

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:
G. A. Gibson 294 Glebeholme Blvd., Toronto 6, Ontario, Canada

“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.

CONTENTS

ECCLESIAL NEWS: Detroit, Honesdale, Houston, Portland, Southern California	Inside Front Cover
EDITORIAL: The Lord's Day	193
THE ECCLESIA OF FIRSTBORNS (Bro. Thomas)	195
ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS: Amen; Fasting; Husbands, Wives and Children; Blessing While Refusing Godspeed (Bro. Roberts)	198
OBEDIENCE	201
RESURRECTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY (Part 3)	205
CHILDREN OF LIGHT	208
WOMAN, WHY WEEPEST THOU? (Part 2)	211
THE GOSPEL PLAN OF SALVATION (Part 4)	215
EXHORT WITH ALL LONGSUFFERING	218
SIGNS OF THE TIMES	221
<u>1962 Worcester Gathering, October 13-14</u>	<u>Back Cover</u>

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

DETROIT, Mich.—12954 St. Marys, Detroit 27—Memorial 10 a.m.; Sunday School 11:30 a.m.

THROUGH the love and mercy of our Heavenly Father we continue to meet week by week in obedience to the instructions of our Master.

Our circumstances are paralleled throughout the brotherhood, as a few meet here and there for the same purpose as do we. Meeting with a common object in view, having common portions of the Divine Word as our daily food, we are knit together in fellowship and as one family of God's children.

We rejoice to read month by month of the activities of our family in the columns. We respond as the natural members of a body, to the good and ills which befall it.

It is good for us to keep in contact in this manner, and by individual correspondence. This is as the life blood circulating through our veins, vitalizing our members through a spirit of love and concern for each other—

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

"If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us."

"This commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also"

(John 4:7-21).

Since our last report we have been encouraged by the company and fellowship around the memorials of bro. & sis. Braden Edwards and sis. K. Passwaters of the Canton ecclesia. Our bro. Edwards exhorted us to continue steadfast in the faith, to let humility and brotherly love always be the guiding principles of our daily lives.

We have also been privileged to visit our brethren & sisters in London. The wisdom of God has called several of that ecclesia to rest from their labours. We sorrow mutually with our beloved who remain in the Vineyard, but confessing alike the wiser counsel of the Father in Heaven.

So also we shall miss the quiet counsel and assistance of our bro. Banta of Houston. Yet we realize that all strength, wisdom and power comes from the Father of Lights.

"O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, I will make the windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles."

"In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee."

"This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord" (Isa. 54:11-17).

God does not send sorrow without joy, storm without sunshine. We therefore rejoice together with the news from Portland, California and Saskatchewan, of the blessings afforded, and strengthening of the hands, by increase in labourers to the Vineyard.

May all our efforts together be dedicated to the glory of the Lord, for Whose honor they are and were created.

To all who hold like precious faith we send love in the Lord.

* * *

HONESDALE, Penna.—859 Main St.—Sunday School and Bible Class 10:45 a.m.; Memorial Service 11:45 a.m.

WE are pleased to welcome back to our midst bro. & sis. H. A. Sommerville, who have been in Texas during the winter.

At our last business meeting, bro. Sommerville suggested one of the younger brethren replace him as recording brother, so the brethren appointed the writer to do the recording.

The Honesdale ecclesia has been meeting in a hall again, since April 15, when we rented a hall over a store on Main Street, Honesdale. We trust this will give us a better opportunity to let the light of the Truth shine.

We have enjoyed the company of bro. Paul Sharp, of the California ecclesia, who broke bread with us on a visit recently.

My home is 80 miles from the Hall, so anyone in the vicinity of the Hall please contact bro. Kenneth Frisbie, Route 1, Box 227, Hawley, Pa.

Please address correspondence to me at 221 Conklintown Rd., Wanaque, N.J.

—bro. David Sommerville

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HOUSTON, Tex.—8008 Junius St.—Sunday School 10 a.m.; Breaking of Bread 11 a.m.; Lecture every 3rd Sun. 7:30 p.m.; Daily Readings Review and Improvement Class 7 p.m. other Sun. evenings; Eureka Class Monday 7:30 p.m.; Elpis Israel Class Wed. 7:30 p.m.

We sadly report the "falling asleep in Christ" of our beloved father and brother in Christ, Emitt Wilson Banta, on June 19th. He finished his work in such a state of zeal and peace with God that we who remain are comforted and inspired to carry on.

