

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 SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

HOUSTON, Texas—8008 Junius St.—Sunday School 10 a.m.; Breaking of Bread 11 a.m. Lecture 3rd Sunday 7:30 p.m.; other Sundays Review of daily Bible readings 7 p.m.; Eureka Wed. 7:30.

WE ARE greatly encouraged as we report another one of our Sunday School pupils has obeyed the command to repent and be baptized into the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

CHARLES BANTA, Jr., son of bro. & sis. Charles Banta, was immersed on April 9 and received into fellowship with the ecclesia at the Sunday Morning meeting the following day.

Charles gave a good confession of the one faith, before many witnesses, and expressed his firm belief in these things, at the same time exhibiting a desire to turn away from the perishing things of the world and arise to a new life in Christ Jesus.

* * *

We are also happy to announce the baptism of MICHAEL PACKER, son of bro. & sis. Johnnie Packer. Mike has been a member of our Sunday School since childhood, and the results of the divine instruction he thus received were apparent, as he set forth clearly, at his examination, a good understanding of the basic principles of the gospel of salvation.

He was immersed on April 16, and received into the fellowship of the ecclesia on the following day. —bro. Charles Banta, Sr.

* * *

HYE, Texas

THE FOLLOWING brothers and sisters of the Texas ecclesias attended the regular quarterly meeting on the Christadelphian camp grounds, May 1.

From Mason: Bro. & sis. Bill Edwards; bro. & sister Melvin Edwards; bro. & sis. Ellie Eastman; sis. Dora Tinsley; sis. Sharon Tinsley, and sis. Taylor.

From Lampasas: Bro. & sis. Lee Wolfe; bro. & sis. Wayne Wolfe; bro. & sis. Ross Wolfe; bro. & sis. Pat Cassidy; bro. & sis. Harry Denbow; bro. & sis. Tip Hill; bro. & sis. Don Hill; sisters Frank Martin, Margaret Martin, Jesse Hatcher, Oriole Bailey and Esther Wolfe.

From Houston: Bro. & sis. Cedell Caldwell; bro. & sis. E. W. Banta; sis. Hallie Smith; sis. Winnie Carroll and bro. Charles Banta, Jr.

From Lake Ariel: Bro. & sis. H. A. Sommerville.

In the Bible study, beginning at 10 a.m., the first chapter of John's first epistle was considered. This lesson was announced three months before hand, which enabled the brothers to come prepared for a full discussion of the subject matter.

It could be seen that those who attended the Memorial meeting at 11 a.m. were there, not to go through with a routine observance of God's command, but out of love for each other, and especially for him whose sacrifice was represented by the emblems on the table.

Lunch was served on the grounds, and many tarried for several hours that they might have sweet communion together in the things of the Spirit. —bro. E. W. Banta

1960 Worcester Gathering Sunday and Monday, October 8 and 9

It is with great pleasure that we learn that the brethren and sisters in Worcester have decided, if the Lord will, to hold a Gathering on October 8 & 9. Details are to be given later.

EDITORIAL

"Thank God, And Take Courage!"

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them."

WHEN A man or woman hears the true Gospel for the first time, the usual reaction is one of resentment accompanied by an impulse to retaliate. There is plausible reason for this, because the Truth strikes at the very foundation of the religion of Christendom.

Even though a person is not particularly interested in any section of what is understood to be Christianity, there is a form of respectability that pervades the social life of a community, and the minister is looked upon as a holy man, and all matters of religion are supposed to be vested in him.

The average layman pays very little attention to the teaching of his church, and far less to what he may read in the Bible. Under the influence of the clergy, he believes that while the apostles were good men, their knowledge of God was limited, and since their time, great advances have been made, and much light has been unfolded.

Therefore when the Truth is presented, and the Bible used in support, it usually takes a long time to break through the barrier of false teaching that has permeated the world, and become the foundation of Christendom's religion. What they think are great advances and new light are in reality departures from the system of teaching established by the apostles in the first century and, therefore, a fulfilment of a prophecy made by Paul in his second letter to Timothy—

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; for after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;
"And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables (legends or myths)"—4:3-4.

If a person has confidence in the Bible (he *will have*, if he studies it carefully) as a divine record, he will become interested in what Paul has said, and apply himself to a searching study of the Word of God. If he devotes himself to a diligent and probing examination of the whole Bible, he will make some remarkable discoveries regarding things that will *change his whole way of living*, and cause him to understand the profound depths of many of the sayings of Jesus, and one in particular that perplexed many of the Jews—

"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free"—John 8:31-32.

They thought he was inferring that they were bondservants, and were quite emphatic in saying they were "never in bondage to any man." But Jesus explained their position by saying, "*Whosoever committeth sin is the servant (slave) of sin.*" Paul enlarges on this subject in the sixth chapter of his letter to the Romans, and says—

"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness"—vs. 17-18.

Here the apostle is addressing men and women who have heard the Gospel, and believed it. Earlier in the chapter he speaks of baptism, and the great change it accomplished in them. It had become a joyful response to a gracious invitation, and the believer had submitted to baptism because

he knew that through it he would obtain remission of sins. He also understood that, being baptized into the Name of Jesus, he would become Abraham's seed, and an heir of the promises God had made to him.

Realizing what a great salvation had been revealed, he began walking in newness of life. Those who have followed this example, soon discover that the way to the Kingdom of God is not a broad and smooth highway; but a narrow passage on which many obstacles are scattered. Although the way is rough, we know that the rod and staff of God will impart strength and courage to our hearts.

If we should become discouraged at any time because of tribulation, let us think of Paul, and the great suffering through which he passed, and what persecutions he endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered him. Then, too, think of Jesus and the intense and ignominious suffering that was heaped upon him, and yet—

"Who FOR THE JOY THAT WAS SET BEFORE HIM endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God"—Heb. 12:2.

To reflect upon these things is good for us, and will cause us to lift up our heads and rejoice. Then when we think of the measure of forgiveness that we have received, we should "*thank God, and take courage.*"

There is good sound reason why we should determine not to permit anything to come into our lives that will separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. In harmony with that thought, the apostle writes—

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

"Not forsaking the assembling (gathering) of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:23-25).

This gathering together for mutual "exhorting," stirring up and encouraging applies to all our ecclesial associations and any other opportunities that may arise for the comfort of mutual communion. The beautiful words of Malachi are—

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often ONE TO ANOTHER: and the Lord hearkened and heard it.

"And a book of remembrance was written before Him for them"—Mal. 3 16.

Those of us who have had the privilege of attending the Texas Gatherings, have found the morning periods devoted to Bible reading and discussion to be particularly beneficial. On all occasions, when we come together, it should be for the purpose of exercising our minds and affections in those ennobling and purifying influences that come from God through His Word.

Waiting for the appearance of Jesus, in this evil age, is a severe trial of our faith and courage, when all we have is the written Word, and the power of prayer. As we plod along on the King's highway, we become thirsty; but provision has been made for us that we may joyfully "draw water out of the wells of salvation." This water is cool and refreshing, and will restore vigor to our tired feet. We will then be able to continue on our journey with renewed energy, revived hope and undaunted courage.

We call ourselves brethren of Christ; therefore let us walk in his steps, for *there will be no life in the Kingdom of God for us unless—*

"We deny ourselves ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, even the appearing of the glory of our Great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS"

—Titus 2:12-14. *Editor*

"There Is a Natural Body"

"That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts: as one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath"—Ecclesiastes 3:19

By **BROTHER JOHN THOMAS**

LET US endeavour to understand ourselves as God has revealed our nature in His Word. The 6th day, the Elohim said:

"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26).

In this word was life, spirit, or energy—

"It was God. All things were made by it, and without it was not anything made that was made"
(John 1:1-5).

Hence, says Elihu—

"The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life."
(Job 33:4).

Or, as Moses testifies—

"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives, and man became a LIVING SOUL" (Gen. 2:7).

Now, if it be asked, what does the Bible define "a living soul" to be?—the answer is, *a living natural, or animal, body*—whether of birds, beasts, fish or men. The phrase "living creature" is the exact synonym of "living soul." The Hebrew words *nephesh chayiah* are the signs of the ideas expressed by Moses. *Nephesh* signifies "creature," also "life, soul, or breathing frame," from the verb "to breathe": *chayiah* is "of life"—a noun from the verb "to live."

Nephesh chayiah is the genus which includes all species of living creatures; namely, *Adam*, man; *beme*, beast of the field; *chitu*, wild beast; *remesh*, reptile; and *ouph*, fowl, etc. In the common version of the Scriptures, it is rendered "living soul"; so that under this form of expression the Scriptures speak of "ALL flesh" which breathes in air, earth, and sea.

Writing about body, the apostle says (1 Cor. 15:44)—

"There is a **natural body** and there is a **spiritual body**."

But, he does not content himself with simply declaring this truth; he *proves it by quoting the words of Moses*, saying—

"For so it is written. The first man, Adam, was made into a **living soul**."

And then adds—

"The last Adam into a **spirit** giving life" (v. 45).

Hence, in another place, of the latter, he says—

"Now the Lord is the spirit. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into his image from glory into glory, as by the Lord the Spirit"
(2 Cor. 3:17-18).

