

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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We are anxious to send the Berean FREE to any desiring it that way. Please do not hesitate to request it. If you know of any who might like it, please send us their names.

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

HOUSTON, Texas—8008 Junius St.—Sun. Sch. 10; Breaking of Bread 11; Lecture 3rd Sun. 7:30 p.m.; review of daily Bible readings 7 p.m. on other Sundays; Eureka Class 5:45 p.m. each Sun.; Elpis Israel Class 7:30 Wed.

WE HAVE enjoyed having with us in our meetings and in our homes the following visitors from other sections of the Lord's vineyard: sis. Mary Cooper, of Carlsbad, N.M.; sis. Jessie Hatcher, of San Saba, and sis. Ethel Hoage, of Denver.

Sis Hallie Smith has returned from an extended visit with the ecclesia at Baltimore, Md.

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WHILE MANY are running to and fro, and knowledge is being increased on the human level, the many problems that confront the great world powers are moving fast toward that final crisis when their own destruction can only be averted by the letting down of the strong hand of the Lord Jesus in human affairs.

While this will be a terrible epoch of upheaval and destruction for all institutions as presently constituted, yet it will usher in that new age so long desired and waited for by those who have "renounced the hidden things of darkness" by laying hold on the ONE HOPE of the GOSPEL.

While we await this glorious time just ahead, may we occupy ourselves to the utmost in those activities and interests that will commend us to our Lord in that day. —bro. Charles Banta

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HYE, Texas—Quarterly Gathering

ON THE first Sunday in November many of the brothers and sisters of the Texas ecclesias met on the Christadelphian camp grounds here.

These quarterly meetings that bring us in fraternal association one with another every three months have become an important part of our ecclesial life which we feel is contributing greatly to the unity and strength of the body.

Bible study began at 10 a.m. with a consideration of the 2nd chapter of 1 John. The A.V. gives the date of this writing as A.D. 90; but it was noted from a study of v. 18 that a much earlier date might be more accurate. The words, "Little children, it is the last hour", are applied by bro. Thomas to the last hour of the Jewish commonwealth, which ended in A.D. 70.

At 11 a.m. the great sacrificial work of our Saviour was memorialized by partaking of the bread and wine as symbols of that one offering by which "he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified".

—bro. E. W. Banta

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LONDON, Ont.—Orange Hall, 388 Clarence St.—Sunday School 10:15 a.m.; Breaking of Bread 11:30; Lecture 7 p.m.; Wed. Class 8 p.m. at WCTU Hall, Clarence St., ½ block north of Dundas St.

WE ARE pleased to report that we have assisted one more scholar of our Sunday School class to put on the Saving Name of Jesus Christ in baptism, DAVID GWALCHMAI, the son of bro. and sis. Harry Gwalchmai, on Sept. 25, 1960.

He realized that he must make a choice between God and mammon, and it is our prayer that bro. David Gwalchmai will continue in the faith and finally gain the reward of righteousness—eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

We are also pleased to report that we have had the company and fellowship of bro & sis. Fred Higham, bro. G. V. Growcott, and bro. A. Fabris of Detroit; bro. & sis. V. Gilbert of Buffalo; bro. & sis. Joseph Jackson of Toronto. Brethren Higham, Growcott, and Gilbert gave us stirring words of exhortation.

We regret to report that sis. Jean Stanley, formerly of this ecclesia, has now left the Berean fellowship since moving to Lake Wood, California. We regret that she has made this move, but hope that in the near future, she will see her mistake and return to the Berean fellowship.

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

—bro. D. E. Gwalchmai

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WORCESTER, Mass.—IOGT Hall, 1 Ekman St.—Sun. Sch. 10 a.m.; Memorial 11; Lecture 7 p.m. 2nd & 4th Sundays in month; Bible Class twice monthly Tues. evening.

ON AUG. 14 we held our annual Sunday School outing at the home of bro. & sis. Warren Rankin, in Charlton, Mass. We had the pleasure of having a good number of our brethren and sisters from Boston with us: bro. & sis John Davey, bro. & sis. E. Sargent Sr., bro. & sis. E. Sargent Jr., bro. Thomson, sis. Strong, sis. H. Davey, sis. Lancour; and bro. & sis. Gibson of Toronto, who were visiting Boston.

After lunch, we studied together the 9th chapter of Mark, and it proved to be a very profitable occasion.

We thank our Heavenly Father for making it possible to meet with those of like precious Faith and speak one to another of that great love shown toward us by the Father of Lights in bringing us out of this world of darkness into the marvellous light of the Truth.

In love, He has made known to us those exceeding great and precious promises whereby we may become partakers of the Divine nature, if we abide faithfully and zealously with our minds constantly filled with those things caused to be written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

WE HELD our Fraternal Gathering on Oct. 8-9 in our Hall on Ekman St. A good number of our brethren and sisters from various parts of the Vineyard were able to be with us to enjoy that spiritual food we all so much need in these perilous times.

On Saturday bro. Mammone of Hopatcong presided (in place of bro. Kling of Buffalo, due to the sudden illness of sis. Kling). The theme of the addresses was: REVELATION CHAPTER 14.

"The Lamb and the 144,000" was considered by bro. Growcott of Detroit. Our minds were directed to the beautiful spiritual significances of the Lamb, Mt. Zion, the 144,000, the Father's Name, the Seal, the Forehead, and the deep rejoicing of the mind of the Spirit in the goodness of God as expressed in song, thanksgiving and praise.

"The Everlasting Gospel" was presented by bro. Gibson of Toronto, calling our attention to the greatness and power of the Gospel as the revelation of God's glorious purpose, our privileges and responsibilities in relation to it, and the glorious time that is near at hand when the darkness of earth's night will be dispelled by the proclamation of the Everlasting Gospel of peace, righteousness and salvation to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

Bro. Banta of Houston in the evening spoke on **"Babylon Is Fallen, Is Fallen!"** He considered the sequence of events involved in the destruction of the great system of iniquity that has deceived all nations for centuries—the great veil of darkness cast over all people from the days of the Tower of Babel—the utter destruction of the ecclesiastical Roman beast and the binding of all other national beasts in subjection to the worldwide righteous reign of Christ.

After the addresses we spent a very happy time visiting with the brethren and sisters from away. All were grouped together at one motel, and many hours were spent during the weekend in becoming better acquainted with, and closer to, those assembled from great distances by the power of the One Hope. We thank our Heavenly Father for this wonderful opportunity of strengthening our Faith and ecclesial ties in united worship and praise.

On Sunday morning we met at 10:30 for the Breaking of Bread, bro. Marshall Jr. of Worcester presiding and bro. Sutherland of London exhorting us and admonishing us to be on our guard, giving constant heed to the Word and watching lest the Master come and find us sleeping in present things.

After lunch, we assembled again for the lecture at 3:30. Bro. Sargent Jr. of Boston presided and bro. Higham of Detroit spoke on "**God's Coming Kingdom on Earth: Only Hope for a Troubled World.**" He presented a vivid picture of the present world and its striking fulfilment of prophecy in a multitude of ways, and convincingly showed that human rule has failed and brought the world to the brink of chaos, that conditions of evil and godlessness and pride and violence are as they were in the days of Noah, and only the soon return of Christ and setting up of God's Kingdom on earth as foretold by all the prophets can save the world from self-destruction.

We had the company and fellowship of many brethren and sisters from Baltimore, Boston, Buffalo, Detroit, Hopatcong, N.J., Houston, Lake Ariel, Penn., London, Ont., Miami, Ringwood, N.J., Toronto, and San Saba, Tex. To all who have been with us and spoken the Word to us, we would like to give assurance that their encouraging presence and fellowship was greatly enjoyed and their efforts appreciated.

Warm ecclesial greetings to the Household.

—bro. R. Waid

EDITORIAL

Knit Together As One Man

"For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building"—I Cor. 3:9

THE WORD "master-builder" appears only once in the Scriptures, and that is where Paul applies it to himself. But he does not claim to be the wise master-builder, for he says, "As a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation." There are several men of that type, whose works are brought to our attention, but there is none of greater interest than Nehemiah, whose record appears in the book that bears his name.

The only personal information revealed is that he was the son of Hachaliah, and had a brother named Hanani. No information is given concerning his father. However, our interest in him does not depend upon his ancestry, but upon his faith and works, and the noble example he set before those with whom he was associated, and for all those who read his record.

Nehemiah comes to our attention in the 20th year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia, for whom he served as cupbearer in the royal palace in Shushan. Having learned from his brother that the wall of Jerusalem was broken down, and the gates were burned with fire, he pleaded with the king to send him to Jerusalem to rebuild the city wall.

As we read his book, it is noticeable that he adhered rigidly to his duties, and was stern when opposing wrong, but above all he had an unwavering faith in God. This comes to our attention in his beautiful prayer in chap. 1, vs. 4 to 11, which he concluded for mercy in the sight of the king. His prayer was answered, for he found favor in the presence of the king, who sent him to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and to seek the welfare of his people.

* * *

AFTER viewing the desolations, he called the nobles and priests together and explained his purpose, and how the king had supported him. They were so impressed, they said, "*Let us rise up and build!*" The work was well organized by Nehemiah, and construction began without delay.

But the work did not proceed smoothly, for they had much opposition from the neighbouring Gentile tribes under the leadership of Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem. But they could neither circumvent nor intimidate Nehemiah for, said he,

"We made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night."

However, Nehemiah's troubles were not all from without. Even among his own people, there were some who would not do the duties that were assigned to them, for we read that "the Tekoite nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord." *Little did they realize that this would be recorded for people to read in the ages to come.*

As this is part of the things "written for our instruction," let us observe and take notice so that it cannot be recorded of us that we failed to put our necks to the Lord's work.

Another saddening internal trouble arose (chap. 4:10)—

"Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall."

