

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

Our Warfare

"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar"—1 John 2:4

IN HIS various letters, Paul compares our walk in the Truth to service in the army. This becomes a striking illustration when we realize what becomes of a person who takes on the duties of a soldier. His first act is to renounce all rights as a citizen. This is done by swearing allegiance to a king or president. After that, he is no longer his own, but becomes a servant of the state, and must serve his master in fighting his wars even unto death.

The comparison is significant. However there is one marked difference, and that is found in the *armour and weapons* (2 Cor. 10:3-5)—

"For though we walk in the flash, we do not war after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;

"Casting down reasonings, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

To carry on a successful warfare, a soldier must be adequately equipped. Paul enumerates the equipment required by a good soldier of Jesus Christ as a *girdle* of Truth, a *breastplate* of Righteousness, the preparation of the Gospel of peace for *shoes*, the *shield* of Faith, a *helmet* of Salvation and the *sword* of the Spirit which is the Word of God. This, says Paul, is the whole armour of God (Eph. 6:13-17).

It will be noted from this analysis that the sword of the Spirit is the only weapon we are permitted to use. Therefore, our success in this spiritual warfare will depend upon our use of this sword, and *the strength by which we employ it will depend upon our knowledge of the Word of God, and our knowledge of the Word will depend upon the time we give to its study, reading and meditation.*

* * *

A GOOD soldier, in any army, is one who gives strict attention to the commands of his superior officer. If we are to war a good warfare, then this principle must be applied so that we will give strict attention to the directions of the Captain of our Salvation.

The use of the sword of the Spirit is usually associated with the public proclamation of the Gospel, or in exhortation. But *the personal aspect of its use is perhaps greater.* In Matt. 18:1, the disciples asked Jesus—

"Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

This opened the way for Jesus to give expression to some of his most lofty and forceful teaching on the subject of humility and forgiveness—

"Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (v. 3).

There are two essential features in this statement that we do well to observe. One is stated and the other implied. We must humble ourselves or we shall not enter the kingdom. The antithesis of humility is pride. Therefore, the implication is that a proud person is unfit for the kingdom of God, for he would be unwilling to use the sword of the Spirit when dealing with his brother. James sums it up when he says (4:6)—

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the bumble."

This whole 18th chapter of Matthew should be stamped upon our minds with an impression that would never grow cold. Especially that portion that forms one of the most important directives of the Captain of our Salvation—

"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault BETWEEN THEE AND HIM ALONE: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

"But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

"And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the ecclesia: but if he neglect to hear the ecclesia, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (vs. 15-17).

It is generally conceded that this commandment of Jesus is neglected more than any other; but that is no reason for us to follow a wrong course. If a problem arises among members of an ecclesia, and one or more refuse to obey this commandment, but endeavour to circumvent it, let them remember that (1 John 2:4)—

"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him."

Those are strong words, are they not? Yes, but they are true. Oh that we might keep these words of John, and bind them for a sign upon our hands that they may be as frontlets between our eyes. If we did, we would not ask, as Peter did—

"How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till **seven** times?"

We would be ready and willing to forgive him *seventy times seven*, as Jesus said.

This statement of Jesus preceded the parable of the unmerciful servant. Here Jesus enforces the lesson of mutual forgiveness as the imperative duty among his servants. And he does it by using a comparison that cannot be misunderstood. The measure of God's forgiveness to us is represented by a sum equal to about *10 million dollars*, while the measure of forgiveness between brother and brother is represented by a nominal sum equal to about *15 dollars*.

In the parable, when the brother refused to forgive his brother for so trivial a trespass, *God cancelled His immeasurable forgiveness*, and delivered him to the tormentors. The comment of Jesus should remain in our hearts as it were a burning fire shut up in our bones, for it comes from the Word of God—

"So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye FROM YOUR HEARTS forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" (v. 35).

If we are not willing to use the sword of the Spirit to *put away all bitterness, wrath and anger, and to be tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us*, then it would be far better to cease calling ourselves Christadelphians, and go our several ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise. But such a course would be madness and folly. Therefore, let us be strong and of good courage that we may DO his commandments, and thereby have right to the tree of life.

How happy we would be, in the closing days of our life, to be able to say with Paul—

"I have fought a good fight!"

—Editor

Subjected to Vanity—in Hope

"The creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him Who hath subjected the same in hope"—Romans 8:20

By **BROTHER JOHN THOMAS**

THE LORD God, having arranged the foundation of the world, in the sentences pronounced upon the transgressors; and commenced the preparation of the Kingdom in the stipulations of the New Law: decreed their expulsion from the garden eastward in Eden.

As the Serpent had said, the man had become "as the gods," or Elohim, "to know good and evil," in consequence of eating the forbidden fruit. He had known good only in his novitiate; but, being lifted up with pride, he had fallen into the condemnation of the devil (1 Tim. 3:6), and had come to know also by experience both sorrow and pain.

This was a great calamity; but not so great as that a greater might not befall him, even in Paradise. He had eaten of one tree, and his presumption might cause him to take and eat of the other. The consequences of this eating, superadded to the first, would have rendered his situation still more deplorable than it was.

He now knew evil, as the Elohim had done before him; but there was hope of deliverance from it when he should return to the dust whence he was taken; but if he should eat of the Tree of the Lives, this hope would be cut off; and he would live for ever the subject of weeping, sorrow, and pain. The misery of being the subject of evil for ever is forcibly expressed by Job. When reduced to the deepest distress, he laments, saying—

"When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; then Thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions: so that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life. I loathe it; **I would not live alway: let me alone; for my days are vanity**" (Job 7:13-16).

But, if Adam had eaten of the Tree of Life, when reduced to such misery as this he would have sought death, but it would have fled from him. He would have found no deliverance. To prevent, then, the replenishment of the earth with undying sinners, the Lord God said to Elohim—

"Behold, the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now lest he put forth his hand and take also of the Tree of the Lives, and eat, and live for ever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man."

This is a very remarkable passage of Scripture. It contains much in a few words. The points which stand out, shining like two stars, are the acknowledgement that *man had become as the gods* by his offence; and, secondly, that he was expelled from Paradise *that he might not live for ever*.

The finality of creation, providence, and redemption is, *man upon the earth, glorious, honourable, and immortal, in a state of unmingled good*. It was because God loved man, and out of mercy to him, that He drove him out of the garden. Had He been actuated by malignity (a feeling, by-the-bye, that has no place in the heart of God), He would have left him free to involve himself in everlasting misery by eating of the tree of lives. But He did not create the man for such a destiny; nor did He subject his posterity to evil by a stern necessity, that it might in any mode of existence be consigned to interminable torment of mind, body, or both.

The creed that inculcates this is God-dishonouring, and expresses the foolish thoughts of sinful flesh, unenlightened by His Law and Testimony. It is the vapouring of the pagan mind, adopted by the Apostasy, and transfused into the symbols of its credulity. As it knows not how to display the divine character in any other light than the propensities, the faintly-illuminated intellect, and the perverted sentiments the flesh exhibit, it presents God to the sons of men as more like the Saturn, or Moloch, of the heathens, who devoured their own offspring, in shrieks and groans, than as One Who so loves the world that he beseeches it to be reconciled to Him (2 Cor. 5:19-20), and to accept, without money or price, the exceeding great things He has in store.

Thus the "religious world" is ruled by terror. The little faith it professes, works not *by love* (Gal. 5:6) to the *purification* of its heart (Acts 15:9), but by the unceasing apprehension of burning in molten lava through endless ages. It works by "fear, which hath torment," and debases the soul; so that were it not for its fears, it would be honest and confess that it cared neither for God nor His religion. But—

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

The world of professors, therefore, deceives itself in supposing that it loves God.

"He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

It loves Him not, for its conscience is defiled.

"Love is the fulfilling of the law."

Was Adam afraid of God so long as he continued obedient? As soon, however, as he sinned, fear seized upon him, and he fled from the sound of His voice, and hid himself. The righteous man's fear of God is the fear of offending one he loves. *God is terrible only to His enemies*. His sons and daughters confide in Him with the affection of children; and He protects them with all the love and jealousy of His holy and blessed Name.

Being ignorant of "the exceeding great and precious promises" relating to the Kingdom of God, the leaders of the people know not in what other way to move them to "get religion," as their phrase is. Hence, they pretend to preach "the terrors of the law." But "religion" got by such a process is worth nothing. Nay; I will retract this. It is worth *something*. A religion of terror, so long as it is believed, is useful as a system of *ecclesiastical police*; which, associated with the civil and military forces, assists materially in keeping the world in awe. Except for the fear of what may be hereafter, professors would be as lawless as the antediluvian giants; and thus, by the ecclesiastical antagonism of society being destroyed, the earth would be filled with violence as before the flood.

