

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 Wisdom of This World

"After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe"—1 Corinthians 1:21

A review of Christadelphian literature for the past 100 years shows that the body has accepted the teaching of bro. John Thomas as set forth in *Elpis Israel*, where he says—

"The six days of Genesis were **unquestionably** six diurnal revolutions of the earth upon its axis . . . Six days of ordinary length were ample time for Omnipotence, with all the power of the universe at command, to re-form the earth, and to place the few animals upon it necessary for the beginning of a new order of things upon the globe."

In recent years (to accommodate modern, evolutionary views) this teaching has been discarded by many in favor of the theory "that in six days the details of God's Creation were revealed to man *in vision*." When discussing this with a brother, he remarked that, "The six days has no bearing on the first principles of the Truth and, further, what brother Thomas said was only his opinion." But in support of his statement, bro. Thomas quoted from Exo. 21:11—

"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the 7th day: wherefore the Lord (blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

Therefore to hold the view that the Creation was revealed to Moses in a "vision" that extended for a period of six days, is to flatly contradict the Word of God that came audibly to the people of Israel when they stood before mount Sinai. And, further, it would place us under strong censure of Jesus, who, when speaking of Moses, said—

"But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"—John 5:47.

But the matter does not rest there, for we have been asked, "*Could we not agree to differ on this question, and cease discussing the subject, and work together in association and fellowship?*"

In the first place, how is it possible for faithful brethren to agree to differ on so fundamental a principle when it involves denial of God's Word? To contradict His Word is in effect to call God a liar and who, pray tell us, is prepared to do anything so rash as that? Especially in view of the emphatic declaration of the Psalmist that—

"He has magnified His word above all His Name."

There is no general truth that stands out more prominently throughout the Bible than this fact; that if we would honor God, we *must believe what He says, and do what He commands*. This is conclusively evident by what Samuel said to Saul, when he disobeyed God—

"And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the Word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king"

—1 Sam. 15:22-23.

It is definitely clear from these words of Samuel, that if we disbelieve God's Word, we become guilty of sin equal to witchcraft, and if we deliberately try to avoid personal responsibility by

permitting pride to keep us from doing those things that we definitely know we should do, we become guilty of stubbornness, which is equal to idolatry.

This principle of *belief and obedience* is richly exemplified in Abraham, who is described in the Scriptures as "the friend of God," and Paul tells us why in Rom. 4:20-22—

"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness."

If, then, Abraham's unswerving faith in the promises of God was reckoned to him for righteousness, is it not an example of the highest order for us to follow? We have Paul's assurance that it is in verses 23 and 24—

"Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead."

What does the apostle mean when he says, "*If we believe on Him?*" It is manifest that he does not want us to think that we are only expected to believe what suits our convenience or fancy. By no means, for, if he did, he would not have submitted Abraham's faith and obedience as our pattern.

"*Without faith,*" says Paul, "*it is impossible to please God.*" If anyone is in doubt regarding the nature of a faith that will please God, let him read the eleventh chapter of the letter to the Hebrews, for, continues Paul,

"He that cometh to God **must believe** that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

Following this, the apostle submits the names of many exemplars who obtained a good report through their unwavering faith, and then adds in verse 13—

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

These, said Paul, all died in, or according to faith. They were fully persuaded that God would perform what He had promised. It was a faith that produced a sincere obedience throughout their lives. Doubt, or mistrust, formed no part of their faith. By such a faith, Paul says we are justified, and will eventually be saved. It is also described as a faith that worketh by love and, says John—

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

The question has been asked, "*What difference does it make whether we believe the six days of Genesis is a record of creation, or just a 'vision' given to Moses that extended over a period of six days?*" We believe this question can best be answered in the following manner;—

What difference did it make when our first parents disbelieved God and ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?

When Lot and his family were fleeing from Sodom, they were commanded not to look behind them. What difference did it make when Lot's wife disobeyed and looked back?

When Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not; what difference did it make?

When transporting the ark, Israel was commanded not to touch it. In the days of David, they proceeded to bring the ark up to the city of David under the care of Uzzah and Ahio. When the oxen stumbled, Uzzah put his hand on the ark to steady it. Although his intentions were good, what difference did it make?

These examples are sufficient to show beyond all doubt that it *does make a great difference what we believe and do*. Let us then be honest with ourselves, and pay serious and strict attention to what Paul has to say—

"We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

"For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him"—Heb. 2: 1-3 —Editor.

NOVEL-READING A POWERFUL SLEEPING DRAUGHT

While taking care to use the means to keep awake, it is necessary to avoid the things that tend to draw us into the universal slumber. On this head, there are books not to be read, companions not to be kept company with, pleasures not to be followed, pursuits not to be engaged in, habits not to be practised, objects not to be aimed at.

There are "weights" to be "laid aside"—to use another of Paul's figures when comparing the calling in Christ to a race. Every earnest man will be able to recognize these for himself. They are discernible by the simple test of whether they interfere or not with the growth of Christ dwelling in our heart by faith.

By this test, NOVEL-READING will be abandoned. There is no more powerful spiritual sleeping draught than this. It conjures a fictitious picture before the mind. It invests human life with a beauty that does not exist in fact, and teaches men to be interested in trifles, and to be interested even in important things and in men from the wrong point of view. It excludes God from sight, draws a veil over real wisdom, and hides the glory to be revealed. The Bible appears a very dull object to the eyes of man or woman just turned from the dazzle of brilliant story-telling.—**Bro. Roberts.**

A Door in Heaven

BY BROTHER JOHN THOMAS

"I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven." Revelation 4:1

The luminaries of the heaven are the dignities, or glories, incarnated in the officials who figure as the civil and spiritual rulers of "the earth and habitable." Although the saints are promised "power over the nations to rule them" (Rev. 2:26-27), "the heaven" in which national government is located, is at present shut and fast closed against them.

Their principles incapacitate them for sharing power with the world-rulers in Church and State. A saint who is one in *deed* as well as in *name* cannot condescend to subject himself to the conditions necessary to obtain the favor of the political mob, whether that mob be a mob of aristocrats or a mob of what these call the "swinish multitude."

He cannot, I say, condescend—as a son of Deity, a brother of Jesus Christ, and a king and priest-elect for God—to seek the favor of the "dead in trespasses and sins," whose votes and patronage

are indispensable to his exaltation to the "heaven" in which he may figure—by the eloquence of his speech or the gaudy decorations of a court—as a star of the first or an inferior magnitude.

No saint could by any other possibility than that based on apostasy, consent to fill any ecclesiastical or secular throne. The heaven in which these seats of glory, honor, wealth and power exist is infected with such malarious and poisonous exhalations of sin's flesh, that he could not breathe them, and live and move and have continued healthful spiritual existence in the Deity.

Fortunately for the saints, this heaven is shut against them, and its door bolted, locked and barred to keep out all who will not fall down and worship the Satan, who is prince of the Aerial, and bestows its glories on whoever he approves.

But this heaven is not *always* to be shut up and barred against the saints—against the Lord Jesus and his Brethren. The Satan that now fills it, and monopolizes its heavenly things, is to be hurled from it with a mighty overthrow. This Satan, which is *Sin in official manifestation*, holds the power and glory of the world's dominions. They are delivered unto him, and to whomsoever he will he gives them (Luke 4:5-6).

All the evil that afflicts humanity is the "power of the enemy" or the Satan, whether that evil be enthroned in the heaven, or be found in the poison of literal serpents and scorpions. But the Satan in the heavenlies is doomed, for Jesus in vision of the future said (Luke 10:18)—

"I beheld the Satan as lightning fall out of the heaven."

He falls thence by virtue of a stronger than the Satan breaking into the heaven and casting him out. The Satan's house or kingdom is strongly fortified against all burglars and besiegers at present upon the earth.

Under existing circumstances there is no chance of the saints being able to make a breach, or open a "door in the heaven," to effect an entrance into it, and after the example of Cromwell and his Ironsides, to expel the Satan and eject him with all his instruments of mischief and abomination.

But though this present inability exists, the expulsion *is to be accomplished*. The oracle before us proclaims a "*door opened in the heaven*," which is equivalent to saying that a power had been revealed upon earth stronger than the Satan; that this power had made a breach in the enemy's works; and that this breach had become practicable, so that the breaching power could march through it as through a door, and take possession of the "heaven," or—

"Kingdom under the whole heaven" (Dan. 7:27).