The proof of the apostle's proposition that there is a *natural* body as distinct from a *spiritual* body, lies in the testimony that—

"Adam was made into a LIVING SOUL."

—showing that *he considered a natural, or animal body, and a living soul, as one and the same thing.* If he did not, then there was no proof in the quotation, of what he affirmed.

A man then is a body of life in the sense of his being an animal, or living creature—*nephesh chayiah adam*. As a natural man, he has no other pre-eminence over the creatures God made than what his peculiar organization confers upon him. Moses makes no distinction between him and them; for he styles them all living souls, breathing the breath of lives. Thus, literally rendered, he says—

"The Elohim said, The waters shall produce abundantly **sheretz rhayiah nephesh**—the reptile living soul."

And again (v. 21)—

"**Kal nephesh chayiah erameshat**—every living soul creeping."

In another verse (24)—

"Let the earth bring forth **nephesh chayiah**—the living soul after its kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth, etc."

And (v. 30)—

"To every thing creeping upon the earth which (has) in it living breath."

—that is, breath of lives. And lastly—

"Whatsoever Adam called **nephesh chayiah**, (the living soul), that was the name thereof"
(Gen. 2:19).

Quadrupeds and men, however, are not only "living souls", but they are vivified by the *same breath and spirit*. In proof of this, I remark first, that the phrase "breath of life" in the text of the common version is *neshemet chayim* in the Hebrew; and that, as *chayim* is in the plural, it should be rendered "breath of lives."

Secondly, this *neshemet chayim* is said to be in the inferior creatures as well as in man. Thus, God said—

"I bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh wherein is **ruach chayim**—spirit of lives" (Gen. 6:17).

And in another place (Gen. 7:15-22)—

"They went in to Noah into the ark, two and two of ALL. FLESH, in which is **ruach chayim**, spirit of lives."

"And ALL FLESH died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing, and every man: all in whose nostrils was **neshemet ruach chayim**, BREATH OF SPIRIT OF LIVES."

Now, as I have said, it was the *neshemet chayim* with which Moses testifies God inflated the nostrils of Adam. If, therefore, this were a particle of the divine essence, as it is affirmed, which became the "immortal soul" in man, then *all other animals have "immortal souls" likewise*; for THEY ALL RECEIVED "BREATH OF SPIRIT OF LIVES" IN COMMON WITH MAN.

From these testimonies, I think, it must be obvious that the argument for the existence of an "immortal soul" in "sinful flesh", hereditarily derived from the first sinner, predicated on the inspiration of his nostrils with "the breath of lives" by the Lord God, and the consequent application to him of the phrase "living soul," if admitted as good logic, proves too much, and therefore nothing to the purpose. For if man be proved to be immortal in this sense, and upon such premises as these, then all quadrupeds are similarly immortal; which none, I suppose, but believers in the transmigration of souls, would be disposed to admit.

The original condition of the animal world was "very good" (Gen. 1:31). Unperverted by the production of evil, all its constituents fulfilled the purposes of its existence. Begotten of the same power, and formed from the substance of a common mother, they were all animated by the same spirit,

and lived in peace and harmony together. Formed to be living breathing frames, though of different species, in God they lived, and moved, and had their continued being; and displayed His wisdom, power, and handiwork.

By a figure of speech in which the container is put for the thing contained, and vice-versa, *nephesh*—"breathing frame"—is put for *neshemet ruach chayim*—"breath of the spirit of lives"—which, when in motion, the frame respire. Hence, *nephesh* signifies "life", also "breath" and "soul"—Life, or those mutually effective, positive and negative principles in all living creatures, whose closed circuits cause motion of and in their frames.

These principles, or qualities, of the same thing, are styled by Moses *Ruach Elohim*, (Gen. 1:2), or Spirit of Him—

"Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, which no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. 6:16).

—and which, when the word was spoken by the Elohim, first caused a motion upon the waters, and afterwards disengaged the light, evolved the expanse, aggregated the waters, produced vegetation, manifested the celestial universe, vitalized the breathing frames of the dry land, expanse, and seas; and formed man in their image and likeness.

This *ruach*, or spirit, is neither the Uncreated One who dwells in light, the Lord God, nor the Elohim, His co-workers, who co-operated in the elaboration of the natural world. It was the instrumental principle by which they executed the commission of the glorious INCREATE to erect this earthly house, and furnish it with living souls of every species.

It is this *ruach*, or instrumentally formative power, together with the *neshemeh* or breath, which keeps them all from perishing, or returning to the dust. Thus—

"If God set His heart against man, He will withdraw to himself **ruachu veneshmetu**—his spirit and his breath—all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again to dust"
(Job 34:14).

In another place (Job 37:10)—

"By the **neshemet el**—breath of God—frost is given."

Speaking of reptiles and beasts, David saith—

"Thou withdrawest **ruachem**—their spirit—they die; and to their dust they return. Thou sendest forth **ruhech**—Thy spirit—they are created" (Psa. 104:30).

And again (Psa. 139:7)—

"Whither shall I fly **meruhech**—from Thy spirit?"

From these testimonies it is manifest that the *ruach* or spirit is all pervading. It is in heaven, in sheol, or the dust of the deepest hollow, in the uttermost depths of the sea, in the darkness, in the light, and in all things animate, and without life. It is a universal principle in the broadest, or rather, in an illimitable sense.

It is the substratum of all motion, whether manifested in the revolutions of the planets, in the flux and reflux of the sea, in the storms and tempests of the expanse, or in the organism of reptiles, cattle, beasts, fish, fowl, vegetables, or men. The atmospheric expanse is charged with it; but it is not the air: plants and animals of all species breathe it, but it is not their breath: yet without it, though filled with air, they would die.

The atmosphere, which extends some forty-five miles in altitude, and encircles the globe, is styled "the expanse," by Moses; and "the breath of God," in Job. It is a compound body, consisting,

when pure, of nitrogen and oxygen. These are considered as simple bodies, because they have not yet been decomposed; though it is probable they have a base, which may be the *ruach*.*

This may exist free or combined with the elementary constituents of the *neshemeh*. Uncombined, it is that wonderful fluid, whose explosions are heard in the thunder, whose fiery bolts overthrow the loftiest towers, and rive the sturdy monarchs of the woods; and in less intensity gives polarity to light, the needle, and the brain. These three together, the oxygen, nitrogen, and electricity, constitute "the breath" and "spirit" of the lives of all God's living souls.

Thus, from the centre of the earth, and extending throughout all space in every direction, is the *Ruach Elohim*, the existence of which is demonstrable from the phenomena of the natural system of things. It penetrates where the *neshemet el*, or atmospheric air, cannot.

When speaking, however, of the motivity and sustentation of organized dust, or souls, they are co-existent within them. In this case, the *ruach Elohim* becomes the *ruach chayim*, or "spirit of lives"; and the *neshemet el*, becomes the *neshemet chayim*, or "breath of lives"; and both combined in the elaboration and support of life, the *neshemet ruach chayim*, or "breath of the spirit of lives".

*(In the 100 years since this was written, the latter-day prophesied "increase of knowledge" has brought man much closer to a discernment of this basic scriptural fact—that all the variety of the universe is constructed of one simple, fundamental force or power.)

Living creatures, or souls, are not animated by a "vital principle" capable of disembodied existence as the ghost of a man, or the transmigrating spectres of other animal species:—ghostly things, the laws and functions of which in the animal economy physiologists are unable to discover; and theologians are nonplussed to prove the existence of from the Word of God.

On the contrary, "souls" are "made living" by the contemporary operation of the *ruach chayim* and *neshemet chayim* upon their organized tissues according to certain fixed laws. When the as yet hidden laws of the all-pervading *ruach*, or spirit, shall be known, this subject will be understood; and men will then be as astonished at the ignorance of this "cloudy and dark day" respecting "living souls", as we are at the notion of the ancients that their "immortal gods" resided in the stocks and stones they so stupidly adored. This, however, is quite as reasonable a theory as that of "immortal souls" dwelling in sinners of Adam's race.

The *ruach chayim* and *neshemet chayim* are lent to the creatures of the natural world for the appointed period of their living existence. But, though lent to them, they are still God's breath, and God's spirit; nevertheless, to distinguish them from the expanse of air and spirit in their totality, they are sometimes styled, "the spirit of man", and "the spirit of the beast"; or collectively, "the spirits of all flesh", and their breath". Thus, it is written—

"They have all one **ruach**, or spirit: so that man hath no pre-eminence over a beast: for all is vanity or vapour."

"All go to one place: all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again" (Eccl. 3:19-20).

And in the sense of supplying to every living creature, or soul, "spirit" and "breath", Jehovah is styled by Moses—

"God of the spirits of all flesh" (Num. 27:16).

There are *vegetable* and *animal* life, and *incorruptible* life. The last is *immortality*; because the body through which the life is manifested, being incorruptible, never wears out; so that, once put in motion by the spirit of God, *it lives for ever*.

Vegetable and animal life, on the contrary, is terminable or mortal; because the materials through which it is revealed are perishably organized. MORTALITY, then, is *life manifested through a corruptible body*; and IMMORTALITY, *life manifested through an incorruptible body*. Hence, the necessity laid down in the saying of the apostle—

"This corruptible body must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality"

(1 Cor. 15:53).

