile and immoral of mankind. The Jews were far from being such: they were a very religious and ostentatiously professing and ceremonially punctilious people, among whom the standard of respectability was high in a religious sense.

All their conversations with Christ show this. That which led to the complete separation indicated in Christ's words and precepts, is indicated by Jesus himself, in his prayer to the Father, so wonderfully recorded in John 17—

"O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee."

It is the world's relation to God that cuts off the friends of God from the world (if the friends of God are faithful). The world neither loves, nor knows, nor considers God. They care for Him in no sense. His expressed will—His declared purpose—His intrinsically sovereign claims, are either expressly rejected or treated with entire indifference. His great and dreadful and eternal reality is ignored. Daniel's indictment against Belshazzar is chargeable against them all—

"The God in Whose hand thy breath is, and Whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified"
(Dan. 5:23).

This is an all-sufficient explanation of the matter we are considering. If the world is God's enemy, how can the friends of God be friends with it? It is not without the profoundest reason in the nature of things, that it is written—

"The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

"No man can serve two masters—Ye cannot serve God and Mammon" (Matt 6:24).

The force of this reason increases tenfold when we contemplate the present situation in the light of its divine explanation, and the divine purpose concerning it. We must seek for this explanation in the beginning of things—the beginning as Mosaicly exhibited (an exhibition *endorsed by Christ*, and therefore to be trusted in the face of all modern theories and speculations). This beginning shows us man in harmony with God, and things "very good."

Then it shows us disobedience (the setting aside of the divine will as the rule of human action—alias, *sin*), and as the result of this, the divine fellowship withdrawn, and men driven off to exile and to death, permitted only, thereafter, to approach in sacrifice, in token of the final way to return. *The present world is the continuance and enlargement of the evil state of man, resulting from man's alienation from God in the beginning. It is enlarged and aggravated* (Eph. 2:1-3)—

"Dead in trespasses and sins—by nature children of wrath."

"The world lieth in wickedness" (I John 5:19).

"Without Christ, having no hope, without God" (Eph. 2:12).

Now what is the *purpose* concerning this state of things? It is briefly summarised in 2 Thess. 1:7, and Rev. 19:11-16—

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"In righteousness does he judge and make war . . . treading the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

When this work of judgment and destruction is done, the Kingdom of God prevails on earth for a thousand years, leading the nations in ways of righteousness and peace; and after a brief renewal of conflict with the diabolism of human nature, there comes at last the day of complete restoration, the ungodly consumed off the earth; the servants of God saved (Rev. 22:3)—

"No more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads."

Here, then, we have harmony with God at the Beginning of things, and harmony with Him at the End of things, and the dark and dreadful interval of "the present evil world" between, in which God is not obeyed nor recognized, but the pleasures, gratifications, and interests of mere natural existence made the objects of universal pursuit.

In this dark interval, however, *the divine work goes on* of separating a family from the evil, in preparation for the day of recovery and blessing. Is it not easy, in view of these things, to realize the *reasonableness* of the divine command to His servants meanwhile, not to be conformed to an evil world, in which God is disowned, and to which they do not belong?

Now, how does Christendom look in this light? Is it not evident at a glance that this elementary axiom of the law of Christ is totally disregarded? The idea of a Christian of the ordinary type being "not of the world" is an anomaly only calculated to excite the sarcastic smile of the cynic. If the ordinary "Christian" is *not* "of the world," where are we to find the people that *are*?

To call a man "a man of the world," has, in fact, become one of the highest compliments that can be paid to a man's judgment and culture: a man at home everywhere, who sees good in everything; and nothing very wrong in anything.

In the ears of such a man, the distinctions and scrupulosities enjoined by Christ and his apostles have an antiquated sound: and worse — a sound of uncharity, of harshness, of narrow-minded and bigoted sectarianism. The earnest recognition and observance of right and wrong, as arising out of the law of Christ, are in his eyes the symptoms of an odious fanaticism, disqualifying the subject of them for society or the commonest good fellowship.

Yet "the man of the world," with kindly unconcern about all things, is a good Christian by the popular standard. He is "*of the world*" essentially; and though Christ proclaimed himself as "*not of the world*" (John 17:16), and commanded his disciples to accept a similar position, *this* man's being of the

world, is held to be no drawback to his Christian standing in the eyes of Christendom. No wonder! The church is the world. What is there in and of the world that the church does not mix with? (And by "the church" we may understand the dissenting bodies as well as the State establishment).

Take the *political* sphere. If there is anything characteristically "of the world," it is politics, whether in the exercise or the discussion of temporal power, and its forms. It is written (Rev. 11:15)—

"The kingdoms of this world" are to become (at Christ's return) "the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."

Consequently, the kingdoms are meanwhile "of the world." In modern usage "kingdom" has become "state," because the political form of the state varies. Where is the church in relation to the State? The alliance of the church with the State is of itself a sufficient illustration of the departure of Christendom from the commandments of Christ. It is a proof that the modern church is "of the world," even if the private practice of its members were in harmony with the mind of Christ.

The common private practice of those who consider themselves "Christians" removes any doubt that the public form of things might leave. That common private practice may be summed up as an earnest discharge of all the parts and functions that belong, or could possibly belong, to citizens of the present world. *There is no point, part or feature of the present evil world, in which they are not found incorporate.*

The bishops are part of the world-system in Britain, as they sit in their lawn sleeves in the House of Lords, to supervise the laws made for this world by the much jangling that goes on in "the lower house." The clergy are "gentlemen," eligible for the society of the world, and welcome in the drawing-rooms of the aristocracy and on the hunting-field with the squires. Her church-wardens and minor officials have the management of the world in hand in their several departments, whether exacting the tithes with the sword of the law in hand, or refusing a resting place in the parish churchyard to dead heretics.

Her laity look on riches, place, and power as legitimate objects. With them all, the most successful in attaining these objects are the most honorable. In minuter details, they are voters—(the discerning blood vessels of the political system); they are patriots and political spouters at public meetings (the thew and muscle of the system); they burn gunpowder on the battlefield, or compete for the civic or parliamentary honors of the State in the boroughs (and become the organs of the system).