The oracle does not say that *doors* were opened. Our attention is restricted to *a door*, that is, one door. A door is that opening in a wall through which you pass into the area or room beyond. This is the scriptural use of the word.

Understanding this, and that the apocalyptic heaven is that constitution of things expanded over all peoples and nations and languages, as the government by which they are regulated and controlled—the reader will perceive that the coup-d'etat by which the smiting power succeeds in placing itself in power and authority over any part of those nations is a *door of entrance* for that new power into the heaven.

That coup-d'etat which gave Louis Napoleon introduction into the heaven and placed him there enthroned among "the Powers" was "a door opened in the heavens" for him to pass through. This is easily comprehended, and makes the oracle before us easy of comprehension, as we will try to show.

The Deity proposes to enact a great and mighty coup-d'etat, or stroke of policy, upon the world's governments. He intends to so shape and overrule its ambitions and schemes as to cause them to make the territory of His kingdom the seat of war between hostile confederacies, contending for dominion over the "127 provinces" of Daniel's lion, bear and leopard. Saith He (Joel 3:2 & Dan. 11:45)—

"I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to war; and bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat."

"They shall pitch the tents of their entrenched camp between the seas to the mountains of the glory of holiness"

—a region indicated in Rev. 16:16 by the word *Armageddon*.

This concentration of the hosts of the nations in the Holy Land is its invasion by Gog, the Prince of Rosh, in hostility to the Merchant Power of Tarshish and its allies, then in possession of Jerusalem (Eze. 38:13). But—

"The city shall be taken" (Zech. 14:2), "and the land of Egypt shall not escape" (Dan. 11:42).

Advanced to this sovereignty, the Gog-dominion stands as:

"The Dragon, the Old Serpent, surnamed the Diabolos and the Satan" (Rev. 20:2).

—and as the Image of the kingdom of men in its latter-day manifestation, as represented to Nebuchadnezzar in dream.

In the development of these events a crisis is formed, such as the world—for magnitude and importance—has never seen before. The Satan will then have attained to the loftiest pinnacle of the Temple, with the presumption that universal sovereignty is within the grasp of his omnipotence.

The heaven will be filled with his glory; and no son of sin's flesh will find admission there whose zeal runs not in the way of a ready and devout allegiance to the God-defying principles of—

"The spirit that works in the children of disobedience."

But things having arrived at this crisis, under the leadership of the Lawless One, *the time will have also arrived for opening a door into Satan's heaven*, through which the saints may enter in. This will be done by a divine coup-d'etat such as the Satan little expects. This political stroke consists in *the power* represented by a Stone falling upon the enemy and crushing them with a terrible overthrow (Dan. 2:34, 44).

This STONE-POWER is *the power of the Eternal Spirit in Jesus and the saints*, who with sword, pestilence, rain, hail, fire, and brimstone, plead with the adversary, and destroy him from the Promised Land. In this way Yahweh makes Jerusalem—

"A cup of trembling unto all the people round about when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem" (Zech. 12:2).

And also (verse 3)—

"A burdensome stone for all people . . . all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth shall be gathered together against it."

Their multitude and power will not appal him. He will go forth and fight against them, and stand victorious upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east. In this way, he whom the prophet styles "Yahweh my Elohim" comes in, "all the saints with him" (Zech. 14:5). In proof of all this, the reader is referred to Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel and Zechariah.

Thus YAHWEH ELOHIM, the Saints, "come in." By the crashing power of the Stone a door is opened, and they march in. Their Prince, who came as a thief, obtains possession of Jerusalem and

the Holy Land, and becomes a potentate among the thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers of the heaven in which, until he breaks in upon them, the "Devil and his Angels" only can be found.

* * *

"And the voice said, Come up hither"—Rev. 4:1

This invitation to John to ascend into the heaven was equivalent to inviting him to "meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4:1). By implication, it was an invitation to all whom he represented to do likewise at the appointed time.

This is the only place in the Apocalypse where it is said to John, "*Ascend hither.*" In Rev. 17:1 and 21:9, it is said, "*Come hither,*" and in doing so he is "in spirit borne away into a wilderness," and "upon a great and high mountain."

In the wilderness he sees the Mother of Harlots and the ensanguined Sin-Powers that sustain her. And from upon the mountain that overtops all other mountains, he beholds—

"The House of the Elohim of Jacob" (Isa. 2:2).
—or the New Jerusalem Community, in the light of which the saints of the Millennial Aion walk in peace and goodwill.

But when "a door in the heaven is opened," John is not borne, or carried, away—he is *called up*. He is invited to "ascend"—to ascend to the Kingdom and Throne to be established in the heaven.

There is a testimony analogous to this in Rev. 11:12, where a class of persons not represented by John are addressed in the words, "*Ascend ye hither.*" And it says—

"They ascended into the heaven in the cloud which ascended."

The cloud of witnesses was the political element of the "Two Witnesses" which had been politically dead, but unburied, for 105 years, at the end of which (in 1789-90) they rose again, and ascending to the heaven in the sight of their terrified enemies, became the ruling power in the state.

Hence for John to ascend into the heaven dramatically was indicative of those he represents—who have been prevailed against by the Sin-Powers of the Habitable, trodden under foot for the previous 42 months of years, and sleeping in the dust—*ascending from these depths of humiliation and degradation to the high and exalted position of kings and priests for the Deity*, through whom the world shall be ruled for a thousand years.

"GOD WAS IN CHRIST"

In remembering Christ, in the breaking of bread, we do not remember him as he desires to be remembered, unless we remember him as the manifestation of the Father's glory, the exhibitor of the Father's mind, the exercise of the Father's power, the Father come nigh to us in him—

"God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself."

The Father, indeed, is the glory of Christ. Apart from Him, there would have been no Christ, who—though a Son who learned obedience by the things that he suffered—is yet the Father in manifestation; for though he said, "The works that **I do**, I do not of myself," he also said, "The Father Who is in me, **He doeth** the works."

To remember Christ, then is to remember the Father also Who dwelt in him and made him what he was. To remember a mere man is not to remember Christ; and to remember a Son without a will of his own is not to remember him.

To remember him scripturally is to remember him as he is presented in his discourses to his disciples, in which, while exhibiting himself as the voluntary subject of the Father, he expressed surprise that he should have been so long with his disciples without them knowing that in looking upon him, they looked upon the Father manifest in his Son.—**Bro. Roberts.**

I Wrought for My Name's Sake

"This city hath been a provocation of Mine anger from the day they built it until now"—Jer. 32:31

BY BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

The chapter (Eze. 20) that has been read this morning will be found on reflection to be one of the most extraordinary compositions ever submitted to human consideration. It is a historical review with comments.

There are many historical reviews to be found among books; but they are all human: here is a historical review *by the Creator of heaven and earth*. It is a review of Israel's history from its beginning in Egypt, down to Ezekiel's day.

There may seem nothing very extraordinary in this at first sight, but this impression will change on reflection.

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

The history of England is but of yesterday, as compared with Israel. The history of Babylon is a short story though going back to ancient times. The broad belt of Israel's history comes down all the way from the earliest beginning, when modern Gentile nationalities were not, to the present moment, when Jewish affairs are an active element in Gentile problems among the strongest nations of the continent.

No historical topic can compare, on even common grounds, with the history of the nation that wanders the world to-day in all lands after ages of national adversity that more than once threatened its entire extinction.

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

We have histories of the Jews by Gentiles and by Jews; but how different are these histories from this—how different in tone, spirit, and complexion! How different in the views presented!

How necessarily different is a history written by the short-ranged vision of a mortal, from a history written by the all-embracing Penetration that sees everything at a glance, and knows the universe to its utmost depths, and the furthest bearing of all occurrences! Accordingly, we find this history, written by Ezekiel at the mouth of God, of a totally different character from anything by Jew or Gentile.

A number of the elders of Israel had come on a visit to Ezekiel, recognising his character as a prophet and seeking through him to approach God and make enquiry of him. It is this visit that furnishes the occasion for the remarkable historic sketch contained in the chapter.

The way the visit was received is quite striking. At first sight, it would appear a meritorious thing on the part of these elders to seek to enquire of God—a something that might be expected to be pleasing to God.