This was a serious situation, for it was created by weakness of faith, lack of courage, and fear. If such a condition develops in an ecclesia, its work will soon be weakened, and the love upon which it was founded, will gradually be dispelled. Therefore, if we should ever feel this condition creeping over us, let us think of the words of Nehemiah, "*Be not afraid: remember the Lord.*"

This courageous and devoted man did not despair, or lose hope, but maintained his impressive example, and *cheerful disposition* at all times. His infectious enthusiasm stimulated his co-workers, and the great work of repairing the wall of Jerusalem was completed in 52 days, "for the people had a mind to work."

The people had a mind to work. When that is condensed into one word, it spells cooperation. The same idea was expressed by the apostles in such terms as "one mind," "like-minded" and "with one accord." This thought should impress us deeply, because it is the *only way possible for an ecclesia to succeed.*

If we do not work together, our love will grow cold; bitterness and evil speaking will be generated, and if this is augmented by the continual agitation of some crotchet which has been developed by our desire to have our own way, the foundations of our ecclesia will disintegrate, and the whole structure will collapse. We must be on our guard at all times, and examine our purpose and motives for, said Jeremiah—

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: WHO CAN KNOW IT?"

—Jer. 17:9.

* * *

BEFORE Nehemiah acted, he *prayed*; and that is the course we must adopt in relation to all aspects of our ecclesial life. Guidance must be sought in the Word of God, for there only can it be found; but if we look for it in a casual manner, it will escape our attention. Our efforts to find wisdom and understanding must be persistent and untiring in the manner expressed in Prov. 2:4-5—

"If thou SEEKEST her as silver, and SEARCHEST for her as for hid treasures; THEN shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."

There are many things to learn from Nehemiah, but one stands out with solemn brilliance, and we believe we are well within the borders of safety when we use a statement that James applied to Abraham, in the manner of Nehemiah—

"Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and BY WORKS WAS FAITH MADE PERFECT."

If we have faith that works *by love*, we will be drawn closer together as the years pass by, being knit together in love. The ecclesia is the Body of many members, and Christ is the Head. Every unit of the Body must do its part by—

". . . speaking the Truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the EFFECTUAL WORKING IN THE MEASURE OF EVERY PART, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

This is the only formula of a true ecclesia. *What we do for our brethren and sisters, is what we do to God.* If what we do is dominated by love, all will be well, but if we are not truly motivated by love and kindness in all we say and do, there will be no edification, and no bodily growth, and we will be brought into condemnation, and will never enter the Kingdom of God. For, said Jesus—

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me"—Matt. 25:40.

In the days of Nehemiah, the wall of Jerusalem was built for a protection against the many enemies that surrounded them, and the work was accomplished, *because "the people had a mind to work."*

We, too, are called to be associated with a wise Master-builder, and it is expected of us that we have a mind to work. Therefore, let us put our necks to the work of the Lord, so that when he comes, and we appear before him, we will be found to be "workmen that needeth not to be ashamed."

—Editor

The Truth As It Is in Jesus

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house . . . He that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil"—2 John 10

By **BROTHER JOHN THOMAS**

IT HAS been the purpose of God from the foundation of the world to set up a kingdom and empire of nations which shall supersede all others previously existing upon the globe. The development of this *imperial constitution of the world*, when brought to the birth, will have occupied six days of a thousand years each in its formation.

No topic can surpass this in interest and importance to every man that breathes the breath of life. *God has made the belief of the things concerning it a condition of partaking in the glory, honor, and incorruptibility which belong to it.*

WHATEVER IGNORANCE MAY BE OVERLOOKED, IGNORANCE OF THE THINGS PERTAINING TO THIS KINGDOM ALIENATES MEN FROM THE LIFE OF GOD.

This is equivalent to saying that no man can attain to eternal life who does not believe the Gospel; for the subject matter of the Gospel is this very Kingdom which it is God's purpose to establish for the Son of Man and the saints.

It is of primary importance that we believe THE TRUTH, and not a substitute for it; for it is by the Truth only we can be saved—"the Truth as it is in Jesus," neither more nor less, is that to which our attention is invited in the Word. "The Truth" is set forth in the law and the prophets; but we must add to these the apostolic testimony contained in the New Testament if we would comprehend it "as it is in Jesus." The Kingdom is the subject matter of "the Truth"; but, "as it is in Jesus", is the Truth concerning him as the King and supreme Pontiff of the dominion; and *the things concerning his Name*, as taught in the doctrine of the apostles. As a whole, "The Truth" is defined as—

"THE THINGS CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST" (Acts 8:12).

This phrase covers the entire ground upon which the "*One Faith*," and the "*One Hope*," of the Gospel are based; so that if a man believe only the "*things of the Kingdom*", his faith is defective in the "*things of the Name*"; or, if his belief be confined to the "things of the Name", it is deficient in the "things of the Kingdom."

There can be no separation of them recognized in a "like precious faith" (2 Pet. 1:1) to that of the apostles. They believed and taught ALL these things; God hath *joined them together*, and no man need expect His favour who separates them, or abolishes the necessity of believing the things He has revealed for faith.

There can be no doubt of the truth of these statements in view of Paul's emphatic declaration that—

"Though we (apostles), or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than that which we have preached unto you, LET HIM BE ACCURSED.

"As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8-9).

Here, then, he pronounces a curse upon even an angel, if he should come and offer to us any other gospel than that which was preached by himself and the other apostles. It is our wisdom, therefore, to receive nothing which has not the sanction of their authority. Paul styles everything else but what he preached "another gospel," that is, "a perversion of the Gospel of Christ"; and, as we can only be saved by belief of the Truth, such a gospel is both useless and injurious

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"GOSPEL" is a word which signifies *good news*, or glad tidings; and *the Gospel* some particular good news. "Blessed", say the Scriptures, "are they who know the *joyful sound*", or the Gospel; and the reason is, because it makes known the "blessedness" which is to come upon the nations, and will give every one an interest in it who believes and accepts it.

The Gospel of God is the good news of blessedness promised in the Scriptures of the prophets, and *summarily* expressed in the saying—

"In thee, Abraham, shall the nations of the earth be blessed."

The making of this promise to Abraham is termed by Paul the *preaching of the Gospel of Abraham*. He says (Gal. 3:8)—

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

This he styles "the blessing of Abraham," which is to come upon the nations through Jesus Christ.

Abraham holds a conspicuous place in relation to the blessedness of the gospel. He is named by Paul 6 times in Gal. 3, which he concludes by saying,

"If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."

Hence, men are required to be Christ's that they may be Abraham's seed. But why is it so important to be of the seed of Abraham? For the very obvious reason that, as the promise was made to Abraham, it is only by being *constitutionally* "in him" that any son of Adam can obtain a participation in what belongs to Abraham.

This idea may be illustrated by reference to the law of inheritance among all civilized people. If a man be possessed of an estate, the members of his family alone have any right to it at his decease. Though all the world may be his friends, unless they are named in his will, they can have no part in the inheritance he may leave behind. And again, if he have no heir, his estate and property would revert to the lord of whom he happened to hold his title; but, to avoid this, it would be quite competent for him to *adopt an heir* according to the law. The person so adopted would become his seed in every respect save that of natural birth. In the case before us, God hath promised an estate to Abraham; therefore he is styled "THE HEIR OF THE WORLD" (Rom. 4:13)—that is, of the glory, honor, and power, of the nations throughout the globe in their millennial blessedness—a gift worthy of Him that hath *promised* it.

Now *the promise of this to Abraham and his seed is a promise to no one else*. No stranger can lay claim to it. He must be Abraham's seed, or he has no right to Abraham's property. On this principle, no one who is not a lineal, or fleshly, descendant of Abraham can inherit the world with him when God fulfils the promise. This is the view taken of the matter by the Jews, who found their hope of participation in the world when it becomes Abraham's and his seed's, upon the acknowledged fact that they are Abraham's flesh and blood.

This would be very well, if no other condition of inheritance were specified. But the Word saith that—

"The children of the flesh are not the children of God; but the children of the promise (those who believe it) are counted for the seed" (Rom. 9:8).

If the children of the flesh had a right to share with Abraham when he obtains possession of the world which God has promised him, then all descended from Ishmael and Esau, his son and grandson, as well as from Isaac, would have equal rights. But God, Who not only promises the estate, but *specifies the conditions of heirship*, has restricted the inheritance to those termed the "children of the promise as Isaac was." He has proclaimed the great truth that—

"The son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman" (Gal. 4:30).

To be a son of the free-woman, a man, although a Jew, must *believe in the promise made to Abraham*; he must be of a like disposition with Abraham; he must be obedient like Abraham; he must have faith in Jesus as the seed of Abraham associated with him in the promise; he must believe in his Name; he must be constitutionally inducted into Christ by immersion into the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:—being the subject of these conditions he is included in the Family of God, to whose members it is said—

"Ye are all the children of God in Christ Jesus through the faith. For as many of you as have been BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST have put on Christ.

"There is no distinction of Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female among you; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:26).

These are the children of the promise, the children of God, the brethren and joint-heirs of Jesus Christ, the sons of the free-woman, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's seed, who are alone entitled to possess the world with him.

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

The Offering of the Princes

"In the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye shall sit on 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel"—Matt. 19:28

By **BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS**

WHEN THE Tabernacle had been constructed and fully set up according to the pattern shown to Moses in the Mount, and when it had been anointed and sanctified with all its instruments and vessels for the service, a circumstance happened that added much grace to the dedication ceremonies.

The 12 princes of the tribes—heads of the congregation—brought to Moses a present of 6 covered wagons and 12 strong oxen, to be used in the Tabernacle service. A more useful present could not in the circumstances be imagined.

The Tabernacle had to be shifted from place to place with the changes of camp while the host was on the march. Though it was a portable structure—capable of being taken to pieces—many of its parts were heavy, such as the sockets for the pillars of the courts, weighing about 100 lbs. each.

The pillars themselves would be heavy pieces of timber, and so also would be the boards of the Tabernacle. The golden candlestick also would be heavy, and the table of showbread with its golden crown and cherubim. Carrying them on the journeys would be very laborious.

The princes had evidently consulted together on the matter, and had agreed jointly to make a present of the wagons to lighten the work.