Superstition is useful in maintaining order until the period shall arrive to supersede it by "wisdom and knowledge," which will be the stability of the times pertaining to the Kingdom of God (Isa. 33:6). But as a means of inheriting this Kingdom, and of entitling men to the crown of righteousness, a religion which works by terror is utterly worthless. Remove the terror, and the religion's gone; except in so far, indeed, as the possession of it is necessary to the preservation of its "temporalities," "vested interests," and worldly advantages.

But the "pure and undefiled religion" of God has no present temporalities, or worldly interests. It has no "lands, tenements and hereditaments"; nor "states," colleges, or "sacred edifices." It is like the Son of God in the days of his flesh; homeless, houseless, and poverty-stricken among the sons of men.

It has great riches, and good things in store for the poor in this world who are rich in faith (James 2:5), it promises them the possession of the world (1 Cor. 3:22), with all the honor and glory, and riches of it, with endless life for the enjoyment of them; but it requires faith in God with filial

obedience to His law, in a time of tribulation (Acts 14:22; 2 Tim. 3:12) as the condition of the inheritance.

It is perfectly absurd to imagine that men who are revelling in all the luxuries, conveniences, and comforts of life; enjoying the honor, glory, and friendship of the world, as do the ecclesiastics of antichristendom in their several ranks, orders, and degrees—to suppose, I say, that such can inherit the Kingdom of God with Jesus and that "cloud of witnesses," of whom Paul says "the world was not worthy," is preposterous.

If men would reign with Christ, they must *believe his doctrine, and suffer with him* (2 Tim. 2:6), in enduring persecution for the Word's sake (Mark 10:29-30). They must separate themselves from "the churches," both State and Nonconformist, which have a name to live, but are dead in trespasses and sins. The whole system is rotten; and awaits only the manifestation of the Lord's presence to be abolished with signal marks of his displeasure.

Therefore, let all honest men, lay and clerical, who shall believe the Truth, come out from among them, and be separate. Better stand alone for the Kingdom of God's sake, than be numbered with the multitude in the day of Christ, who will be denied permission to "eat of the tree of life and live for ever."

When man was expelled from Paradise, the Lord God, apprehending some new act of presumption, placed a guard over the Tree of Lives. This tree, it will be remembered, was planted in the midst of the garden. Now, when Adam was driven out—

"The Lord placed at the east of the garden of Eden, Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life."

This would seem to indicate that Adam was driven out in an easterly direction; had he gone westward, the tree of life would have been between him and the Cherubim; so that it would still have appeared accessible, and have tempted him to try to get at it; which would doubtless have been his destruction.

The Cherubim and sword were to guard the Way of the Tree, so that it could not be approached. If they were disposed to make a circuit to avoid the Cherubim, the flaming sword, or devouring flame, flashed on every side; "it turned every way to keep it" from being invaded by presumption.

From this arrangement, they either saw the tree of life no more; or, saw it only in the distance. The latter is the more probable. The sight of it from time to time would remind them of what they had lost; and, from what they had learned of the effect producible upon the eater of its fruit, it suggested the possibility of mortal man putting on immortality. This was a thing to be desired. But they could not get at the tree; how could they then attain it? There were but two of them, and neither of them could answer the question. There were no Scriptures testifying to them—

"This is the way, walk ye in it."

They were ignorant of "the way leading unto life"; and, if they had not been "taught of God," they would have remained ignorant of it for ever. The thinking of the flesh could never have discovered it; for *the obtaining of immortality involved the belief and practice of things which it was utterly impossible for the heart of man to conceive.*

We have an illustration of this in the endeavour of the heathen philosophers to solve the problem. Being ignorant of God's knowledge they ran into the most absurd speculations. They thought that immortality was a sort of ghost inside of a man that went to the fields of Elysium when death dissolved its union with the body. They regarded this innate principle as a particle of the divine

essence from which proceeded all virtuous actions; while vice was the natural result of the operation of the matter of the body, which was essentially malignant. The apostle refers to this in part when he says (Rom. 1:22)—

"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."

Hence, he styles "the wisdom of the wise" "foolishness"; and, as the Corinthians had received the Gospel of the Kingdom, which teaches a very different doctrine, he inquires—

"Hath not God made foolish, the wisdom of the world?"

Has He not shown the absurdity of their speculations about "souls," "immortality," and "the nature of the gods"?

They had no idea of immortality being conferred only upon men who might be accounted worthy of a certain kingdom. This was a doctrine which the flesh, with all its thinking, and with all its logic, had no conception of. It never thought of the Kingdom of God and the Name of a particular personage, as the channel through which immortality was to flow. It was lost in reveries about Elysium and Tartarus; and the river Styx which flowed between them; and about Charon and his ferry-boat; and ghosts; and three-headed Cerberus; and the snake-haired furies; and Pluto "king of hell."

But of "glory, honor, incorruptibility, and life," an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance, the recompense of reward to the subjects of a righteousness by faith—of such a "prize" as this, to be sought after by *doing the will of God* they were as utterly ignorant as an unborn babe. Well might the apostle say in the language of the prophet: —

"Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of men, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit" (1 Cor. 2:9-16).

—that is, to those who received the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Immortality, then, and the *way to it*, are things about which man must have remained for ever ignorant, so long as their discovery depended upon the thinking of the flesh. In other words, they are matters purely of divine testimony; and as faith is the belief of testimony, men can have no faith in them beyond what is stated in the written Word.

The carnal mind, by reflecting upon its own consciousness, may be "of opinion" that what it terms "I myself" is immaterial because it thinks, and "therefore immortal"; but beyond that it can never go. Opinion implies doubt; for if a matter be beyond doubt, it is no longer opinion, but faith or knowledge.

Where, then, is the man, be he philosopher or theologian, who can demonstrate the existence of an "immortal soul" in the animal man, by a "thus it is written," or a "thus saith the Lord"? A few phrases in Scripture may be twisted, and tortured into an inference—which, however, becomes lighter than vanity before the direct testimonies of the Word to the contrary.

Be Ye Reconciled to God

"O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches."

By **BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS**

SO EXCLAIMED David by the Spirit, and so must every man feel who is enlightened to apprehend and love the God of David. On every hand we are confronted with the manifest products of divine wisdom. Our own bodies, in every part and fibre and movement; the million vegetable structures, from the tiniest fungus to the oak of the forest; the teeming world of animate life in land and ocean; the glorious arch of heaven with its azure depths, and the stupendous and shining machinery of the starry host—let the mind reflect on them, and there is but one deliverance at all adequate, and that is the exclamation of David. In wisdom—perfect wisdom and measureless power, they have all been, and are continually sustained.

We listen with impatience to the man who thinks he can deliver us from all sense of mystery in the case by some or any theory of self-evolution. We tell him the facts are against him, because self-evolution implies a beginning point at which evolution had not taken place; and it is a mathematical necessity that there must at that point have existed

A POWER CAPABLE OF INITIATING THE EVOLUTION.

And when he asks us, "*But who made God?*"—we answer, As *something* must never have been made, we must on any theory accept an inscrutable fact; and it is more according to reason to accept an inscrutability that was equal to the evolution than an inscrutability which—having no wisdom or power of initiative—could not be equal to it.

And while we are discussing with him—unfortunately the need for discussing it is forced upon us every day—we turn to the Bible and say, *Man, while you and I are discussing matters alike beyond the grasp and settlement of human intellect on one side or other of the question, the question is settled for us by the Book.*

This Book cannot be got rid of. It is not a question of discrepancies or questionable authenticities—which by the way do not exist in the case, but are only alleged by the unscrupulous malice which in its turn deceives honesty in many cases. It is a question of the whole character of a book which is a library, extending over thirty centuries in its composition.

Study this character: read this book: read it daily and diligently, as the transcendent importance of the subject demands, and you will find that it is its own evidence. It cannot be accounted for on any theory of human composition. It defies explication in all its narratives and all its prophecies, on such a principle. It is intelligible only on one principle; it will answer to no other; it is a book of divine inception—it is a book of divine narrative—it is a record of divine doings, divine sayings, divine prophecies, divine purposes.

Every one who reads it with discrimination—who brings to it any knowledge of human nature and human books, and any capability of discerning between things that differ—realize in the mere reading of it, apart from all extraneous questions, subjects and investigations whatever—that the question of the Creator is settled for ever by the existence of the Bible and the Bible alone.

* * *

THE BIBLE is distinct from all books and systems in this, that *its main aim is to make man acquainted with God.* It is not a book of philosophy; it is not a book of morals; it is not a book of poetry; it is stately, majestic, pure record of what God has done among men, with the object He has

plainly declared throughout—the object of *making Himself known, and of bringing men into adoration and subjection.*

IT MAKES NOTHING OF MAN: IT MAKES EVERYTHING OF GOD.

This is according to reason; for man is but a transient form of eternal power; eternal power alone is intrinsically great and worthy. And of this eternal power, it tells us what we could not know, but what is also according to true reason. It tells us this eternal power is a unit filling heaven and earth with a simultaneous presence, as a light fills a room, yet having a located radiant focus as light in a lamp-lit room has focus and source in the lamp that illumines it.