—before death can be "swallowed up in victory" (v. 54). This doctrine of "life and incorruptibility" (2 Tim. 1:10), was new to the Greeks and Romans; and brought to light only through the Gospel of the Kingdom and Name of Jesus Christ. It was to them foolishness; and is to the moderns incredible, because they understand not the Glad Tidings of the Age to Come.

Incorruptible life might with equal propriety be styled *spiritual* life, as indicative of that with which spiritual bodies are endowed. But here I use not the word spiritual, lest it should be confounded with that intellectual and moral life a man possesses when the "incorruptible seed" of the Kingdom takes root in his heart; and when, in "obedience of faith," he passes from under the sentence of death to the sentence of justification unto life eternal.

But, at present, we have to do with animal or natural life, which is all the life the fleshly sons of the first Adam can boast of. Enough, I think, has been advanced to show the scriptural import of the text already quoted, that—

"The Lord God formed man, the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives, and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7).

The simple, obvious, and undogmatic meaning of this, is, that the dust was first formed into "clay," which was then modelled by Jehovah Elohim into the form of the soul called "man," as a potter shapes the substance of his vessels. Thus, Elihu said to Job—

"I also am formed out of the clay" (Job 33:6).

And again (Isa. 64:8)—

"We are the clay, and Thou our potter; and we are all the work of Thy hand."

The fashioning of the clay being accomplished in all its component parts, which in the aggregate constitute man; that is, the dust being animalized, and then organized, the next thing was to set all the parts of this exquisite mechanism into motion.

This was effected by the inrush of the air through his nostrils into his lungs according to the natural laws. This phenomenon was the *neshemet el*, or "breath of God," breathing into him; and as it was the pabulum of life to all creatures formed from the dust, it is very expressively styled "the breath of lives" in the plural number.

Hitherto, man, though a soul formed from the ground, had been inanimate; but, as soon as he began to respire, like the embryo passing from foetal to infant life, he "became a living soul," not an ever living, but simply *nephesh chayiah*, a living breathing frame, or body of life.

There is no mistaking the meaning of the words, "FILLED with the knowledge of His will"—THE MIND PRIMED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT GOD HAS REVEALED, AND POSSESSING IT IN SUCH A FORM AS TO BE AVAILABLE FOR EVERY MOMENT'S REQUIREMENTS.

This condition is not only not unattainable, but ITS ATTAINMENT IS IMPERATIVE in degree.

If we are not filled with the knowledge of His will, how can we DO it? And if we do not the Lord's will, how can we hope to stand well with our Judge, who has said, "My brethren are they who do the will of my Father"?—**bro. Roberts.**

"This Is Your Wisdom"

"Receive instruction, and not silver; knowledge rather than gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; all things that may be desired are not to be compared to it."

By **BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS**

THERE IS much praise of wisdom in that part of the Scripture called the Proverbs of Solomon. It is impossible that this praise can be exaggerated. Solomon himself had to put the matter to the utmost proof. He tells us in the Ecclesiastes that, having come to great estate, he communed with his own heart and gave himself to—

"Know wisdom and to know madness and folly."
—that he might (Eccl. 2:3)—

"See what was good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life."

Whatsoever his eyes desired, he kept not from them; he withheld not his heart from any joy. He gave himself to delights, and to great works, and attained to a degree of prosperity and opportunity exceeding all who were before him in Jerusalem. When he had gone through all, his verdict was:

"Wisdom excelleth folly as far as light excelleth darkness."

Now, who can hope to have a better opportunity of testing this matter than Solomon. As he says (Eccl. 2:12)—

"What can the man do that cometh after the king?"

* * *

NOW, LET us realize for a moment *what this wisdom is*. Our power to respond to Solomon's verdict, and to apply it practically in our lives, will be greatly strengthened by a clear conception of what is meant by this wisdom, which is the "principal thing." We all know the import of the term in its general use. We say there is no wisdom in such and such a plan, or there is a sad want of wisdom in such and such a person: but *this is not the wisdom so highly praised by Solomon* as a tree of life; or rather, it is but a very small leaf on that tree—in many cases, a plucked leaf—ay, a withered leaf. We seek for a higher conception when we read—

"The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath He established the heavens . . .

"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old."

We shall seek not in vain if we seek with diligence and with earnest loving purpose. The scorner seeks wisdom and finds it not: the mammon-hunter hunts in vain. Yet—

"How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!"

Wisdom, then, in its most elementary conception, is the power and disposition to adapt means to the accomplishment of good ends. Such an adaptation we see everywhere in nature—in superlative degree—in the most exquisite form—whether we look at matters large or matters small. Who can look at the starry universe without being impressed with the wonderful balancing of stupendous power for the preservation and benefit of every part?

But we do not require to mount the heavens in search of wisdom. "The unwearied sun from day to day" is truly a mighty preacher to "reason's ear," and the moon that walketh in brightness at night, and the stars that glitter in the sky: but we learn the same lesson in much lower flights. Consider the composition of the atmosphere: consider the constitution of the earth: consider the structure of the vegetation that flourishes upon it. Examine the tiniest blade of grass, the meanest insect, the commonest animal: they all exemplify, in the most perfect manner, the adaptation of means to ends—beneficent ends.

Yea, this prevailing wisdom is more prevailing still. There are creatures we cannot see: here also, when the microscope makes them visible, we behold the most perfect mechanical contrivances for fulfilling the objects of being. In our own bodies, we carry about a whole world of such contrivances. Our general structure is a masterpiece of wisdom: our constitution in detail is an almost endless series of wise appliances, not to speak of the wonderful apparatus of digestion and assimilation, the fibre of every muscle, the minute vessels of every blood-holding part, yea, the discs in every drop of blood strike the highest intelligence dumb with admiration of the wisdom with which all things have been contrived.

Here is wisdom in heaven and earth: above, below, around, within: yet another idea is evidently wanting to connect this wisdom with the wisdom so much commended by Solomon—*the wisdom of individual practice*. We find it as we proceed. The wisdom we see in heaven and earth is wisdom mechanically applied—wisdom applied to substances and things which are passive and plastic in the hands of Eternal Power.

But in man, we have an additional phenomenon—a being made in the image of that Eternal Power—a being endowed with intelligence and volition—a being possessed of a rational will, having the power of choice—the power to do, or not do, as may seem to him the best.

Now, the question is, how is this God-like power to be used? Much depends on the answer. It may be used in a way that will bring destruction and misery: it may be used in a way that will bring life and blessing and gladness. Here, as in all other cases, wisdom consists in the adoption of right means for the right ends: but *who knows what are the right ends?* And who knows what are the right means for reaching those ends? As a matter of fact, man left to himself does not know. This is shown by all his history, and by the universal experience of the present hour.

God, Who made him, knows. God, Whose wisdom is manifest in the sky and in the earth, and in every physical thing that we can know anything about, knows how the gift of a free will should be used so as to lead to the blessedness there is in it when rightly used; and God, Who has this knowledge, has made it known to us. And hence it is that what is Scripturally revealed as the right way, is the only practical wisdom for us, and it is here that what is revealed is connected with the wisdom that made heaven and earth. The wisdom that made the one has revealed the other; so that the man who obeys the voice of God, made scripturally audible, is in harmony with the wisdom that has so wonderfully contrived all things around us.

The Bible is that wisdom applied to us which gave the bee its constructive talent: the sun its earth-gladdening light.

To be without this application of Almighty wisdom is to be forlorn indeed. It is to be put out of joint with wisdom everywhere. What boots it to a man that the universe is splendid and great, and full of the arrangements of wisdom, *if he himself is at war with that wisdom, as applied to him?* Of what advantage that he knows the distances of the planets, the magnitudes of the stellar system, the laws of light and electricity—yea, if he be filled with the knowledge of all natural things—of what advantage is it all to him *if he himself know not how to fulfil the object of his existence in creation?* It is like a man admiring the sun who is cast away in an open boat at sea without food or water; or praising the productiveness of British soil when he is obliged to wander the streets without a penny to buy a loaf of bread.

THE WISDOM that made all things has spoken concerning the ways that will lead man to life and peace; and our wisdom—our *only* wisdom, is to listen and obey. This wisdom is beautifully personified as a mentor thus:

"Unto you, O men, I call: and my voice is to the sons of men. O ye simple, understand wisdom: and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.

"Hear, for I will speak of excellent things: and the opening of my lips shall be right things. For my mouth shall speak truth: and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

"All the words of my mouth are in righteousness: there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge

"Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it"

(Prov. 8:4-11).

Again we read—

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, the gain thereof than fine gold.

"She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor.

"Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is everyone that retaineth her" (Prov. 3:13-18).

There is much of figure in this, but how much of obvious literal truth is conveyed in the figure! When a man understands, receives, and continuously obeys the instruction and the commandments delivered by divine authority in the Scriptures, and intended for him, he embraces the "wisdom" of this beautiful parabolic discourse, and will certainly realize the pleasant results depicted. When Moses had placed before Israel all the statutes and commandments he was authorized to deliver to them, he said—

"Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them: for THIS IS YOUR WISDOM."

We Gentiles (invited to adoption through Christ) are not called upon to obey these Mosaic commandments—but the same voice, the same authority, has appointed to us other commandments, suited to the purposes of the dispensation in which we live. These are the commandments of Christ, who enjoined his apostles to teach all nations to observe them, and who said those only were his friends who kept them. Of these, Moses' words may well be addressed to us—

"Keep therefore and do them: for this is your wisdom."