But would the present be accepted in connection with a work wholly divine? The princes may have had their doubts on this, and Moses himself may not have been clear. Whatever uncertainty may have existed was dispelled by the direction that Moses received when the princes brought their offering before the Tabernacle. We read (v. 89) that—

"When Moses was gone into the Tabernacle of the congregation, he heard the voice of One speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of the testimony from between the two cherubims."

The message as to the wagons was this—

"Take the offering of the princes, that they may be to do the service of the Tabernacle of the congregation."

Not only so, but Moses was told exactly what disposal to make of them—

"Give them unto the Levites, to every man according to his service."

It will be remembered that to the Levites, under the superintendence of Aaron, was assigned the work of packing up and carrying the various parts of the Tabernacle while on the march and to each particular family was allotted particular parts: to the *sons of Kohath*, the holy vessels and furniture of the tabernacle; to the *sons of Gershon*, all the curtains and hangings and pins and cords; to the *sons of Merari*, all the boards, bars, pillars, and sockets.

The distribution of the wagons was according to these services: four wagons and eight oxen were given to the sons of Merari, who had to see after all the heavy parts: two wagons and four oxen were given to the sons of Gershon, who had to carry the curtains and hangings, which must have been of some bulk to enclose a court 150 feet by 75. To the sons of Kohath, none were given—

"Because the service of the sanctuary belonging to them was that they should bear on their shoulders."

—that is, the ark, incense altar, table of showbread, etc.

Two things strike us in connection with the whole episode. *God accepts co-operation in forms He has not prescribed if they are in subservient harmony with His requirements.* The twelve princes were in submission to Moses and in subjection to the Tabernacle and the whole Law connected with it. The object of their work was to help and further a divine work.

Had they brought the materials for a second tabernacle, or a second camp, we cannot but suppose that the offering would not only not have been accepted, but would have been spurned as an act of presumption, like Nadab's and Abihu's offering of strange fire. But being in no rivalry to the divine work, but conceived in the spirit of helpfulness and being a wise measure, God approved and accepted it.

We see the same feature in the case of Jethro's recommendation to Moses that he should delegate his authority in small matters to subordinate officers. God approved to the suggestion of Jethro, and it became a commandment to Moses to do as Jethro had suggested (Ex. 18: Deut. 1).

From this we may draw the useful conclusion that the arrangements we are obliged to make in this latter day in the absence of divine direction, will receive the divine sanction and favor provided they are made in the sincere spirit of desiring to help the Lord's work, *and are in harmony with the requirements of that work as specified in the word of Jesus and the apostles.*

The use of the printing press and the holding of meetings for lectures are of this nature. We may hope presently to hear that the Lord approves of them as a doing of our best in an age when His purpose requires that He should be silent.

* * *

IS THERE any shadowing of the work of Christ here? Here is Moses surrounded by twelve heads of the tribes, helping him in the work he has on hand, by ideas of their own, in harmony with that work and accepted because useful as well as in harmony.

If we look at the twelve apostles, whether in the day of suffering or the day of glory—the day of the wilderness or the day of the land of promise—we may get a glimpse of a counterpart. In the work done by the apostles in the taking out of a people for his name, their co-operation with the Lord was not an automatic one. It was the co-operation of intelligent faithfulness which devised measures according to the exigencies of the occasion, such as when they appointed a successor to Judas, or convened a council to consider the controversy that had arisen at Antioch.

So in the day when they "shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel", we may imagine, without being guilty of any freak of speculation, that they will, out of the fulness of wise and loyal hearts, devise measures of service that will go beyond what may be casually prescribed, but will be accepted because in thorough harmony with all the objects for which Christ shall reign.

Such a thought would impart a prospective interest to the work of reigning with Christ that would be absent if we supposed that the apostles would be mere court puppets, as we might express it. *We are justified in believing that there will be nothing mechanical in the operations of immortal life.* The controlling presence of the Spirit will not exclude individuality of thought and volition. Rather will there be that diversity in glorious unity.

One Spirit, acting in the diversity of individual gift and intelligence—in harmony, but not in monotony—will be no new experience. In the apostolic age, the same phenomenon was exemplified in a lower form (1 Cor. 12:4-11). What would be true of the apostles in their exaltation would be true of all saints, so that we may look forward to a life of the interest that comes even now from the application of individual judgment to the decision of problems as they arise.

* * *

IN ADDITION to the wagons and oxen, the twelve princes made each an individual offering in connection with the dedication of the altar. *There is something remarkable in the way in which this was done, and in the way in which it is recorded.* The princes did not come together and present their offerings as a joint offering; but each prince, commencing with the prince of Judah, came on a particular day one after the other, during twelve days, and presented his offering before the altar; and each prince presented exactly the same collection of articles and beasts.

Yet though each prince presented exactly the same offering, *the articles composing it are minutely and exactly enumerated twelve times over*, as each prince made his present on his day: and then all are summarized in a totalling of the twelve. The particulars, in which there is so much repetition, occupy a chapter of 89 verses (Numbers 7).

There *must have been a reason* for this apparently superfluous repetition of apparently superfluous details. It must have been to give conspicuousness and emphasis to the principle involved. What this principle was we may see if we consider that the princes of the tribes would stand representatively for the tribes themselves, and that the altar at which they prostrated themselves was the symbol of sacrifice as the basis of sinful man's approach to God.

Here is a dramatic proclamation of utter humiliation before God as the kernel principle of national existence. Its repetition twelve times on twelve different days would make the lesson more emphatic, and the identity of the offering in each case would show what Paul declares of all men that:

"There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

The offering in each case was elaborate, and covered every aspect of the Mosaic parable embodied in the Tabernacle—

A silver charger and a bowl piled full of fine flour mingled with oil (the Jew and Gentile, purified and wrought into divine shape by affliction, and filled with life and joy);
One golden spoon, full of incense (perfected faith finding daily exercise in praise and prayer);
One young bullock, one ram, and one lamb, for a burnt offering (strength, desire, and obedience absorbed in the incorruptible at the resurrection);
A kid of the goats for a sin offering (the sacrificial condemnation of sin in the flesh);
Two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, and five lambs of the first year for peace offerings (all strength, executiveness, waywardness, and innocence brought into reconciliation with God and employed in His service).

That a ceremony with such significances should be twelve times repeated before the altar on the commencement of Israel's national existence, and expressly for the dedication of the altar to the daily use of the nation, is more eloquent than tongue can tell, of *the nature of the national life as it ought to be, and of the great departure from the true objects of national life, that is visible in the forms of national life now upon earth.*

Revenue, police, drainage, and public convenience are about all that is aimed at. State-churchism is a faint survival of the Mosaic ideal, but lacking life or light or power. The true aim of life is unknown and unprovided for. But the day is coming, of which the Mosaic ritual was a prophecy, as well as a law for Israel, when God will be as much taken into account as the sun or the fresh air, and *human life everywhere will converge upon Him as much as the arrangements of Israel's camp converged upon the Tabernacle.*

"ALL shall know ME from the least even to the greatest."

Should the idea be correct, that the twelve princes will have their anti-type in the 12 apostles of the Lamb, whose names appeared in the gem-decorated foundations of the symbolical Holy City

seen by John in Patmos, there may be an interesting counterpart in the inaugural ceremonies of the Kingdom, to this dedication of the altar.

Christ is the true altar, and he will then be dedicated for use by the whole world, and it is possible that each apostle may, "each on his day," edify and delight the whole congregation of the redeemed by the conduct of special dedicatory services in which the glory of Christ will be powerfully and thrillingly brought home to their immortal faculties. The submissive and obedient mortals in their thousands might share with acclamation in such a feast of fat things: for the feast is to be spread "to all people."

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The Origins of Christ-Mass

*"What communion hath light with darkness? What agreement hath the Temple of God with idols?
Come out, be separate, touch not the unclean"*—2 Cor. 6:14

PAUL'S WHOLE teaching is directed toward developing in his hearers an intense desire for that which is *better, more powerful, stronger, closer* to divine principle and standard. He labours toward the arousing of godly yearnings that find their satisfaction and peace only in a constant upward effort toward conformity with the perfect example.

The struggle of life must not be viewed as an unhappy, stoical battle against desire—the secret is rather a gradual, joyful education and training of the inclinations toward BETTER things—

"Yet show I unto you a MORE EXCELLENT WAY."
"Overcome evil WITH GOOD."

"Here is a BETTER, a more excellent way." The life in the Truth is a GROWTH, a movement ever forward and upward, the progressive advancement toward greater light and fuller understanding.

Baptism is only the first step, a bare beginning—to STOP at that point is *suicide*. We can all call to mind passages which illustrate this essential divine principle—

"Be ye TRANSFORMED by the RENEWING of your mind."

"GROW in grace and knowledge."
"Put on the new man which is renewed in KNOWLEDGE."
"GROW UP unto him in all things."
"Every man that has this hope in him PURIFIETH himself."

And so the man of God, through constant application to the enlightening Word, is gradually moulded from weakness and ignorance to greater and greater strength of purpose, character and perception.

Let us approach this subject from this point of view—to ascertain the true FACTS, and to consider the spiritual principles which bear upon them, that we may in all things better pursue the good, acceptable, perfect will of our holy God.

* * *

ONE THING immediately strikes us forcibly which perhaps we have never noticed before. That is that *most of the present historic anniversaries are ghostly hangovers from the time when the Mother of Harlots held undisputed sway over "times and seasons" and the "bodies and souls of men."*

Many, of course, are now only unfamiliar names to most of us—Candlemas, Epiphany, St. Stephen's, Michaelmas, All Saints, Whitsuntide, Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Plough Monday, Twelfth Night, and scores of others. But some still linger on as grim relics of an age of gross and incredible superstition.

"*Saint*" *Valentine*, for instance, was a romantically-minded bishop of the third century martyred for performing "christian" marriages against the laws of the emperor.

"*Saint*" *Patrick* converted Ireland to Catholicism and immortalized the shamrock by using it to demonstrate the superstition of the triple unity of the "Trinity."

Easter is named, apparently, from a Saxon goddess of spring. Many ancient heathen nations revered the egg as the symbol of the beginning of life, and it is from Teuton mythology that rabbit-laid eggs appear among Easter superstitions.