It tells us that this universal power with glorious kernel and invisible extension is THE FATHER, filling immensity by the plenitude of His inextinguishable and undiminishable presence—the One Person in Whom and of Whom are all things—the seat and source of the wisdom which has contrived all things—the Creator, Possessor and dreadful Majesty of heaven and earth, before Whom the highest angels bow in awful reverence.

Having told us this much—(and oh, how much this is when we contrast it with the contracted and withering notions of the natural man, whose speculations are little better than the gibberings of an idiot!)—it proceeds to tell us most glorious and comforting facts concerning His character. Moses heard the proclamation of His Name, and that proclamation has been written for our learning:—

"Yahweh, Yahweh Elohim, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."

There are several things in this proclamation that strike and challenge attention. The first is very manifest: "*merciful, gracious, long-suffering.*" The meaning of this is practically exemplified in the history of Israel, who though now scattered because of their sins, were borne with for many generations before God's anger reached a point at which He would no longer spare. The Psalmist gives concise and beautiful expression to it:

"He, (being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned He His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath. For He remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again)" (78:38).

There is much in this for our personal consolation. We have been brought into relation with the God of Israel, in our subjection to the Gospel of His Son. We have become His sons and daughters if our faith is one that is alive, working by love, in the obedience of His commandments. In this position how naturally—naturally to the spiritual man—we turn our thoughts towards "Him with whom we have to do."

If we could not find comfort in our contemplations of Him, how comfortless we should be! We are poor and weak ourselves in all senses. We have no mental resources of any account. In the flesh dwelleth no good thing. We delight in the law of God after the inner man: but we find a distressing impotence in the direction of spiritual accomplishment, which would bow us to earth with despair were it not for the encouragement we draw from "the God of all comfort" in our contemplations of Him as revealed. He is presented to us as our Father, compassionate of our weakness, and appreciative of our dependence. Jesus made this aspect of Him very prominent in his communications with the disciples—

"My Father and your Father";
"The Father Himself loveth you."
"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him";
"Ye are of more value than many sparrows";

"The Father Who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

We do well to avail ourselves of the full wealth of comfort there is in these words. Our weakness and our cloud are all our own. They are incidental to the weak nature we have. They no more interfere with His kindness than the mountain mist interferes with the brightness of the sun. Our weakness may incapacitate us for rejoicing in the Lord at all times; but the Lord is there all the same, to rejoice in. In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength, and in the mental sense, we can always draw upon Him for sustenance. We can always lean on the Rock that is higher than all. We learn at last to say with the Psalmist:

"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? Amid there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: (but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

* * *

THE SECOND point, though involving an apparent contradiction, contains also much comfort and some wholesome instruction for the unthinking—"forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."

The apparent contradiction may be manifested thus: if God by no means clears the guilty, how can He be said to forgive any, seeing it is only the guilty that need forgiveness?

The answer is to be found in the sense attaching to the word "guilty" as used in this connection. It is not in the sense of having committed an offence merely, but in the sense of having done it with guile and without that acceptable repentance towards God, which is the basis of forgiveness and which secured the pardon of David in the most heinous of offences.

Achan may be taken as a type of the guilty that will not be cleared. He deliberately disobeyed a divine injunction through avarice, and made no confession of his sin till found out. Then he admitted the offence that was known and read of all men, but being emphatically "guilty," he was not cleared.

So Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and the man who blasphemed, and the son of the Egyptian woman who presumptuously broke the Sabbath law, were all specimens of the "guilty" whom God will by no means "clear," either under Moses or Christ.

There is no provision for the remission of presumptuous sin. Even under the Law, no sacrifice was to be accepted for such.

But for those who are not presumptuous, but who on the contrary are broken and contrite in heart, and tremble at Jehovah's Word, there is forgiveness. The Mosaic service was one long and perpetually recurring illustration of God's desire to be approached in reconciliation of transgressors. For all classes of offence (except offences of presumption), forgiveness was stipulated on confession and sacrifice.

The offering accepted at the hands of Abel is proof that this dispensation of the goodness of God has been in force from the beginning. Its latest illustration exists in the fact stated by Paul, concerning the appearing of Christ in the flesh, that—

"God was in Christ, **reconciling** the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

To which he adds that—

"God had committed to the apostles the word of **reconciliation**."

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye **reconciled** to God."

This is one of the first features of the Gospel as apostolically delivered:

"Through this man is preached unto you the **forgiveness of sins.**"

It was the first thing proclaimed by Peter in connection with the gospel on the day of Pentecost—

"Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins."

* * *

WE HAVE therefore to realize this, as we assemble round the symbols of the Lord's death, that *from all our past sins we have been washed, justified and sanctified*. We stand before God accepted in Christ, notwithstanding the grievous record of the days of our darkness. In this let us rejoice; let us give thanks to God, Who of His own abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope. While we do so, however, let us remember what belongs to our position as saints, who have been washed from their past sins—

"Shall we continue in sin that grace (or the favor of God's forgiveness) may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin continue any longer therein?"

Some have thought in past times, and many practically seem to think so now, that a continuance of transgression is permissible to the children of God, as calling for and securing a continuance of the favour of forgiveness. As to this, John is very pointed:

"Let no man deceive you: he that **doeth righteousness** is righteous even as he is righteous. HE THAT COMMITTETH SIN IS OF THE DEVIL" (1 John 3:7).

So also Paul—

"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them."

This is on the negative side of the question. As to what forgiven men—the saints of God—the brethren of our Lord Jesus should be, Paul makes it very plain—

"Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to (the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:22-32).

Finally, it is no part of the spirit of our calling to glory over other men because of the privileged position in which the Gospel has placed us. Paul expressly exhorts us to—

"SPEAK EVIL OF NO MAN; be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men" (Tit. 3.2).

—adding this as a reason (v. 3)—

"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another."

A recollection of our own antecedents will, in the true exercise of reason, help us to be magnanimous towards those who are still where we were. It will help us in the same direction if we

remember that our whole present probation is intended as a preparation for the mighty work of conferring blessedness on the family of man throughout the utmost bounds of the earth.

Texas Annual Fraternal Gathering

(If the Lord Will)

Monday, July 27 to Sunday, August 2, 1959

We do well to have fixed and stated readings of the Scripture at the Breaking of Bread. It is the best foundation for every assembly of the saints. The best thing we can do at all our meetings is to let our minds rest on the portions that may be read.

The best thing any one can do who desires to speak to the edification of the hearers is to employ what has been read as the basis of what he has to say. Let him endeavour to develop, amplify and illustrate this, and he will speak to profit; whereas, if he seek to "make a speech," in the usual sense of the phrase, he will be in danger of pouring out a weak watery mixture of his own compounding that will give no nutriment.—**Bro. Roberts.**

The Fruit of the Spirit

"Every tree is known by his own fruit"—Luke 6:44

FIRST WE note from these words of Jesus that a tree is known by his OWN fruit, not by another's. This is why it is important that we examine our own fruits. As to the fruit the tree bears, Jesus said—

"Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit"

(Matt. 7:17).

It will be well if each of us can now determine just what kind of fruit is on our tree, and thereby we will know whether we are an evil or a good tree. *We must be either one or the other.* Let us look into our Bible and see how we measure up by divine standards. Paul says in Gal. 5:22-23—

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness temperance."

Do we ever take the time to sit down quietly and meditate on whether or not these qualities are present in us? Let us take the time now. It will be too late when we stand before Christ at the judgment to wonder if we have borne good fruit. Now is the time to do our work. Perhaps we still have time to bring forth fruits unto perfection.

Let us take an honest look at our tree, searching its branches, and as we do let us think of each of the fruits of the Spirit as beautiful ornaments of the Spirit that belong among the branches. We will look at these fruits of the Spirit one by one, and as we do we shall be able to learn whether they are manifest in abundance on our tree.

The first fruit that Paul names is LOVE. Why should this particular fruit be named first? Because it is the most necessary and important. All the rest will be as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal if love is absent. Do we love God, our brothers and sisters, and even our enemies? It is easy to say, Yes. But really, *do our actions falsify our words?* Does Paul's description of love fit our case? He says—

"Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude.

"Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong but rejoices in right.

"Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things"

(1 Cor. 13:4-7, RSV).

How desirable it is that we have this lovely fruit on our tree! But IS IT THERE? Do we ever act unseemly? Or conduct ourselves in a manner unbecoming to a brother or sister of Christ? Do we ever say harsh or unkind things? Are we ever guilty of insisting on having our own way? *Love* bears all things. DO WE?

When we can learn to bear all things, then we will be able to look at the things that try us, not as stumbling-blocks, but as stepping stones; for the very one which we may think an obstacle or irritation, may be a God-given opportunity to perfect forbearance and develop the beautiful fruit of love.

We must all endeavour to bear this fruit in abundance and let its loveliness and warmth be visible to all so that it will flow out to them and enfold them in its comforting mantle.