We were assisted in the necessary arrangements by our brother Fred Higham of Detroit, and our brother was laid to rest June 21st in Cedar Bayou, Texas, where, with his parents, bro. & sis. J. O. Banta, he awaits the call to come forth.

He accepted the glorious invitation and was immersed in the Saving Name, Nov. 8, 1936. But only a month after his baptism, he left Houston to live in isolation in Wyoming and Oklahoma. He returned to Houston in 1942, and has for the past twenty years served in many capacities in the Houston Ecclesia.

He served also as secretary of the Texas Fraternal Gathering for the past eleven years, and as chairman-secretary of the Military Service Committee. He was editor of the Christadelphian Visitor, a Berean publication witnessing to the Truth in Texas. He is survived by his sister-wife, one son, two grandchildren, and a sister in the Truth.

While we "sorrow not, even as others which have no hope," still we deeply mourn his passing, and feel that his "readiness to every good work" will be sorely missed in many of the Truth's activities. His zealous addiction to the work of Christ, his steadfast adhesion to the things of God and the purpose of preparing a people to meet the Lord, are now of great comfort to those who must carry on.

He chose joyously to suffer affliction with the people of God, esteeming the reproach of Christ riches of inestimable and eternal value. Truly, he had here no continuing city, but sought diligently one to come: "a city with foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God."

The day is so soon upon us when our loved one shall arise with the dead in Christ at his coming, and we shall go in his company to meet the Master.

"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

We were strengthened and encouraged to press on through exhortation by bro. F. Higham, June 24th, also, through those meeting with us around the table of the Lord: bro. and sis. Russell Frisbie and daughter, sis. Patricia Frisbie of Baltimore; sis. Mary Cooper of New Mexico, and bro. & sis. Higham of Detroit. —bro. Charles Banta

* * *

PORTLAND, Ore.—616 N.E. Fargo St. Portland 12.

Loving greetings in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We have more encouraging news. Bro. & sis. Arthur Tilling and sis. Edith Tilling applied for fellowship, and after a full discussion we were united.

Bro. Tilling said he was sorry he ever left the Berean fellowship. He has for some time laboured to show others the conditions existing.

We held our first meeting with them on Sunday, June 3.

* * *

On June 9 bro. David Burnett and sis. Donna Tilling were united in marriage. Bro. John Randell, of the Southern California ecclesia, performed the required arrangements.

He very fittingly used the occasion to show the true significance of marriage, reading from Ephesians 5. He emphasized the need for the Bride to make herself READY. His words caused our minds to turn to the beautiful expressions of the Spirit in Rev. 19:6-9—

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying,

"Alleluia! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honor to Him!

"For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

"And he saith unto me, Write: Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

* * *

On June 10 bro. Randell gave us words of exhortation, and we were edified and built up, as we always are by his visits. We appreciate his labor among us.

We would like to ask any brethren and sisters who may have opportunity to visit us to do so, and we ask for the prayers of all who are united with us in the glorious race for life eternal.

We have received very nice letters sharing our joy in recent developments here, and by these we have been much encouraged.

We are joyfully engaged in the task of ecclesial organization, that our efforts may be more effective in the work of the Truth. We plan, if the Lord will, to report more fully on this later.

RECEIVED LATER—

We are very happy to report that we have had another brother join with us in fellowship: bro. Ed Hansen of 21 N.E. 22nd Ave., Portland 12, Oregon.

Brother Hansen is aware of the necessity of sound fellowship, and he is eager to help fortify and strengthen our position. He believes the Berean fellowship is the best expression of the Truth. We had our first meeting with him today.

With much love in the Faith to all brethren and sisters everywhere, —bro. Robert Roberts

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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA—Mailing address: 141 Princeton, Claremont, Calif.—Bible Study 10:30 a.m.; Memorial 11:30 a.m.

AFTER having met in our homes for some time, we succeeded in renting a hall which has given the opportunity to give lectures.

On May 27 and again on June 3, lectures were delivered dealing principally with the Signs of the Times. There were 4 strangers present and 25 from other groups at the two lectures. We hope to continue the lectures and a systematic distribution of literature.

With much love in the Truth,

—bro. Oscar Beauchamp

EDITORIAL

The Lord's Day

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day."