They run in crowds to the public amusements, or in private indulge their liking without the least restraint or reference to the New Testament injunctions of sobriety, self-denial, and holiness.

What is to be done in such a state of things by the man earnestly seeking to be the servant of Christ, and desiring to be found of him at his coming, in the attitude of a chaste and loyal bride, preparing for marriage? Common sense would supply the answer if it were not plainly given to us by God Himself—

"COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND BE YE SEPARATE, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:17-18).

The question with which Paul prefaces this quotation strike home the reasonableness of this command at a blow—

"What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?

"And What concord hath Christ with Belial: or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" (vs. 15-16).

The believer of the Gospel has no alternative but to step aside from the world. He cannot otherwise carry out the will of Christ concerning those whom he asks for his own. What this stepping aside from the world means, there need be no difficulty in the earnest man determining for himself. Christ and the apostles have in themselves furnished an example which we are invited to imitate. (1 Peter 2:21; John 13:15; 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 11:1; 4:17).

It does not mean seclusion; for they lived an open daily life. It does not mean isolation; for they are always seen among men. It means *abstinence from the aims and principles of the world, and from the movements and enterprises in which these find expression.*

The activities of Christ and the apostles were all in connection with, and on behalf of, the work of God among men. They never appear in connection with the enterprises of the world. Their temporal avocations are all private. Christ was a carpenter; Paul a tent-maker; but at these, both worked *as the sons of God*. Disciples of Christ may follow any occupation of good repute; (they are expressly prohibited from having to do with anything of an evil appearance, or giving occasion of reproach to the adversary—Rm. 12:9; 1 Th. 5:22).

But in ALL they do, they are to remember they are the Lord's servants, and to *act as if the matter they have in hand were performed directly to him*, (Col. 3:23-24). Even servants are to do their part to a bad master faithfully as "to the Lord" (1 Pet. 2:18-20).

The sense in which they stand apart from the world is in the objects for which they work, and in the use to which they put the time and means which they can call "their own." They are to (2 Tim. 2:22)—

"Follow after (works of) righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

They are to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts," and "live soberly and righteously and godly" (Tit. 2:12). They are not to live in pleasure (Tit. 3:3; 1 Tim. 5:6). They are to live to give *God pleasure, in which, as they grow, they will find their own highest pleasure.*

They are to be "holy in all manner of conversation," cleansing themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and walking as those who are the Temple of God among men (1 Pet. 1:15; 2 Cor. 7:1; 2 Cor. 6:16).

Guided by these apostolic principles, they will abstain from the defiling habits that are common to ungodly Christendom, amongst which smoking and drinking stand prominent. And as men waiting and preparing for the Kingdom of God (whose citizenship is in heaven, and not upon the earth) they accept the position of "strangers and pilgrims" among men. They are not at home; they are passing on.

They take no part with Caesar. They pay his taxes and obey his laws where they do not conflict with the laws of Christ; but they take no part in his affairs.

They do not vote; they do not ask the suffrages of his supporters; they do not aspire to Caesar's honors or emoluments; they do not bear arms. They are sojourners in Caesar's realms during the short time God may appoint for their probation; and, as such, they sustain a passive and non-resisting attitude, bent only upon earning Christ's approbation at his coming, by their obedience to his commandments during his absence. They are not of the world, even as he was not of the world; and therefore they refuse to be conformed to it.

The way is narrow and full of self-denial—too much so for those who would like to perform the impossible feat of "making the best of both worlds." *But the destination is so attractive, and the results of the cross-bearing so glorious, that the enlightened pilgrim deliberately chooses the journey, and resolutely endures its hardships.*

Pressing Toward the Mark

“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom”—Psalm 90:12.

As we now enter upon a new year it is a good time to look backward over the twelve months that have just passed and see what we have each accomplished in those matters that go to make up the central purpose of our lives. We will want to look over our individual record, so to speak, that we might weigh and evaluate, in the balances of divine truth, the progress we have made in the growth and development of *that perfection of character in Christ Jesus that is the object of our calling*.

We are continually reminded to "examine ourselves;" but it is not an easy thing to do when, like Paul, we all have "sin dwelling in us." This lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life will certainly pervert any judgment we pass on ourselves unless the power of the Spirit-Word is strongly appealed to as the supreme authority in every case.

The past year of 365 days was time that God gave us, not that we should seek our own pleasures and physical well-being, but that we might *grow up in service and obedience to His will*. God has purchased us—our bodies, our substance and our time for His own use and pleasure.

So, we could well begin by asking ourselves whether we have used the time given us during the past year, and our substance, in the service and work of God, or for our own pleasure? Did we make the most of each day, from the time we arose till we retired, by study, meditation and prayer so that the light of divine truth would shine more and more into our lives?

Everything we did, every place we went, and all the money we spent, was it for the furtherance and support of the work of God in the preparation of a people for His name? Was it for Christ's sake that we did it?

We read our Bible through again last year—the Old Testament once, and the New twice. Did we realize each time we read that it was God Who was speaking to us from the pages of this Book, and that in this glorious message, He was extending to us a stretched out hand that offers heirship with His Son and a nature like His own.

But the best index to the state of our progress, as we begin another year, is the *present pattern of our thinking and speaking*. The state of our hearts in relation to divine things is what really matters; and it is a simple matter to measure our selves in that respect. Jesus said—

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matt. 12:34-35).

If the treasure of our heart is good, if it is right toward God, the whole course of our thoughts and actions will be directed toward Him while we are awake, and all the ordering of our daily lives will center around these things which He has revealed to us. Other things that clash with these arrangements will not be allowed to disrupt the peace that God gives to those whose minds are stayed upon Him.

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

No one but ourselves and God can really know how we stand in this respect. Our brothers and sisters can only judge our thoughts by our actions; but we can look into our own hearts and find whether God is enthroned there as supreme or not. If He is, then the course of our thinking will be elevated toward Him from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, not as a duty imposed upon us, but as a source of great pleasure and strength.

