

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.

Edited and Published by:
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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 7:30 p.m. each Mon.; Elpis Israel Class 7:30 Wed.

WE have greatly enjoyed the visits of the following brothers and sisters: bro. & sis. Wayne Wolfe, and bro. Wayne Wolfe, Jr. of the Lampasas ecclesia; bro. & sis. H. A. Sommerville of the Honesdale ecclesia in Pennsylvania.

Bro. Sommerville ministered to us the word of exhortation at the Memorial service on several occasions while here.

In our Bible classes we are continuing to study the Law of Moses, Elpis Israel and Eureka. On Sunday morning we take up the Law of Moses, then on Monday evening, in the homes, we study Eureka and on Wednesday evening, at our regular hall, we study Elpis Israel.

We consider these three books very important to the growth and development of those who want to grow up in the faith and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord's return to the earth is now expected momentarily. May we all be ready when he comes—adorned with that "meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price."

—bro. Charles Banta

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LONDON, Ontario—Wells Academy Bldg., 306 King St., Just East of Wellington—Sunday School 10:15 a.m.; Breaking of Bread 11:30 a.m.; Lecture 7 p.m.; Thursday Class 8 p.m.

WE are once more saddened by the death of two of our elder sisters.

Sis. Elizabeth Logan died April 28 at the age of 71. She had been in the Truth for approximately 40 years.

Our sister Ola Barber died on May 25 in her 73rd year after 50 years in the Truth.

Our sisters' trials and probations have ended, and they now await the call to resurrection by our Lord Jesus Christ. Our love and sympathy goes out to those of their families.

We are pleased to report that sis. Arleen Carney, formerly of Texas, has now taken residence here in London and will be a member of this ecclesia.

We have had visits from bro. and sis. Joseph Jackson of Toronto; sis. Irene Baines of Montreal; bro. and sis. Fred Higham, bro. Fred Higham, Jr., bro. Growcott and bro. Fabris, all of Detroit.

Bre. Higham and Growcott are laboring with us in giving exhortations and lectures here in London.

With much love to the Household of Faith from the brethren and sisters here.

—bro. Dan Gwalchmai

* * *

MIAMI, Flo.—3428 S. W. 65th—Sun. Sch. 10 a.m.; Memorial 10:30.

WE are pleased to report that we are greatly encouraged by the attendance of interested friends at all our meetings. We pray our Heavenly Father that our humble efforts will bring forth fruit to His honor and glory.

We are further encouraged every fourth Sunday by a visit from bro. and sis. Gulbe, bro. Fred giving us the word of exhortation. We would welcome a visit from any of our brothers and sisters of like precious Faith.

—bro. T. S. Lumley

EDITORIAL

Forgiving One Another

"So likewise shall my Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses"—Matt. 18:35

WHEN we come to a knowledge of the Truth, and obey the requirements of the Gospel, we understand fully that our former way of living must be discarded, and we must set our feet on the path that leads to the Kingdom of God.

But our former way of living had been with us for a long time, and there were many things to which we had become attached. At first, some of us may have had considerable difficulty giving up certain habits, but as our knowledge and love of the Truth increased, many things faded out, and we found ourselves much happier as we walked in the Truth.

In his last message, Jesus informs the seven ecclesias that the good things promised will only be given to those who "overcome," or conquer. During his ministry, he told his disciples what overcoming signified, saying, in John 16:33—

"In the world, ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD."

To any who may not be familiar with the Bible, this statement of Jesus will appear indefinite. If so, what John has to say about the world will clarify it. He says (I John 2:16):

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

This three-fold description of the world represents the human nature that we all have inherited, and through which all opposition to the law of God is manifested. When we came into the Truth, it was still with us, and will remain with us as long as we live. In the seventh chapter of Romans, Paul describes it in a most graphic manner—

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing . . .

"I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me."

* * *

WITHOUT exception, we have all experienced the hidden struggle that goes on within us while "the mind of the Spirit" combats "the mind of the flesh," in an effort to bring it under control; for it is always ready to assert itself at every opportunity.

Among the many things that arise from our human nature, or the mind of the flesh, there is none that seems to bring greater sorrow into our lives than offences, or "causes of stumbling," as the word means. But, under no circumstances, must we excuse ourselves, or become careless or indifferent, and that means the offended as well as the offender, for we are commanded to—

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"—Eph. 4:31-32.

If we examine these words of Paul carefully, thoughtfully, and with a desire to do those things that are well-pleasing to our Father in heaven, our offences, and being offended would cease. But if we feel that Paul's words are not sufficient, then let us go higher to the direct law of Christ as it appears in Matt. 18:15-17—

"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

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

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

This is the law of Christ to which we are subject, and if we do not obey it the offended becomes an offender against this law, and will be judged by it.

This is a divine law, with a divine object, and far more excellent than man can devise.

* * *

LIKE many things, there are two sides to this matter of offences. As a general rule the offender is looked upon as the cause of all the trouble that may arise from what he has said or done, and is often condemned without a hearing.

It is true that we must be careful, and do all we can not to offend a brother; but is it not also equally true that we must be careful, and do all we can to AVOID BEING OFFENDED? We believe so.

What causes us to be offended? It may be a false accusation against which we rise in anger, and say many things that only add to the trouble; but do we realize that many offences are caused by a statement that is true?

It may concern our walk, or it may relate to the things we believe, and teach. It will be remembered that many times the Scribes and Pharisees were offended because Jesus told them the truth.

If we take offence easily, let us examine ourselves and endeavour to find the reason. We might discover that we are over-sensitive with respect to things concerning ourselves. We may be hurt if some do not visit us, but **are we equally hurt if we have failed to visit others?**

We well remember a sister once saying of a certain ecclesia, "I have come to the conclusion that there is no love in this meeting." The response made to her was, "What have YOU done to generate love there?"

Over-sensitive feelings will be found to be a product of the flesh, and therefore one of the many things we must overcome, so that the fruits of the Spirit will have good soil in which to grow and produce love, joy, peace, patience and gentleness.

There is a remedy for these things, and it is found in the words of Paul. First in Phil. 2:3:

"In humility esteeming others as exceeding ourselves."

And second, in 1. Cor. 13:5, speaking of love—

"Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not (easily*) provoked and thinketh no evil."

* "Easily" is not in the best manuscripts. See Revised Version, etc.

Although the remedy for these things is set before us in the Word, and definite instructions are given for the offender and the offended, yet as long as we are in the flesh, and subject to the law in our members which wars against the mind of the Spirit, there will be occasions when offences will arise.

But let us remember that there is only one way to deal with them, and that involves mercy and forgiveness.

If we can but realize how much we have been forgiven in the past, and how much more we will need forgiveness when we stand before Christ at his coming, then we will ever remember his parable of the Unmerciful Servant who would not have compassion on his fellow servant, but had him put in prison till he should pay his debt. When the master heard of what he had done, he called him and said—

"I forgave you all that debt because you intreated me; was it not binding on thee also to have had pity on thy fellow-servant, as I also had pity on thee?"

"And his master being provoked, delivered him to the jailers, till he should discharge the debt."

The comment of Jesus is profoundly penetrating—

"Thus also will my heavenly Father treat you, unless you from your heart each one forgive his brother."
—Editor

The Spirit and the Bride Say, Come!

By **BROTHER JOHN THOMAS**

"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the Hope that is in you, with meekness and fear"—1 Peter 3:15

AS TO the duty of the brethren, in relation to the proclamation of the Truth— (though much may not be effected, yet as we do not know how much and when)—it is our common duty to—

"Contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints" (Jude 3).
—and **with as much energy as though we were going to hurl all the ecclesiastical potentates of Gentiledom from their crumbling and tottering thrones.**

We do not believe in any of Christ's brethren purchasing exemption from this laborious duty. If they be rich, or flush of means, it is their privilege to give as well as to do; if they be poor, to do and to receive, which is less blessed than to give, that an equality may obtain.

Brethren, whether rich or poor, should all remember that when they are redeemed from the sins of the past, in putting on the Christ-robe of righteousness, through the obedience of faith, they are "a purchased people;" and that **when so purchased, the purchaser bought all they possess; so that they are no longer their own, but the property of another.**

Now, when a man purchases a servant, he does not buy him to sit all his days with a bushel on his head in complacent quietude. A SLAVE OWNS NOTHING, neither himself, nor anything belonging to self before he became a slave. Such is the relation of brethren to Christ, their Lord and Master.

A complacently quiescent Christian is one who will NEVER inherit the Kingdom, though his faith be ever so orthodox, or his baptism ever so valid. He is an unprofitable concealer of his Master's property in a napkin. He is the napkin, and the property of the truth he has received and concealed within himself.

Woe be to the Christian brother who presents himself at the tribunal of Christ, with nothing else to offer than a hidden Truth! Ill-starred will he be who can only say—

"I received the Truth, and was immersed, and henceforth enjoyed myself in silence!"

Quietude and silence are not the prerogative of the Saints in this present evil world. Their duty is to—

"Cry aloud and spare not; to lift up their voice like a trumpet and show the people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins."

They have nothing to do with results and consequences—let them make the Truth known, and leave the rest to Him who gives the increase.

Every one can do SOMETHING for the extension of the Truth; if it be only trying to extend it among his acquaintance and—as an element of "the Bride" through whom the Spirit operates—"say, Come."

The Bride is the community of the Saints, a community anointed with, and the pillar and support of, the Truth—

"THE SPIRIT and THE BRIDE SAY, COME!"

Is this done without means? Is it done by complacent quietude and silence? By each individual of the community exhausting his energies upon the secular affairs of life?

Surely, if there is one thing: more than another we have to guard against in this age, it is against being docketed as slothful, unprofitable, parsimonious do-nothings; lavish of time, labor and riches in the service of the FLESH; but covetous of all in the extension of the Truth.

It is the duty of the Bride to sustain the Truth by the press and oral proclamation, individually and collectively. Let her voice be heard in reverberating echoes amid the hills and mountains of the world till the isles break forth in song, and forests clap their hands!

True this consummation will not obtain till the Grand Master be apocalysped; nevertheless, when he comes, let him find us DOING!

In our experience of men and things, we have found, for the most part, that they make the most outcry about "hard" and "uncharitable writings" who have the most sympathy with error, or are the least enlightened in the Truth.

Their faith and comprehension of the Truth are so faint and feeble that they cannot discern the broad distinctive line of demarcation, or great gulf, rather that divides Immanuel's ground from Satan's. When error is wounded they wince, and become hysterical at the sight of blood.

We have not found such equally sensitive at the throes and agonies of the Truth; and as far as their efforts are concerned, it might be consumed of its own anguish, so that their quietude and silence were not disturbed.