THERE are many days mentioned in the Bible, but none of greater importance than the one brought to our attention by John in the first chapter of the Apocalypse. The scene of this great revelation is a lonely island on the west coast of Asia Minor. Here the beloved John had been banished on account of his faith in Christ He tell us (Rev. 1:10)—

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day."

That is the way the passage is rendered in the Authorized Version, but the word for word translation as used by brother Thomas in Eureka reads—

"I was **in spirit** IN the Lord's day."

To understand what it means to be "In Spirit," we are assisted by reference to the prophecy of Ezekiel, 8:3—

"And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head;

"And the Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north."

Therefore, to be in Spirit is to be in complete control of the Spirit of God for the purpose of visions or revelations, and thereby caused to see things which, to the normal person, would be invisible.

For John to be "In Spirit in the Lord's day," was to be carried forward in vision to the millennial day of peace and blessedness, and is, therefore, none other than the day of Salvation, of which we read in Ps 118 24—

"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

The prophet Isaiah has much to say about this particular day. In chapter 11, we come upon a beautiful picture, perhaps one of the most entrancing scenes in the Bible, and he declares in verse 9 —

"The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

However, we pause here but for a moment, and pass on to chapter 26, which opens with a beautiful declaration—

"In that day shall this song be song in the land of Judah."

This shows at once that he is speaking of a certain day that he had mentioned previously, and when we look at chapter 25, we find the solution in verses 6 to 8 —

"And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

"And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.

"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it."

But this message of the prophet is intelligible only to those who know the Truth. Every believer of the Gospel cherishes with expectation this great day of salvation. It is the day to which John was carried in vision.

It is the day when the power of man will be broken on the mountains of Israel, for—

"They shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful".

To the saints, this will be a great day of gladness and rejoicing. Therefore, let us endeavour to look forward, as John did, and, if possible, imagine ourselves joining in that song to be sung in the land of Judah (Isa. 26:1)—

"We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks."

In the present dispensation, and for many years in the past, the nations have depended upon the strength of their walls and bulwarks, but in that day they will be dispensed with, and replaced with salvation. Not the sentimental salvation of Christendom, but a salvation of physical reality, when death will be swallowed up in victory.

Taking up our song again, we read in verse 2—

"Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the Truth may enter in."

These gates have been closed for many years, but they will be opened in the Lord's day. They are the gates of glory, honor, and immortality. Yea, the gates of the Kingdom, and they are to be opened so that—

"The righteous nation which KEEPETH THE TRUTH may enter in."

This nation is not in power today. Many of them are sleeping in death, and many of the living are among the poor of this world. It is the same nation of which Jesus spoke to the Pharisees in Matt. 21:43, saying—

"The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

A few years later, Peter, in his first letter, wrote to the believers and said—

"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar (or purchased) people; that ye should show forth the praises (or virtues) of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light."

To be among those who will enter the gates of the Kingdom, we must of necessity be among them who keep the Truth. To keep the Truth today is, in the eyes of the world, foolishness, for, say

they, if you would give up your religion, you could enjoy the pleasures of this life, and be successful in business. But the man or woman who knows, and believes, the Truth, knows also that—

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

"She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her."

It is true that the gates of honor in this world are closed to those who keep the Truth: but let us not look at the present. Let us rather look into the future when the cry will be heard in the earth—

"Open ye the gates . . .

"For this is the Day that the Lord hath made. We will be glad and rejoice in it!" —Editor

The Ecclesia of Firstborns

"God hath visited the Gentiles to take out of them a People for His Name"—Acts 15:14

By **BROTHER JOHN THOMAS**

I HAVE not translated the Greek word **ekklesiai**, but simply transferred it. It is generally rendered "churches," but this word does not express the ideas of **ecclesia**.

Church is a corruption of **kuriake**, which signifies "pertaining to a lord." The Anglo-Saxons took the first and last syllables of the Greek word, as **kur-ke**, which they spelled **Circe**; but which is more obviously shown in the Scotch **kirke**; both of which are equivalent to the modern English **Church**.

"Something pertaining to a lord" is the etymological significance of the word; and although, in a certain sense, an ecclesia is something pertaining to a lord, and that lord the Lord of heaven and earth, yet the ideas of property and lordship are not contained in the word ecclesia.

This is one reason why we reject the word "church" as the representative of ecclesia.