Halloween was once a fairly dignified autumn thanksgiving, but became hopelessly corrupted with a strong mixture of heathen witchcraft (more appealing to public taste).

Christmas, too, we find is fundamentally of religious origin, but FAR from exclusively "Christian." To it we find attached innumerable traditions and superstitions. Most are of pagan origin but the mystery-working of the Catholic church has greatly complicated them by addition of priests and madonnas and holy water and signs of the cross.

WE FIND ABOVE ALL THINGS THAT CHRISTMAS IS BASICALLY AND PRIMARILY A ROMAN CATHOLIC INSTITUTION. To this great system of iniquity it owes its establishment, permanence and popularity.

For the *period of the year* in which it is held, it is mostly indebted to pagan sources. It appears that this time of the year, following the harvest and centering about the winter solstice when the days again began to lengthen, has almost universally been a period of festivity and religious significance long before the spread of Christianity.

Regarding the *date*, most commentators agree that from many points of view NO DATE could be more UNLIKELY as that of Christ's birth, and it is a matter of record that there is no month of the year in which respectable ecclesiastical authorities have not confidently placed the birth of Jesus.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* declares—

"CHRISTMAS (the Mass of Christ) . . . Clement of Alexandria (about 200 AD) mentions several speculations on the date of Christ's birth and condemns them as superstitious . . .

"The exact day and year of Christ's birth have never been satisfactorily settled, but when the fathers of the church in A.D. 340 decided upon a date to celebrate the event, they wisely (!) chose the day of the winter solstice which was firmly fixed in the minds of the people and which was their most important festival."

The *Encyclopaedia Americana* says the same—

"Among the German and Celtic tribes the winter solstice was considered an important point of the year, and they held their chief festival of Yule to commemorate the return of the burning-wheel (the sun)."

And *Everyman's Encyclopaedia* says—

"CHRISTMAS (the Mass of Christ) . . . It is certain that the time now fixed could not by any possibility have been the period of Jesus' birth. The choice of this season was probably due to the general recognition that the winter solstice was the turning point of the year."

* * *

IT WAS during the period of the ascendancy of the Roman Empire that Christmas originated. Consequently, we find that Roman customs played the major part in fixing its date and characteristics. Its general season, however, was later found to coincide with important religious superstitions of the north European barbarians, and this too played a large part in its development. One writer says—

"The roots of Christmas observance go deeply into the folklore of Druids, Scandinavians, Egyptians and Romans."

Chambers Encyclopaedia records—

"Many of the beliefs and usages of the Old Germans, and also of the Romans, relating to this period passed over from heathenism to Christianity."

R. J. Campbell, in *The Story of Christmas*, * declares—

"As we have seen, there are not a few popular observances associated with the Christmas season which have NOTHING TO DO WITH the Christian religion and the birth of Jesus. Most of these observances are older than Christianity, and some of them—it must be confessed—are NOT OF VERY ELEVATED ORIGIN "

William Auld, in *Christmas Traditions*,* notes—

"There are the green garlands, the marvellous trees, the mystic fire and lights . . . and custom many . . . still clustering about the great midwinter feast—all of which descend to us from the PAGAN CHILDHOOD of the race."

T. G. Crippen, in *Christmas and Christmas Lore*.* confesses—

"The Feast of the Nativity rather INCORPORATED than supplanted various HEATHEN festivals. It was therefore only natural that RELICS OF HEATHEN PRACTICE should survive as traditional customs."

The *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics** confirms this—

"MOST of the Christian customs now prevailing in Europe, or recorded from former times, are HEATHEN customs which have been absorbed or tolerated by the Church. The Christian feast has inherited these customs from 2 sources— Roman and Teutonic PAGANISM "

And the *Catholic Encyclopaedia** (note the source) admits—

"There is NO DOUBT that the original Christian nuclei attracted PAGAN accretion."

*These books obtained from the Public Library.

(All these authorities are "friends" of Christmas. Most of them seem to regard its heathen-Catholic origin as a delightful and intriguing asset). We find exactly the same picture when we consult standard, independent reference books. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says—

"Many current customs date back to these pre-Christian origins, among them Christmas decorations. The Romans ornamented their temples and homes with green boughs and flowers for the Saturnalia . . . the Druids gathered mistletoe and hung it in their homes; the Saxons used holly, ivy and bay.

And *Everyman's Encyclopaedia* declares—

"The practice of decorating churches is pagan in its origin."

* * *

THIS PERIOD of the year was one of great festivities for the early Romans. First came the celebrated *Saturnalia*, commencing Dec. 17. *This feast (of the god Saturn) finds much mention in all commentaries on Christmas.* One says—

"The Roman Saturnalia was characterized by processions, singing, lighting candles, adorning the house with laurels and green trees, giving presents."

Again from the *Religious Encyclopaedia*—

"The Saturnalia in Rome provided the MODEL for MOST of the merry customs of Christmas. The time was one of the general mirth. All classes exchanged gifts, the commonest being wax candles and clay dolls. Christmas inherited the general merriment . . . games, giving of gifts, abundance of sweetmeats and—as to the more ceremonious elements—the burning of candles."

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* relates similarly—

"Christmas customs are an evolution from times that long antedated the Christian period — a descent from seasonal, pagan, religious and national practices . . .

And from the *Encyclopaedia Americana*—

"The holly, the mistletoe, the Yule log, and the wassail bowl are relics of pre-Christmas times."

Campbell further says—

"The Romans adopted from earlier folk-customs the rituals which appear in their Saturnalia and have been CARRIED OVER INTO THE OBSERVANCE OF MODERN CHRISTMAS TIMES. There was feasting, drinking and decorating with evergreens."

Auld declares—

"Much of the spirit of this old Roman festival passed into Christmas celebration. The early Puritans, witnessing the jolly antics of grotesque fools, the "Lords of Merry Disport," never had any doubt in the matter. That transient feeling which blossoms at Christmastime OWES AS MUCH TO THE kind GOD SATURN AS TO THE LOVING SON OF MAN.

"This is the Christmas, which, mixed with a little SENTIMENTAL Christianity, lies so pleasantly in the genial pages of Dickens."

One outstanding feature of the Saturnalia festival was the reversion of all order and dignities. This was carried to great lengths at Christmastime in the Middle Ages. In England it was customary to appoint a "Lord of Misrule" or "Abbot of Unreason" who presided over the blasphemous foolery. We read with great surprise that at one time it was quite customary for EVEN THE CLERGY themselves to let down all barriers of restraint within the church itself at the Christmas season. Crippen relates (which seems almost unbelievable)—

"At Vespers, at the end of the Magnificat, the whole service was turned into BURLESQUE. Dice were cast and black puddings were EATEN ON THE ALTAR, ludicrous songs were sung and old leather was burned as mock incense. In some places an ass was led into the church in whose honor a MOCK HYMN was chanted with a bray for a refrain."

The *Encyclopaedia Americana* says—

"On St. Nicholas' Day a "Boy Bishop" was elected, who exercised a BURLESQUE episcopal jurisdiction, and PARODIED the various ecclesiastical functions and ceremonies."

Such is the height and stability of a religion grounded on sentiment and superstition. Auld adds—

"All through the Middle Ages the two rivers of RIOT and RELIGION flowed together."

Following the *Saturnalia* in Rome was the *Sigallaria*, or "Doll Festival," another obvious link with the modern Christmas. Then on Dec. 25 came the great *Brumalia*, the religious observance of the sun-worshippers. This was known also as *Natalis Solus Invicti*—the "Birth of the Unconquerable Sun"—the date when the days again began to lengthen. It is significant that the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* itself says—

"The well-known solar feast of *Natalis Invicti*, celebrated on Dec. 25, has a strong claim for the responsibility of our Christmas date."

On this point the *Encyclopaedia Americana* says—

"CHRISTMAS (the Mass of Christ) . . . In the 5th century the Western Church ordered it to be celebrated forever on the day of the old Roman feast of the birth of Sol."

Everyman's Encyclopaedia declares—

"The one which especially influenced the Christian Church was probably the Roman festival of the winter solstice, celebrated on Dec. 25 ("The Day of the Birth of the Unconquerable Sun.").

Then came the *Kalends of January*, and finally the *Juvenalia*, both of which have contributed their share to the modern Christmas. With very odd logic, Crippen remarks—

"Surely it was WELL (!) that all these should be COMBINED IN ONE GREAT CHRISTIAN FEAST, and their ancient significance transferred in the light of the Gospel. Many customs obtained a new lease of life.

"In Egypt, as in Rome, the new festival would coincide with the birthday of the Sun-god. The northern barbarians would find it practically coincident with their own Yule. It seems to have been the special festival of the god Thor."

Again from Auld—

"After the barbarians were Christianized, all the customs and SUPERSTITIONS which had belonged from time immemorable to their own Yuletide BEGAN TO CLUSTER ABOUT CHRISTMAS.

"When the season calls up in the mind crackling fires on the hearth, lighted candles, rooms adorned with evergreens, bright berries and flowers, wholesome feast and frolic—these are the GENUINE PAGAN ELEMENTS."

Regarding the period when Christmas originated, the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* says it was NOT AMONG THE EARLY FESTIVALS OF THE CHURCH because Irenaeus and Tertullian, at the end of the 2nd century omit it from their lists of feasts.

The first evidence of any observance of the birth of Christ, says this same authority, appears about the year 200 A.D. in Egypt. It was not earlier than 330 A.D. that Dec. 25 was chosen by the Pope, and it was not universally accepted until long after (the position and authority of the "Pope" was then still far from conceded in "Christendom"). Regarding the attitude of early Christians toward such things, Auld says:

"As for the FIRST believers, THEY had not the SLIGHTEST INTEREST in ANYTHING OF THE KIND. Hope in the Lord's imminent return from heaven in great power and glory was the flame that fired THEIR devotion."

In the book, "*The Customs of Mankind*," we read—

"Christmas was originally a festival of the winter solstice. It was customary to hold great feasts in honor of the HEATHEN GODS, to dance and make merry. The EARLY teachers of Christianity PROHIBITED THESE FESTIVALS as unsuited to the character of Christ."