In point of fact it was otherwise, and received a rude rebuff. There was something in the nature of their approach that made it offensive. Ezekiel was divinely directed on the subject as follows (v. 20)—

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

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

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

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

These elders of Israel did not approach God in this spirit. They approached Him in the spirit that has characterised Israel in all their generations, so far as the bulk of the nation is concerned. They came to Him thinking themselves to be somewhat on account of extraction and on account of the divine favour shown to them in days past.

They came to Him in a spirit of self-importance, while, at the same time, having no adequate or reasonable discernment of God's goodness, and little habit of obedience to His commandments. Therefore, Ezekiel is commanded to declare to them that God refused their advances; and he is further commissioned to exhibit to them the history of their nation, as it appeared in His eyes.

It is in this way that we get God's view of the most wonderful history on earth, and an explanation of God's own objects, in the various measures He took, and did not take, in the course of that history.

"Cause them to know the abomination of their fathers,"

—says God; and He takes the recital right back to Egypt—

"In the day when I chose Israel, and lifted up Mine hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made Myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, saying, I am the Lord your God . . .

"I said to them, Cast away every man the abominations of his eyes, defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt.

"But they rebelled against Me, and would not hearken unto Me; they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, nor forsake the idols of Egypt.

"Then I said, I will pour out My fury upon them, to accomplish My anger against them in the midst of Egypt.

"But I wrought for My Name's sake that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made Myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt.

"Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the Wilderness" (vs. 5-10).

Here is a keynote struck which governs the rest of the chapter. Israel were brought out of Egypt, not because they were an interesting and obedient race. So far were they from being this, that they deserved wholesale destruction, and God felt inclined in this direction.

But He refrained Himself and preserved them, and brought them out of Egypt *that His Name might not be dishonored in the eyes of mankind, who knew that He had taken Israel by the hand.*

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

But, that a stubborn and unacceptable people should be tolerated, and favoured, and protected, *for the honour of Jehovah's Name*, is an idea entirely out of the range of human sympathies.

The Jews liked such a doctrine no better than the Gentiles do: and yet, dear brethren and sisters, it is *God's own explanation*. Here it is, without obscurity or the least dimness.

It is not only the authentic explanation, but it is a rational explanation. It throws light where otherwise there is darkness, for look you; is it not the fact that Israel at the time of the Exodus *were* unbelieving and rebellious? Did they not say to Moses—

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

When he brought them out, did they not seek to stone him? This being the undoubted fact, of what explanation is the miraculous Egyptian exodus susceptible, if it were not that God was *aiming at some other object than the mere wellbeing of the race of Israel?*

Apart from this, the divine favour to Israel in Egypt is inexplicable and mysterious, and a stumbling block, as many people have found it to be. God's explanation explains all:

"I wrought FOR MY NAME'S SAKE."

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

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

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

"Mine eye spared them from destroying them, neither did I make an end of them in the wilderness.

"But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statues of your fathers. . . . Walk in My statutes. . . .

"Notwithstanding, the children rebelled against Me; they walked not in My statutes, neither kept my judgments . . .

"Then I said I would pour out My fury upon them Nevertheless I withdrew My hand and wrought for My Name's sake."

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

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

Then He brings the matter home to the elders standing before Ezekiel, accusing them of following the disobedient ways of their fathers.

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

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

Let us consider it a moment. At first sight, it seems a repulsive exhibition of the divine attitude. It seems all stern, unsympathetic, and discouraging. This constant jealousy of the divine honour—this constant anger at the people's waywardness—does not excite those gratified feelings which we associate with the sentiments of adoration and praise.

Some, in fact, have been so oppressed in spirit from this cause as to have come to the conclusion that the chapter and much else in the Bible is the ebullition of human bitterness and not the disclosure of the divine mind.

This is a mistake altogether. The divinity of these writings is beyond all doubt and cavil, for reasons we have looked at in time past and need not now repeat. We must find some other explanation of the sternness than the wild suggestion that it is human and not divine—a suggestion altogether inconsistent with common experience of men.

God is love, but not that only: He is a consuming fire. God is kind and merciful, but not unconditionally so. He must be held in reverence: He must be obeyed. This is revealed, and is it not according to reason?

It is according to reason in two ways: first, heaven and earth are His: He made them all. There is not a thing in existence that is not the concrete form of His own eternal invisible energy. There is not a faculty or power or excellence in the possession of any creature but what has its root in God Himself,

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

If, then, it be true that—

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

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

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

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

I say, if they could *realise* the revealed conception of the Creator, their mind would be open to the evident conclusion that God should be jealous of His own honor, and that rebellion against Him should be a ground of His displeasure.

The other way which shows it to be according to reason is this: it is the indispensable condition of human well-being that God should be known, loved, and revered in the highest. Apart from this knowledge and reverence, man degenerates to darkness and misery.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, even as regards the little happiness that is possible in this mortal state. About this it is impossible for a reflecting mind to have the least doubt in view of either his own experience or the general experience of mankind, so far as an individual may have access to that.

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

The light, therefore, which we see glowing in this 20th chapter of Ezekiel—the burning light of the divine glory, though a painful light to look at with the naked eye—is a beneficent light, like the Sun, which, though scorching in the wilderness, is a generator of life and beauty where water, soil, and the other conditions of life exist.

The doctrine of God's supremacy by itself, would be hard and burdensome for fainting flesh and blood; but it does not come by itself, it cannot come by itself. There is a *blessing* connected with it, as Moses earnestly showed to Israel in the wilderness, at the end of their journeyings.

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

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

He spared Israel in all their backslidings, because He wrought for His Name's sake. *He spared them that the true seed among them—men of Abraham's faith and deeds—might develop for His glory, generation after generation.*

For the same reason, He endures the wicked of these passing centuries, kind alike to all, in patience of the day when He will root transgressors out of the earth, and give it to His tried and faithful people at the resurrection.

The lesson of the chapter is by no means confined to the pre-Ezekiel history of Israel. It was written for those who should come after. *It is an explanation for all time, in all the relations into which God may come with the human race.*

It has force here in our midst this morning. It is the explanation of this bread which we break: this wine we drink—

"I wrought FOR MY NAME'S SAKE."

This might be written over and under the cross of Calvary, by which the world—the godless world of men upon earth—was crucified unto us and we unto the world.

When we come unto God by Christ, we approach Him in a temple, as it were, having these words inscribed on the portals. They are the explanation of the bleeding lamb, which by faith we bring in our hands; away from them there is no explanation. By all natural thoughts, the shed blood of Christ is a distressing mystery—

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

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

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

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

The first and great fact of facts which the natural mind disrelishes is that Jehovah is Maker and Possessor of heaven and earth, and will be approached by man in such consummate deference as *He* requires, the forms whereof *He* appoints.

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

Was he a sinner then? No: Son of God and Son of Man, and though tempted in all things like unto his brethren, he was without sin as to *character*, though made sin as to *nature* (2 Cor. 5:21).

Though on his mother's side he partook of the sin and death-stricken nature of Adam's race; on his Father's side, that nature had such impress and mould as made him Jehovah's Holy One, fitted by his righteousness to bear away the sin of the world in death and resurrection.

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

No, this is not substitution; for *we have to take part in it and be one with it*. We are buried with him in baptism; we are planted *in the similitude of his death*; made to partake in his crucifixion; on this condition our sins are forgiven.

He went through it all for us as our representative, only that in him was done that which could not be done in us. In us, death would have closed our eyes for ever, because of disobedience.

In him, righteousness was declared both in death (because possessing our nature) and in resurrection (because having accomplished a perfect obedience). Therefore in him only is life, and God has given to him the power to bestow life on all who own themselves dead with the crucified Christ, and alive only and by his resurrection power.

God, in Christ, has "wrought for His Name's sake" — for His honour — for His exaltation — for His ineffable and unquestionable supremacy. His righteous law made man mortal because this supremacy was set aside at the beginning: and He sets not this law aside, but has carried it out in the Son of His own providing, in a way that while opening the road to salvation, exalts God in the highest and abases man to the uttermost.

This is the lesson of the cross — that *God is great and dreadful and holy and unchangeable*, though kind and merciful and forgiving to those who tremble before Him: and that **MAN IS SMALL, INSIGNIFICANT AND SINFUL AND MORTAL**, though invited to equality with the angels in glory and honor and immortality.