Another reason is, that **ideas are conventionally associated with the word "church" which are altogether unscriptural**. Ecclesia never signifies in the Bible "the place which Christians consecrate to the worship of God;" nor does it signify such collective bodies of "professors of religion" as pass current for Christians in and with the world, under the various "name's and denominations" of "Christendom."

These, and many other ideas associated with the word "church," such as churchman, churchwarden, church-attire, churchyard, churching of women, and all such papistical foolishness, are altogether foreign from the scriptural use of **ecclesia**.

In order, therefore, to get quit of all the rubbish we exclude "church" from our apocalyptic vocabulary, and hold on to the word used by the apostles.

* * *

ECCLESIA, then, is a word compounded of **ek**, "out of," and **klesis**, "a call, or invitation." Hence an **ekklesis** is an "invitation to come out;" and the assembly of people convened in consequence of their acceptance of the invitation is an **ecclesia**. This etymology of the word is also in agreement with its scriptural constitution.

The mission of the apostles was to the Jews first, and afterwards to the Gentiles, for the purpose of announcing to them an invitation from the Deity to certain things, which, when accepted, became to the invited "the Hope of the Calling."

In delivering this message, or invitation, they distinctly defined the things to which their hearers were invited. In doing this, they informed them of the purpose of Deity—that **He had appointed a day in the which the whole inhabited earth should be ruled in righteousness by the Anointed Jesus, whom he had raised from among the dead—Dan. 2:44; 7:14; Acts 17:31.**

But that, before that day of the administration of the world's affairs in righteousness should be introduced, He had, in his great mercy and goodness, determined to invite all Jews and Gentiles to a share in that Kingdom and glory with eternal life, upon certain specified, indispensable conditions.

Hence the twelve apostles, constituting "the Apostleship of the Circumcision," were sent to the circumcised; and Paul to the uncircumcised, to invite all ranks and degrees of all nations "to God's Kingdom and Glory"—1 Thess 2:12.

The invitation was designed, in the words of James—

"To take OUT of the nations a people FOR HIS NAME" (Acts 15:14).

The expected consummation was not the conversion of nations by the apostles and their successors in the faith, but the **separation of a class** from the general body of mankind, which class should constitute the "One Yahweh-Name;" and that by this Almighty Name the world should be ruled in righteousness.

When this Name is completed—that is, when the last believer shall be inducted into it, and all its elements shall be glorified—it will constitute the Ecclesia in its largest sense. When glorified, its members will occupy "the heavens;" not the skies, but the apocalyptic heavens, to which the kingdoms of this world belong — Rev. 11: 15; Dan. 7: 18, 27. In the present state, they are—

"An ecclesia of Chiefborns, who have been enrolled for heaven" — Heb. 12:23.

The apostles were engaged in enrolling men and women for the future administration of the world's affairs; so that when they shall attain to dominion they will be "the Heavens that rule."

The Gospel invites men to enrolment for becoming in due time the stars and constellations of the New Heavens, in which dwells righteousness, that they may shine as such in the kingdom of their Father — Dan. 12: 3; Matt. 13: 43.

BUT men and women become elements of the People of the Name upon certain specified and indispensable conditions. They are invited to God's Kingdom and glory; and they accept the invitation in believing the Gospel of the Kingdom and Name, and subjecting themselves to "the obedience of faith." What Paul styles "the wholesome words of the Lord Jesus," are these (Mark 16:16)—

"He having believed and been baptized shall be saved; but he having not believed shall be condemned."

If it be asked, what is a man required to believe? The Lord Jesus replies in the previous verse, "THE GOSPEL." **There is no salvation without belief of, and obedience to this.** Hence when Philip, one of the seven deacons, preached to the Samaritans, it is stated that—

"When they believed Philip evangelizing the things concerning the Kingdom of the Deity, and of the Name of the Anointed Jesus, they were immersed, both men and women" (Acts 8:12).

The things of the Kingdom and the Name are the great subject-matter of the Gospel of God, "promised before," says Paul, "through the Prophets in holy writings" (Rom. 1:2), and "the power of God for salvation to every one who believes." (Rom. 1:16).

Without this power none can be saved; hence the immense importance of "the Gospel of the Kingdom," which is totally different from anything preached for salvation by the clergy.

"The things" must be known, understood, believed, and obeyed, with an honest and good heart. This is indispensable.