Tertullian, who wrote, says the *Ency. Britannica*, "in a period when a LAX SPIRIT OF CONFORMITY to the world had seized the churches"—about 200 A.D.) says regarding decorating with evergreens and ceremonial candles—

"Let those who have no Light light their lamps, let THEM affix to their posts laurels: YOU are the light of the world, a tree ever green; IF you have renounced temples, make not your OWN GATE a temple" (by heathen decorations).

And it is recorded that at the time of persecution, *Christians were detected by NOT decorating their houses* at the Saturnalia. Some, it is said, conformed to avoid suspicion. The practice was *strongly condemned by the early church*. And Campbell relates—

"There can be no doubt that the early Christians also frequently shared in the FROLICS of their HEATHEN neighbours, and the fathers of the Church had considerable difficulty in prevailing on their members to refrain from such UNEDIFYING PASTIMES."

"The early Christians discouraged the use of evergreen decorations in Christian homes and assemblies because their display had long been associated with heathen festivals. Bishop Martin of Braga (575 A.D.) forbade the use of all greenery and 'other dangerous Kalend customs'."

Crippen remarks—

"So long as heathenism was in full vigor the ancient Christians were puritanically jealous of anything that might seem like coquetting with idolatry, but when heathenism was declining there was a disposition to ADOPT ITS CUSTOMS."

And further from Auld—

"The use of evergreens is one of the happy (!) contributions which PAGANISM made to the Christian festival. At FIRST the Church frowned upon this intrusion of paganism into the sacred season, but altogether the ancient church was WISELY TOLERANT (!) in her attitude to heathen ideas and customs . . . hence the curious and interesting MIXTURES of ideas, PAGAN and CHRISTIAN, which became CHARMINGLY (!) entwisted."

After unsuccessfully trying to prevent the adoption of pagan customs, says Campbell—

"The clergy endeavoured to transform the heathen REVELS into amusements which—if not really more spiritual in character—had at least the merit of recognizing the authority of the Church."

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* confirms this—

"As Christianity spread among the peoples of pagan lands, many of the practices of the winter solstice were blended with those of Christianity, because of the liberal ruling of Pope Gregory I, the Great, and the co-operation of the missionaries.

And such was the slow but deadly course by which the Church exchanged purity for pleasure, and the friendship of God for that of the world.

Justinian in 529 A.D. decreed that no one should work on Christmas. At the Reformation, 1,000 years later, the revulsion against the Catholic superstitions was such that laws were made against not working on Christmas. Crippen says:

"The leaders of the Reformation in Scotland thought that the Roman church was too bad to be mended. In their view it must be ended, and a new beginning made strictly on the model of the New Testament.

"Now certainly the New Testament MADE NO MENTION OF ECCLESIASTICAL FESTIVALS, so the new beginning included the sweeping of them all away. On Dec. 26, 1583, the Glasgow Kirk Session put 5 persons to public penance for keeping the 'superstitious day called YULE.' "

The early Puritan settlers in America were of the same mind. Christmas, they declared, "smelt to heaven of idolatry," and they abolished it as a "relic of Popery." In Massachusetts in 1659, a law was passed which read—

"Whosoever shall be found observing any such day as Christmas, either by forbearing of labor, feasting, or in any other way, shall be fined 5 shillings."

In their earlier, purer days, the Presbyterians and Baptists were similarly opposed to it on the same grounds. In England, at a time of revulsion against Catholicism, observance of Christmas was forbidden by an act of Parliament in 1644.

* * *

SANTA CLAUS is of course the good Bishop "St. Nicholas," patron saint of beggars and thieves. In the Middle Ages thieves were known as "clerks of St. Nicholas." In Europe he travels about in all his bishop's regalia riding a white horse which (in the strange metamorphosis of centuries) he seems to have inherited through Scandinavian mythology from the benign god Wodin who was

engaged in the same activities at that period of the year. His descent down the chimney is traced to similar habits of the Norse goddess Hertha. Auld writes about St. Nicholas—

"The names and attributes of the mysterious purveyors of gifts disclose a most CONFUSED MIXTURE OF PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN NOTIONS. All kinds of bugbears and bogies figure in the European Christmas. By their names they suggest a loose connection with St. Nicholas, but by their activities they betray an unmistakable relationship with the weird beings of ancient pagan mythology."

Of the *Christmas tree*, the origin is uncertain. Virgil, the Roman poet, speaks of decorating pine trees in honor of Bacchus, the god of revelry. Hislop, in his "Two Babylons," connects similar customs with Egyptian cults.

Mistletoe, of course, is inherited from the Druid priests of ancient Britain. For many centuries the Church forbade its use because of the superstition attached to it. It was so sacred that enemies meeting beneath it laid down their arms (the world still has a relic of this superstition.)

The *holly wreath* symbolized the crown of thorns, the red berries being drops of blood. Like all other holy articles of the Church, *it will keep away goblins*. Miscellaneous Christmas superstitions are far too numerous to mention. Campbell, in summing up, comes *surprisingly close to the truth*—

"There is really NOTHING IN COMMON between the mystery of the Word made flesh for man's salvation, and the orgies of eating and drinking and horseplay associated with the paganism of pre-Christian times and perpetuated at the Christmas season in our own as well as earlier generations. There is goodwill in both—but the ONE IS CARNAL AND THE OTHER SPIRITUAL."

Brethren and sisters, how do WE—called OUT to be "sons of God"—stand in relation to these things of the world? "What communion hath LIGHT with DARKNESS?" In the Revelation, two eternally antagonistic classes appear—

BRANDED WITH THE MARK OF THE BEAST

(1) "ALL NATIONS have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication . . . by her sorceries were ALL NATIONS deceived."

SANCTIFIED WITH THE SEAL OF GOD.

(2) "Lo, a Lamb stood on Mt. Sion, and with him 144,000. THESE are they which were NOT defiled with (the apostate) women. These were redeemed from among men, being: the firstfruits unto God, for they are without fault before the throne of God."

To which class will WE be found to belong?

—G.V.G.

1960 Texas Gathering Report

PART THREE

"They shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid"

—Micah 4:4

OUR QUIET meditations under the leafy arbour of the Hye Gathering grounds, undisturbed by the agitations of the strife-torn world, gave much meaning to these words of Micah. The outside

conditions were only interjected into our scene as an illustration to contrast present human failure to rule the world, with the glorious prospect of a Divine Universal Empire.

The slim thread upon which world peace is dangling over the chasm of chaos was set forth as proof of the truth of God's Word (Isa. 48: 22) —

“THERE IS NO PEACE UNTO THE WICKED.”

We have witnessed during the last year the raising of human hopes to a pinnacle of expectation for peace and security, only to have the enthusiasm dashed to the ground into shivers, as the breaking of a potter's useless vessel on the heap of broken sherds remaining from previous peace attempts, without God.

The United Nations has also been shown to be impotent to overcome the curse of confusion because of disobedience and pride at Babel.

* * *

CONTRASTED with the present confusion of a divided world, we were shown the glories of God's soon-coming kingdom on earth. The turning of all nations from conflict to husbandry, the removal of the ground curse, and the increase in agricultural productivity, will provide more time to worship God and contemplate His blessings.

All God's prophets have combined to show a constant picture of peace from sea to sea, and a Divine law blessing the poor and needy; judgment and justice without fear or favor. The message for a distressed world is found in the filling of the earth with the glory of the Lord, and all men serving Him with a pure heart. Rom. 3: 23-24 records —

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

In New Testament times slavery was common in the Roman Empire. The only liberation from this servitude was death. The Apostle Paul in illustrating the greatness of the redemption of man from the bondage of sin by the grace of God, makes the parallel that natural man is the slave of sin. The only deliverance from this bondage is death. The work of Christ is to free the sinner from this bond —

"By one man's (Adam's) disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one (Christ) shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19).

Only by Divine intervention can mortal man be liberated from servitude to sin (Rom. 6:22-23)—

"Being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

IT IS GOD'S GIFT. It cannot be obtained by unaided man.

The Divine purpose in this method of liberation is to establish GOD as righteous in the eyes of all mankind. The Jews endeavoured to establish their **own righteousness**. The Gentiles today seek the same method and ignore God's plan. God's plan excludes human boasting or glorying.

The church doctrine of Christ as a substitute has no scriptural foundation. Christ made no bargain with sin in his liberating man from sin's bondage. Christ did not pay anything to sin. He defied sin. Christ's redemption was a military redemption. He destroyed sin. He condemned sin. This was God's plan from the beginning —

"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15).

This bruising was **no bargain**. It was a VICTORY (1 Cor. 15:57)—

"Thanks be to God Who giveth us the VICTORY, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

We are redeemed by being "IN" Christ, not just "BY" Christ. Jesus was also involved in the redemption. He was associated with us in the process. Christ prayed earnestly to God with tears unto Him that was able to save him from death. HE NEEDED SAVING FROM DEATH. Christ was tried in all points like we are, having partaken of our same nature. But he did not sin. But we do —

"There is no man that doeth good and sinneth not."

By being "IN" Christ we are covered by Christ's perfect obedience. But it is not a case of just being sorry for what we have done. **There must be a complete change of our lives**. If we conform our lives to the pattern set by Christ by belief, baptism and obedience, we become "IN" Christ, thus Abraham's seed and heirs of the promises made to him (Rom. 6:18) —

"Being made free from sin, we become servants to righteousness."

* * *

THE CONSIDERATION of the redemption in Christ so clearly set before us in the afternoon was fittingly followed by a public lecture on the Promises made by God to Abraham and to David.

God has revealed a specific purpose in the creation of the earth. This revelation has been made by unfolding promises from Adam to Christ Peter refers to these as (2 Pet. 1:3-4) —

"Exceeding great and precious promises . . . that we might be PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE."

God is building a house, a spiritual house, the plan of redemption of mankind as unfolded in the Scriptures showing the laying of the foundation and the method of building up of the structure in Christ.