The death of Christ tells us that the way of immortality is closed impenetrably against all sinners; and his resurrection, that God will only be approached through him who has been made by Him "righteousness and sanctification and wisdom and redemption" for all who humble themselves obediently to his way.

Such only are forgiven; such only justified, and made heirs according to the hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began.

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

"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might: let not the rich man glory in his riches.

"But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth; for in these things do I delight, saith the Lord."

My Father Will Love Him

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand"—John 10:27.

Now this way of truth and life in Christ has one central objective in the case of all who come to God through his Name: that all may be conformed to the image and likeness of Christ, that unity of character and mind might prevail from the head through the whole body.

Jesus is said to be the Word made flesh, or the expressed purpose and will of God come to fruition with the development and manifestation of His Son, who is—

"The brightness of His glory and the express image of His person" (Heb 1:3).

All that Jesus said and did was energized and prompted by his love for God and those he came to save; and so it is that the principles of divine truth were exemplified in his every thought and deed.

Never man spake like he did because he lived and moved on the higher plane where there was harmony and unity with the infinite mind of the Creator.

Is such a way of life too high for us, so that we should give up in despair as we contemplate the straitness and narrowness—the rigid restrictions and requirements that hedge out all interests and relations with the world about us?

If left to ourselves we could never rise to such perfection of life and holiness; but Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, has told us how it can be done—

"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

Jesus has promised to help us: he has promised that God will abide with us. With this assurance he tells us—

"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."
The *condition* is impressed upon us:

"IF a man love me . . . my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him."

It is *unthinkable* that we could fail to allow the Truth full course in our lives to the development and perfection of divine attributes and qualities in our characters, IF love for God was the dominating force that motivated all our actions, so that God *could abide* with and in us.

Nothing is impossible with God, and He is on our side to strengthen and guide us, while there is implicit faith, trust and obedience in love to Him.

Therein is a strong incentive which we can lay hold upon, directing us to a careful and obedient walk in the Truth. This is the knowledge and assurance that while we do so live, in the way of holiness and life, God's care is over us to the utmost, and—

"No man can pluck us out of His hands" (John 10:29).

But we must remember the awful fact that *we lose this care and guidance, and God is against us, rather than on our side, when the unclean things about us are allowed to defile our lives*, and when our attention and interests are directed away from the way of truth.

God is a jealous God. He is not to be mocked neither trifled with. He wants *ALL* our love and service. —E. W. B.

Without Spot to God

"*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect*"—Matthew 5:8.

This command of Jesus sets for us a high standard, which can be better understood if we note the many paragraphs preceding it which are examples of elevating the teaching contained in the Law for Israel to a higher level. The prophet Isaiah had predicted that the promised Messiah would—

". . . magnify the Law and make it honorable" (Isa. 42:21).

That this teaching was primarily intended for the class he was educating and preparing that they might be able to accept and follow a high standard, is shown by the opening verses of this fifth chapter of Matthew—

"He went up into a mountain, and when he was set, **his disciples** came unto him. And he opened his mouth and taught them."

For the world in general, these lofty sentiments and expressions of genuine tenderness and unassuming humility, are above and beyond what humanity is ever expected to rise to in the moral sense. The custom of retaliating as was permitted under the Mosaic law, is considered just and natural and all that can be expected of us mortal creatures.

We are not assuming that the world will accept such a high standard of ethics. Long ago, the patriarch Abraham was called out from an idolatrous people to accept a high standard, even as we are today asked to do (Gen. 17:1)—

"The Lord appeared unto Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God: Walk before Me and BE THOU PERFECT."

That perfection is the goal which we are to strive earnestly to attain, is indicated by such passages as the following—

"Warning every man and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that we may present **every man perfect** in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:28).

"Make you PERFECT in every good work to do His will" (Heb. 13:21).

"But the God of all grace, Who hath called you unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you PERFECT, stablish, strengthen, settle you"

(1 Peter 5:10).

That this absolute perfection has not yet been attained need not excuse us that we may say, "*We can not expect to reach perfection.*" We evidently ARE expected by God's grace and forgiveness to be accounted perfect.

If nothing of the kind could be said of those taken out of the world, of whom the apostles speak as—

"Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling,"

—*why are they called out of the world?* And did not Peter say the same in Acts 15:14—

"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to **take out from them** a people for His Name."

Of this small minority of called ones it is declared:

"Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom"

(Luke 12:32).

"Except your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees (which we know was an outward righteousness) ye shall in no case enter the Kingdom" (Matt. 5:20).

That this high and spiritual state of mind and character could ever be reached without prayer for guidance, assistance and forgiveness—even by those called saints in Christ—would of course be impossible. But, on the other hand, did not the Apostle say of those he was instructing in the obedience of faith—

"I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a **chaste virgin** to Christ?"

(2 Cor. 11:2).

What is that but a declaration that those betrothed to Christ—his Bride—are to be kept a *pure and holy community*, worthy to be presented to the righteous and holy Bridegroom, when the marriage of the Lamb is come? Thus he speaks of his Bride in the Song of Sol. 6:4—

"Thou art beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem."

Again, in verse 9—

"My dove, my undefiled, is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her; the daughters saw her and blessed her, yea the queens and the concubines, and they praised her."

Christ himself, the Bridegroom, offered himself—

". . . WITHOUT SPOT to God" (Heb. 9:14).

That this offering of himself was while he yet was of our mortal nature cannot be denied; therefore it was spotlessness of *character* which is meant. Yet, some will say, "But *we* cannot expect to be as *he* was."

This may be true in the absolute sense. Nevertheless, that the same expression is used of the community who are to be "the Bride, the Lamb's Wife" we see from Eph. 5:26—

"That he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be **holy and without blemish.**"

Speaking then of this same community, and not of all the world, we are commanded to fervently love all those comprising the Bride-to-be (1 Peter 1:22)—

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."

How could we manifest such love toward those outside, who have none of the lovable attributes which the spiritual and transformed community in the Ecclesia of the living God do really possess? How necessary then, the admonition:

"Let love be without dissimulation" (Rom. 12:9).

For if we are insincere in expressing love to our brethren and sisters, *what right have we to expect the Lord to love us?*

As all down through the ages of trial and purging of those called out of God to be constituents of His glorified and beautiful wife, there have been beautiful characters, so there *should be and must be at the present time.*

There will be found to be heroes whose virtues have not been sung; and there will be found sweet, pure, lovable characters, of whom we shall not be ashamed, but shall rejoice that we belong in their holy company.

The apostle Peter notes that transformation has occurred since those he addresses had obeyed the Truth; they had been purified, or purged from sin, and he adds (1 Pet. 1:23)—

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth, and abideth forever."

What a delight it should be to be counted worthy to be constituents of that spotless community—counted as sinless because ever praying for strength to overcome wherein we come short!

We think of the infinite mercy shown to us all and feel it was best expressed by the Apostle in Rom. 8:31-34—

"If God be for us who can be against us? He Who spared not His Own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall not He with him also freely give us all things?"

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?"

"It is Christ that died; yea rather that is risen again, who also maketh intercession for us."

Some may attempt to lay things to the charge of some of God's elect, who, like David and Peter, erred but struggled and prayed and were forgiven and counted perfect. What will their charges amount to after God has justified them? Christ not only interceded for Peter, for he said,

"I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."
—but as the apostle tells us, he—

". . . maketh intercession for us."

And in Hebrews 7:25, we read—

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Thus we are able to realize that all who will be counted worthy to enter into and remain in that household of God, will be without spot, and choicest of—

"First-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God."
—H. A. S.

Out of Egypt Have I Called My Son

"The Holy Spirit thus signifying, that the way into the Holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while the first Tabernacle was yet standing"—Heb. 9:8

PART TWENTY-SIX

The Mosaic shadow is antitypically exhibited in the writings of the prophets in connection with *the glory to be revealed* in "the day of Christ." Habakkuk beheld it in connection with the judgment in Teman, from whence the Eternal Spirit, in multitudinous manifestation, issued forth for the conquest of the earth, and the filling of it with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord and His praise—

"Thou wentest forth for the salvation of Thy people, even for salvation for Thine anointed"
(Hab. 3:13).