Wisdom takes this shape to us: Christ is made unto us wisdom; in him are filled up all its treasures.

Now, it is testified to us, concerning this personal application of wisdom, that the fear of the Lord is its beginning—

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

We live in a day when nothing more meaningless could be uttered in the general ear. In the common estimation, whether expressed conventionally, educationally, or scientifically, the fear of the Lord, so far from being the beginning of wisdom, is an obstruction to all wisdom—an impediment in the way of obtaining it. To most of us it has doubtless seemed at one time as if this general verdict were a true one. Personally, I can recollect the time (now long gone by) when the statement that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, seemed only pious jingle.

How different the case seems now! The words are simply *true*—absolutely *true*—uncontradictably, scientifically, precisely *true*, as every man of any true capacity of observation and reflection is bound to discover.

Without the fear of the Lord, how is a man to obey commandments which run against the natural grain? The commandments of Christ forbid us to do many things we like to do, as natural men—to retaliate, to avenge ourselves, to hoard up treasure upon earth; they command us to do things that we do not like to do as natural men—to be patient with the evil, suffer wrong, do good to our enemies.

How can a man do such things without the motive power—the fear of the Lord? Experience will show it to be impossible. *A man is not to be trusted in the long run who fears not God.* He may be kept on the track for a while at the beginning, by the secondary influences that affect all men more or less; but as these, one by one, get worn away by the friction of time, if the fear of God be not the kernel of his mental composition, he will act the part of the natural man, and do those things only that are agreeable to himself, without reference to what Christ has required at his hands.

The fear of *man* will keep a man straight in many things; but in times of temptation—when the eye of man has no bearing—when a man is left only to the power of what is in his own heart—if the fear of God be not there, he will go wrong and depart from wisdom to his destruction. "I fear God," said Joseph when giving his brethren a guarantee that he would do rightly by them. *If a man is not able to say this truly, there is not much reliance to be placed on him.*

To "fear God and keep His commandments," is Solomon's summary of the whole duty of man. There is no other rule of wisdom or line of safety. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. A man who has not acquired this, has not made a beginning on the road that leadeth unto life.

* * *

THE FEAR of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom in another sense. Wisdom is not in man. Man is only a *permitted form* of the wisdom-guided power of God—a creature that comes into the world without any knowledge, made by wisdom, but himself without it; who acquires wisdom by slow and painful methods, if he acquire it at all, and who, when he acquires it, has acquired it all from without, and from that which was before him.

Wisdom is of God from eternity. It not only precedes man; it preceded the earth, and the physical universe (Pr. 8:22)—

"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was

"When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth."

Thus speaks the personified wisdom of God by the inspired mouth of Solomon. In this sense, God and wisdom are inseparable. Wisdom, or the power and disposition skilfully to adapt means to ends, is the characteristic of the Eternal Father inhabiting unapproachable light, and radiated in boundless immensity. Scriptural praise is "to God only wise." Wisdom dwells with Him, and intrinsically with Him alone. Now, it is testified—

"He hath made all things for Himself."

Upon earth His highest workmanship is man; and His highest delight in earth-direction is to receive man's adoration and obedience. A man who does not fear Him is without interest to Him: a man who disobeys Him is an offence to Him—

"He taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, and in them that hope in His mercy."

A man may profit *himself* by his energy and skill: but of what profit is he to the Almighty if he fear Him not? It will turn out at last all in vain if this is lacking. But let a man *abound in this, even if lacking in other directions*, he is in the way of life, for the approbation of God will secure every good thing in the end. So it is written—

"No good thing will the Lord withhold from them that fear Him."

The first commandment is—

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

Hence nothing acceptable can be offered to God without the fear of the Lord, which is thus the beginning of wisdom.

We stand in much need in such an age as this of remembering this feature of the wisdom which belongs to the house of Christ. We live in an age when God's Name is scarcely mentioned except in profanity; and when there is no more effectual way of earning the reputation of soft-brained folly than to allege the fear of God as a reason for your action. If God's Name is not mentioned in profanity, then it is in the insincerity of cant, which is little better.

Between the extravagances of an unscriptural devotionism on the one hand, and the chilling exactitudes of a science atheistically applied on the other, it is a difficult thing to find and keep the medium path of true wisdom. But such a medium path is to be found; and happy the man who, finding it, keeps it. The fear of the Lord, which is rational and sincere, is to be found now as it ever has been found. How did men come to fear the Lord in the apostolic or prophetic ages? Not by inspiration, but *by knowledge divinely revealed and acting upon their reason*. Men love where they know. Acquaintance is the first condition of friendship. Hence the scriptural injunction—

"Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace."

This process of acquaintance is defined as a drawing nigh—

"Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you."

Again, further, as a *seeking*—

"Seek the Lord while He may be found; draw nigh to Him while He is near."

We have no prophet in our midst at whose mouth we may enquire of the Lord. We have no temple to which we can go, and do homage with peace-offering before the manifested presence of Deity. But *we have the essence of all these privileges in possessing the Scriptures of the Truth*. Men could do no more in ancient days than obtain access to the divine mind, and become acquainted with the divine character and the divine will. The most in which they differed from us was that in some cases they could obtain the mind of the Lord in a given dilemma. This was a great privilege. Still, the greater privilege of becoming acquainted with the revealed character of God, His will, His law, His purpose, is equally ours IF WE MAKE IT SO.

Ah, much depends upon the last five words! Men reap as they sow even now. If we are content with a one-talent knowledge of the Truth—if we rest upon that mere outline-knowledge of the Scriptures which leads to the belief and obedience of the Gospel—if having become sufficiently enlightened to put on the Name of Christ, we thenceforth leave the subject at rest, and devote our energies to other knowledge, and other pleasures, and other cares, we shall never attain to that knowledge of God that results in His love and fear; we shall never become subject to that rich

indwelling of the word of Christ which Christ requires. Wisdom is not to be attained with a slack hand—

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding."

But she is not to be got with less effort than men usually put forth in other gettings. On this point, we have all been more or less spoiled at the start by the loose and unscriptural views that are in circulation in almost all religious communities. It is everywhere represented that salvation is an easy thing; that, in fact, you have only to *allow* yourself to be saved; that you almost put God under obligation in *consenting* to let Him save you!

How contrary to scriptural representations of the matter! Truly, it is "without money and without price" that we are invited to wisdom's feast; and truly the yoke of Christ is easy, and the burden is light; but to the feast we must come and stay; the yoke we must put on and wear. To each of us the Spirit says (Prov. 2:2-5)—

"INCLINE thine ear to wisdom, and APPLY thine heart to understanding . . . CRY after knowledge . . . LIFT UP THY VOICE for understanding . . . SEEK her as silver, and SEARCH for her as for hid treasure. THEN shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."

The spirit of God in the apostolic writings speaks not differently. Jesus speaks of *striving* (more literally *agonizing*) to enter into the Kingdom (Luke 13:24); and Paul, of "working out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12).

Now to what does all this come in plain language?—though I do not know that language could be much plainer. Does it not come to this, that we **MUST** *make ourselves continual and studious readers of the Scriptures?*—readers who aim not only to understand, but, in their actual lives to *carry out* the principles and the commandments therein?

Few would demur to this proposition in the abstract; but many deceive themselves and others by simply saying "Amen" to the theory, and neglecting to do that which is necessary to carry it out. They praise wisdom in the abstract, but leave her unappropriated and unsought after. They re-echo good words about the Bible, but leave the Bible unattended to. They acknowledge the Bible to be the Word of God, but they give the chief place in their lives to the words and the works of man. They give to the affairs and the friendships of this present life the best of their vigorous attention with the rising of every sun; but a daily attention to the unfading life to come, in the daily reading of the Scriptures, sinks either to a languid or a neglected performance, or, worse still, to a performance that they oppose or speak deprecatingly of, as of questionable utility.

Brethren and sisters, as you value the right ending of the whole matter; as you value the verdict, at the end of the journey; as you value the satisfaction of an approving conscience; as you value the sweetness of an acquaintance with wisdom; as you value the friendship of Almighty God for mortal man; as you value an immortal life when our present shadowy days upon earth shall have run; as you value a joyful harvest from a bountiful seed sowing; as you value the haven of rest in the Kingdom of God, when the toil and the conflict of present probation are over, TAKE THE RIGHT SIDE ON THIS QUESTION!

Leave to themselves the mistaken men who preach smooth things. Make yourselves one with the men after God's own heart, who have said—

"Oh how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

"How sweet are Thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth . . . I esteem the words of Thy mouth more than my necessary food."

To such, the wisdom of heaven and earth thus speaks—

“Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord; but he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me love death.”

"LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH!"

If the present friendship of the risen and glorified Christ be a comfort, what words shall tell the consolation afforded by the realization of the fact that he is coming, and that when he comes, he will deliver us from this present evil world, and bruise its whole diabolism under our feet?

IT IS ONLY THE WEAKNESS OF HUMAN FACULTY THAT EVER DIMS THIS GLORIOUS PROSPECT. The facts are all there, whether we apprehend them or not. They are outside of us; they are independent of us; they remain true even if we should faint and fail utterly. Darkness covers the earth. We walk by faith and not by sight; and because we are weak in ourselves, we may falter and grow weary, faith failing to see at all times clearly the things that are promised, and that are pledged, and that are coming. —bro. Roberts.