From the call of Abraham to leave the house of his father in Ur of the Chaldees, we find the purpose gradually unrolled. The eternal promise of the earth as the reward for faithful service to God, and the blessing of all nations, formed the basis of the hopes of the righteous through all succeeding generations.

These promises were shown to have a much fuller meaning than the temporary possession of Palestine under Abraham's natural descendants. Certainly the righteous have not yet been blessed by a possession of the earth, nor have all nations been blessed in the promised seed. The promise is eternal, requiring the bestowing of everlasting life for its fulfilment.

The land promise formed scope for the establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth. The rulers of the Kingdom become evident by an analysis of the promise to David—

"I will set up thy seed after thee, and I will establish his Kingdom He shall build a house for My Name, and I will establish the throne of his Kingdom forever" (2 Sam. 7:13).

Isaiah furthers the promise in well-known words (Isa. 9:7) —

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

* * *

EZEKIEL tells us that God will cause to be builded a glorious house of worship in Jerusalem in the future and that all nations will go there yearly to worship God and learn of His ways. This is the manner in which all the world shall be filled with God's glory and the building of the spiritual house will be furthered.

Jesus Christ was shown to be the seed of Abraham and David, and that all the many prophecies of God will have their fulfilment in Christ ruling in righteousness on the earth. The angel, announcing the birth of Jesus to Mary, said (Luke 1.32-33) —

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

The apostles continued the preaching of Christ concerning God's Kingdom on the earth, and repeatedly stated that JESUS WOULD RETURN TO THE EARTH to set up the long promised reign of peace, destroying all those that oppose themselves to the will of God (Acts 3:20-21)—

"God shall send Jesus Christ . . . whom the heavens must receive (retain) until the times of restitution (restoration) of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of ALL HIS HOLY PROPHETS, since the world began.

"Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."

The blessings of the Kingdom of God on earth were set before us from the mouths of these same prophets. The result of this time of blessing is designed to draw all men to love God.

The present dispensation was shown to be a calling out of those who will rule the earth with Christ in the 1000-year Kingdom, teaching the earth's inhabitants the laws of God. All the righteous of the Kingdom Age—those who come to repentance and serve God—will ultimately be granted immortality at the second judgment. The wicked will be destroyed forever. Then shall God dwell with men in the highest sense, and GOD WILL BE ALL IN ALL.

Now is the time to equip ourselves with the oil of God's Word and to prepare for the day of inspection by Christ at the first judgment.

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

Babylon Is Fallen, Is Fallen

"By her sorceries were all nations deceived . . . Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues"—Rev. 18

CHAPTER 14 of the Apocalypse speaks of things that will come to pass after the Lord Jesus Christ has returned to the earth; after he has gathered the responsible living and dead before him; after he has separated them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats; after the wicked ones have been sent away into that aionian punishment that ends in the second death, and after those who are found righteous are made equal to the angels to die no more.

Then, at this point, as this great host of immortal saints, with Christ at their head, in the strength of their divine nature, "stand and measure the earth," their mission will be to establish the throne of God's Kingdom in Jerusalem, and then to make all kings fall down before him, and all nations call him blessed.

In the out-working of this great mission to bring the whole world into submission to divine laws and precepts, many nations will be overthrown; and great destruction of human life on the earth

among those who resist the divine purpose of that age will be necessary before the survivors are made ready to bow before God's Kingdom on Mt. Zion.

This is the subject matter of this 14th chapter. It depicts the great and terrible judgments that will fall with a heavy hand upon the kingdoms of men as they set themselves against the purpose of God, which is to rule the world in righteousness under the dominion of Christ and his saints.

It is good to know these things, and better still, while the opportunity is yet open to us, to avail ourselves of the merciful provisions God has provided in order that we might "escape these things that are coming upon the earth," and so stand before the Son of man, and partake with him the glory that will be apocalypsed in the earth at that time.

* * *

V. 8: "*And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*"

"There followed another angel." The proclamation of this angel of v. 8 comes after or follows that of the angel mentioned in vs. 6-7. This fact is significant and enables us to understand the relation between v. 8 and the two preceding verses. The angel of v. 6 carries a message to the whole world, from the throne in Jerusalem, calling on all nations to—

"Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come."

Then follows the angel messenger of v. 8 with the announcement that "*Babylon is fallen.*" This would indicate that the system of powers under the influence of Babylon had failed to heed the warning of impending judgments of v. 6, and by open resistance to the mid-heaven proclamation had brought upon themselves this great stroke of divine vengeance—the overthrow of the city apocalyptically called Babylon the Great, "THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

The angel said: "*Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city.*" When interpreting the dream of Pharaoh, Joseph said:

"For that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice, it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass" (Gen. 41: 32).

And here we find the words repeated, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." The fate of Babylon has long been established of God, and He will shortly bring it to pass, and her fall, when it comes, will be without remedy, and for all time; for thus we read in Apoc. 18:21—

"And a mighty angel took up a stone like a millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and SHALL BE FOUND NO MORE AT ALL."

Of the four beasts that Daniel saw, representing the kingdom of men in its latter day manifestation, he says of the fourth, or Roman beast (the Babylon of the Apocalypse)—

"I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame"
(Dan. 7:11).

Of the other three beasts, representing the nations of the Gentiles, not within the Roman system, it is said (v. 12)—

"They had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time"
(1,000 years).

Thus we see that the destruction of Babylon is fully consummated in these judgments, so that no vestige of this great system of iniquity will remain to mar the peace and righteousness that will prevail upon the earth while Zion's King reigns victorious over the nations of the world.

The last part of v. 8 gives the *reason* for Babylon's fall—

"Because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

This passage gives us a clue to the understanding of what is signified in the Apocalypse by the "great city Babylon," as here used for the first time. Wine is a drink, which if taken to excess, causes intoxication, or mental and physical demoralization, depravity and irresponsibility; and so it is used here in this book of symbols to represent *the mixture of pagan and Christian teaching emanating from Rome, by which all nations have been deceived*, as in ch. 18:23—

"By thy sorceries were all nations deceived."

Of no other system in all human history could it be said that she "MADE all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." *But this description exactly fits the state of affairs as exhibited in the history of Rome.*

We remember, early in the fourth century with the rise of Constantine as the head of the Roman empire, that he also assumed control of the church. Thus church and state were united so intimately under his leadership, that the whole system so organized is represented in ch. 12:1 as—

"A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."

The church had become imperial, and from her position in the sun, she demanded obedience throughout the empire to her dictates in religious affairs. This is to be understood as we read v. 17 of the 12th chapter—

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus."

Thus the power of the united church and state brought to bear upon the few who still held faithful to the teaching of Christ made it mandatory upon them to either drink of the "wine of her fornication" or suffer persecution, death or banishment.

By the decree of Justinian about A.D. 535, and later by the decree of Phocas, A.D. 608-10, both of whom were dragon emperors of the Roman empire (with its capital city at that time in Constantinople,) *the Bishop of Rome was made the universal pope, with supreme authority in the ecclesiastical affairs of the Empire.*

From this time on the power, influence and authority of the pope increased and expanded until he was recognized as infallible by his followers, and held the position in the church as the successor of the apostle Peter, and Christ's vicegerent on the earth.

By 800 A.D. with the rise of the so-called "Holy Roman Empire," the greater part of Europe was brought under the temporal and ecclesiastical authority vested in the pope and emperor, with the pope assuming the right to set up kings or remove them as best suited his policy in administering the affairs of church. And so we see the fitness of the words:

"She made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

This system of things in Europe is represented in the 13th chapter, as a beast coming up out of the sea, with seven heads and ten horns; and it is said that—

"Power was given unto him to continue 42 months."
—or 1260 years. *This time period exactly fits what history reveals concerning the papacy, for we have noted that it rose to full recognition as the head of the church about A.D. 610, by the decree of*

Phocas, and history tells us that it lost its temporal power over the countries of Europe in A.D. 1870—just 1260 years after its rise.

This left only Vatican City itself as the sole temporal dominion of the Pope; but though this is the condition of the Catholic system as we see it today, with little power and authority in the political affairs of Europe, yet the influence of the papal See still holds sway in religious matters over much of Europe, as well as in the Western hemisphere.

This "man of sin" or "son of perdition," as Paul calls him, will continue to deceive all nations with his sorceries, or false teaching until he stands up at last against the Lord Jesus and his saints in the final conflict between Rome and Jerusalem for leadership in the spiritual affairs of the world. His final utter destruction is plainly shown (2 Thess. 2:8)—

"Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

And again in Apoc. 18:17—

"In one hour so great riches is come to nought."

Such is the Babylon whose fall is announced in this 8th verse. But this seems to refer only to the city itself, and not to the whole system that is so deeply entrenched in the countries of the western world.

The fall of Rome, the so-called "Eternal City," is only the first stroke of the mighty rainbowed angel power from Jerusalem against apocalyptic Babylon, executed at this time as a warning of impending disaster. This appears from chapter 18 where we find the fall of Babylon is again announced—

"Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (v 2)

We notice that when the city falls—

"The kings of the earth who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning."

This attitude of the nations as they stand afar off and watch the smoke of her burning *shows that they are sympathetic to her*, and we find them re-organized in ch. 19 under the old banner of the beast and the false prophet, making war with him that sat on the white horse, and with his army.

* * *

THE FACT that the fall of the City of Rome itself is only the beginning of the judgments that result in her destruction, is also indicated plainly as we consider vs. 9-11—

"And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation."

"And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever (to the age of the ages.)"

"And they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

The tone of this message shows that the system of apostasy known in the Apocalypse as Babylon the Great, was still intact after the city had fallen as announced in v. 8. The third angel (of v. 9) was using the fall of the city as a basis of warning against worshipping the beast or his image, or

receiving his mark in their forehead or in their hand. The "body of the beast" (Dan. 7:11) had yet to be "destroyed, and given to the burning flame" of divine judgment.

This warning, following the fall of the city, gives scope and opportunity for any who may be so disposed, to come out from those countries giving allegiance to the beast—

"That they be not partakers of her sins, and that they receive not of her plagues."