We must not look with cold and critical eye for the least flaws and imperfections in the fruit of others. *Rather, let us search to see if there are any signs of hope*—a tender bud, or a delicate blossom that we can nourish and perhaps assist in bringing forth fruit to perfection. The apostle John says:

"My little children, let us not love in word neither in tongue; but in DEED and in TRUTH."

* * *

THE NEXT fruit of the spirit is JOY. *The only true and lasting joy is that which comes from a life wholly dedicated to the service of the Truth.* Joy means rejoicing or gladness. As the sweet Psalmist of Israel said—

"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psa. 16:11).

If God dwells in us, then truly this is joy. It is a pleasure that cannot be discerned by the world. But even this joy experienced by the spiritually-minded is only a foretaste of that fulness of joy that will be for those who are granted eternal life to live in the presence of God forever.

If we can say with all honesty that we rejoice *constantly* in the Truth, then we know the fruit of joy is on our tree.

* * *

THE NEXT fruit is PEACE. Peace means serenity, ease, rest, completeness, unity and concord. But—

"There is no peace, saith the Lord, to the wicked."

If the calmness of peace is not to be found within our lives, then *something is wrong with our way of life in the Truth.* We may be sure of that; for God has promised that He will keep "in perfect peace" the mind that is stayed on Him. We must keep in mind that God is over all and in control of all things. If we are conforming our lives to His commandments, *we should not worry about anything,* Paul says that God is able to do—

"Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to THE POWER THAT WORKETH IN US."

But He will do this only if we are faithful; otherwise our problems will be many and will weigh us down; for we ourselves do not have the wisdom nor the power to solve our difficulties. As we rely on God, those troubles that we do encounter will not overwhelm us, nor destroy that peace that our Father has graciously promised to those that love Him with all their heart and mind and strength.

THE NEXT fruit is LONGSUFFERING. This fruit of the Spirit is so closely connected with four others that Paul mentions that we should consider them together. They are: GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, MEEKNESS, TEMPERANCE. Longsuffering means *patient endurance of offence;*

gentleness means *kindness*; meekness means *humbleness or mildness*; goodness means *pleasing, pureness, freedom of evil* as in the verse quoted—

"A good tree bringeth forth good fruit."
—that is, beautiful, pure, wholesome fruit.

The last one of these four—TEMPERANCE—is the most likely to be misunderstood; for many think that temperance means moderation in all things. This is not the scriptural definition of the word. It means *self-restraint*, which is a far different thing from moderateness.

Now these characteristics are closely related. If a person is longsuffering, then it follows that he exercises self-restraint. If he does this, then he is gentle and kind to all. He is not harsh, but mild of disposition and so in turn his character would be well pleasing or even beautiful.

The Scriptures tell us that God is longsuffering, as we read in the Psalms—

"Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, gracious, and longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy."

Longsuffering or patience is a quality that is developed in us under trial. *If there were no occasions where we were called on to exercise patience, then we might never learn it.* We get no credit for being patient where there is nothing to be patient about. It is written—

"For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

"For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted, for your faults, ye shall take it patiently?

"But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God"

(1 Peter 2:19-20).

* * *

DO WE show forbearance toward others? The more natural tendency is to flare up and become irritated and show it openly. It is not to our credit if we do. True there are perhaps many things in the ecclesia we deplore, conditions we hope will improve, as we exercise patience, gentleness and love and direct our prayers to God for help.

But **THEY WILL NOT IMPROVE BY OUR EVIDENT ANNOYANCE AND IRRITATION AT THEM.** Let us seek to help and to heal unpleasant situations by manifesting the fruits of the Spirit. The Scripture says—

"Be angry and sin not."

We may feel all too often that our wrath is justified, but we must be careful, for the Scriptures declare (James 1:20)—

"The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

Anger is an ugly and dangerous passion and we must ever be vigilant in our efforts to restrain it. The occasions when anger is justified are rare. For the most part anger is the expression of the flesh that indicates pride, selfishness and malice.

"When angry, do not sin. Let not the sun go down on your wrath" (Eph. 4:26, Diag.).

Even if we feel that we have a right to be angry, the day must not close with our minds still torn by wrath. Why is this so true? Because a mind cannot be peaceful that is angry, and peace is one of the fruits of the Spirit. Jesus said—

"Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause is in danger of the judgment."
—this is a solemn warning, as are the words of James—

"Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."

If we are constantly annoyed and vexed at things or people, then we can be certain that we are lacking in several of the fruits of the Spirit: first, in longsuffering, then in kindness, as well as self-restraint. The lack of these prevent beauty and goodness of character.

* * *

THE LAST fruit we have to consider, though not the least important, is FAITH. Paul says—

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

We say we have faith in God and His Word, but do we manifest our faith by works? James says—

"Faith by itself, if it have not works, is dead."

Do we believe that God will establish His kingdom on earth? Are we prepared at all times for the return of Christ? Are we ready and watching, *longing for that day*? A faithful man will be ready at all times.

"Who then is that faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?"

There are many other commandments of God which we say we believe, but do we act in accordance with that belief? The Scriptures say that we must love God with all our soul, strength and mind. DO WE BELIEVE THIS? *If we do, why then will we give our strength, time and energy to so many things that are temporal and will mean nothing to us in the day of Christ?*

Our interest and attention to the things of this life can entangle us and take our minds off the lasting things of God's Truth. We can be so busy with our friends, relatives and work that we have no zeal and interest left for the work of God.

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

—J.F.P.

The Whole Creation Groaneth

"Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee . . . In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, until thou return unto the ground"—Genesis 3:17-19.

IN THE curse pronounced upon our first parents, we have a prophetic picture of the Adamic race so long as they shall abide in the mortal state. If there were no other proof of the authenticity and inspiration of the first chapters of Genesis, this curse pronounced upon man would be sufficient evidence of the inspiration of the Genesis record. For, the Adamic race, individually and collectively have, for 6,000 years, graphically fulfilled every item of the curse.

The good and the bad, the rich and the poor, the low and the high—none have escaped the curse, no matter how hard they have tried to do so. Yet the chief effort of all humanity in every age has been directed toward finding some means of escaping from the inexorable law which condemns humanity to labor, sorrow and death.

All those who have sought to ignore the fiat of Almighty God and attempted to selfishly carve out for themselves a system whereby they can enjoy perfect ease, luxury and pleasure, inevitably bring upon themselves greater woe and misery than if they had humbly submitted to the divine arrangement which God has decreed for mankind under the reign of sin. Just as death was a blessing sent upon a race of sinners, so unmixed ease and pleasure would have only allowed sinful man to further corrupt himself and would have shortly brought about his complete destruction.

Medical science, with all of its accumulated knowledge and experience, has only been able to slightly alleviate, not abolish, sickness, and as old maladies are wiped out, new diseases spring up to baffle the medical profession; and the secret of the infirmities of old age, which ends the mortal career of all, still remains a complete mystery, as to either its cause or cure; that is, a mystery to *human* knowledge.

Every labor-saving device is a monument to man's effort to eliminate the curse of labor, but power machines wreck his nerves, create unforeseen problems and in many ways has worsened, rather than helped his condition in general.

There is one item of the curse that is generally overlooked. It is something which is common to human experience, but a thing which few are willing to fully recognize. It is the unescapable fact that *man must pay a price for everything which he obtains.*

Before he sinned, man's living sprang from the ground spontaneously, without hard labor and the nerve-wracking scheming which has been the lot of all those who have sought to obtain more than their share of earth's riches. His efforts to escape the curse, even to a limited degree, has brought upon mankind, in the end, almost, if not quite, as many miseries as comforts.

Yes, a portion of humanity has "bettered" their living conditions in many ways. Many comforts, pleasures and luxuries have come with the "progress" of civilization. But what a price has been paid! Take the automobile as a single example. Since the advent of this wonderful machine some 60 years ago, in the U.S.A. alone, more persons have been killed or maimed for life in automobile accidents than in all the wars in which this country has ever been engaged.

But this is not all. It does not take into account the wrecked nerves, often causing suffering and death, and the fact that life upon the highways has become a hazard to all and a terror to many. And recently it has come to light that the poisonous fumes from the automobile is a large contributor to a condition which is gradually spreading throughout the world as industry and fuel-burning machines increase—a condition which is so polluting the air as to make good health impossible.

There is not a question of doubt that, if sinful man were allowed to carry on with his present efforts to establish Utopia on earth, he would ere long destroy the race.

Only by divine intervention will this be averted.

* * *

CHARACTERISTIC of sinful man, his one means of escape from the Adamic curse has been the one most neglected. For, while great progress has been made in the field of material things, spiritual values are neglected, morals decline, crime increases, selfishness and greed flourish, pride and vanity rule, God is forgotten and His Word scorned.

Man's efforts to escape the curse presents a sorry picture in this advanced age of human activity. We see about one third of the human race having attained to "a high degree of civilization," but still ridden with sin and infirmity, making it still impossible to obtain more than a trifling measure of real joy and comfort from all their "inventions," while two thirds of humanity live in want and poverty, envying and even hating those more highly "favoured."