We will realize that we are thus in contact with the eternal springs of life and wisdom, and the reality of God as the source and center of all things will have become a great part of our lives.

But whatever we find in reviewing the course of our lives during the past year, we will want to show progress during each day of the year ahead. We will want to set our feet more firmly and surely in the path of righteousness; for *the Truth calls for continual progress*, an unending and never slackening striving toward the mark for the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus.

In doing this we will seek the company and association of others, our brothers and sisters, who are working to the same end, that by our mutual faith and comfort we might be helped along the way of life. Jesus sought out as companions those who shared the same interests and desires with him; and no doubt the hardest to bear of all his trials was at the last when his own apostles forsook him, and he had to go on out to Golgotha alone.

The year 1958 may be our last opportunity to conquer the flesh, and reach that state of mind and heart in which we delight in the law of the Lord and live with the assurance that God is our portion, and we shall not fear what man can do.

It may be that our gathering together unto the Lord will come this year; but even if not, we will be much better for having lived as though we knew he would come tomorrow. —E.W.B.

London Fraternal Gathering

FRIDAY, SATURDAY, SUNDAY—APRIL 4 to 6

Orange Hall, 388 Clarence Street

Please notify bro. W. D. Gwalchmai, 173 Devonshire, London, Ont., Canada, if you plan to attend.

My Peace I Give Unto You

"Tribulation worketh patience . . . because the love of God is spread abroad in our hearts"
—Rom. 5:3-5.

This appears to be a year of trial for many brethren and sisters. As the troubles of a weary world are increased due to the imminence of the day of Divine wrath, the brotherhood seems called upon to undergo an increase in tribulation. We must realize that each must be prepared for the Bridegroom's coming. We may feel (each one of us must) that we are unprepared for that awesome moment when the call goes forth:

"The Master is come, and calleth for thee."

We feel that we need more time to prepare to meet the just Judge whose verdict we know to be without question. As the Master declared (Luke 10:2)—

"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few."

However, the way we may feel is the way to complete our probation frequently differs from the Divine wisdom which comprehends in far greater measure what is good for us, and what is necessary to prepare us for the day of inspection.

Realizing that, if we are His servants, our lives come under His supervision, then we must concede that, as Paul said in his persecutions and tribulations and apparent hindrances (Phil. 1:12)—

"The things which have happened unto me, have fallen out unto the furtherance of the Gospel."

It is difficult for us to discern the reality of this aspect of preaching, but if we accept Paul, it must be so.

It could only be in this sense that the great apostle could say he "gloried in tribulation." Consider him bound with chains in prison in Rome, the winter chill penetrating his aged and beaten frame. The brotherhood, even in Rome, despised his lot—

"At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me" (2 Tim. 4:16).
"The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee" (v. 13).

Does this not tell us that the suffering apostle was human, was one of us, that the winter was cold, and friends were few? Does this mean that God had forsaken him, that he had fallen from grace in the Divine eyes? Such was farthest from Paul's mind. *These events drew him closer to the Father in heaven.* Said he—

"I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for **I know whom I have believed**, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

When no *man* stood with him he declared that *God* stood with him and strengthened him. Paul was no exception to the rule of Divine selection and operation. In varying degrees these same principles carry through the lives of each servant. *The manner in which each responds to the Divine chastisement and development is the way in which we further the Gospel.* Our actions witness to God's working through each one of us to will and to do of His good pleasure.

But we come again to the thought of illness or disability of any kind, seemingly restricting our activities and preventing us from doing what we would like to do in His service. *It is not always what we would like to do in His service that counts the most.* Again the apostle stated,

"When I am weak, then am I strong."

It is not human strength that is required. It is spiritual strength, which is unaffected by the curse which we are subject to by inheritance from Adam but which rises above and transcends all the mundane and common weaknesses of our flesh. This is the most important in the eyes of God.

"Bodily exercise profits (only) for a little, but, godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that life which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8).

This is the most profitable exercise, for we read, "*Exercise thyself unto godliness.*" *This exercise* can be indulged in by those who are confined completely, yea, those who are wholly bed-ridden. Oftentimes confinement is necessary for us to development of our spiritual muscles in this manner.

As the days of Gentile times are swiftly running out so the purposes of the Creator will necessarily become fore-shortened. Let us then count the few remaining days as opportunities to prepare ourselves. The development of patience, patience under tribulation, is essential in God's purpose. Let us not despair at what may appear to be restrictions to our activities, but try to view our confinements as avenues to serve in a slightly different manner.

It has been very easy for us to minister unto the needs of others in season and out of season, rising betimes and helping others with willing hands, ever ready to heed the plaintive call. *But are we*

ready to let others minister unto us? We find frequently that we must be placed objectively on the other side to understand and comprehend the full picture which the Creator is painting.

The realization that in whatever state we find ourselves our lives are being framed to the glory of God will help us each to accept with joy our trials and testings.

"Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts."

It is interesting therefore to find our daily readings from the Word of God draws in the evening of our year with the trials of Job and out of which the Lord delivered him. How appropriate to find James calling attention to this faithful man with particular reference to his patience! James has been speaking of patience under trial, waiting in faith for the early and the latter rain.

And this harmonizes so beautifully with what Paul said about spiritual exercise being profitable for the life that now is and for that which is to come. The early rain is the blessing of our present lives with food and raiment and all things necessary for faith in God's provision plus the blessing of godly contentment by knowing the working and purpose of God. The latter rain is that descending of Spirit-life upon the ones upon whom the early rain has descended and brought forth the fruits of the Spirit. James adds—

"Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

Then he added that *we must not murmur* at tribulation one against another. It is at this point that he interjects the thought of the prophets suffering affliction and enduring patiently (James 5:11)—

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy."

Those that endure suffering are "counted happy"! Certainly the enduring is a cause of sadness at the moment, because it is contrary to the flesh; it carries the mind back to the introduction of sin into the world. It speaks of the necessity of trial and chastisement in the working out of the plan of redemption.

But prospectively it gives happiness because those who endure are assuring themselves a place in the glories of the future age through the mercies of the Creator. Those also who endure are a source of encouragement for others to remain steadfast in the fight of afflictions.