The prophet Zechariah also beheld the same glory of the Eternal Spirit incorporate in Christ and his brethren as they entered "the city of the great king" in triumph, after the destruction of the Gogian hosts on the mountains of Israel and in Bozrah, and the division of the Mount of Olives in the initiation of the physical changes necessary for the erection at Jerusalem of a "house of prayer for all nations," and the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, when—

"Every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts."
—when he shall be "*King over all the earth.*" His entrance into Jerusalem, accompanied by his brethren, after the destruction of Gog, is thus expressed:

"And the Lord my God shall come in, and all the saints with thee, and it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark."
Or, as Dr. Thomas renders it—

"There shall be no brightness, the splendid ones drawing in."
That is, Christ and his brethren will not then—

". . . shine as the brightness of the firmament,"

—but will suppress the glory of their nature until the work of conquest is completed, when they shall—

" . . . shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

—see Zech. 14, Dan. 12:3, Matt. 13:43, John 17:5.

Moses was permitted to *behold* this glory, as it is reflected in the angels, in whose presence he had spent forty days and nights, and in a very special manner too, as previously noticed. It is the purpose of God to bestow upon mortal men the same glorified, incorruptible nature possessed by them as taught by Christ, saying (Luke 20:35-36)—

"They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead . . . can die no more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

It is *certain*, however, that the children of Israel had no idea of this; and this fact was typified by *the vail* over Moses' face, illustrating their inability to—

"Look to the end of that which is abolished."

"Nevertheless," says Paul—

"When it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away."

Or, as he says in another place (Rom. 11:25-27)—

"Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the times of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written. There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is My covenant to them when I shall take away their sins."

In addition to the visible credential of the rays of light irradiating the countenance of Moses, the emblematical import of which we have already glanced at, a sanctuary was to be erected according to the divine pattern shown to Moses in the mount (Exo. 2 5:9), particulars of which were given to him on the occasion of his first interview with the Elohim, and set forth in chapters 25 to 30.

The apparent object of this, so far as immediately concerned the children of Israel, was, doubtless, that they might have constantly in their midst a visible assurance of the divine Presence. Its construction was light and portable, and suitable for the pilgrim nation journeying through a wilderness to the land of promise.

The prayer of Moses, after beholding the glory of Yahweh, was particularly directed with a view to the establishment of God's continual Presence in the midst of His Own people.

"Let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our sin, and take us for Thine inheritance."

And in the erection of this pilgrim-temple, where He might meet with and speak unto His people, and that they might draw nigh to Him, we behold the condescension of God, and the evidence of the prayer of Moses having been answered by Him.

The superintendence of the work was entrusted to two skilful artificers, *Bezaleel*, of the tribe of Judah, and *Aholiab*, of the tribe of Dan (Exodus 31:2-6; 35:30-34). Every member of the nation was invited to take part, and to contribute the materials specified (Exo. 25:1-8; 35:5-9).

The shittah or acacia tree grew abundantly in the neighborhood of Sinai, and, being adapted by its durability and lightness, was required in the construction of the tabernacle and its furniture; and would therefore necessitate the felling of considerable numbers of trees.

We can therefore imagine numbers of Israelites ranging the neighbourhood of their encampment in search of this material, and engaged in the collection of it in sufficient quantities for the purposes required.

Others of the nation were busily employed in the manufacture of the material for the curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet; and so throughout the entire work we behold men and women busying themselves in collecting and preparing the materials necessary for its completion, and consecrating the arts acquired in their sojourn in Egypt, in ready compliance with the commandments of God in this behalf.

The "building made with hands" consisted of two portions —The Holy Place and The Most Holy. The *Holy Place*, 20 cubits in length and 10 in height and width, was divided from the Most Holy by a veil. It was illumined only by a golden lamp or candlestick, with seven lights, fed with pure olive oil, there being no opening to admit the light from above. It was symbolical of the—

“True Tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.”
—in its present or *mortal* state; while the *Most Holy*, which formed a perfect cube of 10 cubits in length, breadth, and height, was symbolical of the *same* Tabernacle, in its future most holy or immortal and incorruptible state, so beautifully and graphically described by John in Rev. 21:9-27.

The area, or court, within which the Tabernacle stood, was an oblong square, 100 cubits in length by 50 in breadth, formed by curtains of fine linen, 5 cubits in height, hanging from pillars of wood, with capitals overlaid with silver and furnished with sockets of brass.

The Tabernacle was entered, at its eastern side, through a magnificent curtain, 10 cubits in width, supported on five pillars. Its dimensions inside were 30 cubits in length, 10 in breadth, and 10 in height.

It was formed of acacia-wood overlaid with gold, fixed into the ground by means of two tenons, each fitting into a socket of silver. At the top they were united by bars of acacia, five bars to each piece, passing through golden rings.

The roof was formed of several sets of curtains; the innermost, ten in number, formed of fine twined linen of various colors, and adorned with cherubic figures of curious workmanship; next to these were eleven curtains of goats' hair; then one of rams' skins, with the wool on, dyed red; and lastly, another of badgers', or, more probably, seals' skins.

Such was the Tabernacle, in brief outline. The altar of burnt-offering, the great laver for purification, the table of shewbread, the golden altar of incense, the golden lamp and its utensils, the ark of the covenant and its contents, and the mercy-seat, at either end of which rose two golden cherubim with outspread wings, and faces turned towards each other, and eyes cast downwards, as though desirous to look into its mysteries (1 Pet. 1:12), and towards the divine law, over which, seemingly so rigid and unbending, was the compassion of One forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin—all these things, with their spiritual significances, the reader will find fully dealt with in *The Law of Moses*, by our late brother Roberts.

"And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month that the tabernacle was reared up" (Exo. 40:17).

And after everything pertaining to it had been put into place:

"Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and feet."
—in the laver—

"When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the Lord commanded Moses."

"Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle" (Exo. 40:31-35).

The encampment of the Israelites before Sinai had, as we have seen, occupied upwards of a year, of which more than one-half had been spent in the preparation of the Tabernacle.

Its miraculous dedication was the divine intimation to Israel that thenceforward the new structure was to be the exclusive holy place to which all who would publicly worship Jehovah must approach, because He designed to make His glory rest on it and fill it.

How happy must have been the Israelites who had such a glorious symbol of the divine presence in their midst. *What people upon earth were ever before thus privileged?*

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

"THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE"

The Truth emancipates us from the depressing company of petty thoughts. It brings to us the joyful news of an age of light and strength and righteousness and joy, which shall dawn when the present night shall have passed away. It exhibits to us a destiny beyond every human aspiration in its height, and transcending our highest conceptions in its glory.

It holds before us a prize that beggars all ordinary appeals to human motive and human exertion—a prize that combines, in an ineffable form, all the conditions of well being that man has ever experienced or that the heart has ever conceived.

This whole coming glory is meanwhile, in the absolute prerogative of that wonderful man—the marvel of history—the Light of the World—God manifest in the flesh—Jesus crucified and now exalted, in whom abides all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

What shall we say, then, but that Paul was a wise man, whose company we shall try to keep when he said:

"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but loss that I may win Christ and be found in him."
—Bro. Roberts.

Thy Speech Bewrayeth Thee

"If any man among you SEEM to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is VAIN" —James 1:26

PART FOUR

Murmuring next comes before our attention. It is very natural to complain, find fault, and be dissatisfied like spoiled children whenever things are not just exactly as we think we would like them to be. But do we realize that we are *speaking against the love and providence of God?*

Even small and passing annoyances and dissatisfactions are manifestations of carnal thinking and evidences of lack of any real faith, for the promise is (Rom. 8:28)—

"ALL things work together for good to them that love God."

Either we believe that FULLY, or we do not believe it at all. There is no middle ground. How beautifully Job expresses the attitude of the spiritual mind—

"Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord and shall we not receive evil? . . .
"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him!"

We may feel that we could rise to this height in some great disaster, but often a more searching test of our character comes in the little daily disappointments that catch us off guard in our natural state when we are not heroically steeled for a great and showy display of patient resignation.

But let us remember that for murmuring under trials far heavier than we have to face, Israel (says Paul) were "*destroyed of the destroyer*," and this, he says, was an example for us. Therefore, let us—

"Do ALL things without murmurings" (Phil. 2:14).
* * *

Isa. 29:13 expresses a complaint God had against Israel—

"This people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor Me, but have removed their heart far from Me."