But what do such outcries effect in this world? What mark do they leave upon their generation for good? Compare the results of our "hard, uncharitable" course, with their soft and oily display.

"By the fruit the tree is known." Many are now rejoicing in this Truth by our means; but who ever hears of them or theirs?

They are too soft and unctuous to hew the men of this perverse and wicked generation into a living image of the Truth. The "style" of popular religious writing is too insipid—the little salt in it has too completely lost its savour—to be received without disgust.

"I believe," says David, "and therefore have I spoken." "We also believe," says Paul, "and therefore speak."

To which, "Amen" is heartily acclaimed by this Editor.

—J. T.

Answers to Bible Questions

By **BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS**

The Fashion of This World Passeth Away

WHAT is Fashion? It is the mere ingenuity of the world to vary its pleasures; and to deliver itself from what—to its foolish heart—would be the dull monotony of existence.

Its enjoyments are of a kind that soon grow stale. It requires "change"; and in the matter of dress, it issues fresh decrees with every moon; and with what alacrity its decrees are obeyed! At once the millions bow the knee!

The people—vanity they are—recognize fashion as their king. As soon as he comes forth, they go and dance like fools round his throne. The little wisdom there is in the throng is found in the outer circle.

You can always tell when there is not much in the head: there is plenty of show outside. Everything is as neat and precise, and superfine as if the man had just emerged from a bandbox.

There is no necessity for being tawdry or Quakerish; nevertheless, there is a very broad margin between the high dresser and those who don't care.

* * *

WHOM do you find in the inner court of fashion? The empty heads, the triflers, the people who are not governed by principle; those who have no sense of the gravity of existence; to whom God is nothing, Christ a myth and the future a blank.

Come out of the inner court, and go to the outer circles of dress, where people attire themselves for convenience and decency, and as you go, you find people becoming more and more sensible, sober, and unobtrusive, until, by and by, you come upon men of judgment and capacity and mind.

If this is the case with regard to the world, how little excuse there is for those who profess the Name of Christ indulging in the vice of "costly array." Let them obey the apostle, and—

"Adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety" (1 Tm. 2:9).

There is no necessity for being odd, but there is a need for eschewing the excesses into which the world is running in the matter, and this can be done without any offence to a pure taste.

There is nothing more beautiful than to see men and women of judgment attired in a plain, unobtrusive manner. High dressing takes a considerable percentage OFF the moral dignity of such. It implies a lingering affinity with the low class of intelligence that thinks to create appreciation by the display of stuff that can be purchased over a counter.

Men and women, who walk in the knowledge and love of God, can dispense with such meretricious attractions, even if in the doing of it, they have to dispense with the favourable opinions of foolish neighbours.

* * *

The Brazen Serpent

THE BRASS placed on the top of the pole was first worked into the shape of one of the serpents that bit the children of Israel, to intimate (though that generation did not understand the intimation) that the deliverance of man from the death-bite of sin was to be effected by impaling on a cross the nature that had inflicted this bite—or to use the words of Paul, "condemning sin in the flesh": "destroying through death that having the power of death."

It would not have been suitable to have placed a **living**: serpent on the pole; for this would have intimated that the deliverer was to be an actual transgressor. This was an impossibility.

His sinlessness was the great necessity: his **participation of the condemned nature** was the next necessity. The first signified by the lifelessness of the brass: the second by the serpent-shape of the metal.
—**Bro. Roberts, 1874.**

* * *

Ye Are Not in the Flesh

QUESTION: "*What does Paul mean by saying, 'Ye are not in the flesh'?*"

ANSWER: He means that the Roman brethren did not stand in the flesh as regards their relation to God and the future. The flesh is destined to disappear. It has always proved itself in all its generations a weak and imperfect thing as regards righteousness.

It has nothing: good in it, and no power to devise anything that will emancipate it from the dominion of death.

Therefore, all who are "in" it, in the sense of being related to nothing above or beyond it, will pass away with it.

But such of the Romans as were subject to the Spirit, were not in this position. Their faith in Christ (who is the Lord, the Spirit) and union to him, incorporated them with "the Spirit," as regards principles and destiny.

Some of them had been circumcised in flesh, but on this they did not rest, knowing that their breaking of the Law had nullified the righteousness connected with this (Rom. 2:25). Their confidence was on and in the Spirit to which they were related by faith in Christ. They:

". . . rejoiced in Christ Jesus and had no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3).
"We walk in the flesh, but do not war after the flesh."

Literally they **were** in the flesh, but spiritually they were "not in the flesh": just as sinners are literally in God, Who fills heaven and earth, while it is only the saints that are **spiritually**—

"IN God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 1:1). —**Bro. Roberts, 1874.**

* * *

Paul in Paradise

PAUL was not removed from earth when he saw Paradise. When he is writing about the Third Heaven and Paradise, he tells us he is treating of "**Visions and Revelations** of the Lord:" that is, of things represented and communicated to him by the Lord, as they were of old time to the prophets, and afterwards to John in Patmos.

He was so absorbed in the contemplation of what he saw and heard, that he was altogether unconscious of his present existence. He had a vision of Paradise, or a Vision of the Third Heaven, in which he heard things not communicated for utterance.

He did not see Paradise or the Third Heaven, but a REPRESENTATION of them as they will be, when the Kingdom is established by the God of Heaven, in the land promised to Abraham, and shall be in continuance after the thousand years shall have passed away.

—**Bro. Roberts, 1897.**

But Where Shall Wisdom Be Found?

PART TWO

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, and it shall be given him"—James 1:3

WE COME now to the Proverbs, the heart of the subject. The book begins—

"The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, King of Israel.

"To know wisdom and instruction: to perceive the words of understanding:

"To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice and judgment."

The purpose of the book is to impress us with the importance of wisdom; to teach us the emptiness and foolishness of our natural mind; to try and awaken us to the urgency of our need to search tearfully for wisdom—

"To be **fleshly**-minded is death, but to be **spiritually**-minded is LIFE and peace." (Rom. 8:6).

And only by the constant absorption of divine wisdom do we ever become or stay "spiritually-minded."

The present is so real, and presses so closely upon us, that all things tend to encourage and feed the mind of the flesh. Attaining divine wisdom is slow and uphill and laborious for our mortal minds, and **most of us are very lazy mentally**.

But only those who struggle all the night, and overcome, will gain the prize.

* * *

V. 7: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

A recognition of the reality and authority of God is the very beginning of all true learning. The Scriptures say that anyone who does not recognize the reality of God, and make Him the center of all their thinking, is a FOOL.

This is basic—there is no use sugar-coating it; no use going any further until this is learned.

Wisdom does not hide from man. Her advertisements are everywhere in creation around us (v. 20)—

"Wisdom crieth without. She uttereth her voice in the streets. She crieth in the chief place of concourse . . ."

The Scriptures tell us that God's wisdom and power and divinity cry out continually in all the beauty and order of creation, and that any who cannot see His hand in it all are blind fools.

And this testimony is true. The recognition of God is the very beginning of the opening of the eyes to Light. All wisdom, all true knowledge and understanding, must start there. Prov. 1:22 continues Wisdom's urgent plea—

"How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and scorners delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge?"

Let us take what instruction is due us from these words. WE DO NOT STAND ABOVE AND BEYOND THEM.

We ALL fall far short in our appreciation of, and search for, divine wisdom. We drift along from day to day, largely taking salvation for granted.

These strong words of exhortation are to rouse us from such fatal self-deception. We are at school, with much to master, the time is short, and the judgment seat will determine with terrible finality, whether we have passed or failed. There will be much bitter weeping and gnashing of teeth then, for wasted time and lost opportunity, but it will be too late. Many parents who have berated their children for failing to study will find they themselves have failed far more grievously.

* * *

CHAPTER 2 emphasizes this theme that the attainment of the knowledge of God that alone is life eternal is a matter of prolonged and intense yearning.

We must go forth every day consciously determined to use every effort and opportunity TO KNOW MORE AND MORE OF GOD—of the deep things of His revelation and manifestation.

We can never be content with shallowness; yea, we can never be content AT ALL. We must have a sense of pressing urgency—of knowing so little—of having so much to learn—so much to develop—so little time to spare.

"Great peace have they that love Thy Law, and NOTHING shall offend them" (Psa. 119).

Is not this an infinitely desirable condition? **Have** we "great peace?" It comes only to those whose roots are deep in the knowledge of God. If we do not have peace, that is a danger sign. Solomon says here—

"My son, IF thou criest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding . . .

"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.

"For the Lord giveth wisdom" (Prov. 2:1-6).

James says (1:5)—

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God . . . and it SHALL be given him."

But he warns (v. 6)—

"But let him ask in faith. . .

"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways . . .

"Let not that man think that he shall receive anything."

It must be in pure singleness of heart. All other interests must be put away.

"If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

* * *

V. 10 (of Prov. 2) speaks of—

"When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul."

The way of life is not an arbitrary or mechanical set of rules. It is a glorious, personal, joyful, exciting relationship with the Father, the eternal Fountainhead of all glory, joy and love.

Beauty is that which is pleasing to the senses, and it is the opening up to our understanding of the beauty of holiness that makes knowledge pleasant to our soul.

Who can desire the ugliness of the flesh when their eyes have been opened to the beauty of holiness?

The flesh is ugly, terribly ugly; ugly in its self-centered and self-destructive stupidity. All its reactions are ugly, in ourselves and in others, and the more clearly we can see its ugliness, by comparing it with the beauty of holiness, the more we shall seek to overcome it.

* * *

PROVERBS 3 gives further instruction in the way of wisdom (vs. 5-6)—

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

Here is a wonderful promise—"In ALL thy ways acknowledge Him, and He SHALL direct thy paths."

God will not "direct our paths" unless we on our part "acknowledge Him in ALL our ways." There can be no holding back. Continually uppermost in the mind at all times must be the remembrance of God and a desire to please Him which is stronger than any other desire.

If we do not have this, let us stick with it and think it through until we clearly see there is no other sensible or satisfactory way to live. God said to Israel, and it applies to all—

"Be not as the horse or mule, which have no understanding."

Most people live like the horse and the mule. They never do any real thinking. They live by custom, and desire, and habit, and emotion, and self-gratification. God's people must be different.

* * *

THE end of Prov. 3 gives two aspects of an important divine principle — just **to whom** God gives wisdom —

V. 32—"His secret is with the RIGHTEOUS."

V. 34 — "He giveth grace unto the LOWLY."

Life-giving wisdom is a precious gift of God to those alone who seek to please Him and conform to His desires. The way of wisdom is defined in the words of Paul to the Philippians:

"Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule."