As the year draws to a close, how we pray for the coming of the Deliverer. One more year has passed and we continue the struggle against sin. Will he come next year? Will we gain the release from sin? Peter says that the time which seems a delay from a human standpoint is an extension of the Father's mercy and is the means He has provided for our salvation. If the time is extended let us realize that it is for our good. This seems to be the theme of chapter 3 of the 2nd epistle, showing that the general tendency is to feel that God has forgotten His creation, that those statements of judgment are not really to be expected in fulfilment.

But He shows that though judgment waited 120 years in the days of Noah, the day of retribution came and took them all away except the faithful few. So also we see the days of Divine wrath drawing near. We hear the rumblings of the expected earthquake. But the world, all unaware of the Creator's wrath, in effect state—and many of those who know the prophecies likewise *by their actions* state—

"Where is the promise of his coming?"

As Zephaniah declares, they say (1:12)—

"The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil."

Our hope therefore is with Jesus at the Father's side. Let us then grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen. —F. H.

Thy First Love

"They went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise"—Matt. 22:5.

Our attention is often called to the great privilege we have in that our high and holy calling has placed us in that class that can truly say—

"We are the sons and daughters of God" (I John 3:2).

Do we as mortal men and women realize our position? Do we fully understand and think often about what is in store for us if we are obedient?

On the other hand, do we ever ponder about that time of punishment which faces us if we are one of the many who deceive themselves into thinking they are doing just fine, when all the while we are neither hot nor cold, and may soon be spued out as a nauseous mass that can no longer be tolerated?

Let us recall for a few moments the days right before our immersion. Our zeal was tremendous then. We, like the man who found the pearl of great price, were willing to sacrifice all to obtain it. We were eager to teach others, so that they too could have this pearl of great price. But, perhaps, after a while our zeal slackened. We became discouraged because there were so many ears that were dull of hearing, and eyes that could not see. We could see and imagine that glorious kingdom so well, but others could not and would not see.

Have the years dimmed our vision and time weakened our zeal? *Let us examine ourselves.*

The Lord has given everyone talents according to his ability. So, let us look at ours. Have we increased them? Or, do they lie dormant awaiting the time for our Lord to return and collect them? Consider Jesus' words—

"Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest, therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

"Take therefore the talent from him, and give unto him which hath ten talents"

(Matt. 25:26-28).

Brothers and sisters, let us consider the facts and face them. If we were an investment firm and gained nothing for our clients, we would be out of business in a short time. We have been called to be laborers in God's vineyard. *We must produce fruit*; for if we do not, then sooner or later the sentence will be pronounced against us, as it was against the fig tree that bore no fruit—

"Cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground?" (Luke 13:7).

We must keep our lamps trimmed, and our light burning brightly, or we will stumble in the dark and fall. We must replenish the oil daily so we can be in the class with the wise virgins, and not as the five foolish ones who failed to do this, and at the last moment sought to buy more. They waited too late, and fell short of their goal to enter as one of the wedding party. The supply of oil for our lamps is in abundance, and can be ours without any money. It is freely given to all who seek diligently for it in the Word of God.

How brightly is our lamp burning now? Are we, who have been in the Truth for, say, 5, 10, or 15, or even 20 years, taking our place in the ecclesia accordingly? Are the elders the leading examples, directing the young in the way that they should go? Peter says (1 Pet. 5:2-3)—

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but ensamples to the flock."

It is a grave responsibility we have as our years go by in the Truth. "*Feed the flock of God,*" is what Peter says. This should bring to our minds a picture of tenderness and concern on the part of the elders, a gentle, firm, teaching and guiding hand that is outstretched to help the young and weak so that they may be strengthened and led in the right paths. In doing this the elders must be examples that can be followed. Woe to those that put a stumbling block in the way of the young! (Eze. 34:2)—

"Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed **themselves!** Should not the shepherd feed the flock?" (Eze.).

Can the younger members be shown the way of truth if the older ones are not strong and lead the way in the path of righteousness? Let us look at our *own ecclesia* in the light of the Scriptures, which show what a true ecclesia of Christ should be, and consider our condition. Is it Laodicean?

Bro. Roberts says that the true children of God love to frequent the meetings where He is prominent, and to keep company with the men and women in whom His love is great. We who have the Truth should be *more than glad* when the time arrives to attend the various meetings, that we may be with Christ, and that we might gain some knowledge or oil for our lamps.

Why, brothers and sisters, can't more of us come to the meetings? ALL should be at the midweek Bible Class. ALL should be at the Sunday morning Class. *Do we not CARE to understand our elder brother's writings more fully?*

Whatever our reason is for not attending, *let us be sure that our reason will be acceptable before Christ when he comes to judge us.* Let us think seriously on the fact that one member who does not take his place and work in the ecclesia weakens the whole body. When this is multiplied to several, the body is sick.

When a person becomes sick, he goes to the doctor to see if his disease can be cured. Is our ecclesia sick and in need of help from the Great Physician? Let us seek his help before our candlestick is removed. We need the strength we get from each other; so let us all try to be here.

We all get up early in the morning to go to work and do our daily temporal chores. *Are they more important than our meetings?* The Scriptures tell us that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

We should be more interested and dutiful about being here than we are at work. In this day of modern conveniences, we can get to the meeting with ease, and in comfort.

Think of the hardships of those in the days of the apostles who travelled on foot, or even in the days of bro. Roberts and Dr. Thomas, when travel was slow and uncomfortable.

Brothers and sisters, we must each examine ourselves in the light of the Scriptures and act upon our short comings before it is too late.

Today, tomorrow, next week, maybe before another year is spent Christ may come to call us all to that day of account at the judgment seat, and there we will answer for the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or evil.

We cannot impress upon our minds too often this judgment scene. Cannot we now see the multitude, separated, some on the right hand and some on the left. Will we be among those on the right hand that are joyful, standing there in unspotted garments trying to realize the glory that is theirs, throughout all the future—a place, however small, in that glorious age to come? Then will come the opportunity to see and talk with Christ himself, and the apostles, Moses and David, and all the patriarchs of old; a life of eternity in which no good will be withheld from all of them; no pain or sickness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

What is the matter with us, brothers and sisters, that we are not more zealous and our hands have slackened in the work we do, and we do not seek eagerly for the prize?