1959 Texas Gathering Report

“At that time ye (Gentiles) were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope.”

PART EIGHT

ONCE MORE the invitation was extended to the alien by local advertisement to come to the Hye grounds to hear the Divine message of how they may become aliens to the world and made nigh unto the Covenants of Promise. The basic "hope" of the Scriptures was set forth in the lecture, "THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE TO BE FULFILLED IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

The reader of the New Testament cannot help but notice the repetition of the expression, "The Promises unto the fathers," "Exceeding great and precious Promises," etc. This constant reference should arouse interest to search into the meaning of these "Promises."

THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM THE FOUNDATION OF ALL HOPE

Why this constant mention of promises made to men hundreds of years before? If we are Christians in the New Testament sense of the name, we **must** have this knowledge for these ancient promises constituted the first century Christians' basic hope for the future. The Apostle Paul said that—

"Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, TO CONFIRM THE PROMISES MADE UNTO THE FATHERS" (Rom. 15:8).

That is, Christ came to establish or make firm these promises. The New Testament abundantly proves that these promises to the Jewish fathers are very important. A few quotations will prove this conclusively—

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, 'And to **seeds**' (as of many); but of one, 'And to thy **seed**,' which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16).

Paul tells us we must be baptized into Christ and in so doing we become part of Christ, or the seed promised to Abraham—

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye **Abraham's Seed**, and heirs ACCORDING TO THE PROMISES."

When the great apostle wrote to the Ephesians, he made a contrast between their original position as Gentiles, and that which prevailed when they became related to Christ—

"Ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh . . . That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the COVENANTS OF PROMISE, having no hope in the world.

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ"
(Eph. 2:11-13).

With this apostolic confidence our speaker took us back to the days of Abraham and laid the foundation of our hopes in the clear promises made by God unto this righteous father of the Jewish race. We heard God's command to Abraham—

"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

When Abraham became a wanderer in Canaan, God told him to survey the land by looking in all directions, and was assured that ALL THE LAND HE COULD SEE was to be given to him and his seed as an everlasting possession. Further that Abraham's seed should become as numerous as the dust of the earth (Gen. 13:14-17).

After over 40 years of waiting in patience, enduring trials of varied degrees, the very seed through whom the promise was to develop was ordered by God to be sacrificed. When Abraham manifested complete confidence in the power of God to raise Isaac from the dead, the sacrifice was stayed and Abraham received the final assurance of the fulfilment of the promise—

"Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; in blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore;

"And thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice . . ."

These same promises were reiterated unto Isaac years later and to his son Jacob, as recorded in Gen. 26:2-4 and Gen. 28:13-14. **These are the promises made unto the fathers which were confirmed—made sure—by the ministry of Christ.**

Our association is made sure also by our belief and obedience of what has been commanded, by illustrating the same faith in God as shown by Abraham.

1. HIS SEED A MIGHTY NATION

THESE PROMISES were then shown to have **four basic features**, which were expanded to show the purpose of God through all generations of mankind. The first aspect we contemplated was the promise—

"I will make of thee a great and mighty nation."

Abraham's descendants did become a mighty nation. The scriptural record however shows that they mostly were disobedient to God's will, and in consequence after many hundreds of years in the land were driven out by the Romans to wander in the earth for 2000 years. **This could not be the nation referred to in the promise.**

But Paul shows that not all this nation are to be considered as the seed, yet God's promise would stand sure (Rom. 9:6-8)—

"For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, 'In **Isaac** shall thy seed be called' . . . The children of the promise are counted for the seed."

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were obedient unto God. But most of their descendants were not worthy. The remainder of the seed is therefore to be gathered out of the Gentiles, as saith Peter—

"God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His Name" (Acts 15:14).

Not all the Gentiles are so called, but Paul told the Ephesians, that Christ revealed to him the knowledge that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs (participators in common), and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel.

The preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles becomes the means of opening up the Promise to those who espouse the same faith in God as Abraham, become children of Abraham. Or as Paul told the Galatians (4:28)—

"Now, we brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise."

God's promised Kingdom is still in the future. It will so remain until Christ returns to establish it in the earth. At that time Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the seed will rule with Christ over the earth (Matt. 8:11)—

"And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."

2. POSSESSION OF THE EARTH FOREVER

AS OPPOSED to the popular church doctrine of "heaven-going at death," the promises to Abraham, which formed the basis of TRUE Christian belief, offer the **earth** as the reward of faithfulness to God. The earth was promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as an everlasting possession. These faithful men wandered in the earth in expectation, but never received any of it for a possession. Abraham had to buy a portion to bury his wife. The apostles bear testimony to this same truth.

Stephen, in his defence before The Council, laid the foundation of his remarks and hope for the future possession of the earth by saying—

"Abraham . . . removed him into this land, Wherein ye now dwell (the land of Canaan). And He (God) gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet He **promised** that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him."

(Acts 7: 4-5).

Paul told the Hebrews that Abraham was called to go to Canaan and become a stranger and wanderer in a land that he should "AFTER receive for an inheritance," but that his life terminated, not having received the fulfilment of the promise. **Yet he died in full assurance that he would be raised from the dead to receive the blessing with all the other faithful.**

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11-8-13).

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, lived their life spans in the land, without receiving it for a possession as promised. The Master, when speaking of the day of judgment, declared concerning the responsible wicked that (Luke 13.28)—

"There should be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God and ye yourselves thrust out."

That the promise had reference to the earth (and not heaven or an ecclesiastic body) was clearly shown by the prophets whom Christ said should sit down with the Jewish Fathers. One of them, Micah, said of the Jewish nation (4-6-8)—

"In that day, saith the Lord . . . I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted. And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast off a strong nation; and the Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever. And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion: the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem."

While Isaiah fairly shouts for joy of the day when the redeemed shall come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, when the Lord should comfort Zion, and make the land like the Garden of Eden, when joy and gladness fill the earth (Isa. 51:11).

The Kingdom Age of blessedness was depicted by David through the Spirit in Psa. 72, the removal of the curse and the abundant fruitfulness of the earth (v. 17)—

"His Name shall endure forever: His Name shall be continued as long as the sun . . . all nations shall call him blessed."

This is the promise made to Abraham, repeated by David, and in anticipation of the fulfilment thereof David added (v. 20)—

"The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended."

This is what David prayed the Lord to bring to pass.

3. HIS SEED SUPREME OVER ALL MANKIND

THE THIRD aspect of the promise was the subjection of all enemies to the rule of Christ, the seed of Abraham. Christ will conquer the world and accomplish that which was prophesied to Abraham as the working out of the blessing of all people—

"Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies" (Gen 22:17)

David also indicated how this would be done, and its effects:

"All kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him" (Psa. 72:11).

Daniel continues this theme, and shows that though a long time was to pass with trials for his people, in the end the righteous should rule over the nations and possess the earth:

"The kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Dan 7: 27).

John in the Revelation was shown the end of human rule by the judgments of the seventh angel—

"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

4. ALL NATIONS BLESSED

The final aspect of the promise was then set before us by the words of Paul to the believers in Galatia (3:8)—

"And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."

The Gospel of the Kingdom formed the basis of the preaching of Jesus. His message was the good news of the coming Kingdom of God on earth. The apostles' message was the same—

"When they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12).

Malachi the prophet declared that God's Name should be great amongst the Gentiles, and that incense should be offered in His Name throughout the earth (Mal. 1: 11).

All the prophets combine with one accord to speak of the blessing of the earth under the benign reign of the Son of David, the blossoming of the earth like the garden of Eden, the day when the blind shall see, and the deaf shall hear, when the lame shall leap like the unharmed deer, when the curse shall be removed from the earth, and the earth shall bring forth bountifully for the blessing and satisfying of the hunger of all the earth.

Moses and the prophets are emphatic in their assurance that, though man has failed to manifest God's glory by obedience, God's purpose has not been frustrated—

"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14).

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

1960 Texas Fraternal Gathering

If the Lord Will

TO BE HELD FOR EIGHT DAYS AT HYE, TEXAS

Sunday, July 31 to Sunday, August 7

"Let None Judge You of Sabbaths"

"Let no man judge you in meat, or drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath, which are a shadow of thing to come"—Col. 2:16

THE FIRST mention of the Sabbath is found in Gen. 2:2-3, where we are informed that the Creator, after the six days creative work, rested the seventh day and sanctified it. *From that time until the Law was given to Israel, there is no mention made of the Sabbath.*

In Nehemiah 9:14 we have testimony which should forever settle the matter as to when the Sabbath law first came into force. It was when it was given to Israel, and it was never given to any other nation. Nehemiah says (Neh. 9:14)—

"Thou . . . madest known unto them Thy holy Sabbath, and commandest them precepts, statutes and laws by the hand of Moses Thy servant."

Nowhere in all the Scriptures is there any other reference to a people being given the Sabbath law this side of the return of Christ to the earth. Neither Gentiles nor Jews under Christ are

commanded to keep the Sabbath. *It applied to the nation of Israel alone, while they were under the Law of Moses, and only while they were in the land under divine government.*

This is made clear when we examine into the requirements and the purposes of the Sabbath law as given to Israel. For instance we read in Ex. 20:8-11—

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates."