The words of Paul in Romans 8:22 still ring true—

"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

He gives the only escape possible—"the redemption of the body," the *gift of ever-joyous, weakness-free immortality*.

God intended it that way from the beginning, and man, with all his ingenuity, all the accumulated knowledge and experience of the ages to aid him, cannot change it. —O.B.

Psalm 119

"I will run in the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart"—v. 32.

THE THEME of this Psalm is the glory and beauty of the Word of God, and the divine blessedness and happiness God's Word brings to all those who love it. This Psalm contains 22 sections of 8 verses each. Each section is identified by one of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and each of the 8 verses in each section begins (in the original) with the letter that is applied to that section. There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet and 22 books in the Hebrew Scriptures.

We may at first wonder at the use of such an arrangement like this in the inspired Word of God. It may at first seem artificial and mechanical and out-of-place, and beneath the dignity of divine inspiration.

But as we think upon it, two related thoughts emerge. First, we are impressed with the fact that *order* and *arrangement* and *pattern* and *harmony* are characteristics of all God's works—from the microscopically small to the infinitely large. From the structure of the atom to the vast framework of the heavens, all is beauty and order.

Next, we are led to the thought that as this Psalm, extolling the Word of God, so obviously manifests *pattern* and *arrangement*, so we can expect to find—in greater and greater degree as we search—pattern and arrangement throughout the whole Bible. Type and antitype—parallels and contrasts—symbols and allegories—repeated themes in different forms—basic principles taught by a variety of lessons and examples—histories of men and histories of nations, precepts, parables, commands, entreaties, things very simple and things very complex—through all we see the *pattern and purpose of infinite wisdom*.

* * *

THERE ARE 9 words used throughout this Psalm to describe the Word of God in its various aspects of guidance, instruction, enlightenment, admonition and comfort.

In the Common Version they are consistently translated by English words which quite well express the meaning of the original terms, and all translations are practically unanimous in rendering these words in the same way. This is a help in studying their various shades of meaning.

With one or two exceptions, every verse of this Psalm contains one of these 9 words. They all occur within the first 11 verses, and throughout the Psalm they occur around 15 to 20 times each.

These 9 words are: law, testimony, way, precepts, statutes, commandments, judgment, and 2 Hebrew words—*dabar* and *imrah*—both translated "word" in the Common Version.

The first is *LAW*—which occurs in the first verse. The Hebrew is *torah*, the term applied to the 5 books of Moses, though the meaning in this Psalm is not just the Law of Moses, but the Law of God generally as a body of instruction and regulation for the well-being of man.

The 1st verse sums up the whole Psalm—

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the LAW of the Lord."

The second, v. 2, is *TESTIMONY*. It is from the root meaning "witness"—"repetition"—"going over." It is the word used in the phrase, "The Ark of *Testimony*." It carries the idea of the established sureness and *faithfulness* of God's Word, purpose and promises.

The third (v. 3) is *WAY* or *WAYS*, from the word meaning to "tread" or "walk." The thought is that God's Word defines a certain way or *manner of life* and conduct—a consistent pattern of goodness, an unswerving travelling in a certain direction.

The 4th (v. 4) is *PRECEPTS*, from a root meaning "to have charge or oversight." It emphasizes God's *oversight and superintendence* of His children—His watchful guidance concerning the details of their lives and conduct.

The 5th (v. 5) is *STATUTES*. The root means "to hew or engrave," hence "to decree or ordain." Here we are taught the firm *inflexibility* of His principles and requirements.

The 6th (v. 6) is *COMMANDMENTS*, emphasizing the *authority* and rulership of God as the Creator and Possessor of heaven and earth.

The 7th (v. 7) is *JUDGMENTS*, from *shaphat*—"to judge, to discern, to set right." Here is the thought of God's holy and impartial *righteousness*, as illustrated by Abraham's plea:

"Shall not the **Judge** of all the earth do right?"

The eighth occurs in v. 9—*WORD*. The original is *dabar*—"word, purpose, expressed will." It corresponds with *logos* in the Greek—

"In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

This presents the aspect of *God's glorious, eternal purpose of self-manifestation in a perfected host, redeemed from among men by the precious blood of His only begotten Son, the Head of the Body.*

The 9th and last, found in v. 11, is in our version also translated *WORD*, but the original is not the same as v. 9. The original here is *imrah*, from *amor*—"to say or speak," first occurring in Gen. 1:3—

"And God **said**, Let there be light."

The basic root actually means, "To bring forth to light— to inform." This word, therefore, speaks of the aspect of God's *revelation* to man, teaching and enlightening—causing to understand—dispelling darkness.

* * *

THUS WE are impressed with the rich and many-sided beauty of God's holy Word—its divinely ordained position as the source and center and foundation of life and light.

Throughout this Psalm are interwoven 2 major thoughts— on the one hand, the *ecstasy of intense rejoicing* in the contemplation of the infinite light and glory revealed in the Word, and on the other, *intense desire and yearning and supplication* for comfort and strength. The Psalm begins—

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord."

"Blessed"—This is the word with which Jesus began his marvellous discourse on the godly life—

"Blessed are the poor in spirit;"

"Blessed are the meek;"

"Blessed are the pure in heart."

The word for "Blessed" literally means "happy." But it means more than just happy—it means to be truly, fully, and *soundly* happy—happiness with a *divine foundation*—happiness in harmony with, and related to, eternity. Blessedness—divine happiness—is God's great gift to His children. *If we are not happy we have not truly laid hold on God.*

"Blessed are the *undefiled*"—this word means (and is translated) "whole, complete, perfect." It is the word used throughout the Law of Moses that is translated "without spot"—"without blemish," as applied to the sacrificial lambs. It is the word used in Psa. 19—

"God's way is **perfect**."

Blessed are the undefiled—*there is no other blessedness than this*—no other happiness than calm and peaceful acceptance and harmony with God.

The rest of the Psalm is a commentary and elaboration on this opening verse. The thought in the 2nd verse is *wholeness of heart*.

In the 3rd—*doing no iniquity*. These opening verses draw the broad picture and declare the basic principles. It must be all or nothing. If there is any conscious and voluntary disobedience, or division of the heart, then the whole pattern is marred and useless.

Diligence is the thought of v. 4. *Just doing* is not sufficient—there must be a *loving and painstaking earnestness* to do the very BEST we can. The word here translated "diligently" is a word of extreme intensity—it is elsewhere translated "very, greatly, exceedingly, mightily, with all thy might."

Let us not look upon this demand for obedience "with all our might" as a hard command. Things are much easier and far less of a burden—*much more enjoyable*—if they are done heartily and with all one's might. It is the divided, slack and half-hearted service that is so hard and tiresome.

V 6—"Then shall I not be ashamed."

John speaks of being ashamed "before Christ at his coming." But to the mind enlightened in the Truth, there is a very real *present* aspect to this verse. There is shame in failure and weakness, and there is the blessedness of freedom from this shame whenever, and as long as, there is a true putting away of weakness, and walking in conscious harmony with God's will and holiness.

The thought in v. 7 is *learning*—

"I will praise Thee with uprightness of heart when I shall have **learned** Thy righteous judgments."

Bro. Roberts said—"The natural man is an ignoramus with us all . . . left to himself, he is a fool and a liar."

These are harsh words, but true. Holiness, and godliness and spiritual-mindedness must be laboriously *learned* by persevering effort, and above all by a frank and searching recognition of the ugliness and hopelessness of our natural death-tending ignorance. Our life if it is at last to lead to life,

must be a constant *learning and searching* of the ways of God—and not then just a learning of facts and information, but a learning *in the heart* of the principles of wisdom and godliness.

V. 8—"FORSAKE ME NOT."

* * *

SO, IN each verse, we find a special thought, which—all together—make up the pattern of a pure and Godly life.

In v. 9, the thought is *cleansing*.

In v. 10, the plea to be *kept from wandering and straying*.

In v. 11, the Word *hidden in the heart*—treasured and cherished and guarded.

In v. 12, "*Teach me*."

V. 13—"I have *openly* declared."

V. 14—"I have rejoiced." *Rejoicing is an essential part of godliness*. If rejoicing in all the eternal beauties and goodness of God is not the peaceful underlying current of our minds, then we are carnal, and walk as men. Any dissatisfaction or unhappiness is a reproach against God's goodness.

V. 15—"I will meditate." We all do far too little meditating—the things of the present press in so much upon us. It is meditation on the Word that develops spiritual depth and fulness. But it must be disciplined, effectual meditation upon what *is* revealed—not the self-pleasing speculation of the natural mind—upon what is *not* revealed. The one is hard, and rare, and useful—the other is easy, and common, and much worse than useless.

V. 16—"I will not forget." Forgetting is perhaps the one greatest single enemy of godliness. How often do we start out determined to remember, to carefully keep in mind—and then, hours later, suddenly realize that we have forgotten—that the pressure of the present has obliterated everything but itself.