Let us return for a moment to the judgment scene. We have just looked at the joyful, pleasant side, now let us imagine ourselves on the left side. We can see Christ in all of his glory admiring those who kept his commandments—but for us there is no pity or mercy or glances of love.

Undoubtedly many of the rejected will be on their knees begging and pleading for mercy—their faces in the dust. But all in vain. They see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the apostles with some of the fellow laborers of their own day, there ready to put on the robes of immortality, and themselves thrust out.

It will be too late *then* to do that which we should do *now*. Think of Peter who so vehemently told Christ that he would follow him anywhere, even unto death. Imagine his feelings after he denied Christ, as he stood in the hall and saw his Master being cruelly treated. Then Jesus looked at him. Just a glance, but that look said more than many words. Can we imagine the anguish of Peter at that moment?

Our anguish at being rejected will be much more than was Peter's. That look from Christ served to strengthen Peter, and show him the frailty of the flesh; but then we will have no second chance to repent and turn from our folly. Our time to do this is now. Repentance will do no good after the sentence has been pronounced (Luke 13:27)—

"Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity: **I never knew you.**"

Mortal words cannot express the sadness and remorse of those who are found in the class of the luke-warm, half-hearted, so-called followers of Christ, who carry the name but not the cross. Christ said—

"I am the vine and ye are the branches" (John 15:5).

What a divine connection this is that we all have! Christ, the True Vine, has an *unlimited supply* of the life-giving sap to impart to all the branches. It is *always available to give strength* unto the branches, so they can provide fruit.

Christ warns that those branches that do not bring forth fruit will be cast off and withered, thus they will be fit for nothing but to be burned.

If we bear fruit, Christ tells us that we will be purged and chastened, that we might bring forth more fruit. We are instructed not to despise the chastening of the Lord; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. Let us then have patience and courage, knowing that whatever befalls us, if we bear it without murmuring, saying rather, "Thy will be done," we will be rewarded in the day when Christ appears.

We would now like to call your attention to another thought, and we will do so by way of illustration. As we travel down the streets of a large city, we often come to a crossing, with the sign: "ONE WAY: DO NOT ENTER."

Now we all have enough sense to know, without any lengthy explanation, or detailed reasoning, from anyone, *why* we must not enter. To do so—to go up that one-way street the wrong-way—would be to court disaster.

Brothers and sisters, as we travel along the strait and narrow way leading to the kingdom, we come across many signs that read: "THE WORLD: DO NOT ENTER HERE." Yet, though we know the command is from God; for He says—

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

"The friendship of the world is enmity against God."

—yet we feel that we have a right to quibble and ask, "*What's wrong with it?*" "*What harm is there?*" "*How far can I travel down this forbidden street without getting hurt?*"

Let us examine closely what we are doing with our time and energy. Television, radio programs, novels and magazines, record players, and whatever else may be amusing and gratifying to the flesh, are *NOT FOR US*.

These are the things the world dotes on, and we are *not of the world*. What news we want to see or listen to that might help us to keep abreast of the signs of the times will take very little of our time.

—J.F.P.

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Between Thee and Him Alone

"Moreover, if thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother» But if he shall not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the ecclesia; but if he neglect to hear the ecclesia, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican"—Matt. 18:15-18.

Nothing tends more to the keeping or the restoring of peace than the observance of this law; and no law is more constantly broken. The universal impulse, when anything is supposed to be wrong, is to tell the matter to third persons.

From them it spreads, with the results of causing much bad feeling which, perhaps, the original cause does not warrant, and would not have produced if the aggrieved person had taken the course prescribed by Christ, and told the fault "between thee and him alone."

If good men, or those who consider themselves such, would adopt the rule of *refusing to listen to an evil report* privately conveyed, until it had been dealt with to the last stage according to the rule prescribed by Christ, much evil would be prevented.

Disobedience is almost the universal rule in this matter. The results are serious now in the generation of hatred instead of love. *Much more serious will be the result to offenders against this rule in the day when all matters will be measured and settled by the divine rule.* Jesus indicates that any decision arrived at by an ecclesia in the proper application of this rule will be respected and confirmed by God Himself:

"Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

This is much encouragement to the brethren to be faithful in the matter. The application of the rule will often make it unnecessary to advance beyond the first stage. A brother approached privately, with every opportunity of explanation, will often make concessions that must remain impossible if he is made the subject of public opprobrium, however deserved.

The healing of a matter will often be the result if you go and tell a man his fault "between him and thee alone." If there is no fault, there will be explanation and understanding. If there be, there will be concession and forgiveness.

And we are not to weary in the recurrence of the process. Peter asked how often this forgiveness was to be granted. Christ's answer practically was, "No limit." Peter suggested "seven times" as going a long way. Christ said—

"I say not unto thee until seven times, but until **seventy times seven**" (Matt. 18:22).

He then backed his remark with the parable of the unmerciful fellow-servant, which concluded with the command that we *must* every one forgive trespassers, on pain of not being ourselves forgiven.

The mind cannot exhaust the beauty of this commandment. How noble is the placable mind! How cordially it commends itself to all classes of men! How hideous and detestable the harsh and unforgiving!

By so much we may estimate the superiority of the doctrine of Christ over all other teachers. *No system of teaching places man so low and God so high*, the duty of mercy in such an imperative position. The reason self-evidently is, that other systems are of man: Christ's alone is of God.

—Bro. Roberts

Out of Egypt Have I Called My Son

"As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain"—Eze. 1:28

PART TWENTY

In the typical scene of the Mosaic parable we have Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and 70 elders of Israel gathered into the presence of God in the Holy Mount where—

"They saw the God of Israel: and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in His clearness" (Ex. 24:9-10).

In this pictorial scene we may recognise the vision of the "four living creatures" seen by the prophet Ezekiel in symbolic representation of the manifestation of God by Spirit in Christ and his brethren (Eze. 1:26)—

"Above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it."