For the benefit of any sincere reader, we refer him to the Covenants made with Abraham and David, and to the testimony concerning Jesus in the writings of the apostles, and to the preaching by these as illustrated in the Acts, for an answer to the question, "**What are the things to be believed for salvation?**" — See Gen. 12: 1-3,7; 13: 14, 15; 15: 6,7, 8-21; 17; 22; 1 Chron. 17:11-15; Matt. 16; Acts 2, 3, 8, 10; 26:6-7; 28:20-23.

* * *

NOW when men and women became Christians after the apostolic fashion, (and this is the only way of any account,) they became members of "the Ecclesia of Chiefborns." They were addressed in the apostolic epistles as **Kletoi**, "THE CALLED," or invited, "of Jesus Anointed;" as "made holy in Jesus Anointed, called Saints," or holy ones; as "the faithful in the Anointed Jesus;" as "the faithful brethren in an Anointed One;" and as "the Ecclesia IN God the Father, and IN the Lord, Jesus Anointed."

They, being in the Deity and in the Anointed One, and the anointing being in them, were a **manifestation of Deity in flesh**; and were addressed by Paul, saying (Gal. 3:26-29)—

"Ye are all Sons of Deity in the Anointed Jesus through the faith: for as many as have been immersed INTO the Anointed, have PUT ON the Anointed.

"There is (in him) neither Jew nor Greek; there is (in him) neither slave nor freeman; nor is there (in him) male and female; for ye are ALL ONE in the Anointed Jesus:

"And if ye be the Anointed's then are ye the seed of Abraham, and Heirs according to the promise."

From these premises, then, it is evident that an Ecclesia is a community of men and women, who have accepted an invitation to the Kingdom and glory of the Deity; in believing the promises and testimonies concerning the Kingdom and Name of Jesus Anointed; and in being immersed into him: by which faith and obedience they have been "washed from their sins in his blood; and made kings and priests to the Deity, even to the Father;" and so separated from the body of mankind for the Age to Come.

The Ecclesia of Chiefborns is, therefore, not the Kingdom of God (as church, in the clerical sense, is styled), but it is the community of the HEIRS of the Kingdom; and every one knows, or ought to know, the difference between the heirs of an estate, and the estate itself.

From these premises, the reader will readily perceive that the distinction existing between church in the usual acceptation, and ecclesia as defined above, is not fanciful, but real and important.

The churches of the Gentiles are not ecclesias. They make no pretensions to be such, according to the definition I have demonstrated.

The ECCLESIAS of the Scriptures are "the Heritages," or **kleroi**, the TRUE clergies of the Deity, (1 Pet. 5. 3,) who shall possess the earth and all that it contains; while the churches are the Kingdom of SIN, possessed and administered by his clergy for their own glory and behoof.

Joy and peace are only for the Saints in the Anointed Jesus, who know, and have obeyed the truth, having been purified thereby — 1 Pet. 1:22. The salutations of the scriptures are only for these.

God is the father, and Jesus the Lord, only of the enlightened and obedient. Hence, to these only did they send greeting.

Answers to Bible Questions

By BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

Amen

THE USE of the word "Amen," at the conclusion of a prayer or sentiment uttered by another, is founded on ancient usage, of which there is abundant Biblical record. That it prevailed in the first ecclesias is evident from Paul's question in (1 Cor. 14:16) —

"How shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say amen at thy giving of thanks, if he understand not what thou sayest?"

It is a pleasant and edifying endorsement of what is good. It has odious sectarian associations, but we must not discard a good and scriptural thing because it is abused.

Its figurative illustration in Christ as expounded in Eureka I, pgs. 187 & 402, does not displace its literal use in the assemblies of the saints.

It would be delightful if every brother and sister felt the liberty to indulge a fervent and honest "Amen" at the close of every thanksgiving.

We are too much afraid of each other.

—Bro. Roberts, 1892.

* * *

Fasting

FASTING is not a matter of command to the Household of Faith. It was not even a matter of command to Israel under the Law, but a matter of **practice** under special circumstances, such as in the case of David when Saul was killed in battle (2 Sam. (1:12), or when Bathsheba's child was ill (2 Sam. 12:16).

The origin of the practice is not evident. It is a natural accompaniment of grief or humiliation of any kind, as feasting is of the opposite state of mind; but it was always purely optional except when made obligatory by vow (1 Sam. 14:24).

It became a compulsory act of religious service, not by Divine appointment, but by the tradition of the Elders (1 Kings 21:9).