If we truly seek divine wisdom, we must honestly and consistently walk according to what we already understand, and put away what we know to be out of harmony with divine perfection. Otherwise we mock God by asking for more guidance.

* * *

PROVERBS 8 is a beautiful exhortation by Wisdom herself, personified as the ever-present hand-maiden of God in all His works. It would well repay daily reading and meditation.

She freely offers to men ALL peace, ALL happiness, ALL well-being, ALL joy.

She crieth everywhere, seeking men's attention, seeking to turn them from death to life, and from sorrow to joy, from natural poverty to true spiritual wealth.

Why must wisdom and life cry in vain, while all the world flocks after folly and emptiness and death?

What a sad commentary on mankind! Are we so foolish as to join in these meaningless, juvenile pursuits of entertainment, pleasures, acquiring of wealth, and constant childish time-wasting play—rushing headlong to the eternal oblivion of the grave?

Let us be men in understanding, and recognize the true divine, eternal values of life.

* * *

WISDOM says in this 8th chapter—

"Receive my instruction, and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold.

"For Wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

"By me kings reign.

"I love them that love me, and those that **seek me early shall find me.**"

Here is an intimation that many leave the search for wisdom until too late. God is not mocked. When He decides we have had ample opportunity, He often closes the door and sends strong delusion. We never know when the door will suddenly be closed. Wisdom continues—

"I cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasure . . ."

"Substance" here is surely a well-chosen word. "Substance" implies permanence, solidity, reality, durability.

Substance is what we want—not the vapour and froth and bubble of the passing world . . .

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

"I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was."

Here, perhaps, is wisdom's greatest characteristic. It is eternal. It is divine. In the great scope of infinity, folly is but for a fleeting moment, but wisdom gives life for ever and ever and ever.

* * *

IN EVERY Scriptural subject, we are finally led to the same point. All points forward and finds its fulfilment in one man—the only REAL man—the only COMPLETE man that ever lived—the embodiment and perfect fulfilment of the divine wisdom of the ages. Isaiah declares (11.2)—

"The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord."

Here are "The seven spirits"—the seven-fold Spirit—of the Deity before the throne"—

The spirit of the Lord, of wisdom, of understanding, of counsel, of might, of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord.

The seven pillars of Wisdom's temple—all the aspects of Wisdom—understanding, counsel, knowledge, the fear of the Lord and might.

And Paul says, in the chapters in Corinthians on wisdom to which we have referred—

"Christ Jesus is of God made unto us Wisdom and Righteousness, and Sanctification and Redemption."

Here is the true life-giving Wisdom before which all the wisdom of the world stands as naked foolishness.

"Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption."

Christ is our wisdom, and our wisdom is Christ—

"In him, and through him, and because of him, are all things."

"In him," declared Paul to the Colossians—

"Are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Let us therefore live in him and for him—grow up into him in the wisdom of God through the Word, for "Wisdom is the principal thing."
—G.V.G.

1961 Texas Gathering Review

PART TWO

"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit"—Gal. 5:24-25

Thursday Morning

THE meetings for the day were opened by the Word of God being read in our midst. It was followed by a consideration of the message to the ecclesia at Philadelphia. Its lessons were to teach us patience under trial, to maintain and increase our strength in the Lord, and not deny Him before men by our actions, that the promised crown be not taken away by our failure to honor God before men.

Those who are successful will become pillars in God's Temple of the future, upon whom the Name of Jesus and God and the New Jerusalem would be inscribed.

* * *

THE theme of the message to the Philadelphia ecclesia was carried into our morning address, whose title was, "Holding Faith During Times of Doubt and Indecision."

There are three kinds of faith in the Scriptures; strong faith, weak faith and dead faith. Faith in God is a spontaneous, loving acceptance of what He has commanded, a fervent effort to present our lives wholeheartedly in His service, and a humble desire to conform in every way to His will.

Strong faith, developed by storing in mind the operations of God in the lives of His servants, is developed and increased by prayer and casting our care upon God, and not having confidence in our own understanding.

Weak faith is the product of trying to hold the promises of God in one hand and the pleasures of the world in the other.

Dead faith is declared to be related to those who produce no fruit toward God. They are not activated by the truth of God's purpose. They comprehend not the direction of world events, and their relation to world happenings. They are not stirred up to come out from the world and be separate. They are dead while they live.

If we are strong in faith we will act as did Abraham, trusting in God, and not drifting with the majority. We will be aware of the Word of God and be ready to give an answer therefrom to everyone that asks us of our Faith.

The departure from the faith in the days of the Apostles illustrates the condition of the ecclesial world at the end of Gentile times. The desire of men to draw away disciples after them is repeating itself.

The philosophy of the "sciences" is being substituted for the basic foundation of Divine truth.

As soldiers we are to stand firm against great odds. The warfare in defence of the Truth has never been more important than at the present. Let us arm ourselves with all the spiritual weapons, by daily resorting to the armoury of the Word of God.

Thursday Afternoon

AS brethren and sisters we are instructed to grow up into the full stature of Christ Jesus. In the process we must "Put Away Childish Things," as impressed by our exhorting brother in the afternoon. Paul told the Corinthians that if we hold on to present worldly things, whether they be possessions, or positions, worldly wisdom or pre-eminence, we have failed to grow up into Christ, we are stunted in growth, we are babes, we have not progressed past the digestion of milk.

We are counselled to put off all temporal desires, to grow up by the assimilation of the meat of the Living Word. We increase in stature unto maturity, and thereby shall be found of Jesus suitable to be incorporated into the Multitudinous man — Christ Jesus—who shall rule the world in immortal strength.

* * *

Thursday Evening

IN THE evening we were shown another aspect of the Gospel message: "Separation from the World and Complete Submission to Divine Commands as the Way of Life." Separation from the world's activities and associations with natural man's pleasures, must be the way of life for God's servants.

Scriptural illustrations were called forth to establish the pattern which is acceptable to God. While restricting to the flesh it was shown to be a way of quiet patience for the pleasure of God, bringing peace and contentment for the present, and assurance for the future age of glorification.

Coupled with the position of strangers and pilgrims on the earth is obedience to Divine requirements, there are natural companions on the road to the Kingdom, and where the law of the Truth is perceived these two features are in evidence—

"Come out and be separate, and I will receive you, and be a Father unto you and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

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

Friday Morning

OUR Friday activities began as usual with the daily Scripture readings, the necessary Bread of Life. This was followed by our final consideration of the first 3 chapters of the Apocalypse.

Here we were impressed with the application to our lives of the Spirit's message unto the ecclesias; the warnings and blessings were emphasized as good exhortation for "the servants of God"—

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the ecclesias" (Rev. 3:22).

HAVING the messages of God upon our minds, we were further exhorted in the morning to present our bodies as "living sacrifices" to God.

The spirit of Paul's letter to the Romans, moving step by step to show that the Law could not bring salvation, that we stand by grace and not by works of the flesh, that it is not of him that willeth or of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy, that we shall be saved.

As Gentiles, our position has no advantage over the Jews, but if we boast over the Jews we are in danger of falling also. Our speaker therefore impressed us with the fact that our sacrifices must be LIVING sacrifices, as contrasted with the SLAIN beasts of the Law of Moses, which could not take away sins.

This aspect was illustrated from the Law in the cleansing of leprosy: the 2 birds, one slain, the other dipped in the blood of the first and let go in the open field. Also in the cleaning of sin on the great yearly Day of Atonement: the two goats, one slain, the other let go free into the wilderness.

While we symbolically die with Christ in baptism, it is a beginning of life in a fuller sense, identified with the blood of Christ, our Slain Lamb.

The Body was shown to be a unit, each member being a specific element of the body; all must function in harmony, love, cheerfulness and humility. The living sacrifice must be from the heart, no slothfulness, but fervent in spirit. It must identify itself with the joys and sorrows of others in true ecclesial fellowship.

True, the working out of living sacrifices requires much patience; it recognizes God as just and right and completely aware of the injustices of daily living, which we are called upon to bear, teaching us to love our enemies, and provide for their needs. By this we shall not be overcome of evil, but we shall overcome evil with good.

Friday Afternoon

OUR afternoon address was related to the morning's exhortation, continuing the theme of Patience.

Indeed, we cannot stress this feature too much, for without patience we cannot successfully attain the reward.

We are exhorted to be like our Heavenly Father, and He has manifested patience and longsuffering in all respects with His children. He becomes therefore our example if we are His sons and Daughters. Our patience must be manifested unto each other. If we are patient with each other, we are to God.

God created us with the ability to develop patience. This requires effort, and thereby the manifestation of character. We have examples of Patience in Job, the prophets and Christ himself, "Who when he was reviled, reviled not again".

There are no short cuts to develop patience. It can only come by trial. We deceive ourselves if we feel otherwise. Patience is developed by our correct reaction to the little daily happenings. Each day presents its test.

We must not lead double lives, one of righteousness when around God's Word, one of weakness when we are exposed to the world. Do we patiently maintain our separation when the flesh says we should be a "good fellow, well met," or do we join in the laughter of the fool, which is as the crackling of thorns under the pot?

We must illustrate patience in all our actions. We cannot have double standards. Patience is not easy to manifest in this age of stress and speed. But this is our test. Remember the world lieth in wickedness. What others do tests our endurance at all times.

Let us remember that the look on our face is frequently a token of lack of patience, and a revelation of the heart.

If we feel ourselves weakening let us draw near to God, Who giveth strength liberally and upbraideth not. The final exhortation impressed us with the assurance that doing good and suffering for it patiently is a token of association with the sufferings of Christ—

"Therefore let patience have her PERFECT work, that ye may be PERFECT and entire (complete), needing nothing."

Friday Evening

THE evening address centered on the Holy City, Jerusalem, illustrating its long period of downtreading, but that glorious things have been spoken about her future, which is about to dawn.

The prophecies of God illustrate the "indestructibility of the Jewish nation," but a period of tribulation and wandering are required because of disobedience to Divine commands. In such a condition they witness to the justice and righteousness of God. Their regathering also shows the Divine mercy.

By means of slides the prophetic picture was drawn of world nations as beasts, and great waters, subjecting the people of God. Assyria the ruthless lion, with eagle wings; Babylon, the same lion power with changed characteristics, made to stand on its feet as a man, becoming the head of the kingdom of men which was to overturn the kingdom of God for 2500 years.

The prophecy of Hosea 6:1, taught us that restoration would come after 2 days, in the third day, a day of healing. This time has just about arrived.

The animal phases of Persia, the bear with 3 ribs in its mouth; Greece as the 4-headed, 4-wirged leopard, and also as the He Goat overcoming the Persian Ram, followed in historical sequence.