—the throne and its occupant being representative of *the Kingdom of David in the hands of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ*. The prophet then describes the appearance of the symbolic man (v. 27)—

"I saw as the color of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about."

And then in order to show that the manifestation related to the future and was connected with the covenanted throne and Kingdom of David, he sees (v. 28)—

"As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in **the day of rain**, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord."

The vision as a whole, therefore, relates to *the Kingdom which the God of heaven shall set up*, and which shall never be removed, nor left to other people (Dan. 2:44); but—

"The Kingdom, and dominion, and its greatness, **under the whole heaven** shall be given to the saints of the Most High" (7:27).

In the Mosaic parabolic scene, *Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu* represent the symbol of the four living creatures. Before their appearance in the mount, they had been sprinkled with the blood of the covenant, as also the *seventy elders*; but while the *former* represent the redeemed firstfruits of the Kingdom as the King and his elohistic Princes in assembly, the *latter* are representative of the mortal element of the divine government, the assistant-priests who eat the most holy things in the southern chambers of the Temple (Eze. 42:12). And the blood-sprinkled people before the mount represent the true children of Abraham purged from their sins after their acceptance of Jesus as the Christ in their occupation of the land under the new covenant.

For the fuller and more elaborate exhibition of this divinely-conceived allegory, read and study carefully the vision of the apostle John in chapters 4, 14, and 15 of the Revelation. We have not, however, yet done with the beautiful allegory of the Mosaic parable under review. We read:

"Upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink."

These nobles were the representatives of the people, as the Levites of the coming Kingdom will be (see Ez. 44:23). Upon this representative class the Deity laid not His hand, that is, *they were separate and distinct from the four living creatures*: nevertheless, "they saw God and did eat and drink."

The next pictorial representation is one that is very saddening to contemplate; but it served the purpose of illustrating to us the oft-repeated lessons that—

"Known unto God are all His works" (Acts 15:18).

"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done" (Isa. 46:10).

All Bible students must have observed in their study the divine peculiarity so frequently exhibited in the Scriptures in the many instances where *the things to be ultimately accomplished are presented in their completeness first*; and afterwards, those things which lead up to, and ultimate in, the things primarily set forth. A very clear illustration of this will be found in what follows—

"The Lord said unto Moses, Come up to Me into the mount, and be there and I will give thee tables of stone and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.

"And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God.

"And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again to you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them.

"And Moses went up into the mount and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the clouds covered it six days: and the seventh day He called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

"And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.

"And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights" (Exo. 24:12-18).

While Moses was thus *separated from his brethren* in the presence of God, he received the pattern of the Tabernacle in which the Deity should dwell, and its furniture; and details of all those elaborate arrangements in connection with the service of God, which are set forth in chapters 25 to 31.

"And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him,

"Up, make us gods which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not What is become of him" (Exo. 32:17).

In the clamor of the people, Aaron took refuge in the unworthy expediency of granting them their request. Having bidden them to bring him the golden earrings of their wives, their sons and their daughters, of these he fashioned a calf, probably according to the well-known form of the Egyptian Apis, whose worship the people would have often witnessed during their sojourn in the Nile valley.

He then built an altar, and proclaimed a three days' festival to Jehovah. And with the earliest dawn of the following day the people arose, and offered burnt offerings before the image, exclaiming,

"These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt" (Exo. 32.4).

—and concluded the ceremony with one of those licentious orgies, accompanied by song and dance, which were so common amongst heathen nations (32:1-6; 1 Cor. 10:7).

While they were in the very act of celebrating this idolatrous festival, Moses, accompanied by Joshua, returned from the presence of the Lord, Who had already informed him of the apostasy of the people, and threatened to consume them, and to make of Moses a great nation.

But Moses, in his capacity of mediator, interceded in their behalf in that forcible and most exemplary appeal which he made to God, for His Own sake, not to put His threat into execution, but to remember His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, to whom He had sworn by Himself to multiply their seed as the stars of heaven, and to give them all the land that He had spoken of to inherit it for ever; and in which he was successful; for—

"The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people. And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of testimony were in his hand . . .

"And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables . . .

"And it came to pass as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and break them beneath the mount" (Exo. 32:14-19).

—and seizing the senseless image, burnt it with fire, reduced it to powder, strewed the ashes on the neighboring brook of Horeb, and compelled the people to drink thereof.

Afterwards he sternly rebuked Aaron for conniving at so heinous a sin, and stationing himself at the entrance of the camp, bade all who remained faithful to Jehovah to gird on their swords, and without regard to family tie or friendship, slay the offenders from gate to gate with the edge of the

sword: and in the execution of his commands there were slain about three thousand of the offenders (Exo. 32:7-29).

The typical bearing of this appears to be so apparent as scarcely to need explanation. *Moses was undoubtedly a type of Christ in all the official capacities in which he appeared before Israel.* With this fact before our minds, and looking carefully into the picture presented to us in Exo. 24:12-18, may we not discern in Moses' ascent into the presence of Jehovah alone, the ascent of Christ to the right hand of God, leaving the apostles and elders to "Occupy till I come"?

And in the result of the delay of Moses' return to the camp, do we not see a striking parallel to the history of the work of the Truth in the earth; how that the delay, as it was supposed, in the return of Christ worked a similar result in the terrible apostasy which took place, in which the pure worship and service of the one only true and living God was abandoned for the worship and service of the fabulous Trinitarian deity of pagan origin?

And may we not also clearly see that this apostasy will continue until the true Moses returns from the heavenly mount to punish with destruction the equally guilty offenders in the day of His wrath, as foreshown in the fact that Moses reappeared upon the scene during the very act of the celebration of the idolatrous festival, accompanied by Joshua, who, in this case, represents the ministers of Christ, who will cooperate with him in the work of judgment upon all his adversaries.

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

Signs of the Times

"Now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do"—Gen. 11:6.

World events during the past month have changed the picture of the general world situation very little. It seems that whatever happens now is simply a further contribution to the state of tension which continues to grow in volume as time goes on.