Lip-service. Are our *heart and mind* always fully with our lips in all our praise—in all our singing of hymns and attending of meetings and breaking of bread and doing of daily readings? If our minds tend to wander, then it is only an offensive mechanical lip-service that we are offering to the Great Creator upon whom we depend for every breath.

It is so fatally easy to slip into this, especially in matters like meetings and hymn singing, that have the character of repetition and familiarity.

To the prophet Jeremiah, even in the midst of his Lamentations for the destruction of his people and desolation of the land, God's mercies were seen with marvel and awe, as "new every morning" (Lam. 3:23).

We must perceive the mercy of the Creator with the same continual freshness and vividness and give all our heart and soul to His service, or we too shall fall into the rut of lip-service. The only way to keep our minds from wandering to other interests is *not to have any other interests*—to shun everything that does not properly fit into that pattern.
* * *

Harsh words call for special mention—not necessarily angry words, but just habitually, often thoughtlessly harsh words. The flesh is a harsh, coarse, irritable thing. Graciousness and gentleness do not come naturally. They are spiritual qualities.

Let us not make the sad mistake of thinking that contending for the Truth or raising children calls for harsh words at any time. Gentle words can do the job much better, much more impressively, much more lastingly, and with much deeper and sweeter results in the recipient.

In both fields discipline is often required to maintain faithfulness, but harsh words are no fitting part of it. *Harsh words are ALWAYS an ugly manifestation of our own inner flesh*: we must face this fact if we hope for healthy results.

It is particularly on occasions requiring discipline that solemn, gentle, well-weighed, impressive, Spirit-guided words are so essential. Harshness can only shrivel and blight, and breed harshness in return.

The true meekness and gentleness of Christ must be consistent on *all* occasions if it is to be part of our real character and not a cloak of convenience.

"The words of a wise man's mouth are grace" (Eccl. 10:12).

True, Christ, as the mouthpiece of God, spoke scathing words of judgment that were Spirit-inspired, but we are not called to be so used and so inspired, and the pattern laid down for us is clear—

"Meekness toward all" . . . "Speak evil of none."

Expose the whole, dark, worldwide fabric of sin and error in clear and unreserved terms, by the searching light of the Spirit Word—keep carefully separate from it all in faithfulness to divine command—but *always in gentleness and mercy and hope*, for who are we to pronounce another's judgment?

* * *

We have considered the many warnings and instructions concerning the spoken and written word (for the instructions apply equally to both). Let us in closing glance at its *powers and benefits and beauties*.

First we think of the Word of God.

"In the beginning was the Word."

"By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made."

And by that Word the gracious, glorious message of life and hope came to perishing man.

And in the fulness of times the Word was made flesh. All that marvellous message and purpose was focused in the Son of God—

"And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

And when he began his ministry of love and sacrifice among men, those who heard him—

". . . Wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth" (Luke 4:22).

The Word of God is our great treasure—able to make us wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3:15). Counsel concerning preserving its integrity is solemn and frequent—

"Hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13).

"To the law and to the testimony, if any speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20).

"If any man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God."

What a vast range of good is in the power of the tongue! *Toward God*—praise, worship, thanksgiving, confession, intercession, entreaty. *Toward man*—preaching, teaching, exhorting, comforting, encouraging, warning and rebuke—

"The lips of the righteous feed many" (Prov. 10:21).

"The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life."

"Death, and life, are in the power of the tongue."

Let us then, with firm determination, make the words of the Psalmist our own—

"*I am purposed that my mouth should not transgress . . .*

"*I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue . . .*

"I will keep my mouth with a bridle . . .

"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth . . . keep the door of my lips."

—G.V.G.

"WE LOOK FOR A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH"

We are looking for great things, because God has promised them. We are looking for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven, after an absence of more than eighteen centuries. We are looking for his interference in human affairs when he arrives.

We are looking for the violent overthrow, at his hands, of all the governments of the world. We are looking for the establishment, in his person, of a government in Jerusalem which shall rule the whole earth in righteousness, and kindness and true enlightenment and irresistible power, as the result of which mankind shall become a universal brotherhood, blessed with plenty and wisdom and joy.

We are looking for a participation in that government. We are looking for a place in the innumerable body of kings and priests, through whom the authority of their One glorious Head will be administered in all the earth.

In preparation for this exalted position we are looking for a physical renovation at the Lord's coming, such as it hath not entered into the heart of physiological speculation to conceive.

We are looking for that which will change this vile body that it may be fashioned like unto the incorruptible, glorious and immortal body of the exalted Lord Jesus Christ; by which all the saints of every age and nation will become a corporation of immortal rulers, gifted with exhaustless vigor, unerring wisdom, angelic grace, and endless life.

We are looking for the abolition of the present order of things, and the setting up of a new world in which joy will be established in righteousness and glory to God. —**Bro. Roberts.**

Signs of the Times

Not since the start of the "cold war" between the Communist and Western powers has war appeared so imminent as it was just a few weeks ago. The overthrow of the Iraq government and its deflection to the Nasser-controlled U.A.R., the swift movement of U. S. troops into Lebanon and British occupation of a portion of Jordan, and the tension created by the general situation in the Mideast had all the symptoms of coming armed conflict between the big Powers.

But the very fact that nothing more than local disturbances have arisen out of the Mideast revolutionary movements has raised hopes that the great Powers will be able to settle their differences, and so the "peace and safety" cry is again beginning to be heard from many quarters.

All this leads us to the conclusion that in all probability, when the last great war breaks in all its fury, it will come suddenly and unexpectedly upon the greater portion of humanity, "as a snare."

Because of the wholesale destruction that can be inflicted upon an unsuspecting enemy, **no aggressor would dare to strike when his foe was alert and prepared to strike back instantly**, but rather at a time when such an attack was least expected. A peaceful settlement of the present tense and ominous situation, followed by what may **appear** to be the establishment of peaceful relations between the nations, may set the stage for that swift, sudden and undeclared assault upon the bastions of the West by "Gog of the North parts."

It is certain that, no matter how the present disturbances in the Mideast are resolved, the aims, purposes and designs of the great Powers will remain unchanged.

If actual war is avoided, it will only mean that they will attempt to profit by the delay to make their defences still stronger, waiting a better opportunity to achieve their ends.

Mideast Problems and Purposes

It is clear that Russia's purpose in the Mideast is to keep the whole Arab world in ferment in an effort to induce the Arabs to force out the Western powers from the area and cripple their hold on Mideast oil. To this end they favor any anti-Western movement or revolt, and give their support to Nasser's pan-Arab ambitions.

The Western powers are chiefly interested in maintaining their control over Mideast oil, their commitments to Israel to prevent her being swallowed up by a united Arab anti-Israel coalition, and their desire to prevent this highly strategic area from falling into Russian hands.

Meanwhile, the problems which directly affect the common Arab people go unresolved as the great Powers contend with each other for domination of the whole area. The awful plight of the Palestinian refugees; the feudal system of government, in which the ruling classes, at present fattened with oil revenues, live in luxury and splendor while the masses of the people live in poverty, squalor and ignorance; the revolutionary movement within the Arab world against this oppression, which is common in both pro-Communist and pro-Western Arab states—all these are problems which receive little or no attention as foreign powers and local political aspirants contend for power. It is a repetition of the old story of the 2 cats "protecting" the mouse, each ready to devour it the moment the other's back is turned.

Not till he comes who will rule in equity and justice, will heed the cry of the needy, and break in pieces the oppressor, will the Mideast problems be resolved and these unhappy people be freed from the poverty, ignorance and oppression which has been their lot for ages. The clash between the two great groups of nations now contending for domination of the area we believe is not far away. It is **then**—after terrific divine judgments are poured out—that the subdued Arab peoples, as well as Israel, will turn to Christ and the prophetic Word of God will be fulfilled, when—

"In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land.

"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. 19:21-25.

The Iraqi Situation

The Iraq revolution, which stirred up the present crisis in the Mideast, is now generally recognized as having accomplished its purpose and the new government must be accepted for what it is. Obviously the change in government is a heavy blow to the Bagdad pact, as Iraq was the only Arab member of this organization, which was intended to act as a bulwark against Soviet aggression in the Mideast.