Rome, the unnamed dragon with iron teeth dispersed the Jews and destroyed the Holy City. The removal of the Daily Sacrifice by Rome was furthered by the establishment of the Abomination that maketh desolate by the hand of the Arab (locust) scourge and the 4 Euphratean Messenger powers, the Turks.

The Great River Euphrates was shown overflowing Palestine and Europe, only to dry up in accord with Rev. 16, to provide a way for the restoration of the land and people of God, when the Kings of a Sun's Risings should be manifested.

Bro. John Thomas was quoted to show the anticipation of God's Word in the restoration of the Jews, through the intervention of Britain, directed by a Divine hand against their will.

The fulfilment of bro. Thomas' expectation in the last 100 years sets the seal to the accuracy of his interpretation of the Divine Word.

Jewish re-birth as a nation in our lifetime sets the budding fig tree before our eyes. Jewish national resurrection speaks of the resurrection of God's sleeping saints and the soon end to the downtreading, when the Kingdom of God shall be established and all nations shall go up to worship the Lord in Jerusalem in the beauty of holiness.

Saturday Morning

EARLY Saturday morning was devoted to the business meeting, to make final arrangements for the Gathering for the year ahead, if the will of the Lord so directs. It taught us that ecclesial activity is essential until the summons is sounded—

"Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left."

* * *

ALL that had gone before during our week's activities was a building upon a sure foundation. While we labor together, it is only as jointed together by the Builder, Jesus Christ.

To impress our minds in relation to things spiritual we were taken to the construction of Solomon's Temple in accord with the Divine pattern given to David. The magnitude of the foundation stones, firmly embedded in the living rock of the holy hill of God, was a type of our sure foundation in Christ, the chief Cornerstone.

We are not the foundation; we are built upon the foundation. At present we are as stones being quarried, having the hammering and chiselling done by our trials, being prepared to drop into place upon the sure foundation stone.

We are repeatedly admonished in the Scriptures to "hold fast," to "lay hold," and to "remain firm" in our service in the Truth. Holding fast to the things of the world is to rely on a foundation of sand.

Let us not rely on our own efforts and works, else we shall be like unto the Jews who placed confidence in salvation by the Law and stumbled over the chief Cornerstone. We must in humility fall on this stone, or it will fall on us and grind us to powder.

Jesus is a living stone, because as Paul states, "Death hath no more dominion over him" (Rom 6:9). We also, if we serve faithfully are to become living stones, but at present we must permit ourselves to become shaped by the necessary trials of our lives.

These living stones are shown in Revelation as constituents of the New Jerusalem which descendeth out of heaven from God. The light and splendour of the multitudinous company of saints associated with Christ are illustrated by refulgent stones in the foundations.

Here in metaphorical language the Spirit of God portrays the honoured positions given to those who are built on the sure foundation and stumble not. They are as "tried stones, precious stones," set in enclosings of gold—their tried faith.

Saturday Afternoon

GOD'S Word tells us that we must bring our children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; in this manner they shall be as plants around the house of God for glory and beauty.

The labor of those who take seriously this Divine exhortation was illustrated during the afternoon by the combined efforts of the scholars and teachers in various classes, in recitation, dialogue and essay, and hymns of praise to God—

"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise."

The wholehearted simplicity of these young minds in their service was a good exhortation to the older to let their efforts reflect the work of God upon them—

"It is God that worketh in each to will and to do of His good pleasure."

The teachers laboring in classes and in isolation with these scholars should remember this day as a firstfruit of much greater service, as these children grow into adults in the vineyard of the Lord.

Saturday Evening

THE final public proclamation of the Truth was an epitome of the last 100 years, in the light of God's prophetic word. Indeed, all world events must be taken in this sense as we realize that God sets up and removes the rulers of the nations in the furtherance of His glorious plan of salvation for mankind.

God has revealed His purposes unto His servants the prophets and He has assured us He will do nothing that is not recorded there. How necessary then that we observe diligently His Word!

The broad panorama of world history based on Daniel chapter 2 (the Image of Nebuchadnezzar) was pictorialised by slides, as the various stages of the World Kingdom, Head of Gold, Breast and Arms of Silver, Belly and Thighs of Brass, Legs of Iron, Toes of Iron and Clay, have proven the accuracy of Divine foreknowledge.

The standing of this Image upon its feet in the time of Christ's return was stressed, and recent events were brought to bear on this phase.

First the French (Frog) influence was shown as a background element in uniting many latter day world-powers under a common standard, in opposition to the defenders of God's people. The world was to become a divided camp; the King of the North (Rosh) and his confederates, against the Democracies (the King of the South) the defenders of the Jews, Britain and her allies.

This trend toward the final unity of the King of the North was emphasized by the development of the Catholic-dominated Common Market in Europe today, by the increase of power in the Warsaw Pact of Nations, against the weakening NATO structure of European defence. The boiling pot set in the midst, Berlin, the central issue of European unity or division.

Many other trouble spots of the world picture from East to West, North to South combined to show the last 100 years are the closing days of Gentile Times.

The rise of Russian power, the weak nations asserting their strength, the constant sword-rattling of large and small peoples, to raise the roar of the sea and the waves to a deafening pitch, leave no doubt that the Master is at the door. Are we ready to receive the summons. "The Master is come and calleth for thee"?

Sunday Morning

AS our assembly opened with the Memorial Service so it was fitting that it should close, in the same manner. With a feeling of renewed strength yet tinged with sadness, we assembled for the last time beneath the Tabernacle.

The lesson of the Holy Place of old was still with us. We are still in the wandering state. The Temple is not yet built. We must continue to light the lamps before the Veil, prepare the Show Bread, and present the burning Incense of acceptable prayer, combusted by fire from off the Great Altar.

The essence of the week's exhortations by the various brethren was set in the exhortation on this final day. Wisdom, Divine Wisdom, was shown as the necessary pattern of the true servant's life. Naturally we cannot comprehend the things of the Spirit, but with the wisdom which comes from searching the Word of God all things are discernable.

The wisdom of the world, illustrated in its great men, Aristotle, Newton, Einstein, while displaying great animal mental power, could only lead to oblivion in the dust of the grave.

It is therefore of utmost importance—it is absolutely vital—that we see the clear distinction between true wisdom and every aspect of that which the world, considers wisdom.

How important that we apply the days of our years to that wisdom that endureth unto everlasting life!

WISDOM IS THE PRINCIPAL THING, THEREFORE LET US GET WISDOM.

* * *

And so the curtain came down upon our feast of fat things, wine well refined. The last bell sounded and we took up our individual stations in the vineyard again.

1962 WORCESTER FRATERNAL GATHERING

God willing, the brethren and sisters in Worcester will hold a Fraternal Gathering on Saturday and Sunday, October 13 & 14.

"Woman, Why Weepest Thou?"

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene"—John 19:25

WE meet each first day of the week to remember the Death and Resurrection of our Lord, and twice each year we read together 4 accounts of the events of this period, in the 4 gospels.

Let us consider these events, endeavouring to arrange them in order in our minds, and to picture the experiences and circumstances of each individual involved.

Let us begin our consideration at the foot of the cross.

* * *

THE thing that first strikes us very forcibly is the prominence of women and the apparent absence of all but one of the men connected with Christ.

At the betrayal in the garden, 9 disciples flee and we hear no more about them until after the Resurrection.

The other 2, John and Peter, after first fleeing with the rest, turned and followed the crowd to the High Priest's house. John was known at the High Priest's house, and therefore must have been known to be a disciple of Jesus. The High Priest's servant's girl remembered seeing Peter with Jesus; she surely would have remembered seeing John with him, as she knew John. This is a point in John's favor. He went right in along with Jesus, knowing he would be recognized. We find John outstanding all through these events.

After Peter's denial, he too, like the rest of the apostles, drops out of the picture until after the resurrection. There is no mention of Peter or of any of the rest at the cross—only John and the women. All the women closest to Jesus are mentioned by name by Matthew, Mark and John, as being there.

* * *

JOHN stood at the foot of the cross, with Jesus' mother, and received the commission to take care of her.

There also was Salome, the wife of Zebedee and mother of James and John. Comparing Matthew 27:56 and Mark 15:40 with John 19:25 almost certainly establishes Salome as the sister of Mary. This would make James and John the cousins of Jesus. The only other alternatives are—

Mary's sister is mentioned once, (John 19:25) but not named, or ever referred to elsewhere.

Mary's sister was also named Mary, and was the wife of Cleophas.

In either case, Salome would be omitted from one record where she appears in the other two. In the first case, someone else is mentioned in her place who is never mentioned again. In the 2nd case, there were 2 sisters, both named Mary. All this seems very unlikely, so we conclude that Salome was the "his (Jesus') mother's sister" of John 19:25.

It was Salome who approached Jesus with the request that her 2 sons, James and John, sit on Jesus' right and left hands in the Kingdom. We will have a better and kinder view of Salome if we remember in connection with this incident that she was one of the faithful band of women who followed Jesus wherever he went, ministering unto him in loving devotion of their own substance.

Matthew says (27:55) regarding the crucifixion scene that:

"Many women were there . . . which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him."

We can hardly interpret 'many' as much less than 15 or 20, and it would seem to imply more. Let us try to get the picture. Besides these women, as Jesus travelled about, there were the 12 disciples, and a certain number of others. We know there were at least more than 2 others, and probably many more, for in Acts 1, Peter says—

“Of these men which have companied with us all the time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us . . . must one be ordained a witness.”

And of this group they appointed 2 to be chosen between by lot to fill Judas' place.

I am trying to formulate some mental picture of the group that accompanied Jesus. It could hardly have been less than 40 or 50. It could have been much more. We know on at least one occasion Jesus sent out 70 to preach.

What a strange sight it must have been. What an object of ridicule to the learned and sophisticated! They were of the simplest and commonest of the people. We know how limited their

understanding was, right up to the end. And while they were utterly devoted to Jesus, yet to the end they were small-minded and the best of them disputed who should be first.

What a background for the manifestation of God's Son! What a naturally-speaking humiliating and unimpressing presentation he made! The intellectual of the nation said in scorn, looking disdainfully at this motley, itinerant company:

"Have any of the rulers believed in him?"

They would seem like gypsies, wandering about the countryside, with no apparent means of support, and no fixed abode—nothing normal or respectable about them.

And furthermore he did not hesitate to company with publicans and sinners. He recognized no social distinction — no normal standards of propriety. He violated all their artificial etiquette—he did not even wash his hands to eat.

He did not work He did not support himself. He allowed these (as it would seem) infatuated women to minister to him of their substance.