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

The BIBLE Meaning of 'Soul'

"Whosoever toucheth the dead body (nephesh) of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself . . . shall be cut off"—Num. 19:13

TO THE average person, the word "soul" carries the meaning of an undying, immaterial essence that continues in conscious existence after death. This conception is accepted without thought or examination.

As soon as we start to look into the question, however, we begin to make very interesting discoveries. We find, first of all, that *the BIBLE meaning of soul is ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT from this*, and immediately the question arises:

How can the commonly accepted religious conception of soul be entirely different from the soul of the Bible, seeing that the beliefs of Christendom are supposed to be based upon the Bible?

The Scriptures themselves give the answer. They tell us that *the Truth is hidden from all except those few whose minds and hearts please God*. Divine truth is not a common thing to be probed by every curious scholar. Unless a man sets his heart to seek God and sets his life to conform to God's will, he can no more find the truth of the Scriptures than the men of Sodom could find the door of Lot's house.

God has said that He will *send a strong delusion upon all those who receive not the LOVE of the Truth, that they should believe a lie* (2 Thess. 2:10-11).

When we turn to works of reference by the learned expositors of the immortal soul theory, we see how this "believing a lie" works out quite naturally. Most of them make no attempt to conceal the fact that *scriptural teaching* and *popular theology* are very different regarding the meaning of "soul." They are in fact, *proud* that they have developed many "improvements" upon what they consider the partial and hazy conceptions voiced by the—

"Holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1: 21)

We soon find that we are forced to choose between Scripture teaching and orthodox Christianity. It is very fortunate for us that the issue is so clear-cut, and that the leading exponents of the immortal soul theory are so *frank in admission of its non-Biblical origin*. Webster's Dictionary says—

"The Christian conception of the soul DERIVES FROM THE GREEK, especially as modified by the MYSTERY CULTS, as well as from the Bible . . .

"The more exact determination of the Christian conception was reserved for the Church Fathers, especially Saint Augustine, who taught that it is simple, immaterial and spiritual, devoid of quality and spatial extension. He argued its immortality from the fact that it is the repository of imperishable truth."

Funk & Wagnall's Dictionary is even more to the point—

"Among the ancient Hebrews 'soul' was the equivalent of the principle of life as embodied in living creatures, and this meaning is continued throughout the Bible . . .

"It was Augustine especially who, in part on religious grounds and in part as the disciple of the later GREEK PHILOSOPHY, taught the simple, immaterial and spiritual nature of the human soul—a view which has remained that of the scholastic philosophy and of Christian theologians down to the present time."

The well-known Hasting's Bible Dictionary freely admits—

"Soul is throughout a great part of the Bible simply the equivalent of 'life' embodied in living creatures. In the earlier usage of the Old Testament it has no reference to the later philosophical meaning—the animating principle—still less to the idea of an 'immaterial nature' which will survive the body."

The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, says—

"Soul has various shades of meaning in the Old Testament, which may be summarized as follows: Soul, living being, life self, person, desire, appetite emotion and passion.

"Nephesh or soul, can only denote the individual life WITH A MATERIAL ORGANIZATION OR BODY."

"In the New Testament 'psuche' appears under more or less similar conditions as in the Old Testament."

Young's Concordance defines both *nephesh* and *psuche* as "animal soul."

Strong's Concordance defines *nephesh* as, "A breathing creature, an animal; or, abstractly, vitality." *Psuche* it likewise defines as "The animal, sentient principle."

The noted lexicographer Parkhurst (himself a believer in immortal soulism) says—

"As a noun, *nephesh* hath been supposed to signify the spiritual part of man, or what we commonly call his soul. I must for myself confess that I can find no passages where it hath undoubtedly this meaning.

"Gen 35:18, 1 Kgs. 17:21-22 and Psa. 16:10 seem fairest for this signification. But may not **nephesh** in the 3 former passages be most properly rendered 'breath', and in the last, 'a breathing or animal frame?'"

These quotations show clearly that the immortal soul doctrine is generally admitted by its supporters to be entirely different from the BIBLE meaning of soul, and based mainly upon GREEK PHILOSOPHY.

The issue then is this: is the Word of God to be our final authority, or is religious truth something to be gradually developed by man's speculation on the basis of pagan Greek philosophy?

For nearly 2000 years, the bulk of Christendom, beginning with the Church Fathers, have favoured the latter, but there have always been a few who have regarded the BIBLE as wholly inspired by God, consistent from beginning to end, and the only possible source of true knowledge of such things as life, death and the nature and destiny of man.

A Bible that is anything less than this is NO BIBLE AT ALL. And the Bible itself leaves no room for compromise. It takes a bold and unequivocal stand throughout as the direct Word of God in every part. We must accept it as that, or else throw it away entirely as the most brazen and blasphemous of falsehoods.

Those who take the middle ground are the Bible's greatest enemies, and this unfortunately includes the vast majority of professing Christians. They dare not openly deny its divinity, because it is so obviously divine, but they seek to rob it of all power by spinning an endless web of theories around it that confuse the mind and distract the attention, and obscure its plain, clear teaching.

It is impossible in any one consideration to fully examine the Biblical use and meaning of "soul." But it *is* possible to lay the foundation by demonstrating that popular theology on the subject is admittedly derived from other sources than the Bible, and is at direct variance with it.

The *Bible* meaning of "soul" (which modern writers mention briefly in passing), is regarded by them as a rather amusing phase of ancient Hebrew speculation, hardly worthy of serious attention, and which no one laying claim to "modern" learning would dare allow his name to be associated with.

The following brief outline of the BIBLICAL use of the term is for those few to whom the Bible is still the one unique Book among millions—the wholly-inspired divine message to man—one verse of which is worth more than countless volumes of the cloudy, inconclusive speculations of human philosophy and "modern wisdom."

* * *

IN THE Old Testament Hebrew, the original word for soul is NEPHESH. In the New Testament Greek it is PSUCHE. *Both mean the same thing and are used interchangeably.* One is used to translate the other.

Nephesh occurs about 750 times. About 500 times it is translated "soul" in the Authorised Version. The other 250 times it is translated by over 40 different English words, as shown on the following chart.

CORRESPONDING WORDS

English—**soul** Hebrew—**nephesh** Greek—**psuche** Latin—**anima**

MEANINGS OF NEPHESH

- (1) A breathing body, a living creature, an animal.
- (2) Animal life
- (3) Functions, qualities of human creatures

WORDS USED IN TRANSLATION

(Soul, 472 times—All others together, 282)

soul	man	me	soul	soul	lust
beast	person	myself	breath	appetite	mortality
creature	any	self	ghost	mind	deadly
body	one	themselves	life	heart	refresh
dead	he, her	they		will	heartily
fish	himself	yourselves		desire	greedy
thing	herself	own		pleasure	contented

USES OF NEPHESH

- 22 times—of **animals alone** (Gen. 1:20-28)
- 7 times—of **men and animals together** (Num. 31:28)
- 53 times—of individuals, persons (Gen. 2:7)
- 96 times—of persons doing things (Lev. 5:1, 2, 4)
- 22 times—of man: **appetites and animal desires** (Pro. 6:30, Gen. 34:3)
- 231 times—of man: mental faculties, emotions (Gen. 34:3, Num. 21:4)
- 22 times—**Souls cut off by God** (Psa. 78:50)
- 32 times—**Souls killed by man** (Josh 11:11)
- 242 times—**Souls subject to DEATH** (Eze. 18:4, Psa. 22:29)
- 13 times—**Souls actually DEAD** (Isa. 53:12)

13 times—**Souls going to grave** (Job 33:22)

(NOTE—Last 5, over 320 times, souls dead, dying, subject to death)

Psuche occurs about 100 times, and is translated similarly.

It is quite obvious at the outset that a word of such broad application, *including all the animal kingdom, in all its bodily, physical aspects*, CANNOT POSSIBLY indicate some immortal essence in man *distinguishing* him from the lower creation.

It is clear from the words used to translate it that it is related throughout to ANIMAL BODIES, including man, and this will become more and more clear as we consider some of the passages in which it is used.

It can be readily seen, too, that with such a range of meaning the translators could do much to colour the various passages by their choice of English words—using one set of terms when used of animals and another when of man.

On the other hand, it is evident that in an article of this kind, it is impossible to quote sufficient of the 850 occurrences to fully illustrate the word, and by choosing obscure, borderline passages, a very distorted picture could be drawn.

Therefore, only a careful, individual investigation, seeking divine guidance, can bring solid, durable conviction and enlightenment. THERE IS NO SHORT CUT TO THE ENLIGHTENED FAITH THAT LEADS TO SALVATION.

For instance, soul is used in relation to God. He says—

"My servant in whom MY SOUL delighteth" (Isa. 42: 1).

But examination will show that this is *a very exceptional and isolated use*, and is a figure of speech that has no bearing on the literal meaning of soul. The expression "my soul" is often used simply as an emphatic term meaning "myself." Because of its undeniable animal basis, clearly it is in this secondary sense of emphasis only it is used of God.

* * *

AS IN THE case of most other Biblical subjects, we find ourselves taken back to the opening chapters of Genesis when we begin to examine the meaning of *soul*. There the foundations for many things are laid, and lost indeed are those poor "modern" thinkers who dismiss these early books of the Bible as folklore and fairytales.

Here again, let us courageously face the consequences of our convictions. *Christ put his seal upon the ancient Hebrew Scriptures as the unbreakable Word of God.* He said—

"The SCRIPTURES CANNOT BE BROKEN" (John 10: 35).

And again (John 5:47)—

"If ye believe not Moses' writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

If we reject Moses' writings, let us at least be consistent and *reject Christ* too. If we believe in Christ, let us give those Holy Writings he endorses our full assurance of faith.

* * *

THE FIRST FOUR OCCURRENCES OF THE WORD "NEPESH" RELATE EXCLUSIVELY TO ANIMALS. That is a good fact to start with and to remember. A good foundation. Let us get them firmly in our mind—

Gen 1:20—"And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life" (The word "life" here is **nephesh**—soul).