In Ex. 31 the purpose of the Sabbath law is fully set forth—

"Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep, for it is a sign BETWEEN ME AND YOU throughout your generations, that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you . . . every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death . . . Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant."

To sum up the purpose of the Sabbath law—

1. It was to be a sign between God and Israel.
2. It was to be a perpetual covenant between God and Israel.
3. It was to be observed as a memorial of Israel's deliverance from Egypt (Deut. 5:15).

Some requirements: The penalty for violation of any provisions of the Sabbath law was death. They were to kindle no fires, cook no food. They were to do no work, take no journeys, but remain within their gates. They were to offer a special sacrifice upon the altar, in the tabernacle, as a Sabbath day offering (Num. 28:9-10).

It is obvious that professed Sabbath-keepers do not, and cannot keep the Sabbath law in Gentile lands, under Gentile government, neither was it so intended.

Present day Sabbath-keepers make the merest pretence of keeping the Sabbath. While they vociferously proclaim that its keeping is a solemn and essential duty, they thereby condemn themselves, for none of them keep it.

* * *

THE ARGUMENTS used to justify Sabbath-keeping are flimsy and inconclusive. *Failing to find any scriptural testimony whatsoever to justify binding this burden on men's shoulders*, they resort to subtle reasoning. A favourite argument is an attempt to prove that the Ten Commandments as a unified code are still in force. An attempt is made to attach special force to the Decalogue by reference to Ex. 31:18 and 34:1, where it is said that these commands were "written by God," and it is assumed, because of this, that they were to be eternal and unchangeable, and forever binding as written by the finger of God.

Only a casual study of the Bible should convince any one that every word of God, though delivered "at sundry times and in divers manners," is immutable and "shall accomplish that which He pleases." But God stands above His law, and when that law has served the purpose for which it was given, God takes it out of the way. For instance, the law of Moses, though "steadfast," was "taken out of the way," at the time appointed of God.

* * *

Sabbath-keepers claim that, because the Decalogue was a single code of laws; therefore if the Sabbath law was revoked, all the other commands would have to go with it. Hence, they say, we would have no moral law. This argument may appear plausible until we understand that *the Decalogue as a code of law given to the nation of Israel was taken out of the way.*

It was necessary for them to keep the entire ten commands perfectly, or else be guilty of all (Gal. 3:10). Thus they became a "ministration of death," to them, because they could not attain to such high moral standards through law.

And so the Apostle Paul, beyond any shadow of doubt, shows that the Ten Commandments was "that which is done away" (2 Cor. 3:6-11). Here he tells us that it was "the ministration of death, *written and engraven in stones*,"—the Ten Commandments, a covenant between God and the nation of Israel—which was taken out of the way. *This includes the Sabbath law.*

The Ten Commandments were given to Israel for a purpose. They served that purpose which God intended. Read Galatians 3 and you will find the purpose of the Law given. It exposed the sinfulness of human flesh. It exhibited the whole world as "guilty before God." It showed the utter inability of man to win salvation through law; thus showing the necessity of salvation by faith, through the grace or favor of God. It also served as a disciplinary measure to keep Israel in check and as a schoolmaster to lead us unto Christ.

* * *

ALL THE Ten Commandments were reaffirmed in the law of Christ EXCEPT THE SABBATH LAW. We find these commandments reaffirmed in the New Testament in the following passages:

I: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." —Matt. 4:10; Eph. 4:6

II: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image." —1 Cor. 10:14; 1 John 5:21

III: "Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain." —Matt. 5:34; Jas. 5:12

IV: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

Nowhere reaffirmed, but abolished as a law and command.

V: "Honor thy father and thy mother." —Ephesians 6:2

VI: "Thou shalt not kill." —Romans 13:9

VII: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." —Matt. 5:27-28

VIII: "Thou shalt not steal." —Rom. 2:21; Eph. 4:28

IX: "Thou shalt not bear false witness." —Eph. 4:25; Tit. 2:3

X: "Thou shalt not covet." —Ephesians 5:3

In addition, we find the moral principles involved in the law of Moses reaffirmed throughout the New Testament. Even the *principles* involved in the Sabbath law are involved in the law of Christ. That is, just as the Israelites *on the Sabbath* day (the shadow) were commanded to cease from their labor, and direct their thoughts toward divine things, so the saints *every day* (the substance) are to cease from the works of the flesh, and not think their own thoughts, but keep their minds filled with the things of the spirit.

To the disciples of Christ, *EVERY day is a holy day*; not just one day a week, but every day alike devoted wholly to holiness and consecration to divine service.

It should be noted also that in the commands of Christ—though the same *principles* are involved as in the Mosaic Law—the emphasis is on the *spirit* of the law, rather than the letter. Paul, speaking directly of the Ten Commandments—the law "engraven in stones"—shows that the commandments as reaffirmed in Christ, come under a *New Covenant*—

"Not of the letter, but of the spirit, for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. 3:6).

The old law was entirely abrogated; and as reaffirmed in Christ, *the Sabbath law was not included*. The reason is obvious. The typical shadowy Mosaic Sabbath, like circumcision and keeping of days and seasons, was *purely of the letter, and ceremonial in its application*, while the other commands were purely moral and spiritual in their application to Christian duty.

Sabbath-keepers, failing to see this, like the Galatians, are again "entangled with the yoke of bondage," the Mosaic law, and trying to obtain salvation by keeping the letter of the law instead of the spirit of the law.

* * *

SABBATH-KEEPERS must deny plain scriptural testimony, that the keeping of *any day*, as a divine command, is not only not enjoined upon the saints, but *expressly forbidden*. Paul deplored the attitude of some at Galatia who were teaching return to the law, saying (Gal. 4:10-11)—

"Ye observe days, and months, and times and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain."

The words of the Apostle Paul in Rom. 14:5-6 should forever settle the question as to Christian duty toward keeping days as holy. There he shows that the widest freedom is to be exercised in the body of Christ in keeping holy days—

"One man esteemeth one day above another. Another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

That this includes the Sabbath day, is clearly shown—

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or of the new moon, OR OF THE SABBATH DAYS, which are a **shadow of things to come**" (Col. 2: 16-17).

When confronted with the indisputable evidence that the Apostles nowhere enjoin Sabbath-keeping on believers, we are met with the pitiful excuse that Sabbath-keeping was "so obvious that it was not necessary for them to mention it."

Then *why did they repeat all the other commands over and over again?* Surely the sin of idol-worship, adultery, murder, stealing, etc., is obvious enough! Yet they are repeated and strictly enjoined upon believers, both Jews and Gentiles. On the other hand, the Gentiles were unacquainted with Sabbath-keeping, yet we find in Acts 15, how a conference of the Apostles was held for the express purpose of deciding what was required of Gentiles in relation to the Mosaic law. Their decision was this (verses 28-29)—

"For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us (the apostles) to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and fornication."

If it was necessary for Gentiles to keep the Sabbath, *certainly this was the time to state it*. And surely Paul, who was specially commissioned to turn the Gentiles "from darkness to light," would have instructed them on Sabbath-keeping, as he fully instructed them on all other points contained in the Decalogue. On the contrary, he tells them—

"Ye are not under the Law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14).

As he bade farewell to the Ephesians, he said (Acts 20:20-27):

"I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly . . . I have not shunned to declare unto you **all the counsel of God**."

And yet we never find him teaching the keeping of the Sabbath, but on the contrary, as we have seen from his words to the Galatians, Romans and Colossians, he *warned them against it*, as going back into the imperfection and bondage of the shadows.

The Sabbath, like the other Mosaic ordinances, was "a shadow of good things to come" (Heb. 10:1). Some of those "things" were fulfilled in Christ. He fulfilled the Sabbath and "entered into his rest."

"There remaineth therefore a rest (or Sabbath) for the people of God" (Heb. 4:3-11).

They will enter into that rest when, like their Saviour, they cease from their labours, put off the burden of mortality and enter into life eternal. —O. B.

Cast Thy Burden on the Lord

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it"—1 Cor. 10

THESE GOOD words of Paul show us that our individual problems, when we take a good look at them, are a part of the experience of all human kind. Any temptation that may come to any of us has come to others before us. It is a part of human nature, and we must face it as it is, and learn to use the experience of those who have gone before us.

Sometimes it may humble the pride of those who discover that what they thought was an experience entirely different, is commonplace among men. It is an easy matter to think that no one ought to have to bear such troubles, and this is the very reason why one can easily fall into the temptations.

When we turn to the days of Abraham and Lot, what do we find? We find that there existed then all the profligate excesses that the world indulges in today. Down through the days of Joseph, Judah and David we see the sins as they are today.

In the days of Solomon and Rehoboam the sins of the individuals were added to the problems of taxation, just as today. The human temptation to sin goes back to the Garden of Eden, where man fell from the state wherein he was created, and was condemned to die and return to the dust. So we find Paul saying to the people of his day, "Trust in God Who is faithful"—your problems were faced by others before you, *and they were helped, and they held fast and overcame, because they leaned on God.*

Yes, God is faithful: if we do not ask amiss, He is our help. He knows our limit of endurance, but we must do our share. We have read how various materials are tested by stress and strain to find out their limit of endurance. And so it is with man in the spiritual. We all do have a limit of endurance; *we* may not know where the breaking point is, but God does, and He gives us strength to meet the strain—

"We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

Troubles may sometimes seem beyond our strength to endure, but we have the living God on our side, if we have the faith, and can feel as did the Psalmist when he said—

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me" (Psa. 23:4).