It is a great victory for Nasser of Egypt, another step in his campaign to unite all Arab states in an anti-Western bloc and favorable to Russia. It is a tremendous propaganda **victory for Russia** and a distinct blow to Western prestige in the Mideast, forcing them to take steps which can so easily be made to appear as direct aggression.

And the great fear is that it will lend encouragement to other Arab nationalist groups to follow the example of Iraq. It has given to Russia a right to demand a major voice in Mideast affairs, and has cast her in the role of champion of Arab nationalism and protector of the Arab and other small nations.

However, the West is trying to garner a few crumbs of comfort from what appears to be a tendency on the part of the new government of Iraq to shy away from complete domination by Nasser and the U.A.R.

Also it appears at present that the desire for Western markets for oil may prevent Iraq's rich oil fields from falling completely into the hands of the anti-Western bloc. Be this as it may, **the West has received a blow from which it cannot fully recover**, and Russian stock in the area has now soared to dizzy heights.

"Many People With Thee," and Why?

It has appeared to many strange that a small communist minority has been able to control the governments of countries whose population was overwhelmingly Catholic and anti-Communist. Of course, it can be conceded that, in the final analysis, the nearness of Russian military might would be the deciding factor in retaining the "loyalty" of these satellites.

However, it is becoming more and more evident that **economic and industrial dependence on Russia** is becoming one of the major reasons why "many peoples" are inseparably bound to the Soviet bloc of nations. Their very economic existence depends upon it. And, as Russian production expands, this dependence becomes more pronounced.

Figures recently released show that seven Russian satellite nations in Europe depend upon Russia or other Communist nations for more than 70% of their trade, which if withdrawn, would mean industrial and economic ruin.

As Soviet military might increases, and her industrial production expands, it becomes evident that propaganda from the "free world" will fall on deafened ears of a people who are inescapably shackled in many ways to the great "Colossus of the North," who will eventually lead them to their destruction on the mountains of Israel.

"Edom, Moab, and the Children of Ammon"

British armed forces in Jordan, the ancient territory of Edom, Moab and Ammon, is particularly significant at this time. Ever since Britain withdrew from Palestine it has been certain that she would return whenever her interests were threatened; that she would be there at the end to challenge Gog when he invades the land, and to furnish a certain amount of protection to the Jewish refugee who will flee from the wrath of the invader when—

"He shall go forth with the great fury to destroy and utterly make away many"

—Dan. 11:40-45.

U.S. Bases Gird the Earth

While the Western world views Russia as the great aggressor and threat to world peace, in all fairness it should be recognized that it is not without reason that the Soviets bring the same charge against the West, especially the U.S.A.

To those who understand that God rules in the kingdom of men, and that all nations are so many segments of Satan's dominion, ruled and controlled by the lusts of the flesh, we should not be deceived into thinking that any particular nation is guiltless in the race for supremacy in this mad world.

In addition to the fact that her military bases encircle the globe, the U.S. has commitments with 44 nations, which involve mutual defence and economic aid to any of these nations who are the victims of aggression in any form. It is particularly irksome to the Soviets that U.S. bases, as they express it, "form an atomic ring around the Soviet empire."

And so, in a world hopelessly divided into two antagonistic groups who are committed to each other's destruction, what is there to expect but Armageddon? —O.B.

"YE HAVE NEED OF PATIENCE"

A perseverance in the course of life that is "acceptable to God" will bring great peace when pursued with a pure regard to His approbation. It will not, however, be found a path of roses. While toward God there will be peace, towards man there will be much to mortify and perturb—much to endure in the way of present sacrifice and crucifixion of feeling. The path of probation is purposely a path of thorns. Hence Paul's words—

"Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise; for yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come and will not tarry"
(Heb. 10-36-37).

See also Peter:

"Salvation (is) ready to be revealed in the last time, wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Christ" (2 Pet. 1:5-7).

The accepted of God in all] past ages have exemplified this rule—

"Take, my brethren, the prophets for an example of suffering, affliction and patience"
(James 5:10).

Of the congregation of the chosen as a whole, it was said to John when he saw them glorified in vision and asked who they were—

"These are they who came out of great tribulation (Rev. 7:14).
—reminding us of Paul's words to the churches among whom he went to strengthen them in a season of great trouble—

"We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God." —**Bro. Roberts**

1958 Texas Gathering Report

"Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord'."—Lev. 23.24.

Such was the spirit of the assembly of brethren and sisters who congregated at the Hye grounds to continue the spiritual activities upon this spot into its 80th year.

It is interesting to observe that this figure 80 is equal to two periods of time similar to Israel's wanderings in the wilderness probation, covering Jew and Gentile. In the overall picture we see world events moving rapidly and we wonder if the Lord will return and call forth his elect before this association can be renewed.

The design of each of these assemblies is to renew the spiritual strength of the servants of God, that a people may be prepared for the coming of the Lord. The Feast of Tabernacles was a joyous type of Kingdom Age unto which all faithful eyes are directed.

This assembly was a foretaste of that blessed event, as close as we are able to come during our probation. It has to be experienced to be really appreciated. It is different from the usual ecclesial gatherings in the nature of its arrangements. There is a feeling of being separated from the world in a

literal manner as the river is crossed daily, or if one remains encamped under the natural arbor of the trees for the seven days of the assembly.

While the Gathering is primarily a Texas event, the power of its spirit has drawn visitors from great distances. Literally the four corners of United States were represented, and many parts of the Midwest, and Canada to the North.

The effects of the work cannot be measured. Its influence is preserved in the records of the Texas Christadelphian Tape Library, which service is available to all who desire to be strengthened by the addresses delivered there. We pray that the efforts of all who labored to the working out of this gathering, whether speakers, listeners or those who labored behind the scenes to keep the Gathering functioning, may be acceptable in the eyes of the Creator and that all may have been done with an eye single to His honor and praise.

SUNDAY

The usual arrangement of Sunday morning meeting at the home of sis. Frank Martin was again the opening event of the Gathering. Sis. Martin, a pioneer in this quarter of the vineyard, has ever ministered unto the needs of faithful brethren and sisters who have assembled for the meetings. Upon this occasion our bro. Sommerville of Lake Ariel, Penna., exhorted the brethren and sisters to faithfulness in the remaining days before the coming of the Master.

During the afternoon and evening those who were to dwell as Israel, on the grounds, prepared their camps in readiness for the week's activities.

MONDAY

The orderly carrying out of all arrangements was assured by the business meeting early Monday morning.

"Let all things be done decently and in order" 1 Cor. 14:40

The program of daily readings first, followed by three addresses during the day was once again adopted. The power of first laying a foundation in the Word of God was appreciated by all, and it was felt that this is one of the most powerful stimulants to godliness. We paused to stoop down and look into the Word of God and have our faith built up.

The activities of the building of Jerusalem in the days of Nehemiah were forcefully directed to our attention. The application to our times was impressed as the walls of the Truth are secured against the power of those who would compromise with the enemy.

The direction of the servants of God was shown to be under the hand of the Master Shepherd, as the flock pass under the rod of correction, necessary in each individual case, and the staff of protection from harm and danger.

While the outward evidence of the labors of Nehemiah and faithful brethren of all ages may fall into decay with the passage of time, we pray that the Heavenly Father will remember us for good. This has been assured in the hope of the resurrection which was clearly set before us from God's Word in the evening address.

TUESDAY

The second day's series took our minds back to the Call of Abraham, the root of our faith, which, in all those of like mind with that faithful patriarch, is counted for righteousness. The position of the Creator as Ruler of the vast and complex universe was linked with His boundless goodness to

the children of men. We were impressed with the abundant witness left on record for the children of men to love and serve God in humble submission.

While the evidence of God is on every hand for all to see and believe, the authority of an all inspired, irrefutable Bible was shown to be in our hands.

"But chiefly Thy compassion, Lord, is in the Gospel seen—
There like a sun, Thy mercy shines, without a cloud between."

WEDNESDAY

Wednesday's addresses changed the scene to a personal aspect as we were directed to the preparing ourselves for the marriage of the Lamb, to clothe ourselves with the wedding garment, to purify ourselves by holy, dedicated, service unto God. The constant reminder of this necessary cleansing was illustrated by reference to the weekly memorial of the Passover in the Breaking of Bread service, the cleansing and washing of ourselves to partake in an acceptable manner; that we must enter into the guest chamber following the bearer of life. In the evening we were reminded of the prospect of fulfilling prophecies concerning God's national witnesses, the Jews: that their presence in the land today is an indication of a far greater position for that nation in the Age to Come.