Next verse—"And God created great whales, and every living creature (**nephesh**—soul) that moveth, which the water brought forth abundantly."

V. 24—"The living creatures (**nephesh**) after his kind, cattle and creeping things."

V. 30—"Every beast . . . every fowl . . . everything that creepeth, wherein there is life (**nephesh**)."

Then, having prepared our understanding by applying *nephesh* four times to every species of living creature on the earth, the Scriptures' next use of the word is in the record of the creation of man (Gen. 2:7)—

"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground."

—and that in itself is a phrase to be well noted when we consider the nature and composition of man—

"The Lord God formed man of the dust of ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul (**nephesh**)."

—EXACTLY THE SAME WORD as four times already applied to animals. Man, formed of the dust of the ground, became a living soul (an animal, breathing creature) when God breathed into him the breath of life.

Now the usual response at this point from the immortal soulist is to switch over to the word *spirit*, and abandon the argument based on *soul*. Our present subject, is however, SOUL, and we hope to thoroughly dispose of that, but in passing it may be mentioned that *exactly the same remarks apply to "spirit."* It, too, in these early foundation chapters of Genesis, is used of animals alone, and also of men and animals together, and to the same point Solomon says—

"Man and beasts—they have all ONE spirit" (Eccl. 3:19).

In applying both these words, *soul* AND *spirit*, to animals as well as to men, the Scriptures seem to be taking especial care to protect us from erroneous conceptions, if only we will heed and accept its divine guidance, and not depend upon the Greek philosophers against whose teachings the Apostle Paul so bitterly contended and so vehemently warned.

We have considered the first five occurrences. Of the next eight, SIX are applied to animals. There are seven places where the word is applied to *man and animals together without distinction*. An interesting example is Num. 31:28—

"Levy a tribute . . . one SOUL (*nephesh*) of 50G, both of the **persons**, of the **beeves**, of the **asses**, and of the **sheep**."

One more typical passage of the use of *soul* for animals before we go on, Prov. 12:10—

"A righteous man regardeth the life (**nephesh**—SOUL) of his beast; but the tender mercies (of the wicked are cruel."

Surely we can consider it definitely established, therefore, that *there is no difference between men and animals in the matter of being or having souls*. This IS VERY IMPORTANT. It is one of the first principles of Scripture. If we have not definitely fixed this in our minds, let us keep going back over these facts and passages and stick with them. They are worth more than all the volumes ever written of Greek or modern philosophy.

The sentence passed on Adam is in full accord with the record of his creation from the dust (Gen. 3:19)—

"Dust THOU art, and unto dust shalt THOU return."

The sentence was passed upon the *conscious, thinking sinning individual*—the LIVING SOUL, created from dust, and animated by breath from God. This in harmony with the general expression of the dispensation of God's justice, as expressed through Ezekiel—

"The soul that sinneth, IT SHALL DIE." (Eze. 18 4.)

Any attempt to transfer this sentence from the thinking, responsible Adam to his mere body is such an obviously weak subterfuge as not to be worthy of serious consideration.

And finally, we note, in passing, very distinctly that in this first pronouncement of the wages of sin, THERE IS NO MENTION OF ETERNAL TORTURE — but on the contrary, the sentence is *dissolution into original dust*.

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

Signs of the Times

AS WE COME to the end of another year, it seems fitting that we refresh our minds upon the things which form a pattern of events and conditions which clearly indicate that we are living in the "Time of the end," the end of Gentile world dominion.

The Spirit of God in His prophets has revealed that a series of world events and developments on earth would so converge during a specific era, the era preceding the return of Christ to the earth, in such a way as to form unmistakable evidence of the imminence of Christ's return.

The signs foretold may be summarized as follows:

1. **Decay of Turkey (Rev. 16:12).** Fulfilled over a period of about a century; consummated in 1917 when the Turks were driven out of Palestine, opening it up for Jewish colonization.

2. **Return of the Jews to Palestine (Luke 21:24; Eze. 37).** Fulfilled to the extent of 2,000,000 Jews settled in the land (at least a "tenth"), but we watch closely further developments in the land expecting that soon "dwelling confidently" will be a reality, setting the stage for the Gogian invasion.

3. **Preparation for War (Joel 3:9).** Fulfilled to such a fantastic degree that it would seem little could be left to fill up the prophecies concerning war preparation in the time of the end.

4. **World Unrest (Luke 21:25-26).** In this key prophecy, world revolution, political upheavals, political heavens shaken, governments overthrown, causing perplexity and fear throughout the earth is foretold. It is needless to recount the many evidences of the fulfilment of this marvellous prophecy.

5. **Formation of the Gogian Confederacy (Eze. 38).** Foretelling the rise of Russia to world power with many allies. A period of 40 years has seen Russia rise from a backward nation, crushed by revolution, bankrupt, without an ally, undergo a meteoric rise to world power, and having now under her direct control at least a third of earth's population, with "fifth-columns" of dedicated Communists in every country working in her interests.

6. **"As it was in the Days of Noah" (Matt. 24:37-39).** Envisioning a world filled with violence, general godlessness and rebellion against God, while oblivious to the storm of divine judgment gathering over their heads.

KEEPING OUR EYES ON THE PICTURE

IT IS WELL that we watch developments along the lines indicated above and related events. Slowly at times, but inexorably, the pattern continues to take shape, growing clearer and nearing completion.

We of the present generation are privileged to witness the final phases of these developments which have been going on for many years, but in these very last days have grown so intense, exciting and conclusive that no longer can there be any doubt, by all who are awake, that the return of the Lord from heaven is near at hand.

We of the present day are brought into the brilliant sunlight of the "Signs" which brethren of a half century ago only saw the first dim rays appearing over the horizon.

RUSSIA AND RED CHINA

Rumours of a split between the Soviets and Communist China have persisted for some time, but these rumours appear to be based more on wishful thinking than on facts.

Regardless of what minor differences might occur, the purposes of the two Communist nations remain the same, and their chief purpose is to impose Communistic ideals upon all peoples. Neither can do it alone; co-operation is essential to their aims.

Latest reports clearly indicate that China has fully recognized Soviet leadership and agrees to the "coexistence" policies ratified by the recent Communist summit conference. The chief difference between the Soviet and Chinese policies for world conquest seems to be that Russia favours a plan to strangle the Western nations with economic competition, infiltration, "peaceful" overthrow of non-Communist governments by converting the population to Communism by whatever means can be employed, only resorting to war as a last resort.

On the other hand, Red China, it is believed, favours an immediate build up of Communist armed might so as to be able to conquer the world within a few years. Which idea may prevail, only time can tell.

WORLD UNREST GROWS

In SOUTHEAST ASIA the three nations still favourable to the West, Laos, South Vietnam and Cambodia, are being threatened with Communist infiltration from the north, constantly harassed by pro-Communist guerrilla bands and political factions seeking to establish "neutral" governments, which means pulling away from the West and towards Communism. The recent revolution in Laos indicates that pro-Communists have the upper hand.

In the CONGO rival factions still keep the whole country in a state of civil war, while the U.N. finds their task of bringing the Congo Republic to a state of law and order growing more difficult by the day. A cold war is developing among the nations whose forces are now occupying the Congo, the Soviet-controlled nations and certain African and Asian nations on one side and nations favourable to the West on the other.

It is feared that this conflict between the two blocs may result in a complete breakdown of U.N. control in the Congo and the withdrawal of U.N. forces altogether. The situation is further aggravated by the fearful expense incurred in policing the country, a heavy drain on the already dwindling funds of the U.N.

It is generally conceded that withdrawal of U.N. forces would immediately bring about a state of chaos and anarchy in this turbulent African country.

The angry, rioting crowds which greeted Gen. de Gaulle's arrival in strife-torn ALGERIA gives evidence that the Algerian problem is far from solution. And indeed, it will never be solved according to the French President's plan. Anti-colonialism is sweeping the world, and France cannot hold out forever.

In LATIN-AMERICA Communist infiltration and influence is beginning to be felt in almost every nation. Stepped up by Soviet conquest in Cuba, revolutionary movements are budding in more than a dozen countries.

Unrest and dissatisfaction over economic and social affairs is common in all Latin-America, where more than 90 per cent of the population live in abject poverty, creating a perfect hotbed for Communist propaganda.

Sporadic revolutionary outbreaks and strikes in CUBA indicates trouble ahead for Castro and prospects for civil war. The big question is how far will Russia go in giving aid to their new ally in the event of armed opposition to his government.

ISRAEL AFFAIRS

PALESTINE HAS long been attractive to tourists because of its religious background and its sentimental surroundings. But, until a few years ago, the tourist trade was of small importance to Israel's economy. Now the tourist industry is rated as third among the nation's industries earning foreign currency, and, according to a report from Jerusalem, it is "growing by leaps and bounds." It has touched off a boom in the building of hotels and other tourist accommodations.

As we view the near-miracle of two million Jews settled in Israel and the phenomenal progress made by these hardy Zionist pioneers, we are bound to conclude that it is the hand of God working toward a predetermined purpose and the fulfilling of His prophetic word.

However, there are many natural factors which have entered into this divinely-arranged plan to restore Israel to the land of their fathers. The burning desire of the Jewish people for a homeland and escape from persecution, their indomitable will and courage and their generosity in providing funds for transportation and sustenance for new settlers has been largely responsible for the success of the boldest enterprise ever undertaken by any people.

It has recently been made public that the Jewish Agency, a world organization of Jews, has raised funds from all over the world, chiefly in the U.S.A., running into hundreds of millions of dollars. These funds have enabled the Agency to provide homes for 700,000 settlers and assist them in securing a livelihood for themselves in Israel.

The return of the Jews to Palestine and the marvellous transformation of the land did not "just happen," as some have foolishly imagined. It has been the outworking of a divine program in which Zion has been used to "deliver themselves" through a divinely-instilled impulse which gave them "a mind to work," as it did on the return from Babylon. The phenomenon of Israel's new birth remains the No. 1 sign of the times, a sign that Gentile downtreading of the land is nearing its close; that Israel is soon to be "planted in a place of their own to move no more." —O.B.

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