It is never referred to by the Prophets except in terms of disparagement. (See Isa. 58:5; Zech. 7:5). God says (Isa. 58:6):

"Is not THIS the fast that I have chosen — to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to deal thy bread to the hungry, to bring the poor that are cast out to thy house, etc.?"

This is said in **contrast** to the usual fast (v. 5)—

"For a man to afflict his soul — to bow down his head as a bulrush, to spread sackcloth and ashes under him; wilt thou call this a fast, an acceptable day to the Lord?"

In Israel it was thought very meritorious to perform the fast which the Lord here makes light of. The Pharisee's prayer made a feature of this —

"I fast twice in the week."

Men were at liberty to fast if they liked (and no doubt it is a good thing occasionally); but they were not to make it a matter of religious parade. This is what Jesus means when he says (Matt. 6:17)—

"Thou, when thou fastest, be not as the hypocrites are, of a sad countenance, but anoint thy head and wash thy face, **that thou appear not unto men to fast.**"

His own disciples did not fast. In this, had it been a matter of divine command, they would have been guilty of sin: but Jesus defended them in the matter from the complaints of the Pharisees, which shows the matter stood not so. His question was (Luke 5:34)—

"How can they fast while the bridegroom is with them?"

Joy banishes fasting. This shows it was a question of **natural fitness** — not of divine command. As to the statement—

"The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them: then shall they fast in those days."

—here again fasting is put as an **effect** springing from a cause — **not** as an ordinance by command. The words are a **prophecy** — not a precept: and the prophecy is found fulfilled in several instances (Acts 13:2-3; 10:30).

But there can be no doubt that the words of Christ had a much wider than a literal meaning: for he was addressing the Pharisees; to whom it was his custom to speak in parable. Indeed, the simile of the bridegroom is a parable. In the absence of the bridegroom, the "children" fast in a larger sense than occasional abstinence from food. They (Tit. 2:12)—

"Deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world, looking for the appearing of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ."

There can be no objection to occasional literal fasting, but it is not a law, and—

"Where there is no law there is no transgression."

It was an exercise naturally conducive to spiritual susceptibility in a hot country, and would often be found advantageous in colder climates when it is desired to fix the heart in a specially earnest way upon some spiritual aim or contemplation.

But we must be on our guard against establishing a law where none is, and bring ourselves into the bondage of Catholics and Jews who are very punctilious on a point like this, and insensible to the real requirements of God at their hands. **—Bro. Roberts, 1892.**

* * *

Husbands, Wives, and Children

WHEN Paul advises the believing wife or husband to remain with an unbelieving partner with whom the Truth has found them in alliance, and who is willing to stay (1 Cor. 7:12-13) he does so on two grounds which he immediately specifies:—

No. 1. The unbelieving partners are sanctified by believing ones, on one or both of two principles, namely, that unbelieving partners are:—

- (a) Likely to be won to the Truth by believing partners, as Peter hints in 1 Pet. 3:1-2; and
- (b) May be divinely favoured and blessed for the sake of the believers, as Laban for Jacob's sake (Gen. 30:30) and Potiphar for Joseph's sake (Gen. 39:5).

For both reasons, they were to feel at liberty to remain in association. The Truth was not to be allowed to act as a divorce cause if the unbelievers were pleased to "dwell," and this for ground No. 2—

"Else were your children unclean, but now they are holy."

This must mean family status and relation to surrounding influence. Dissolution of wedlock would render the children legally unclean, and expose them to the demoralising influence of a state worse than orphanage. Maintenance of the conjugal bond preserved them on both points.

Paul could not mean that the children become holy in the personal sense, because this is not according to fact. If children become holy in the personal sense, it is because of the power of the Truth, and not because of their relation to parents.

But relation to parents is of vital consequence to them in determining their standing and the shaping influences of their lives. — **Bro Roberts, 1892.**

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"Blessing," While Refusing "Godspeed"

QUESTION: "*Christ said, 'Bless them that curse you.' Will you explain all that we ought to understand by the word 'bless,' seeing 'Godspeed' is forbidden to false teachers, and the apostles were commanded to shake the dust off their feet against those who rejected them?*"

ANSWER: All that is needful is to discriminate between personal enemies and the enemies of God.

We are to bless our enemies in the sense of **doing them good when opportunity arises**. This is what Christ says —

"Do good to them that hate you; pray for them that despitefully use you and afflict you" (Matt. 5:44).