We cannot expect to be free from problems, but are we to give up in despair and helplessness? Are we to allow nervous breakdowns to be the only way of escape? Have we no faith? Have our minds become so hardened that we cannot forget?—our hearts as flints that we cannot forgive?

From the first to the last page of Scripture we have the assurance that *man was not meant to bear the load alone*. The great beauty and value of tribulation is that it forces us to seek comfort and refuge in the arms of God—

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."

* * *

IN JUDGES 6 we find a man in great difficulty. He is discouraged almost beyond measure. Israel had sinned against God, and their enemies had overcome them, and were taking everything away from them. This man was in hiding, threshing wheat, when suddenly an angel appeared. He came and sat down under an oak tree in Ophrah. He said to the man—

"The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour."

The man answered—

"If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?"

Israel in their folly had forgotten God, but God had not forgotten them. Yea, said Gideon—

"Where be all the miracles which our fathers told us of?"

There was bitterness in the words of Gideon. We do not need to guess who was to blame. The fault was their own, but they refused to see it.

There have been many since that day who have used the words of Gideon, "*If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?*" A mother sees the remains of her only son lowered into the earth. The widow mourns for a lost husband; troubles have separated brother from brother, and sister from sister; and not understanding, they say, "If the Lord be with us, why then has all this happened?"

We could ask the same question as we consider the tragedies of today. The love of God may seem to many to be but an empty phrase. Many people reason that if God cares, then why must people be in such distress and perplexity? For most people, the lamp of faith gives but a feeble light, and they get irritated when told that suffering can be for their good, as it was for Israel. The Psalmist said (119:67)—

"Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept Thy Word."

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted: that I might learn Thy statutes" (v. 71).

Paul speaks in the same strain—

"My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked. For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."

The Lord looked upon Gideon and said—

"Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel. Have not I sent thee?"

* * *

Turning to Luke 4, we have a different picture. This shows that lack of understanding can bring tragic results. When Jesus came to Nazareth where he was brought up, he went into the synagogue as his custom was. All eyes were fastened upon him when he stood up to read—

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor . . . to heal the broken hearted . . . and to set at liberty them that are bruised . . . **This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.**"

The people were filled with wrath at his words, and rose up and thrust him out of the city, and brought him to a place to cast him down. They did not understand that the Son of God was now in their midst, so, "Jesus of Nazareth passed by." Because of their unbelief, Jesus could do no mighty works there, so he passed them by, to return no more. Jesus came to them in love, and they turned him

away in hate. What a difference there is between these two words, "love" and "hate"! Love is defined as a feeling of strong personal attachment, induced by sympathetic understanding.

We can better understand it when we consider the answer of Jesus to a certain lawyer, who said—

"Master, what is the great commandment in the law?"

Jesus said—

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22: 36-37).

The opposite of that principle is the word "hate"; it is defined as "to dislike exceedingly, to abhor." There are things in the Truth that we should and must love, and other things that we should hate. In Eccl. 3:8, Solomon says—

"There is a time to love, and a time to hate: a time of war, and a time of peace."

These words like other passages of Scripture need to be carefully considered in all our interpretations of divine things. Paul understood that when he wrote to Timothy—

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing** the Word of Truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

In Prov. 8:13 we read—

"The fear of the Lord is to hate evil."

If we were to spend all our time hating that with which we do not agree, we would become unbalanced in our ideas. But being in the Truth, and having knowledge, something better is expected of us. Again we read from Solomon—

"By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil."

Therefore believers will express their hate of evil things *by departing from them*, because they understand that the fruit of the Spirit is love.

While it is very true that God hates many things, as we read in Deut. 12, yet *He is never spoken of as a God of hate, always as a God of love—*

"He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for GOD IS LOVE." (1 John 4: 8). — C.H.T.

"His Father Ran and Kissed Him"

"Then drew nigh unto him (Jesus) all the publicans and sinners for to hear him"—Luke 15:1.

WHAT ATTRACTS these outcasts, whom the Pharisees openly despised? It was not because he hid his light or condoned their sins. None was more outspoken or uncompromising in his denunciation of sinfulness. But he showed sympathy for them. He wanted to help them. He won their confidence and attention by his genuine and unmistakable concern for them. He *worried* about them, if we may use that term. It *grieved* him that they should be astray—that they should grope in darkness—that they should be in ignorance of the pleasures and glories of God's love, the incomparable joy of a pure heart at peace with itself and God—that they should be as sheep without a shepherd, ignored and despised by those whose duty it was to teach them.

It was his main concern. It was not a hobby or a pastime with him. It was his *life*—his meat and drink. He had come, he said (Matt. 18:11), "to save that which was lost."

For the self-righteous and hypocritical Pharisees he had little patience. Having the keys of knowledge, they neither entered in themselves, nor permitted others to enter (Luke 11:52). But to these unfortunates, who, in the absence of guidance or instruction, were making shipwreck of their lives, Jesus came with understanding and compassion.

After reading so often of the sublime and awful *holiness* of God, it is very pleasant to read here of His *long-suffering mercy and compassion*. He is represented to us as not only joyfully receiving the repentant sinner, but as actually going after that which was lost until He find it, and carrying it back upon His shoulders rejoicing. To the sanctimonious, letter-of-the-law Pharisees, this must have seemed blasphemous heresy. But to those whose minds are receptive it furnishes a powerful motive toward righteousness. "*Grieve not the holy Spirit of God,*" says Paul (Eph 4:30). It is a solemn thought that God has given us the power to grieve Him, and also to give Him joy. How careful we should be!

This conception of God as grieved at waywardness and joyous over repentance reveals to us a loving Father with deep concern for His children—His own offspring, created in His image and after His likeness. The mystery of parental love is a wonderful thing. In humans it is often misguided, perhaps, but still it is a strange and beautiful thing to contemplate. Ever ready to forgive. Ever ready to forget the unhappy past. Believing all things . . . hoping all things . . . enduring all things.

"Come now, and let us reason together, said the Lord" to Israel (Isa. 1:18), "though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

But we must not distort the picture by sentimentally ignoring its other aspects. God's mercy is great and His love is long-suffering, but judgment finally descended upon Israel. Isaiah continues in the next verse (v. 20)—

"But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

"*Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God,*" says Paul (Rom. 11:22), "*on them which fell, severity: toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*"

A proper balance will give us a correct and inspiring view of God as the loving Father Who will withhold nothing from His obedient children, and Who is eager and joyful to receive them back upon repentance, but Whose authority and holiness must be respected, and Whose righteous anger is a consuming fire.

* * *

THE PARABLE of the prodigal son is written for the instruction of that class represented by the elder brother. The younger son wasted all his substance in wicked living. He forsook his father for the world's pleasures. *He only returned when all was gone and he had nowhere else to go.*

The elder son surely had grounds to feel justified in his suspicions, and to feel that his father was being taken advantage of. But the prodigal was sincere. He was truly humble and penitent. He realized his foolishness, though to the elder brother, who gave his suspicions the benefit of the doubt, the evidence was not convincing because he preferred to think the other way. "*With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged.*"

The father, on the other hand, gave the benefit of the doubt to mercy and love and hope. There was no bitterness or reservations in his forgiveness. While he was yet a great way off he *ran* to meet him. He did not stand upon his dignity, or remain coldly aloof demanding proof. He did not force an apology. He loved him and he wanted him back and he was willing to forget the past and hope for the future. He showered every display of affection and attention upon him, in his intense joy at reconciliation.

The elder son did not share all this exuberant enthusiasm for the returned sinner. He had his doubts. He was angry and resentful. He doubtless felt the prodigal should be made to suffer a little and be humbled instead of being royally feasted.

Most of all he lacked the balancing and softening influence of brotherly love. If, instead of thinking of only himself, he had loved his brother as he should, he too would have been truly glad to see him return, *he would have been only too eager to hope for the best and believe the best*. He would have been overjoyed to know that his brother had been reclaimed in time from his folly. Far better to be found wrong on the side of kindness and gentleness and faith in others, than to be found wrong on the side of judgment and suspicion. "*With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged.*"

True, indeed, justice demanded that the younger son be punished, but should his own brother urge the claims of justice when the father extended mercy? Let us remember that the father here represents God. His reaction is the proper one. He went out to meet the returning sinner. All his actions were dictated by love and fatherly affection. The father was not necessarily sure the younger son would justify his love, but still he gave it without stint, knowing that *it would be the strongest incentive possible to keep his son in the proper path*, if anything could. Many times God forgave and accepted Israel back to His favor, knowing that they would lapse into sin again.

How ungracious the older brother seems in contrast with his father's love! But it did not seem so to him. He felt quite justified in his self-righteous indignation. He had no qualms at distressing his father, or marring the joy of reconciliation. He could only see one point of view and that was that he had worked hard and faithfully and here was this returned wastrel being shown favours that he had never received.