Peter spoke of faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love—of the need for *constantly abounding* in these things—constantly living in this spiritual atmosphere of holiness, and he says—

"Though ye **know** these things, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to **stir you up** by **putting you in remembrance**."

In our weakness, we need constant "stirring up" and "putting in remembrance." It was these things that made Paul exclaim—

"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death!"

"I will not forget"

* * *

V. 17—"Deal bountifully with Thy servant, that I may live, and keep Thy Word."

Here the Psalmist seeks the graciously-promised blessing and strengthening power of God that he may live unto God and hold fast to His Word.

V. 18— "**Open Thou mine eyes**, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law."

We think of the fleshly veil that obscured Israel's spiritual vision all during their national history, and of Jesus' words to his few humble disciples—

"Unto **you** it is given to understand, but unto **them** it is **not** given."

Is it fair that it should be withheld from some, and revealed to others? *It would not be fair any other way.* If spiritual understanding were like any other learning—governed by mental capacity and education, in which all vary through no fault of their own, where would be fairness?

But the way to spiritual understanding is through lowness, and meekness, and humbleness, to which all can bring themselves down if they choose.

"The **meek** will He teach His way . . . To the **humble** and **trembling** will I look, saith the Lord."

How fitting and how beautiful are the ways of divine wisdom! The blessings of spiritual understanding are reserved for those few among men who bring themselves *down*—empty themselves of all desire and truly and consistently seek communion with God with *all their hearts*, putting aside all earthly things as useless impediments in the way.

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

Toronto Fraternal Gathering

(If the Lord Will)

Saturday and Sunday, October 3-4, 1959

Be Strong in the Lord!

“By their fruits ye shall know them”—Matt. 7:20.

WORRY, FEAR and perplexity have taken the place of confidence throughout the world; hatred prevails among the different races of people, even in the countries where they boast of freedom and justice for all. There is deep poverty and misery in many countries, mismanagement and chaos in others, and we see the big paw of the bear meddling among the affairs of Ham. Hunger and hate stalk through the lands like a ravaging wolf.

But we who understand the times, have no need for fear; we can read the headlines with interest, and consider them calmly; for we know and believe what Jesus said, that there would be great distress among nations, men's hearts failing them for fear of what is coming upon the earth. Those in the Household have no cause for fear. All the signs rather give cause to rejoice—*“for your redemption draweth nigh.”*

But there is a condition existing causing concern to all earnest brethren. It is the tendency to *weaken ecclesial standards*, and to *disrupt unity*. None of us wants to be lacking in strength of faith and knowledge when we stand before the great Judge; for it will then be too late to think of what we should have done.

We know that it is a long hard fight to maintain the right spirit among us. And if the ecclesias are to prosper, a spirit of unity must prevail among us. A house divided cannot stand, and it is no different with a fellowship made up of many ecclesias. Paul in all his epistles exhorts the brethren to faithfulness, that they, and we, might be more fully enlightened in the Word. He wrote to the Corinthians—

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or wisdom . . . I was with you in weakness, and in much trembling; and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in flue wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

We need to speak the Truth as it has been made known to us by the will of God. Then as this is done among us all, there will be unity of thought and action which will bring ecclesial prosperity to the glory of God. Let us not grieve the Holy Spirit by doing that which would bring dissension.

We all desire eternal life, as our supreme goal, and if we hope to attain to that goal, we must work for it now. To live in our high calling in Christ Jesus is not easy for any of us, at any time. *Only a spiritual sluggard would say, "Don't bother trying to be perfect."* Jesus said—

"BE YE THEREFORE PERFECT, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"
(Matt. 5:48).

These words speak of the excellence which should distinguish the disciples of Jesus, and show the perfection that will characterize the kingdom, and the glorious completeness of the divine example we are to follow.

Jesus does not expect more of us than we are able to do; but he does want us to be faithful and *ever trying to overcome* the evils of the flesh, and the ways of the world. To follow the world may be pleasant for the time, and very satisfying; but we must do all things in harmony with the Truth. All our decisions should be made on the basis of spiritual thought and understanding.

If we stray from that course, then *we will seek defence in compromise*, and nowhere in the Scriptures are we allowed to compromise. Paul did not compromise or use half measures. He gives direct warning—

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a LIVING SACRIFICE, holy, acceptable unto God . . .
"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and PERFECT, will of God"
(Rom. 12-1-2).

James says (1:2-12)—

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience . . . for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life."
* * *

ONE OF the most essential pillars in the ecclesia is love. All through the Scriptures runs that theme, that *love should bind the followers of Christ in unity*.

Jesus gave this new commandment—

"That ye love one another; as I have loved you . . .
"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"
(John 13:34-35).

If we feel that we do not measure up to such a standard, let us repair the unsound spiritual condition wherein we fall short. We are reminded in Rom. 8:9—

"Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

In the Truth there is no provision for compromise. If we try to follow a "middle course" we place the promised crown in jeopardy. We are urged to fight the good fight of faith; but if we compromise, there is no need to fight, and eventually all who resort to it will be among those who look to the judgment with fear and trembling.

Jesus taught that a good tree did not bring forth corrupt fruit, and a corrupt tree could not bring forth good fruit.

"For a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil:

"For **out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh**" (Luke 6:45).

The person who lives *close to the Truth* is like a good tree which is healthy and sound to its deepest roots. Such a tree will have leaves green and beautiful, and the fruit will be abundant, for it is a tree of the highest standard.

In the days when Jesus was teaching, he often spoke of the common things of every-day life. The people could easily understand his words about a tree, as trees were a very important thing in their lives. In some parts of Palestine trees were few, and there was a tax on trees. Therefore when a tree showed symptoms of disease, or failed to bring forth fruit, it was cut down.

We have read of the master who ordered a tree cut down because it had not borne fruit for three years. By this parable Jesus compared men to trees, and said—

"BY THEIR FRUITS ye shall know them."

Those who live unto the Lord are said to be like trees planted by rivers of water. Like the tree that will sprout forth with the scent of water, so will those in the Truth be sustained by the faith and hope of attaining to the living waters of eternal life. And like the trees deeply rooted in the earth, they will *grow in character*, and their walk will conform to the revealed will of God.

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the court of God.

"They shall **still bring forth fruit in old age**; they shall be fat and flourishing"

(Psalm 92:12-14).

Well did Jesus know the law of nature that governs the life of trees. If the root be healthy, the leaves will be lush and green and the fruit will be beautiful and abundant. As the great tree reaches high, so will its roots sink deep and strong in the earth, so that not even the raging storms of winter can dislodge it.

And so the worst of life's temptations will fail to dislodge those who have the roots of their faith imbedded deep in the Word of God, and in the solid foundation of Jesus Christ, the rock of our salvation.

* * *

WHAT ARE good fruits? Paul says they are: love, joy peace, longsuffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance. Such a believer and upholder of the Truth can, and will, bear witness to the transforming power of God. *He can turn defeat into triumph, and darkness into light.*

The magnetic influence of such spiritual faith will draw others to come and pluck the fruits of Truth and knowledge from such a life as theirs, and others will seek shade and comfort from their troubles in the companionship of such as live in the Lord, and who cultivate the spirit of Christ in love and kindness.

May our lives ever sink deeper in God's Word. May we always seek fellowship with Him and learn His ways, that we may be—

"Like a tree planted by a river, which in his season yields his fruit, and his leaf fadeth never."

The things that predominate in the heart, these are the things of which a person will speak. Unless their words pertain to spiritual matters, then, such are of the world. No one will ever reach

completeness in the knowledge of the Scriptures. To learn we must read, and we must speak of those things that we have read to fully instil them in our minds and make them a part of ourselves.

Could we think of the Master sitting on the Mount and speaking of purely temporal things? — or criticizing his friends, which is a very common pastime with the worldly and small-minded?

Even as Jesus sat at the table with the twelve on that fateful night, he did not chastise with words the one who was to betray him. We have been called to be followers of the Master. If we betray him, or one another by unsound speech, what can we expect, when Jesus commanded us to love one another? How much better to think of the words of Paul—

"Love suffereth long and is kind, love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly, is not easily provoked; seeketh not her own; thinketh no evil."

And so as we make it our weekly practice to remember our absent Lord in the memorial service, let us look forward to the day when he shall come in his glory; then we shall see him as he is. And let us live in faith and hope that we shall be found worthy to drink it with him in his kingdom.

Let us keep the feast in all sincerity and truth. We are now on probation; now is the time to make sure that our spiritual house is built upon a rock. It is the time we must strive to sink the roots of our faith deeper and deeper into the knowledge of the Scriptures of Truth.

While the storms and temptations of the world beat against our spiritual house, we can find strength in the words spoken by Jesus, and by them we can uphold the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

May we be like good trees, to which others will come for shelter and shade, and for peace with God. — C.H.T.

THE SECRET OF ECCLESIAL HARMONY

This lies in the rich indwelling of the word of Christ in each individual member of the ecclesia—a state to be attained in our day only by the DAILY SYSTEMATIC READING OF THE SCRIPTURES.