This is not the habit of the natural man, but the reverse. "I will pay him out," is the universal language of personal resentment. This is forbidden (1 Thess. 5:15)—

"Render not evil for evil."

To do so is to commit sin. But the man who acts this magnanimous part towards those who hate and hurt him is not at liberty to carry his complaisances to the length of **helping the work of false teachers and rejectors of the way of God**, and wishing them God speed. The command which requires the other forbids this.

Here also **the natural man inclines in the opposite direction to the command**. Men most prompt to indulge in personal resentments are most prone to be sweet and conciliatory with false doctrine, and false teachers and ungodly ways.

They justify compromise with error on the plea of "charity," and the returning of evil for evil on the plea of "justice."

It is always possible to "wrest the scriptures" thus; but to those who are sincerely desirous of doing the will of God, there is little difficulty in reconciling the doing of good to enemies with the refusal to be implicated in ungodliness. The two things may sometimes appear to clash, but they are really separable.

Christ's own attitude is the illustration of the right blend of the two apparently incompatible duties. He did no harm to men. In the midst of all the evil, he went about doing good even healing an ear righteously cut off at the crisis of his last trial.

But **he took no part in the evil**, and did not indulge God speeds for the sake of propitiating goodwill. On the contrary, he spoke out in terms of unqualified condemnation. (See Matt. 23 for example). — **Bro. Roberts, 1892.**

Obedience

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father"—Matthew 7:21

THE first lesson on obedience recorded for us in the Word of God is found in the second and third chapters of Genesis. God placed a law or commandment relative to the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil." This commandment stated clearly—

"Thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"
(Gen. 2:17).

In the first place we should recognize Adam and Eve were not left in ignorance concerning this command. Not only were they told specifically and definitely, but undoubtedly the angels spoke of the command in their hearing and in the hearing of the serpent, for did not the serpent say—

"Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Gen. 3:1).

Then the woman reveals the fact of her knowledge of God's law when she says—

"But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said,
"Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (Gen. 3:3).

Man desires to make his own decisions, and also to seek wisdom in his own way. To-day the world is not interested in "Divine Wisdom." They seek to obtain knowledge themselves, even to think they can probe and finally to travel into space and to the planets.

This space and other worlds, if any, belongs to God; God has given to the children of men the earth; the heavens belong to God and only God has the power over the far reaches of space and any bodies of matter that are therein.

Man has also sought in their own way, to probe into eternity, they seek to find the mystery of life itself, and some think man himself will be able to bring about eternal life. This is the serpent's lie (Gen. 3:4)—

"Ye shall not surely die."

And (v. 5)—

"Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Yes, man thinks he himself can become as gods, to control life and space.

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"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat"
(Gen. 3:6).

In this first act of disobedience to God's law, we recognize the three basic elements that, perverted by the serpent reasoning, lead to all of the sins of mankind; namely, that which becomes manifest as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Without going into the first two, we want to consider the third, Pride of Life.

The Spirit through Isaiah has this clear teaching concerning the kind of man with whom God is pleased (66:2)—

"But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word."

Also in Psalm 34:18—

"The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."

To be humble before God is a general teaching of Scriptures, and all those worthies of old who are mentioned as faithful, exemplified this attribute of humbleness.

Contrary to this, the majority of people from Adam until now have been proud. Nimrod and the building of the tower of Babel revealed this pride of life, and all his followers submitted to the same way—the so-called glory of the Chaldeans, the pride of the Babylonians, the Medes and Persians, Greeks, Romans, until this present day.

Men have always sought to raise their own standard, and to become wise in their own ways—to become as gods, and to establish their own righteousness.

David, a king, could have been a proud man and had all the opportunity to be so. He recognized the pride of life in the world of his day. This is shown in Psalm. 37:35—

"I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree" (Margin — a tree that groweth in its own soil).

"They are inclosed in their own fat; with their mouth they speak proudly" (Psa. 17:10).

We read in the scriptures that God resisteth the proud, that He will bring the counsel of the heathen to naught, and that He will make the devices of the people of none effect.

We read in the Scriptures of fleshly wisdom. Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians says he came to them—

"Not with fleshly wisdom."

This wisdom is the cause of all the evils that have befallen man; the reasoning of the flesh in the first instance was, to become wise as the gods. Instead of men learning this lesson, they have continuously followed the same path of fleshly wisdom, leading them to destruction and death.