We remember his first temptation — "Make these stones bread." He had all the power at his command. He did not need to humiliate himself, and give such an appearance to the world by depending upon the ministrations and possessions of the simple women who followed him.

Only 2 classes could possibly be attracted to him—the very simple, and those with deep spiritual discernment who could see through all the externals to the reality within.

How beautiful it was that he who had all power at his command must not use it for his own simplest needs, but must embarrassingly depend upon devoted women who had left their households and who followed and ministered to him with loving care! How beautiful that he should be permitted to need them and depend upon them!—He—the Son of God, the potential Lord of Heaven and Earth!

How strange and beautiful are the ways of God! How utterly and refreshingly different from the ways of men!

And so "many" loving and devoted women were there at the cross, but—as far as we have any record—only one man, "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

The men were later to carry the burden; and the women, as their position is, were to drop entirely out of sight, but this was their day, their glory, their courage and devotion and service—eternal testimony of love and faithfulness.

When Paul later lists the appearances of the risen Lord, he does not even mention the appearances to the women, though the first 2 appearances were to them.

Does he slight them? By no means! Rather he honours them. These appearances were not public witnesses. They were the far more glorious inner, personal, intimate communions of fellowship and love. The woman's great privilege is the gentle, inner, silent, secret touch.

Beside Jesus' mother, and Salome her sister, there was also Mary the wife of Cleophas and mother of the apostle James the Less, another who travelled with Jesus, and ministered to him.

Three elderly women, standing by the cross, witnessing that almost unendurable scene of agony and shame, hopeless bewilderment and disappointed faith. Faith and Hope had fled but Love remained.

* * *

AND then there was Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene is clearly the leading and most active spirit among the faithful group of women. For three days — the most momentous three days in history—Mary Magdalene is the most prominent actor in the whole divine plan.

How strange and beautiful that this fearless devoted woman should suddenly come briefly into brilliant prominence and, then as quickly fade forever from the record! She filled one essential, central role in the great sweep of history, and then retired to womanly obscurity

Mary Magdalene—the last at the cross, and the first at the tomb. And her devotion was rewarded—she was the first to see the Lord

When we come right down to the very heart of the events of these three days—around which all history revolves—we come to two people—Mary Magdalene and John the beloved disciple.

True, John at first fled. "They ALL forsook him and fled." It **had** to be that way. The flesh must learn the deep wisdom of its weakness—its utter, powerless dependence upon God. But John recovered himself immediately.

Peter "followed afar off," drawn by an irresistible love, but held back by the dragging feet of a terrible, trembling fear.

But John, we are told, "went in with Jesus into the palace of the High Priest"; then later went out and brought in Peter. It was John who said, "Perfect love casteth out fear."

John was the last to whom Jesus spoke in the hour of death: "Behold thy mother."

Mary was the first to whom he spoke in the hour of Resurrection and Life — the first name he uttered beyond the grave.

How little we know of Mary! Her name occurs 12 times—11 times in connection with the events of the crucifixion and **only once** anywhere else. That one place is Luke 8:2, where we are told she was among those who went about with Jesus on his journeys, and ministered to him. We are told there too that Jesus had cast 7 demons out of Mary—that is, he had cured her of some terrible and overwhelming infirmity.

AT the close of the crucifixion day, 2 other men come into the picture — men whom we would never have dreamed would fill the role they filled.

Of one of them, Joseph of Arimathea, we have never heard before, and never hear of him again. We are told he was rich, he was a counsellor, that is, one of the ruling body of the nation—like a member of Congress or of Parliament, that he was a good and righteous man who looked for the Kingdom of God, that he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews.

Up to this point he had never publicly revealed his allegiance. He had lived a double life—an inner, private life and an outer, public one.

There is a great lesson and a great comfort in the example of Joseph He was rich and influential—he had much to lose in following Jesus, and up to this point he had not been able to face the open choice.

But when Jesus was dead, when all hope seemed ended, he gathered together a Faith and a Courage that stands out with almost unique brilliance, and went boldly to Pilate, requesting the body of Jesus. Something now so moved and took hold of this fearful man that he stood up boldly and alone before both the Romans and his whole nation and publicly allied himself with the cause of Christ just when that cause had come into direct collision with both Jews and Romans and seemed to have ended in utter disaster.

We wonder whether, and at what point, Joseph realized that he was fulfilling that strange, unlikely prophecy of Isa. 53—

"He shall make his grave with the rich."

Truly a prophecy which— up until the moment Joseph stepped forth — seemed impossible of fulfilment under the circumstances.

How marvellous are the ways of God! Let Joseph be a perpetual inspiration to all who have ever hesitated under any circumstances to speak out for Christ because of fear.

Joseph laid the body in his own new tomb—a tomb wherein never man had lain. In the fittingness of things, it could be no other way. This event was not only unique in all history—it was the very center of all history.

At long last, in the fulness of times, the grave was to be conquered. A path never before opened up was to be trod—a path of hope right through the hitherto hopeless valley of the shadow of death, and out the other side.

No man had passed this way before.

True, there had been typical raisings from the dead before in manifestation and shadow of what was to come, but never a Resurrection that shattered the power of the grave and cast off its shackles forever. Never man had passed this way before —no man had ever lain in **this** tomb — this glorious gateway from death to life.

* * *

THE other man was Nicodemus—likewise a counsellor—two of the highest men in the nation. And, like Joseph, he had apparently up to this point been held back by fear from open discipleship. Unlike Joseph, he appears twice before in the record.

At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Nicodemus comes to him by night, confessing his recognition that Jesus was a teacher sent from God.

Though he chides him for lack of understanding basic spiritual truth, though holding a position as the teacher of Israel, still Jesus speaks to him many things of depth and beauty that we find revealed no where else. He knew what was in man, and he could doubtless see in Nicodemus the nucleus of a faith that would overcome all fear.

Consider the well-known passages of eternal promise and beauty that Jesus spoke alone to this Jewish leader who sought him in the night. The event is recorded in John 3—

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God."

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit."

"No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven."

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up."

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

"This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light."

For all this we are indebted to Jesus' private conversation with this man Nicodemus in the quiet of the night. And Jesus ended the interview with this gentle rebuke, doubtless long-remembered with much heart-searching and self-examination, and which bore glorious fruit so long after—

"He that doeth Truth cometh to the Light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

Nicodemus was at last to come in the open daylight—in full public gaze — to manifest his allegiance to Light and Truth.

There is one other mention of him, apparently about 6 months before the Crucifixion. It is very revealing, both as to how far he went, and how far he did not go.

The officers were sent to seize Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles. They came back to the chief priests empty-handed and overawed, exclaiming—

"Never man spake like this man!" (John 7:46).

The Pharisees contemptuously answer—

"Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?"

Nicodemus was there. He was one of them. What were his thoughts in the face of this contemptuous challenge? This was just a few months before the Crucifixion. He had had 3 years to ponder on the words of Jesus, whom he had confessed to be a teacher sent from God.

He does speak up. Truly very mildly and timidly and uncommittingly from the point of view of a robust faith, but he does speak out against them—

"Doth our law judge any man before it hear him?"

And they all turn on him in scathing ridicule—

"Art thou also of Galilee?"

But finally, at the last moment possible, Nicodemus' secret faith burst forth in loving, fearless, public service to the dead body of a condemned and executed prisoner.

To Be Continued Next Month, If the Lord Will

Berean Christadelphian

1962 TEXAS FRATERNAL GATHERING

HYE, TEXAS

(If the Lord Will)

JULY 29 - AUG. 5

SUNDAY, JULY 29

9:00 a.m.
11:00 a.m.
3:00 p.m.
8:00 p.m.

SPEAKER

Bro. G. A. Gibson
Bro. Wayne Wolfe
Bro. O. Beauchamp

SUBJECT

BUSINESS MEETING
"Praise Ye the Lord"
REVELATION 4:1-5

"There Is One God, and One Mediator Between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). God the Creator of All: Christ's True Relation to God and God's Purpose.

MONDAY, JULY 30

9:30 a.m.
11:00 a.m.
3:00 p.m.
8:00 p.m.

Bro. W. J. Pickford
Bro. Troy Haltom
Bro. John Randell

Read and discuss daily Bible lesson
"Following Christ and Bearing His Cross"
REVELATION 4:6-11

"This Same Jesus Shall So Come" (Acts 1:11). The Personal Return of Christ to the Earth the Only Way of Saving the World From Complete Destruction.

TUESDAY, JULY 31

9:30 a.m.
11:00 a.m.
3:00 p.m.
8:00 p.m.

Bro. Fred Higham
Bro. G. A. Gibson
Bro. N. Mammone

Read and discuss daily Bible lesson
"Men Ought Always to Pray, and Not to Faint"
REVELATION 5:1-7

"The Holy Scriptures Are Able to Make Thee Wise Unto Salvation" (2 Tim. 3:15). God's Inspired, Infallible Word: Proofs of its Truth.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1

9:30 a.m.
11:00 a.m. Bro. L. A. Hill
3:00 p.m. Bro. G. V. Growcott
8:00 p.m. Bro. O. Beauchamp

Read and discuss daily Bible lesson
"2nd Peter, Chapter 3"
REVELATION 5:8-14

"The Law of Sin Which Is in My Members" (Rom. 7:23). Sinful Flesh the True Bible Devil: The Cause, Results, and Removal From Mankind.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 2

9:30 a.m.
11:00 a.m. Bro. Will Edwards
3:00 p.m. Bro. W. J. Pickford
8:00 p.m. Bro. John Randell

Read and discuss daily Bible lesson
"Ephesians, Chapter 2"
REVELATION 6:1-8

"Many That Sleep in the Dust of the Earth Shall Awake" (Dan. 12:2). The Dead Unconscious; Heaven at Death False; Resurrection at Christ's Return.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 3

9:30 a.m.
11:00 a.m. Bro. N. Mammone
3:00 p.m. Bro. Michael Packer
8:00 p.m. Bro. G. V. Growcott

Read and discuss daily Bible lesson
"Be Ye Therefore Perfect"
REVELATION 6:9-17

"Narrow Is the Way, and Few There Be That Find It" (Matt. 7:14). Holiness and Enlightened Obedience the Only Way to Eternal Life.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 4

9:00 a.m.
11:00 a.m. Bro. G. A. Gibson
3:00 p.m. Bro. Ellis Higham
8:00 p.m. Bro. Fred Higham

BUSINESS MEETING
"The Word Made flesh"
CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

"There Shall Be a Time of Trouble Such as Never Was" (Dan. 12:1). World Conditions and Events Fulfill the Many Prophecies Concerning the Latter Days. The Continued Growth of Russian Power and Prestige the Key to the Entire Picture.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 5

10:30 a.m. Bro. G. V. Growcott

"Cast the Unprofitable Servant Into Outer Darkness"
(Matt. 25:30)

Resurrectional Responsibility

PART TWO

"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day"—John 12:48

IN examining this subject, there are two avenues of investigation:

- 1. What are the BASIC SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES involved?**
- 2. What are the SPECIFIC STATEMENTS OF SCRIPTURE covering the calling of the disobedient to account?**

Do the Scriptures anywhere exclude, or make an exception of, ANY of the disobedient in speaking of their judgment?