THURSDAY

Our minds once more were centered on Nehemiah, builder and statesman of the Lord, laboring in troublous times against the wickedness of God's enemies. We were saddened by the perversity of the flesh, which would undo the efforts of such able men; yet impressed by the lesson that we are also human and must ever be on guard against the same thing in ourselves.

A true perception of our calling teaches us that humbling ourselves under the Mighty Hand of God, loving and displaying the Divine attributes of mercy and judgment is what the Creator requires of His people.

When we consider the exalted position of God in the heavens, comprehend the fact that they are the Lord's and that He has given the earth to the children of men who serve Him, we declare—

"What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visited him?"

FRIDAY

As the week began to draw toward a close we were exhorted to contend earnestly for the Faith put in trust in our hands, to make no compromise with the world and its ways. The power of the Holy Spirit being withdrawn, we find our power, strength and confidence in the Word of God which is able to make us wise unto salvation, together with the guiding and directing care of our Heavenly Father.

National Israel, together with the lives of their first King Saul and the faithful Samuel, were presented to us in such a manner as to exhort and warn us of the weakness of the flesh.

SATURDAY

The orderly arrangement for the 1959 Fraternal was agreed upon by those present on Saturday morning.

Again we returned to a consideration of the life of Saul, this time in relation to David. The fact that we have become the anointed of the Lord, does not assure our acceptance, unless we continue faithfully in God's service unto the end.

During the daily Bible readings our children were ministered unto by the brethren and sisters in separate classes. This is one of the most important aspects of preaching the Word, requiring diligence and patience on the part of those so engaged.

It was therefore appropriate that we should assemble Saturday afternoon to listen to the lessons of many of these scholars, as they spoke of God, His creation, His love and mercy—"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise."

May we bring our lives into such conformity that we may be accounted worthy of an entrance into the Kingdom of God.

In the evening we were exhorted to lift up our heads, by a review of the Signs of the Times indicative of the near approach of the Son of God.

SUNDAY

Our final activities were the apex unto which all the week's assemblies had directed our minds. Assembled together at the appointed hour to recall the Father's great love and mercy, we were exhorted to examine our relation to God as His children and to one another as brethren and sisters. The association of these two thoughts impressed the true privileged position of Christ's brethren and sisters and their fellowship with God and each other.

As we again folded our tents and returned to our various quarters of the vineyard, we rejoiced that we had been privileged to have this united communion with the Living Word. We pray that the lessons may have fallen into good and honest hearts to bring forth fruit unto the Creator's praise.

TAPE SERVICE AVAILABLE TO ALL

The Houston ecclesia has made a large collection of tape recordings of addresses by various brethren. They have tapes of the Hye Gatherings since 1953, the London Gatherings since 1954, the Boston Gatherings of 1956 and 1957, the 1956 Toronto Gathering, and individual addresses, exhortations and lectures of brethren in Canada, England and U.S.A.

Please write to bro. Charles Banta, 10606 Wiggins, Houston 29, Texas, U.S.A.

Ecclesial News

HONESDALE, Penna.—O.F. Hall, Main St.—Bible Class and Sun. Sch., 10:30 a.m.; Exhortation and Memorial Service, 11:30 a.m.

We are pleased to report that another of our Sunday School pupils has "obeyed from the heart that form of sound words" divinely prescribed for salvation.

On Aug. 20 JANET FRISBIE, daughter of bro. & sis. Kenneth Frisbie, was examined at the home of bro. & sis. Chas. Frisbie, by bro. N. Mammone, assisted by other brethren.

After witnessing her good confession, all the brethren and sisters present accompanied her to an adjacent lake that same evening where the baptism, performed by bro. David Sommerville, took place.

Though the many fulfilling prophecies give promise that the end of all our probation is near, nevertheless the race must be run to the end. We pray our young sister continues in the narrow way which alone leads to life eternal.

Loving greetings to all, —bro. H. A. Sommerville

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.

We have had the pleasure of meeting around the table of the Lord with bre. Growcott (Detroit), C. H. Thomson (Boston), and Wayne Wolfe Jr. (Lampasas). Bre. Growcott and Thomson each spoke to us the word of exhortation.

We are happy to report that bro. Elson Frisbie, after a satisfactory interview with the examining committee, is again working with us in the upbuilding and strengthening of the ecclesia.

Sis. Mildred Banta is in Hedgecroft Hospital, 5120 Montrose Blvd., Houston. We pray that her condition will soon improve so that she may resume her work in the ecclesia.

May it be the utmost desire of all to strive together in unity and love to the end that the Lord may find us diligently pursuing his work in the vineyard when he returns. —bro. Charles Banta

Correspondence

Dear Brethren and Sisters, Loving Greetings in the One Faith

When the disciples with Jesus on the Mount of Olives said—

"Tell us what shall be the sign of thy coming and the end of the age."
—they no doubt expressed a hope voiced by many of the prophets to whom God revealed things to come, but when they asked, "How long?" they were given to know that all that was to be revealed at the "time of the end."

From our reading of the many signs given by the various prophets and Jesus Christ, surely we cannot be mistaken that we are in the very "time of the end," the signs being too numerous to mention.

There does not appear to (be a tribe or nation in all the world who are not in a restless or disturbed state—truly a state of perplexity—seeking a way out when no way out will be given them:

"Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (Luke 21:26).

When we see these things foretold by Jesus and the prophets, how thankful to God should we few in number be that we are permitted to see and understand what the "Great Ones" of the earth cannot see.

The whole world is so taken up with the things of the world, they have no time or inclination to take heed to or study the Word of God, and learn of things to come.

Of the many signs of the end, it appears to me the Return of Israel is the clearest and greatest, and yet the religious teachers of the world are dumb on the subject. Speaking to one recently, I asked him what he thought of world affairs. He replied, "It is the end."

Questioning him further, I asked, "Why don't you religious teachers tell the people of these things?" He replied, "I do a little, but I have to be careful." They appear to be afraid of the result to their congregation.

What is today known as the Middle East is rapidly becoming the focal point for all nations—

"And they shall come up against My people of Israel . . . it shall be **in the latter days**, and I will bring them against MY LAND" (Eze. 38:16).

"WHEN I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also **gather all nations**, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat" (Joel 3:1-2).

What most people are thinking about and relying on for safety are the great inventions in weapons of war as a deterrent to the aggressor, but they know not the ways of God. The British Prime Minister stated when in the U. S. recently that the West was "too strong to be attacked," and people will rely on that.

One thing seems to me outstanding—that is **the clear lead of Russia over all nations** in the orbiting of their huge Sputniks, with which no one, not even the U. S., has yet been able to do anything to compare.

This is a great factor to bolster the courage and pride Of the Russians. I often think that it is remarkably like Lucifer, the King of Babylon, and will end the same (Isa. 14:12-14).

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the Mount of the Congregation, in the sides of the north."

Russia's star today is swiftly rising to pre-eminence in the political heavens, the fear and wonder of the world, and her covetous eye looks toward the Mount of the Congregation, but "Fear not, little flock," though all the world fears, for down it will come at the appointed time.

When nations are actually talking of sending satellites to the moon, "nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do"—but **we know the end!**

We are saddened by events among those bearing the name of Christ, especially in relation to those who, having realized their mistake in having left us to join a larger group, now cannot bring themselves to face the facts and return, but must seek to form another group of their own.

May I in humility suggest this?—What we all require to do is to study human nature more in the light of the Word of God—"Let a man **examine himself**"—if we do we shall find that the cause of our own troubles and those of others also is the perversity of human nature.

Our difficulty is not so much in not **knowing**, as in **overcoming**. "To him that OVERCOMETH" are the promises made.

We here are all very pleased with the way the Berean is edited. It is a monthly assistance to us in obeying the admonition of the apostle Paul to—

"GIVE ATTENDANCE TO READING."

Continual meditative reading of the Word is essential to spiritual life. We all know from experience how helpful is a thought here or there which has perhaps not been noticed before. We are (or should be) "laborers together with God"—

"Ye are God's husbandry; ye are God's building."

The apostle goes on to show the materials of which the building can be built: gold, silver, precious stones, etc. Then—

"Know ye not that YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD? . . .