He had no doubts about the justice of his position. He KNEW he was right. All the cold, hard facts were on his side. The younger son should have been humiliated and made an example. He should have been made to pay for his sins, right to the uttermost farthing. According to the letter of the law, he was right, dead right, and he knew it. But he could not see, in his vindictive eagerness, that he was killing the spirit. It was his father who had been wronged, and the father had chosen to forgive. Love is wise enough not to go too far—"*There is a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down and a time to build up.*"

* * *

THE FATHER'S approach to the elder brother was just as tender as to the other. Gently he reminds him of the true state of affairs—of the need for love, and for joy, rather than prolonging the bitterness of selfish jealousy.

The older brother's task was hard. The prodigal's share of the inheritance had been wickedly squandered with no thought for either his father or the brother that remained. Now the latter was called upon to share with the returned renegade what was rightfully his own. Only one thing could enable him to fight down the well-justified but destructive reactions of the flesh, and that was a strong and deep love for his father and his brother—a *love that was big enough and wise enough to take into account his brother's weaknesses and failures and still be able to love him and make sacrifices for him and unselfishly seek his welfare*. It is the unlovable, the weak, the stragglers, the lost sheep that need love and sympathy and help most—

"They that be whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick" (Matt. 9:12).

Jesus does not tell us what the older brother replied. The parable closes with the father's gentle entreaties. Each of us must supply the older brother's answer within ourselves, remembering that "*He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy*" (James 2:13), and "*Love will cover the multitude of sins*" (1 Peter 4: 8).

—G.V.G.

Signs of the Times

AS THIS is being written, the much-heralded Summit meeting in Paris, on which the hopes of many people for world peace was centered, has collapsed and passed into history, a complete failure before it ever began.

All the world knows that Mr. Khrushchev's refusal to take part in the conference dealt the death blow, but only he and his closest associates can know all the reasons as to why he did it.

Only the naive, the uninformed, and the wishful-thinkers in the world could have expected anything of great value to come out of this first Summit meeting. For, after the ten-nation East-West conference at Geneva, trying to reach some agreement on the same issues to be discussed at Paris had recessed hopelessly deadlocked, there was little hope that anything better would come out of the Paris conference. But still the world hoped until Mr. K. delivered his ultimatum and walked out of the conference.

Speculation has run wild as to what real purpose lay behind the Soviet Premier's dramatic action in scuttling the very first Summit meeting, but as to its immediate effects, there can be little disagreement.

The cold war and the armament race takes on new impetus, with all the old conflicts revived, pursued with added fury. The touchy Berlin crisis will acquire new tension, a situation which could start actual hostilities, at any time the matter is pressed too far. World tensions, slightly subsided during the few months preceding the Summit meeting, will begin to grow more tense. Relations between the U. S. and Russia are at the lowest ebb since the Bolshevik revolution.

The most obvious explanation of Mr. Khrushchev's dramatic action at the Summit meeting, is that he did just what he intended to do, one way or another. The spy plane incident gave him the opportunity he was looking for.

His chief object seems to have been that, with the eyes of the world centered on the Paris meeting, he could brand the U. S. as an aggressor and war monger, full of deceit and treachery, and that to Russia, and Russia alone could the peace-loving peoples of the world look for disarmament and peace.

It would seem that, if Mr. K. had been as zealous for disarmament and peace as he professed to be, that he would not have let the U2 incident or anything else deter him from presenting his case before the world at the Summit meeting.

Each side blames the other for the collapse of the Paris meeting, but it matters little what diplomats think or say about the matter, the important thing is how the neutral, borderline and uncommitted people will view the matter. In all these countries there are strong pro-Communist elements, also strong anti-Western factions. Viewing the whole matter from all angles, it would appear that the Communist cause will be greatly strengthened by the present turn of events.

The whole matter emphasizes how frail a structure any international arrangement or agreement can be, when a single incident, a single blunder or the hot temper of a single man can, in a single day, make a shambles of all the carefully-laid plans of a united effort of all the nations.

Like mere children, with their hands full of high explosives, dictatorial leaders, small and great, mad with the lust for power and wealth, have within their grasp the means of making of the earth a desolation of death and destruction.

WEST ON DEFENSIVE

MR. KRUSHCHEV has, by a clever line of propaganda, and by taking advantage of events favouring his position, placed himself in position of the chief and leading figure in all international negotiations, and he is in a position to create the impression that all opposition to his proposals by Western representatives is opposition to disarmament and world peace, regardless of how dangerous and unworkable his proposals might be.

It is possible that a deadlock at the Summit meeting was all he expected and all he wanted, that he might set before the uncommitted nations of the world the idea that Communism is the only hope for world peace, and that capitalism is the great obstacle standing in the way.

The West stands between two fires, knowing not which way to turn. They must accept Khrushchev's terms for disarmament, which could be disastrous for the West, or else place themselves in the position of appearing to oppose disarmament on any terms.

EVERYTHING SEEMS TO FAVOR RUSSIA

IT IS unquestionably true, as all informed students of the Scriptures know, that the Gogian confederacy of nations (as foretold by Ezekiel) is to attain tremendous size and power in the time of the end.

Therefore Russia's phenomenal growth, territorially, economically, industrially, politically and militarily constitutes one of the greatest and most conclusive signs of the times.

And we are not assuming too much to believe that the many events occurring in different parts of the world today, all favouring the Soviet position, but detrimental to the West, are not mere coincidence.

Rather we can be sure that it is a part of the divine program to permit this mighty aggregation of nations, sparked by Communism, to "attain to the plenitude of its power" that it may fulfil God's purpose in gathering the nations to Armageddon and cause this mighty host to fall on the mountains of Israel.

Events widely separated, and outwardly having no connection, nevertheless forming a general pattern, are like ripe plums falling into the spacious lap of Mr. Khrushchev.

The Racial Controversies in both the U. S. and South Africa, have given to the Soviets one of the most effective propaganda weapons ever to be placed in their hands. In fact they have no need to publicise the matter. All they need to do is sit back and let it work for them. Communism, say they, is the only solution to racial difficulties and inequalities.

The racial crisis in the Union of South Africa is made more acute by the imminent danger of their entire economy being irretrievably wrecked by the racial struggle.

The fifty-nation African-Asian conference at Conakry, Guinea, **which includes Russia and Red China**, called on African and Asian countries to campaign for the "total isolation" of South Africa, beginning with boycott of their goods.

In South Korea and Turkey an uneasy calm has followed the violent outbursts and rioting directed against these two governments, which resulted in the enforced resignation of Dr. Syngman Rhee and his associates in S. Korea, and in Turkey the government of Premier Menderes has been rudely shaken.

In these two widely-separated events again the general pattern is the same. South Korea lies on the border of Communist China and is under continual pressure from pro-Communist agents from within and without.

Turkey, bordering on Soviet Russia, is under the constant threat of Soviet interference in her internal affairs. Rioting in both countries was instigated by students, the younger, more modern, better educated elements. Both nations are allied to the Democratic bloc of nations, and were supposed to be examples of free government in opposition to Communist despotism.

As it turns out, both governments have proved to be corrupt authoritarian regimes who have resorted to political fraud and oppression to exercise an iron hand over the people and make of their party a one-party system of government

It is somewhat ironical that, while the rioting was at its height, representatives of the fifteen-nation NATO group were arriving in Turkey to hold a conference which had to be held under the shadow of martial law. Also that two governments, aided and sponsored by Democratic nations have proved to be politically corrupt and the very antithesis of what they were supposed to be.

Well did the Spirit of God in the prophet Isaiah say: "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" It is no surprise that Communist agitators are losing no time in pointing to the Korean and Turkish incidents and their causes as more evidence of the weakness of "capitalistic" government.

The Spy-Plane Incident, in which a U. S. airplane was shot down over Russia, was an unfortunate occurrence for the U. S. and all the Western nations in more ways than one.

While it is true that such espionage is nothing new, and it is well known that Russia has one of the most extensive and efficient spy organizations on earth, nevertheless the fact that such a bold and venturesome espionage expedition with its dramatic conclusion on the very eve of the Summit meeting, gave to the Soviets just what they were wanting—evidence of U. S. duplicity and insincerity.

No matter what other view may be taken of the matter, or where the chief blame may be placed, it must be admitted that the spy-plane affair was a colossal blunder from the start to finish, playing into the very hands of the wily Soviet officials.

In the estimation of many peoples, the very attitude of U. S. officials in their treatment of the matter places the stamp of guilt upon their every action. First they denied it altogether; then justified it; then agreed not to do it again, but still refusing to admit any wrong or apologize. What more could Mr. K. ask?

THE GREATEST OBSTACLE OF ALL

AFTER ALL, as we have emphasized many times, the greatest obstacle to permanent peace in the world is the crushing weight of poverty and want which engulfs the greater portion of humanity and makes of them ready victims of Communism.

In an address during his recent visit to the U. S., Gen. De Gaulle said: "There can be no peace in our time until the nations relatively surfeited with goods join together to raise standards for two billion people in the backward areas of the globe."

Not unless racial, political and economic equality can be established throughout the world, and the "Golden Rule" observed by all nations could there be any hope of international and lasting peace. **This we know is reserved for "that Man" whom God has ordained to be Prince of Peace to all the world.**

—O.B.

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