Do they anywhere specify that a man must be baptized, or must first agree to obey God, before God can call him to account?

Is there ANY single statement or example in the Bible where God tells a man he can decide himself whether or not he will have to answer for wilful disobedience?

If we carefully seek scriptural guidance on these specific points—not obscuring the matter with inferred theories—there will be absolutely no doubt in our minds concerning the answers to these questions.

The basic scriptural principles involved are these:

Enlightenment Is the Ground of Resurrectional Responsibility

1. ENLIGHTENMENT is invariably given, in both statement and example, as the ground of accountability and responsibility to resurrectional judgment and punishment.

An Appointed Day of Judgment

2. God has appointed a GREAT DAY OF GIVING ACCOUNT —**after** life is finished and the record is complete.

Wicked Prosper in This Life

3. Judgment, discipline, or punishment in THIS life is on an entirely different basis from INDIVIDUAL accounting at the END of life, and does not in any way fill the requirements of what the Scriptures reveal concerning the final, individual judgment.

a. Judgment in **this** life is in no way universally equalized in application—it is concerned with God's OVERALL PURPOSE, rather than with INDIVIDUAL MERIT.

b. The common rule (supported by the testimony of Scripture) in this life is that the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer.

This is positive proof that God's basic principle of "bringing EVERY work into judgment" cannot be dissipated through the loophole of applying it to PRESENT retribution.

Only Exception to Resurrectional Accountability Is Ignorance

4. The only exception the Scriptures ever make to final and universal accountability before the judgment seat is IGNORANCE.

Disobedience Will Not Shield Just Because It Is Complete

5. The Scriptures never once suggest or hint that disobedience will excuse a man from rendering an account to his Maker, simply because it is COMPLETE disobedience.

Omission of Wilful Rejectors Is a Strained, Unsupported Theory

6. The expressions used by Scripture in describing the rejected at the judgment-seat never give the slightest support or warrant for excluding any of the wilfully disobedient.

On the contrary, these expressions are such as to make the exclusion of wilful rejectors a very STRAINED and UNNATURAL and IMPROBABLE theory — something that would **never be thought of in an unbiased reading of the verses.**

Scriptural Terms for Rejected Clearly Include Wilful Rejectors

7. Whenever we seek for a SCRIPTURAL definition of who shall come forth to the resurrection of condemnation, we find such terms as:

the wicked;
the disobedient;

the unjust;
those that have done evil;
those who OBEY NOT the gospel;
those who do not obey the truth;
those who REJECT, DENY, REFUSE TO LISTEN;
those who BELIEVE NOT the Gospel when preached.

The expressed ground of their accountability is that they KNOWINGLY commit these things and treat God's commands in this way.

We are never told that resurrectional responsibility hinges on any OTHER ground, such as consenting to be baptized. Responsibility throughout the Bible depends on OPPORTUNITY, and punishment depends on WORTHINESS for it.

Scriptures Often Speak With Only the Approved in View

8. The Scriptures often speak with only the approved in view, not taking the rejected into account at all. This is so obviously true of the whole of 1 Cor. 15 that it is very difficult to understand how anyone can extract support for the belief of non-responsibility of wilful rejectors from 1 Cor. 15:22 ("IN Christ shall all be made alive").

Yet this verse appears to be the main passage relied on, and everything else is built up around it.

"Resurrection" Complete Process

9. In the same connection, the Scriptures often speak of the resurrection in the sense of the complete process, including glorification. This, too, is SO obvious throughout 1 Cor. 15 that it is hard to see how anyone could question it.

Yet once perceive this, and immediately the groundlessness of the non-responsibility argument based on v. 22 is exposed.

Legal, Mechanical Technicalities

10. The term "legal" is, as bro. Roberts pointed out, an unfortunate and hazy one. It has given deceptive body to a misleading and mechanical conception of "justification from Adamic condemnation."

It led bro. Andrews to contend that the very Jews who destroyed Christ were "justified by faith in his blood!" (In his theory, this was essential for their resurrection and judgment. They had to be "legally" and technically "justified by faith" before God could raise them from the dead to bring them before Him for judgment—otherwise the supposed "Adamic condemnation" of "eternal death" held them eternally in the grave).

Gospel Call Is Direct Command

11. The Gospel call is a DIRECT COMMAND to repentance and good works, from man's omnipotent Lord and Maker, not just an optional invitation.

We MUST clearly recognize and confess God's **authority** before we can take advantage of His **love**. This is essential to prevent mortal presumption and to maintain God's glory.

We must faithfully declare the whole counsel of God — His majesty, authority, and dignity, as well as His marvellous condescension, mercy and love.

IF these broad and basic scriptural principles are properly laid hold of, there will be no doubt in our minds about the position of the enlightened and wilfully or negligently disobedient who knowingly reject God's call or who — when commanded to obey—do not do so.

The Flesh Hates Thoughts of "Command" and "Judgment"

The "liberal" and "merciful" mind of the flesh would like to blot out all thought of command or compulsion or punishment. It is so humiliating to be "commanded". It is so gratifying to be "invited".

It would like to regard God as an equal, making it an offer which it is a free and sovereign agent to reject with impunity. It is a pleasing conception to the natural man, gratifying to his pride and soothing to his apprehensions.

But the All-Wise Creator well knows our frame and the subtlety of the fleshly mind that we must all combat within ourselves. He has plainly declared that ALL (specifically excepting the ignorant, but **no others**) must finally give an account to Him.

A Grave Responsibility

Let us consider long and well before we take upon ourselves the responsibility of leading any to believe that they can ignore their sovereign Lord's voice when He speaks to them. What could be more bitter and tragic than to stand before Him at the last day, and hear Him say: —

"Why did you presume to tell these disobedient that as long as they avoided baptism I would never call them to account? Where is your authority— when I have given them a command — to step in and tell them it is optional whether they agree to obey Me or not?

"What do you mean by telling them, 'Belief and obedience are necessary to become responsible to God?' Is it not clearly written:—

"THIS is the condemnation, that LIGHT is come."

"He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my word shall be judged at the last day."

"To him that KNOWETH to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin?"

"Why did you whisper in their ear, 'He doesn't mean that — it just refers to the Jews, or those who have agreed to accept His commands; you are a special exception to all those statements that disobedience will be called to account and punished'?"

"Did not the serpent whisper to the woman, 'You will not be punished — you are quite safe to ignore the command'?"

Truly God is Love, but we must declare the WHOLE counsel—He is also a consuming fire—jealous of His honor and glory and majesty and authority.

"Be not deceived: God is not mocked."

To Be Continued Next Month, If the Lord Will

HOUSTON TAPE LIBRARY

Many tapes are available, to any who would like them, including the Hye, London, Boston and Worcester Gatherings for the past several years, lectures, exhortations, etc.

Write to bro. Charles Banta, 815 Boston, Deer Park, Texas

Ask, and It Shall Be Given

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you"
—Matt. 7:7

THESE are wonderful words we have read together this morning, living thoughts from the lips of the Lord Jesus.

The 7th chapter of Matthew is the last of 3 recording what is commonly called the "Sermon on the Mount", a singular discourse, its beauty unmatched in any other literature—in fact no other teaching anywhere is comparable with it.

It requires but little imagination to reconstruct that scene. At this time, there followed him great multitudes of people (Matt. 4:25). Seeing them, he ascends a convenient hillside and with his disciples gathered around him, he speaks from nature's platform. The occasion was doubtless marked by peace and serenity . . . and—

"He opened his mouth and taught them."

They were gathered to him for various reasons, but in the main it was the power of his words. And in general—

"The people were very attentive to hear him."

He spake astonishing things with authority, a **divine** authority—

"Never man spake like this man."

His teaching was altogether foreign to accepted rules—quite contrary to the tuition which is calculated to fit one for worldly success — even **antagonistic** to the common spirit, the spirit which animates the natural man.

It was on a new plane altogether, one which rested, not on man's wisdom, but on the lofty principles of the divine estimate of things.

Lofty as was the tone of this teaching, it has been described as a "revelation of Christ's own character . . . his life translated into language," and we know how literally true this is for the principles he here enunciates were the controlling force of his life.

There are 2 thoughts from this:

1. Would that our teaching could be a reflex of our own walk and conversation.
2. If we would only narrowly observe and apply the findings of the Master in these 3 chapters, we would not be far from the Kingdom of God

* * *

"Blessed are the poor in spirit—they that mourn—the meek—they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness—the merciful—the pure in heart—the peacemakers."

These 7 elements of the character beautiful—and godly—are wrought into the fabric of the Lord's message and serve both as an introduction and a basis.

"Blessed" . . . the word as here used represents, we are told, the possession of present happiness, a **state of being**—rather than indicating the **reception** of blessing by the favoured.

The reason for their happy state is given, variously, because they have so many desirable things in prospect—

"They shall be comforted . . .

"They shall inherit the earth.

"They shall see God . . .

"They shall be called the children of God."

—and the things God has laid up for His children are so great they are beyond our present comprehension. But for now—

"Ye are the salt of the earth."

If ever words implied responsibility they are these.

Christ's followers were to exercise a sweetening and purifying influence in a world that was otherwise almost entirely corrupt

In the face of a universal degenerate trend, they are to constitute an arresting and freshening power. So much different therefore (from the surrounding and daily contacted **kosmos**) is the direction of their life and walk, that the contrast is apparent and the subtle influence works . . . or else, "the salt has lost its savour"—only a useless, displeasing, insipidity is left, and it is due to be "cast out."

The force of the figure can be equally applied to the church apostate or the individual believer of worldly trend.

Are we going with the world, or are we combating its destroying inroads, its insidious putrefaction by the saline properties of the Word: not only taught, but self-observed; not only inculcated, but lived, one's-self. . .

"Except your righteousness shall exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (v.20).

Profession — even an outward performance—is empty and vain, of itself.

In the remainder of ch. 5, he lays down the Royal Law, which we paraphrase thus:

"It was said by them of old time that thou shalt not do this or that serious act . . . very good . . .

"But I say unto you that **much more** is required of you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is Heaven."

This follows through in a series of precepts from the warning (v. 22)—

"He that is angry with his brother without a cause is in danger of the judgment."