When every mind is influenced by the Word, the worst rules work smoothly. When it is otherwise, the best will miscarry. The system of daily reading, laid out in the Bible Companion, has for many years been followed by thousands with increasing benefit.

The brethren ought, above everything, to help one another in its observance.—**Bro. Roberts.**

Godliness with Contentment

"Godliness with contentment is great gain."

IN THE sixth chapter of I Timothy the apostle Paul gives words of exhortation to both servants and masters, and words of admonition concerning riches and faithfulness.

In the first verse he exhorts believing servants who are under the yoke to esteem their unbelieving masters as worthy of all (fitting and respectful) honor. They were to give their masters every consideration. And the reason why servants should do so he immediately gives, saying—

"That the Name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed."

They were to manifest in their lives *godliness with contentment* with their present lot in this age. To be a disobedient, reluctant and discontented servant would cause the holy and righteous Name of God to be held in disrepute, so being defamed among unbelievers: as well as causing His teaching to be considered lies and deceit, since His worshippers are not what they profess to be—children of the one and true God, Who is longsuffering, patient, merciful and forgiving, just and righteous in all His ways.

In the 2nd verse Paul has a special word for those believing servants who have believing masters—

"Let them not despise them, because they are brethren."

They were not to presume upon their masters. The believing servant should not disregard the relationship of servant to master on the grounds of all brethren being equal in Christ. That equality should exist among them; for they are all brethren and Christ is their Master. But still, faithful believers will give faithful service to their faithful masters.

Instead of cancelling out their "worldly" relationship with their fraternal relationship in Christ—

"Rather **do them service**, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit."

The exhortation is to give *more hearty and enthusiastic service*, doubly content with their lot in the present age—

"They must serve **all the better** since those who benefit by their service are believers and beloved" (RSV).

In the last verse the believing servant is "under the yoke" to his unbelieving master; whereas, in the 2nd verse, Paul does not speak of the believing servant being in *bondage* to his believing master. No such relationship should exist among the brethren of Christ.

Believers may expect sincerely enthusiastic service from their believing servants without even exercising the threat of the yoke. *The yoke would only mar the spirit and mind that should pervade the true children of God.* The first requisite among God's children is faithful service in all things, quietly, willingly and lovingly rendered, being content with such as they may have in the prevailing age.

Paul warns Timothy against the teaching and doctrine contrary to what he preached, which are the words of our Lord Jesus. The teaching he gives is "wholesome"—that is, *sound or healthy*. Any man teaching otherwise "is proud, knowing nothing" or, as the Diaglott puts it—

"He is puffed up, being master of nothing."

When anyone aspires to advocate doctrine contrary to the Word of God, that person is puffed up with pride. And since he has not learned the basic truth of speaking according to the Oracles of God, he knows nothing while trying to show himself a master over his inferiors. But he is proud and *puffed up*; which literally means "befogged" or "wrapt in smoke." The fog or smoke is the fumes of his own conceit, preventing him from seeing spiritual things clearly. He sees all things through his pride and conceit which distorts the Truth by perverting and obscuring the vision. Therefore he sees nothing clearly and is master of nothing. Such an one should anoint his eyes with eye-salve, that he may see.

Rather than assent to the spiritually sound and spiritually healthy doctrine of Christ, the proud, contrary teacher dotes "about questions and strife of words." The "questions" are controversies of debatable issues; the proud having a morbid craving for heated arguments and abusive debates whereby they are repeatedly belittling others while assuring themselves of their own superiority. Their "strife of words" are merely wordy arguments so that they may hear themselves talk. It is argument for argument's sake.

Such, says Paul, "dote" (*noseo*—"to be sick") about questions and words. That is to say they have a morbid passion or morbid craving for such things. They are morbid, or *sick*. This sickness is in contrast to the *wholesome* (sound, healthy) words of our Lord.

To consent to all such wholesome words is to become *spiritually healthy, increasing in the exact knowledge of God*. But proud teachers, wrapt in the smoke of self-conceit, in having a morbid passion for abusive argument on debatable issues just to hear themselves talk, give rise to—

"Envy, strife, railings, and evil surmisings" (v. 4).

The *envy* spoken of, "who can stand before it" (Prov. 27:4)? The *strife* is dissension or discord. The *railing* is abuse or insults. The *evil surmisings* are evil suspicions of others.

What is needed in order to avoid such ungodly, unbrotherly results in our fellowship with one another is to *replace pride with humility and love*, each esteeming the other better than himself to be. Fleshly qualities must be replaced with spiritual qualities.

So long as the ways of the proud have any influence among brethren, they will cause—

"Wrangling among men who are depraved in mind and bereft of the Truth imagining that godliness is a means of gain" (v. 5, RSV).

Such suppose that they can use godliness as a means of getting gain; they think that they can use piety to advance their worldly interests and thus make profit. But they are destitute—bereft—of the Truth, which is the greatest possible loss! *They were possessed of the Truth once!* Alas! They are now bereft—a loss by death—and only spiritual death can leave them so destitute.

"But godliness with contentment is great gain" (v. 6).

Godliness is truly the greatest possible gain, being accompanied with contentment, when one is not disquieted or disturbed by a desire for things he does not have, And so—

"Having food and raiment, let us therewith be content,"
—as we give faithful service in earning our daily bread. We are seeking and striving to be faithful in all things at our daily work and in the ecclesia, fighting against the pride of the flesh, and endeavouring to be content with such things as we may have in this present age.

We MUST follow after these things and continue steadfast in the fight if we are to lay hold on eternal life. This life, with all its honours and prestige, with all its material wealth and possessions, is not the life which is life indeed; nor are the riches of this life the true riches which shall not change from hand to hand, or be stolen, or corrode with age. The riches of this life are "*uncertain riches*" (v. 17).

If then, we aspire to those riches which are *enduring*, and to that life which is life indeed, let us—

"Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 14).
—N.M.

"WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?"

What shall we say of Christ? No man can obliterate this living footprint of God on earth. Whatever explanation men may try to give him (and learned men have vainly exerted their profoundest ingenuity to bring him within the category of common men), they cannot deny him as a fact of history. He has left his mark too deep for that. His name is in all the archives and political documents of the civilized world for ages past.

Only men who doze in a moral and intellectual torpor, engrossed with the affairs of their private lives, can be insensible to the mass of incontestable, palpable facts that tell us that Jesus of Nazareth appeared upon the stage of history 1,800 years ago and astonished the world by "works which none other man did," and words "such as never man spake."

Gaze at his picture as it shows itself to us in the authenticated records of the past. Is it not natural for us to unite in the question put by his neighbours?

"Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works?"

And is it not equally natural for us to say with Nicodemus who visited Jesus by night:

"We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles which thou doest except God be with him"?

Verily if God left not Himself without witness, in giving us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, He has almost forced Himself into our presence in the gift of His beloved Son, the true and faithful witness, who came not in his own but in his Father's name, glorifying Him on the earth and finishing the work He gave him to do. —**Bro. Roberts.**

Signs of the Times

"Gog . . . and all thine army . . . Persia, Ethiopia and Libya with them . . . in the latter days thou shalt come into the land brought back from the sword"—Eze. 38:4-8

WHILE SOME of the world's trouble spots have momentarily quieted down in recent weeks, at least to the extent of no longer receiving "front page" attention, in two areas tension and perplexity is growing more intense.

In the EUROPEAN area, chiefly because of the Berlin crisis, tension and anxiety is unusually prevalent among these unhappy peoples who still bear the scars and frightful memories of two world wars.

Premier Khrushchev continues his speech-making, threatening and blustering on the one hand, while out of the other side of his mouth he breathes soothing words of peace and conciliation. As one commentator says: "Khrushchev does not want war, but he is playing a dangerous game." It is a game which could easily get out of control, compelling the participants to either accept humiliating retreat or face the inevitability of real war.

Khrushchev's overall plan appears to be, to make proposals which he knows the West will not accept and then cite their rejection of his offers as evidence of their refusal to co-operate in a peaceful solution of "cold war" problems. Veteran correspondents agree that, not since he came to power had he raised "so much uncertainty and perplexity in the West as to the meaning of his tactics and intentions." Which is doubtless just what he intends to do.

Premier Macmillan's talks with Khrushchev made one thing very clear—the impossibility of accomplishing anything worthwhile by negotiations with the Soviets. The issues at stake are so great, the demands on both sides are so exacting from the others' viewpoint that they cannot find a common platform on which they both can stand and negotiate the issues in a friendly and understanding manner.

Further conferences with the various NATO nations, including a visit to Washington, appears to be having considerable success in the way of uniting and consolidating Western nations in presenting a solid front against the Soviet schemes to "divide and conquer" the NATO alliance.

The Berlin Crisis

IF THE channels into Berlin from West Germany are closed, as the Soviets threaten to do, the Western powers must either surrender the West sector of the city to East Germany, attempt another "air-lift" to supply the city, or shoot their way in, if they can. None of these alternatives could bring about any permanent solution of the complex problems involved in the Berlin controversy.