The satellite race between the U. S. and Russia has developed into a propaganda race, in which they are both trying to convince the world of their superiority in scientific know-how in both space satellites and atomic weapons. Reports of progress in both offensive and defensive weapons would indicate, if true, that more terrible weapons than have ever been visualized before are in the making.

Egyptian-Syrian Merger Poses Big Question

The merging of Egyptian and Syrian nations into one government, with some prospects of other Arab nations joining with them in a United Arab States has caused widespread speculation as to the eventual outcome of it all. As to whether it will force pro-Western and non-communist Arab states to do the same, and just how it will affect Russia's interests in the Mideast, is still a matter of conjecture.

Unquestionably it places Israel in an uncomfortable position, a little strip of land squeezed in between Egypt and Syria, with the prospect of having a united Arab bloc to contend with in case of trouble with any one of them.

It is obvious that Syria is being swallowed up by Egypt, and it appears to be a move on the part of Nasser in his effort to make of himself leader of an Arab empire, composed of all Arab people in the Mideast and North Africa.

The Tunisian Village Bombing

The bombing of a Tunisian village by the French is of great propaganda value to Nasser's designs as well as to Russia, while the Western powers are "in a spot," having either to denounce France or appear to favor actions which might inflame the entire Arab world.

In comments arising out of this incident, is revealed one of the chief reasons why the French are so tenaciously holding on to a territory which so far has been more of a liability than an asset. Oil geologists are now of the opinion that **beneath the Algerian desert lies one of the richest oil fields in the world**, a potential oil supply which might greatly augment, if not suffice for all Western Europe's petroleum needs.

Let Us Keep the Whole Picture in View

Sometimes world events, because of their spectacular nature, are seized upon as a great sign of the times—events which may, or may not, taken by themselves, have an unmistakable connection with the signs which indicate that the return of Christ is near. But there are **conditions** which have been developing over a long period of time, and have reached the stage where there can no longer be any doubt that they point unerringly to the immediate return of the Lord in glory. These conditions have become so well-rooted and firmly established that no change is possible until changed by the coming of the divine order on earth.

As we have had occasion to remark previously, the certainty of Christ's immediate return does not depend on one or two prominent signs, but our confidence in the imminence of his coming is fully justified as we see **numerous** and unmistakable developments, converging together in such a way as to leave no doubt that the end is at hand.

The developments in Palestine, the phenomenal and sudden rise of Russia to great power and extended domain, the fantastic increase in war preparation and annihilating weapons, the stupendous increase in scientific knowledge, and the world picture in general reminds us of another sign, a composite picture, a combination of all signs.

"As It Was in the Days of Noah"

This sign is revealed in the words of the Savior—

"As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be . . . They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage . . . and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. 24:37-38).

In the 6th chap, of Genesis we are told how the world was in the days of Noah. The people were in a state of universal apostasy; those who had formerly been the "sons of God," had departed from the way of God and had taken on the ways of the world; human pride in their own prowess had developed many men of renown, but godless in their ways; the earth was filled with violence, "for all flesh had corrupted His way upon the earth."

The shocking increase in crime and immorality in "highly civilized" countries; constant war and strife; the craze for indulgence in fleshly entertainment and amusements, and the trend toward general godlessness, has been noticeable for more than a generation.

In contrast to a world absorbed in its every-day affairs to the extent of being oblivious to the gathering storm of judgment, in Luke 21:25-26 the Saviour pictures the world in a state of war, violence, fear and perplexity. And in 1 Thess. 5:1-2 the Apostle Paul says of the time of the end that they will be crying "Peace and safety," when destruction swiftly descends upon them.

In these prophecies we see a duplication of the days of Noah—a world filled with violence, yet heedless of any warning of coming judgment, drowning their fears in illusion, absorbed in their own petty affairs and oblivious of the danger which surrounds them.

Today we see a world fearful on the one hand, yet ready to cry "peace and safety" on the flimsiest evidence. It is wonderful, it is strange, that we see all these things existing today, a composite picture of the whole world situation, as it was in the days of Noah.

An outstanding feature of world conditions comparable to the antediluvian age was the exaltation of human accomplishments and departure from divine precepts and instruction in which God's way had been corrupted in all the earth.

As scientific progress increases, there is created in the minds of men **the notion that they can accomplish whatever they please**, as one prominent statesman said recently:

"Man can accomplish anything, if he will train his mind to it, and has sufficient determination."

As human accomplishments enlarge and multiply, human pride and self-confidence increases, while belief in and dependence on a Supreme Being correspondingly declines. A prominent professor of anthropology in commenting on recent scientific gains, said:

"A cultural system which can launch satellites can dispense with gods entirely."

What these exalted dreamers do not know, is that God is the All-Supreme Ruler of the universe, and that they can do no more nor less than what He has decreed that they shall do. They know not, though, like the antediluvians, they have been warned many times in many ways, that the Day of the Lord is at hand; that day when—

"The **loftiness of man** shall be bowed down, and the **haughtiness of men** shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day"—Isa. 2:17.

"Willing Ignorance" of God and His Word

In 2nd Peter 3:5 the apostle shows that one of the outstanding signs of the Day of the Lord would be "willing ignorance" of the very truths concerning that day. This is in harmony with Christ's words, "they knew not until the flood came." That day was to come at a time when the world would be in a state of abysmal ignorance of the true teaching of the Scriptures, when "the Faith" had all but disappeared from the religion of mankind: when a **Laodicean state of self-satisfaction** had descended so heavily upon the religious world that God and His Word would no longer exercise any authority.

Recently a survey by the "Gilbert Youth Research Co." revealed some shocking facts which shows up the reputed "spiritual renaissance" as a delusion. Their survey showed that: Few young church members know anything at all about their own "religion" or any other religion. Only a very few could answer the simplest questions on the Bible, and 42 per cent of those interviewed had never read the Bible at all. Only about 25 per cent attend church regularly. Less than 10 per cent expressed any confidence in the advice of a clergyman or their elders. The conclusion was:

"For all groups, and all faiths, the simplest questions evoked the most shocking displays of ignorance."