To verse 44—

"I say unto you, love your enemies."

"LOVE YOUR ENEMIES"

It is forbidden that we agree with their way, or metaphorically pat them on the back and say, "You are all right." But, we are to hold no vengeful feelings, and are to be **ready to do good to them**, as to all, desiring their personal welfare . . . so imitating God, Who is "not willing that any should perish."

It is a state of the heart and mind that is enjoined—for "as a man thinketh, so is he."

Purity of mind, with self- abnegation and genial beneficence of character, are laid down as necessary attributes of the "children" of a gracious God, those striving towards God-likeness—

"Be ye therefore PERFECT, even as your Father who is in heaven, is PERFECT."

Impossible?—No. If we seek it now, it will become a fact in the great consummation. If we do not, it will not come to us

* * *

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven."

The drift of this is so plain, its scriptural logic cannot be avoided.

If the satisfaction of publicity is what we are seeking, that is all we will get, like the hypocrites here mentioned. "Verily I say unto you, they HAVE their reward"—and if we have it now, we cannot receive it later.

We want to be among those whom the Father will presently reward openly, do we not? Ostentation and display in any form is evidently very distasteful to Him, and if we are given to it, we had better "take heed."

Of course, we like our brethren to realize our readiness and good will in this matter, and we know that cheerful acts of mercy are frequently spontaneous in the generous minded . . . but . . .

Let us not sound the trumpet: Deliberate advertising betrays a woeful lack of faith . . . Our Father "seeth in secret" whatever good we do—or evil.

The principle bears directly on all our behaviour and our motives. It is a question of our faith, whether it is real or not, and where our heart is—it is a case of either a plus or a minus sign on our final account, a credit or a debit. V. 19 quotes the minus and v. 20 the plus—

Treasures where they will vanish, or—
Treasures where they will be safe.

There need only be one reason for not laying up treasures on earth: the whole system is to pass away as a vesture folded up and removed.

We are careful about many passing things while still admitting that anxious thought about temporal things is really out of place with us, and inconsistent with true faith. We could very profitably transfer more of this care to the things of the Kingdom, seeking first of all the Kingdom of God. He knows our needs and will take care of the rest.

* * *

"Judge not, that ye be not judged."

A solemn injunction about which there has been controversy leading to wrong conceptions.

One of the highest faculties given to man is that of judging—reasoning from evidence and arriving at studied decisions from fact. The appeal of the Scriptures is to that faculty.

This very chapter tacitly accepts the ground that it is a rightful possession, and moreover, that we must exercise it in summing up other individuals (vs. 15-16)—

"Beware of false prophets . . . ye shall know them by their fruits."

This last verse cannot therefore refer to the process generally, which is frequently very sincerely and also prayerfully, undertaken. It must refer to the misuse of it in the predisposition to condemn without consideration of fact or knowledge of motive, judging unnecessarily, judging motives.

The extreme is that carping and cavilling spirit that hastens to the condemnation of others but is blind to its own faults. The context supports the view in the immediate reference to the mote and the beam.

The danger to us is perhaps the many little ways in which we can almost innocently fall into error—

1. Failure on our part to comprehend another's case.
2. Uncontrolled zeal.
3. Misleading appearances.
4. Distorted and exaggerated reports, or hidden facts.

The unlovely spirit is the one which is always inclined to sum up unfavourably, uncharitably—inwardly sitting in judgment— filling in the gaps with evil surmisings—giving no credit or quarter or benefit of doubt. On the other hand—

"Love thinketh no evil."

Love is kind — reserving judgment. Love is reluctant to condemn.

We must not, however be led away, one way or the other. Facts are stubborn things and **Truth is a fixed quantity**. The wise will not seek to avoid it, but receive it, and face it, and make way for it in their life's economy.

This also is provided for in the chapter (v. 15)—

"Beware of false prophets."

Our attention is then drawn to certain truths. A tree, quite naturally, brings forth fruit in accord with its nature, good or evil, and certain existing facts are thus accounted for.

Good and evil fruit is being produced, and we are to judge accordingly, because we have to be on our guard against the encroachment of evil. We must be able to discern, to recognize the individual tree by its fruit.

Yes, piercing discernment, keen understanding, the ability to judge righteously, is doubtless earnestly desired by every brother and sister here, and in particular by the brethren in the problems that come before them. The answer is in vs. 7-8:

"Ask, and it shall be given;

"Seek, and ye shall find;

"Knock, and it shall be opened."

By the questions in vs. 9-11, we are called upon to consider our case. The conclusion is, of course, our Father in Heaven will give good things to those who ask Him.

It matters, necessarily, **what** we ask of Him, and the purpose of it. Whims and fancies and trivialities are out of the question—temporal gifts are secondary, though not excluded—**the requests for spiritual gifts are more in keeping with our position, and there are some we should earnestly seek.**

Solomon's example is a good one. He just asked for wisdom to carry on. We are reminded of the statement by James—

"If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, Who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth (or censureth) not."

There is an addition—

"Let him ask **in faith.**"

You will note the condition is not: "If he is intellectual, or educated, or has natural capacity"—as if it were predicated on natural lines. No. SPIRITUAL WISDOM IS OPEN TO ALL.

The wisdom possible to the lowliest of God's servants would by comparison reduce "the wisdom of this world" to foolishness.

Summarised, it is the ability to walk the narrow path to Life. It is from above, it is exclusive, it is positively outside the range of the wisdom and knowledge so regarded by the great of the earth.

We, ourselves can be without it. It is not acquired by the technique of passing so many facts through the head, but is received by the assimilation of the SPIRIT of the Word.

The expression common among us—"prayerfully studied" —as applied to that Word, is the answer. The wisdom is there. If we ask and seek and knock, we **shall** receive—**it says so**.

The chapter finishes rather sadly, but we need the warning, for we could spend a lot of effort building a house on sand. That many will do it is evident (v. 22)—

"MANY will say to me in that day, Have we not in thy Name done many wonderful works?"

What had they done? Much, they felt. Probably, like Israel, they had put in a lot of time and effort going about to establish their own righteousness.

He does not even stop to parley with them. He simply says—

"I never knew you."

They never did belong to the fold, though it was not necessarily apparent in their day. But think of their hopeless position when they stand before the all-discerning eye of the righteous judge —

"Depart from me."

Now transfer the thought to ourselves and imagine it being said to us—the tragic, hopeless, bitter finality of it!

The danger of it is too great— **we cannot risk it**—that is, by any slackness on the one hand, or any misdirected effort on the other — we must continually check up ourselves by the aid of the true Light. We are admonished by the Apostle Paul to particularly do so at this time—

"Let a man examine himself."

This time around the table of the Lord is one of the most important factors in our lives. To some it would seem to be the most important.

It is now, at these meetings, we receive impressions, form ideas and foster impulses, of one certain kind and in one direction, that are a real force in our walk before God.

It must be so.

The solemn obligations of the mind to Godward, in the presence of these significant items on the table, must, if sincerely met, carry an influence of such power, that we are enabled to maintain our course, and that in spite of contrary winds, cross-currents and the like.

Exhortation is just contributory, to remind us of those obligations—induce a state of mind in which we do examine ourselves in relation to the matter and make sure our heart is right.

It is manifest from Scripture (and particularly from Paul's words so often read) that to approach in any other way is worse than useless—**it is fraught with dreadful consequences**.

But we, beloved brethren and sisters, will draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, to receive the blessing that comes with a joyful, thankful, acceptable partaking.

—G.G. Sr., 1941

The Gospel Plan of Salvation

"In the last days the Lord's house shall be exalted . . . all nations shall flow unto it . . . Out of Zion shall go forth the . . . He shall judge the nations"—Isa. 2

6. THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND OF MEN

Always Antagonistic

THE Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of men have always been antagonistic institutions and always at enmity with each other. The reason for this is not difficult to search out.

Established by Nimrod

The kingdom of men was established by Nimrod. He was the great grandson of Noah in the line of Ham. Nimrod was a mighty hunter before the Lord (Gen. 10:8-13), and the sequel proves what kind of game he hunted—men—for he established the first human kingdom, which has always been done by brute force and by usurping the prerogatives of God (Gen. 1:26).

God only gave His creature man dominion over the inferior creatures, but not over his fellow creature man.

God reserved for Himself the right or prerogative to make laws for the government of His creature man.

The Kingdom of Men Ruled by the Carnal Mind

Therefore no human ruler can truthfully say he is ruling over his fellow mortals by divine right. The spirit or policy which dictates, decrees and enforces the laws in a human government is the spirit of sin's flesh of the carnal mind, which the Spirit in Paul says is "not subject to the law of God nor indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).

It Is of the Diabolos

Its motto is that might is right and whatever a nation is able to do it is right for it to do. Hence we hear of certain territory belonging to certain powers by "right of conquest." This is the same right a highway robber has to a traveller's purse — he is the strongest.

It is diabolical (or "of the devil") because the Greek word "Diabolos," from which "devil" is translated, means "a slanderer, traducer, or false accuser." See any Greek Lexicon.

It slanders the Deity by claiming to be ruling by divine right and thus making Him responsible for all the bloodshed, misery, and unjust oppression it has caused the people to suffer for nearly 6000 years.

And Satanic

It is Satanic, or of Satan, because the Hebrew word from which it was taken—Satan—signifies an "adversary," one who stands up in opposition to another. Peter was a Satan or Adversary to Christ and Christ rebuked him saying—

"Get thee hence, Satan, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but **the things that be OF MEN**" (Matt. 16:23).

And of the Serpent

In this sense the kingdoms of men are Satan. And as they follow the teaching of the serpent, especially in their ecclesiastical element and contradict and make void the Word of God by their carnal traditions, they are serpents, as Christ told the Jews—

"Ye are of your father the devil, and his works ye do. He was a liar and the father of it"
(John 8:44).

And again (Matt. 15:6)—

"Ye make the commandment of God of none effect by your traditions."

He also said to them—

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can you escape the condemnation of Gehenna?"
(Matt. 23:33).

Church & State—2-Horned Beast

The ecclesiastical deceivers are as numerous and active in their profitable business of teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake as the politicians are in their work.

So the world is full of deceivers in church and state, all of whom must be silenced before the people can be instructed in divine knowledge and accept the truth in politics and religion.

Man's Whole History Is One of Violence and Bloodshed

This iniquitous and cruel institution made powerful by the union of politics and false religion, and actuated by its selfish greed for gain and insatiable lust for power and aggrandizement has soaked the dust of the earth with the blood of its best inhabitants and caused the tears of the widows and orphans and other helpless victims to flow like rain.