To surrender the Western portion of the city to the Communists, would be "another Munich," as all agree, leaving more than 2 million non-Communist Germans at the mercy of East Germany and Russia and pave the way for further demands by, and concessions to the Communists.

To attempt to supply the population by air could be no more than a makeshift, temporary device and could easily provoke hostilities in the air. To attempt to shoot their way in would, as the Soviets have warned, mean certain war, which could easily explode into another world conflict.

The Berlin controversy is just another trouble spot, a sore on the face of the world picture, which the Communists deliberately irritate and keep open as a means of throwing the West off balance, keeping the nations involved in a state of unrest, and creating situations and conditions which serve as propaganda material out of which they can reap an advantage and stir up prejudice against the West.

While Russia claims to be favouring unification of all Germany, actually it would be disastrous to the Soviet aims and purposes. For the Germans are overwhelmingly non-Communist, and no one knows better than the Soviets that the greater portion of East Germans are only kept in line by force, and the constant stream of refugees into West Germany indicates their desire to escape from Communist thralldom.

The inescapable facts are that both the Soviet and Democratic nations only favor a unified Germany according to their own patterns, and in neither case does it include any plan which would give Germany the slightest opportunity to rearm and revive the menace of another rampaging German War machine.

And so it appears that the Berlin crisis will drag on for a long time, yet it constitutes one of the many recurring situations which could easily erupt into a shooting war, inaugurating that awful holocaust necessary to bring the nations to their knees and establish the "new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Iraq Big Question Mark

AT THIS writing Iraq, once the center of the ancient Babylonian empire, is in the throes of the second revolution within 8 months. All competent observers agree that the final outcome of the revolutionary state of affairs in the turbulent Arab nation is of the most questionable character.

To say that Iraq is in a state of turmoil is to state it mildly. When the present Premier Abdel Karem Kassem came to power by way of the July 14 revolt, his announced policy was one of strict neutrality toward the West, the Soviets and the U.A.R. republic

It soon became evident that this policy was either a mere subterfuge or else it was impossible of attainment because of the divergent factions operating within the nation. Be that as it may, the Kassem government soon began to adopt pro-Communist policies.

He has accepted Soviet military and economic aid and consummated trade agreements with both Russia and Red China. Russian tanks in Iraq number about 160, enough for an armoured division, and Soviet military experts are flocking; to this area as U. S. and British military advisors are being pushed out.

Anti-Western sentiment is noticeable on every hand. One American correspondent says: "A steady, deliberate campaign of harassment and vilification against the U. S. and its citizens is under way in Iraq." Formerly Western, and still professing neutrality, yet Communists are being given free rein and are "the most admired of all people." All U. S. citizens and all Westerners are treated as spies and are under constant surveillance. Communists dominate the nation's press and hold most of the key posts in its police services, labor organizations and official propaganda services.

The present revolutionary movement in Iraq is unquestionably fomented by Nasser agents, aided and abetted by pro-Communists, who take advantage of every disturbance to further their own designs. It appears likely that the Soviets are concentrating on Iraq to make of it a bastion for further Mid-east operations and conquests, especially to outflank Iran which is showing too much pro-Western tendencies to suit the Soviets.

"Persia . . . With Them"

IRAN, ONCE the center of the far-flung Persian empire, is in the news, as Western and Communist forces vie with each other in their efforts to bring this oil-rich Arab nation into line with their respective Mideast policies.

At present the West would seem to have the advantage in Iran with the signing of a military agreement with the U.S. Russia makes no secret of the obvious fact that she is greatly displeased with this agreement, made as it were, on her very back door step, directing a vitriolic attack against Iran even before the treaty was signed, and threatening that the Soviet Union would heap "dire consequences" on Iran if the treaty with the U.S. was consummated.

And there are good reasons for this Soviet attitude, as the N. Y. Times says: "Russia has coveted her neighbor (Iran) for centuries." There are good reasons for this also. Aside from having rich oil reserves which Russia would like to control, as a means of shutting off its flow to the West, and a ready supply for herself in any Midwest military operation, **Iran also has a strategic value for Russia unequalled by any other Arab country.**

Iran is bordered on the north by Soviet Russia, on the northwest by Turkey and on the south by the Persian gulf. **Possession of this highly strategic area by pro-Communist forces would be the fulfilment of an age-old Russian dream.** For control of Iran would give Russia these things: 1. A breach in the chain of Western allies bordering Russia. 2. Control of oil fields now supplying the West. 3. Access to the warm-water ports of the Persian gulf. 4. A direct land route for access to the Arab world.

It is highly probable that extreme pressure will continue to be pushed against Iran by Moscow, coupled with a determined effort to overthrow the present government through revolutionary means that it may be supplanted by a pro-Communist government. Though we cannot know just how nor when it will be done, **we do know that Persia (Iran) will be allied with Gog** (Ezekiel 38:5) when he "overflows" the Arab world and "plants the tabernacle of his palaces" upon the mountains of Israel, where "he comes to his end with none to help him:" when he and his many allies will fall before the invincible legions of the King of kings."

As we wait let us "Watch and be sober."

—O.B.

Ecclesial News

HAMILTON, Ont., Can.—Sherwood Rm., Wentworth Arms Hotel, Main St. Breaking of Bread, Sunday, 11 a.m.

Greetings to those of like precious Faith in the Brotherhood.

Here we are in the year 1959, and in living by the eye of Faith are ever mindful of God's goodness. We are indeed privileged to be called unto the glorious Hope in these days of the Gentiles.

The Signs point to the coming of our Master, and it behoves each of us to look toward the great consummation of God's promises, and remain firm in the Truth.

This cannot be done by compromise. The Truth changes not. God's plan continues and each day brings us closer to the time when the earth will be filled with the glory of God.

Recently it was the pleasure of our ecclesia to be augmented for a Sunday by the association of the Toronto ecclesia around the Table of the Lord. As we are few in number such experiences are uplifting. Bro. Keith Abel gave us the word of exhortation and through this means our minds are strengthened in the Faith. This spiritual food is essential for our wellbeing.

The following brethren and sisters came from Toronto: bro. & sis. K. Abel, bro & sis. Gibson, bro & sis. J. Jackson, sis. Beasley and sis. Crone.

Our ecclesia has again suffered a loss by the hand of death (as briefly mentioned in the last Berean as it went to press). We have laid to rest our sister Mary Martin. Sister Martin had reached 85 years of age. The majority of these years were spent in the Truth. Our sister now rests in peace away from the cares of this life. Christ's death and resurrection is our assurance that God has for His elect a sure and certain knowledge that the Captain of our salvation is to return from heaven and raise again the dead who sleep. We call to mind the words of a hymn we sing—

"Hasten, O God, the hour when, free from sin,
We'll rise Thy sons of power, glorious within:
And with Thy Christ confest, Blessing and ever blest,
Rule o'er the earth at rest, in the Amen."

To bro. John Fotheringham and his sister, sister Jenny Fotheringham, we extend the sympathy of our ecclesia in the loss of their sister.

Sister Martin fell asleep on Jan. 28, and was laid to rest on Jan. 31 in Whitechapel Memorial Gardens.

We have had the company around the Table of the Lord of sister Ola Barber and Clara Sparham, of London, and sister Fred Higham of Detroit. We are always happy to have the company and fellowship of our fellow-pilgrims Zionward. —bro. C. Cope

"THOU HAST CREATED ALL THINGS FOR THY PLEASURE"

Paul says we are not to "sleep, as do others." What is this but saying that we are to keep the FACTS OF OUR SITUATION in constant memory? These facts are the Truth. They are facts that the natural man is most liable to "let slip"—

That "the earth is the Lord's";
THAT HE HAS MADE IT FOR HIS PLEASURE;

That this pleasure principally consists in the enlightened appreciation and praise and faithful obedience of man;
That man has departed from this obedience;
That he is consequently under the dominion of evil and death;
That God has purposed and is carrying out a plan of remedy which, while rescuing us, will exalt His own praise;
That this purpose centres in Christ who was born, proved, crucified, and raised from the dead 1800 years ago;
That he is now above at the Father's right hand as a priest over his own house, with actual results even now;
That he is coming at the appointed time to take possession of all the kingdoms of men, and to judge his House and assign them a place in the earth, his inheritance, or to reject them altogether, "according as their works shall be";
That, meanwhile, that House consists of those who hold fast the confidence and rejoicing in this hope to the end;
That they are now a priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices in showing forth the praise of Him who has called them;
That they are strangers and sojourners in the earth at present, as all the fathers were;
That while they are in the world they are not to be of the world, but to accept the commandments of Christ as the unvarying rule of their lives, walking as children of the light in denying all ungodliness, and living soberly, righteously and godly in the present evil world.

I say there is nothing that the natural man is more liable to forget than that all these things are
so. —**Bro. Roberts.**

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