All of which adds up to a godless, paganized religion in which the Bible has no part, and this in the nation which boasts of being a citadel of Christianity and religious freedom. It also shows that **church membership is no indication that the member has any real interest in the Bible or religion of any kind.**

In this connection let us never forget that falling away from the Faith has always come in the same way: A gradual departure, marked with a loss of interest in divine teaching, and a conformation to the ways of the world, and merging and affiliation with apostate groups. This was true in the days of Noah; it was true with the nation of Israel; it was true in the first-century departure from the Faith. And the Lord Jesus Christ indicates that it was to be true in the falling away just before his coming, saying that:

"Take heed to **yourselves**, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares."

May the day hasten when—instead of the earth being an arena of bloodshed and crime, where ignorance of God and His Word prevails, and man vaunts himself in his own wisdom and accomplishments—

"The earth shall be full of knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." —O.B.

Ecclesial News

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

Loving Greetings to those in the Household.

Our ecclesia has recently felt the sadness which comes from losing the company and fellowship of a fellow-pilgrim. On Jan. 21, 1958, after three weeks illness, our sister Ann Fotheringham, wife of bro. John Fotheringham, fell asleep in Christ. Our sister's probation was a long one in the Truth of more than 50 years. During this last year her trials were many, but with them all she regularly attended the meetings.

She was laid to rest on Jan. 24 in White Chapel Memorial Cemetery to await the call of the Master on that glorious resurrection morn. Brethren and sisters from Detroit, London and Toronto were also in attendance.

To our brother John Fotheringham and his family we extend sincere sympathy in their hour of sadness.

The apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Thessalonians, comforts us at a time like this. We have the glorious hope of Christ's second coming, and of the resurrection when those who are asleep in Jesus will arise from the tomb. The signs of the times point to the nearness of that day.

We have recently enjoyed around the table of our Lord, the company of bro. & sis. Joseph Jackson of Toronto. The company of those of like precious Faith is deeply appreciated. Bro. Jackson gave us the word of exhortation. In these days of small things, we need every help as we press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, that we may make our calling and election sure.

—bro. Clifford Cope

* * *

HOUSTON, Texas—8008 Junius St.—Sun. Sch. 10 a.m.; Breaking of bread 11 a.m.; Lecture 3rd Sunday 7:30 p.m.; Discussion of daily Bible readings each other Sunday at 7 p.m.

Visitors with us at the hour of worship memorializing the great and perfect sacrifice Jesus offered to God for us have been sis. Jessie Hatcher, of San Saba and bro. & sis. H. A. Sommerville, of Lake Ariel.

Bro. Sommerville has been very helpful in the ministry of the word, both in exhortation to the body, and in the proclamation of the truth in its saving purity to those without who could be induced to come.

On those Sundays of the month when the ecclesia is not engaged in the proclamation of the gospel to the stranger, we come together at seven in the evening to discuss questions that arise out of the previous week's daily readings. Brothers take turns presiding at these meetings, and after the opening prayer, the first portion of the readings are open for questions and discussion. About thirty minutes are allotted to each portion of readings, so that the three portions may be covered in about an hour and a half, the meeting closing at 8:30.

Much interest has been shown in these classes and it is felt that they will be very beneficial, especially to those not long in the Truth, as a means of bringing about a fuller understanding of scriptural things hard to be understood. —bro. C. Banta

* * *

HYE, Texas

On Feb. 2 the regular quarterly meeting of the Texas ecclesias was held here. The 5th ch. of 1st Peter was the basis for discussion at the Bible study period beginning at 10 a.m.

Bro. Sommerville spoke the word of exhortation during the hour of worship at the Memorial Service. He entreated the Household to exert a whole-hearted effort in the matter of preparation for the coming day of the Lord, as the prophet Amos, through the Spirit spoke to the house of Israel—"Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (Amos 4:12).

After the meeting was over, the brothers and sisters enjoyed a period of association one with another, and all had the pleasure of eating dinner together before returning to their respective places of abode. We are grateful that God thus permits us to be together in the work of the Truth; for it lends much to our comfort, strength and well being as we strive to serve the Lord with singleness of heart. —bro. E. W. Banta

Correspondence

Dear brethren and sisters,

Loving Greetings in the Faith

We have all had a joyful and thrilling experience in listening to voices from the Household far away. One of our brethren wrote to bro. Banta in Houston, Texas, about the possibility of getting some tape records, and he sent four, of different brethren in Canada and the United States.

All four were easy to understand and forcefully given. It was, and still is, a time to be remembered, and needless to say the same records have and can be listened to many times.

Regarding the stirring events transpiring in the world, I am of the opinion that they will get peace proposals agreed upon in a form, but when they (the World) shall say, Peace and Safety, then cometh sudden destruction (1 Thes. 5:3), and they shall not escape. But any such proposals should not deceive the brethren and sisters in Christ. They know what is coming, as Daniel says (12:10)—

"The wise shall understand, but none of the wicked shall understand."

There seems little doubt that in the present battle of words, Russia is the real leader. By her arts she is compelling the West to largely disclose their plans, which they seem powerless to prevent.

By Russia causing discord among the weak nations and Arabs, the West are perforce compelled to take notice, while Russia keeps clear of immediate entanglements.

But God having revealed what is coming, it is for us to be ready when His mighty angels come to remove His elect from the four winds of heaven. Many ask, "When is Armageddon coming?" But we are not so much interested in its coming as we are in Christ's coming to take us away from that trouble.

So let us be in the position described by Habakkuk (2:1-4)—

"I will stand upon my watch, and set me in the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd.

"For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

"The just shall live by his faith."

With much love in the Faith to all,

—bro. K. R. Macdonald

Death of Sister Florence Van Akin, Lackawaxen

We have been asked to mention that sister Florence K. Van Akin, sister-wife of bro. John Van Akin, of Lackawaxen, Penna., fell asleep on December 18, 1957, at the age of 75.

Our deepest sympathies are extended to bro. Van Akin.

PRINTED IN U. S. A.