The tears of the poor and the needy, the oppressed and downtrodden are unheeded, and—

"The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty" (Psa. 74:20).

It is this awful state of affairs that we see in the world the fulfilment of God's purpose with the earth?

Will it last forever? Will the just, merciful, and omnipotent Creator and Upholder of all things permit such inhumanity and creature suffering to go on without end in any part of His habitable universe?

How Long, O Lord?

Hear the words of the Spirit in David, Psa. 89:52—

"How long, Lord? Wilt Thou hide Thyself forever? Shall Thy wrath burn like a fire?

"Lord, where are Thy former loving kindnesses, which Thou sware unto David in Thy truth? (The oath-bound and blood confirmed covenants of promise).

"Remember, Lord, the reproach of Thy servants; how I bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty people wherewith Thine enemies have reproached, O Lord, the footsteps of Thine anointed (or Christ)."

The "Times of the Gentiles"

This is descriptive of the long period of desolation and down treading of the kingdom and throne of David spoken of in vs. 38-45. So completely and literally has the prediction been fulfilled that the civilized world is full of scoffers walking after their own lusts and saying—

"Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Pet. 3:3-4).

A Wicked, Godless World

Mankind has wandered off so far from God, politically and ecclesiastically, and are so firmly fixed in their Ways and so well satisfied with themselves that no amount of preaching and expounding

of the inspired oracles nor persuasion can move them from their long cherished notions or convince them of the truth. Persuasion has been tried long enough.

The world in all its institutions has become so steeped in wickedness and disregard for God, that it is fit only for capture and destruction.

The Divine Remedy

The only remedy for the evils that afflict humanity is the utter destruction of the present order of things and the establishment in their stead of a universal, divine and righteous government in the hands of spiritual immortals and infallible rulers—a kingdom which flesh and blood cannot inherit

Flesh Was Weak—Israel Failed

The rulers in the kingdom of God organized by Moses at Mt. Sinai (or the judges and executors of God's law) were all mortal fallible men. This was the reason why none of the kings of Israel or Judah, not even David, gave perfect satisfaction to the people ruled over by them. The law was weak, not in itself, but through the weakness of sinful flesh in its rulers, Rom. 8:3.

Immortal, Infallible Rule to Come

This deficiency will be removed in the restored kingdom under Christ because the rulers with Christ as their head will all be spiritual, immortal, and therefore infallible, and placed beyond the reach of temptation to do wrong.

Present Things Must Be Destroyed

But before such a kingdom can be established on the earth, the way must be cleared for its establishment by destroying the present order of things on the earth; for the world rulers are not going to tamely surrender the reins of government which they have held so long without putting forth the most desperate effort to retain their hold on them.

The Final War: Christ vs. World

This will bring about the last conflict between the powers of the world and the Kingdom of God, and though the Kingdom of God at the beginning of the conflict is compared to a little stone (Dan. 2:34, 45) cut out without hands, yet after it smites the image on its feet and toes (which symbolizes the 4th or Roman beast in its ten toes or ten horn phase division, Dan. 7:7) and grinds it to powder and the wind carries it away and no place is found for it, the stone becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth, Dan. 2:44. Read Dan. 2:31-46; 7:1-28

Destruction of All Human Power a Consistent Theme of Prophecy

This destruction of the kingdoms of men by the Kingdom of God is plainly foretold by the other prophets of Israel as well as the establishment of the Kingdom of God over the whole earth.

Witness the following testimonies which are not more than one out of a hundred that might be adduced on the same subject: Psa. 2:2-12; Psa. 110:5-8; Psa. 149:5-9; Isa. 24:21-23; Isa. 41:13-17; Isa. 42:13-17; Isa. 66: 14-17; Eze. chs. 38 & 39; Dan. 11:40-45; Joel 2:1-12; Joel 3:1- 18; Zeph. 3:8; Hag. 2:22; Zech. 9:12-13; Zech. 10:5-8; Zech. 12: 1-12; Zech. 13:2-7; Zech. 14.

Jesus says (Luke 12:49), "I come to send fire on the earth and what I wish is that it were already kindled." See also: Luke 19:27; Acts 3:22-24; 2 Thess. 1:6-11; Rev. 17:12-15; 19:11-21; 16:12-21; 11:15-19; Isa. 26:9.

Peace and Righteousness on Earth

When the judgment storm is over and the kings and rulers of the world and all who oppose the righteous rule of Christ on earth are destroyed and none are left alive but the poor and needy and those who are willing to submit to the new government, established by the God of heaven, then peace and righteousness, and joy will be universal among all the millennial inhabitants of the globe.

All Nations Blessed in Christ

All nations will then be blessed in Abraham and his seed, the Christ, for one thousand years. Christ who will then be the high priest of the nations (Zech. 6.13) as well as a king over the whole earth (Zech. 14.9) will give law and religion to the world and administer to the world such blessings as it has never before enjoyed.

Sin Bound for 1000 Years

All deceivers in church and state will be bound or restrained for 1000 years, Rev. 20:1-4. The following statements or predictions in the holy writ will then be fulfilled: Rev. 15:4.

"In mercy shall the throne be established, and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging and seeking judgment and hastening righteousness."

See also: Isa. 11:1-13; Isa. 2:2- 5; Micah 4:1-9; Psa. 72:1-19; Psa. 102: 21-23; Psa. 67:1-7; Psa. 85:7-13; Ezk. 34:25-29; Isa. 65: 17-25; 66:22-24; 35:1-10.

This certainly makes the doctrine of the Kingdom of God GOOD NEWS, or Glad Tidings, to a suffering world.

To Be Continued Next Month, If the Lord Will

Signs of the Times

"There shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time . . . at that time thy people shall be delivered"—Dan. 12:1

ALTHOUGH little change has taken place in the world situation during the past month, a certain amount of optimism pervades the world capitals, even though it is tempered with areas of tension which still present problems and perplexities for which no solution is in sight.

ACCENT ON ECONOMY

NEVER before in the history of the world has economic strength had so much to do with military power. The cost of military equipment is now so great that any nation without a strong economy, capable of pouring stupendous sums of money into its military coffers continuously, cannot keep pace with the armament race.

This doubtless is the reason why the nations today have "their eyes on economy," as one newspaper phrases it. Commercial rivalry is now becoming an essential part of the cold war, and could as easily lead to real war as the armament race.

COMMON MARKET RIVALRIES

AS both Britain and the U. S. are knocking at the door of the European Common Market, fears arise, especially in France, that if, and when the Anglo-American nations enter the Market they will be able to dominate trade to the detriment of small European nations. At the same time, to refuse their entrance would force Britain and the U. S. to form a common market of their own, thus dividing the West economically.

In the meantime, the Soviets are conferring with all Communist countries in an effort to create trade agreements countering the possible effects of the European Common Market on Soviet-aligned nations.

It appears certain that what is called "the economic plight" of Communist countries has the Soviets worried, and some drastic move by Mr. Khrushchev is expected momentarily.

Mr. K. spent 6 days in Balkan countries with a big rally at Sofia, Bulgaria, with an attendance of 250,000, the chief purpose of which seemed to be to unite all the Balkans, including Greece and Yugoslavia, in a trade agreement and forming closer ties with the Soviet bloc.

The Common Market idea has also claimed the interest of the Mideast, where Arab nations are seeking to establish a common trade agreement among themselves, but, of course, leaving Israel out of it. Israel has already signified a desire to join the Market.

All of which looks very much like an economic rivalry of great proportions is building up, to more completely divide the two groups of nations, which could easily lead to war, especially if one group began to far outstrip the others.

WORLD TROUBLE SPOTS

THE Berlin issue flares up again just as it begun to appear that some kind of amicable settlement might be at hand. As determined East Germans find new methods of escaping to the West the tension increases.

The Soviet government has come out with a statement that Russia will no longer tolerate Western aid to escaping East Germans. This had particular reference to Western border guards firing upon East German guards to divert their attempts to stop fleeing refugees.

The "flight from Communism" is now becoming a very touchy situation, which could develop into open warfare.

Southeast Asia

THE situation in Southeast Asia remains somewhat static, with general conditions favouring the Communist forces. U. S. forces sent to Thailand do not appear to have any immediate intention of invading the area of conflict, but a state of tension is created by the presence of U. S. troops and anything could happen.

While government forces, with U. S. aid, seem to be gaining the upper hand in South Vietnam, the situation in Laos is described as precarious.

A "coalition" government has now been formed, with a "neutralist" as Premier. The issue all along has been who shall control the police and the army, which has been the usual Communist avenue to the seizure of full dictatorial power.

Communist forces hold much of the country, and, in view of the complicated state of affairs and intense political rivalry, any stable form of government seems remote.

Indonesia

CLOSELY allied with the situation in Southeast Asia, the quarrel between Indonesia and the Netherlands over possession of Dutch New Guinea is commanding the attention of both East and West.

Actually, the area under dispute is of little value and it has been a liability rather than an asset to the Dutch, and certainly could not be of any economic value to Indonesia. Pride and prestige seem to be the factors involved.

But so far as the rest of the world is concerned, the issues are staggering. It is a war between the United States and the Soviet Union to see whether this whole rich and highly strategic area of

Indonesia, with a population of 93 million and bordering Australia, shall remain favourable to the West or be inseparably tied to the communist bloc of nations.

Surrender of this vast area, on the doorstep of Southeast Asia, to Communism would outflank all Western bastions in the South and West Pacific and, in the opinion of experts, "would be the biggest victory for Communism since the Reds overran the Chinese mainland."

The U.S. has contributed half a billion dollars in economic aid to Indonesia, but Russia has provided them with a billion dollars in military aid.

It is clear that Russia expects Indonesia to win a war with the Dutch, with Soviet aid, and is obviously trying to foment a war which would be of inestimable value to Russia in her plan to communize the world.

Algeria

STILL a potential threat to French stability, Algeria is still in the throes of civil strife, with little hope of any permanent solution to a condition which has produced one of the most cruel and insane conflicts in modern times.

The "Secret Army Organization" seems determined to leave this once-prosperous territory a desolate wilderness. They are carrying out a systematic campaign of mass murder and property destruction.

With relations in the Western Alliance under great strain, the loss of France would deal a stunning blow to Western unity, and a full settlement of the Algerian problem seems to be all that can save the present French government from total collapse, with reverberations which would shake the Western Alliance to its very foundations.

* * *

AS THE time approaches for the coming of the Son of Man, fears, perplexities and tremblings take a tighter grip upon the nations. New problems daily arise to augment the old ones not yet resolved.

Let us therefore heed the warning of the Saviour that —

"When these things — violence, fear, unrest, upheaval— come to pass (as never before), then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). —O.B.

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