This fleshly wisdom has no part in the "Wisdom of God." Isaiah 55 tells us that God's thoughts and ways are incomparably higher than the ways of men—

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (v. 9).

We are told in the Proverbs to:

"Cease from thine own wisdom."

And by David in the Psalms—

"Apply our hearts unto wisdom."

— the true Wisdom — GOD'S wisdom. Most religions are manufactured wisdom of fleshly thinking. One must be careful not to follow anything that is developed religiously from men's own thinking, and also we must not allow anything of earthly thinking to enter into our own minds that would lead us away from Divine wisdom. Paul said in his first letter to the Corinthians (1:20)—

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

And in verse 19—

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise."

Adam and Eve therefore sought by man's own way to reach forth and grasp wisdom and to become as gods. Therefore the first Adam revealed disobedience to God's law, and by his disobedience brought death upon the whole race of mankind.

By the offence of one, death hath reigned and death hath passed upon all men, for that all hath sinned.

This reaching forth by another way has become the Way of all men. By natural means and by a self-righteous, religious hypocrisy, men seek to elevate themselves. Instead they give evidence of the fact that mankind in general are a disobedient race of people.

The second Adam is the Lord from Heaven, and was made a quickening spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ, Emanuel, exemplified the very opposite to the first man Adam.

His life was a life of complete obedience to the will of His Father in Heaven, instead of reaching forth and seeking to grasp that which only God can give, he humbled himself completely, he emptied himself of all of the lusts of the flesh.

Paul in his letter to the Philippians said, "He (Christ) made himself of no reputation." Or as the Emphatic Diaglott renders it, "But divested himself."

For one to divest himself, is to strip, or to deprive. Therefore Christ Jesus stripped himself of all of the desires and the pride of the flesh, and deprived himself of earthly wisdom, self-glory and the ambitions and striving for earthly accomplishments and vainglory.

We see in the Lord Jesus a lifetime of perfect obedience to the will of his Heavenly Father. He crucified himself not only by allowing himself to be set forth on the cross, but **his whole life was dedicated to the crucifying of the flesh and the lusts thereof.**

Let us now quote from Paul's letter to the Philippians (Diaglott rendering)—

"Let this disposition be in you, which was in Christ Jesus, who though being in God's form, yet did not meditate a usurpation to be like God.

"But divested himself, taking a bondman's form, having been made in the likeness of men, and being in condition as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

"And therefore God supremely exalted him and freely granted to him that Name which is above every name" (Phil. 2 5-9)

One of the greatest lessons in obedience we need to learn to please God, is this **making oneself of no reputation or of divesting oneself of all earthly attainments.**

It is considered by most all men that it is their right of life to make of themselves as great men as they can. Therefore men study or practise on how to become proficient in their own fields of endeavour, whether doctors, lawyers, politicians, baseball players, football players, space men, etc. Each one seeks glory, honor, or money, whichever is greatest in his own mind.

The exhortation of Scripture, however, is to—

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

Since then, it is necessary to humble ourselves before God, to be obedient in all things, and to divest ourselves of the desires of the flesh, then those are the things we need to study on how we can comply with the wishes of God, so we can show ourselves approved, and a workman that need not be ashamed.

However, we are faced with a great danger, and that is a show of self-righteousness.

We learn from Scripture that even the Israelites made offerings, had their solemn meetings, and offered their sacrifices. They gave a great appearance of zeal.

In the first chapter of Isaiah we are given a description of this, but God told them—

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices?"

Their oblations and solemn meetings are spoken of as vain. God calls on them and says—

"Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings" (Isa. 1:16).

And in verse 19 promises to forgive them—

"If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land."

An outward show of piety and obedience is not what God desires, this actually is not obedience to God, this is only obedience to oneself.

As this holds true to the individual, so it holds true to an ecclesia. An ecclesia can be spoken of as a live ecclesia, and working hard to preach the Gospel. They can have many meetings and produce assemblies and solemn meetings that look like great zealously.

Scripture again gives us a lesson. The ecclesia in Sardis was spoken of as having a name that they are a living, or a live ecclesia, but the Word pronounces, "And art dead."

To have a name, means that to the human eye and understanding, this ecclesia was a live or zealous meeting, but it was not.

The same holds true to the ecclesia of the Laodiceans; they said they were "rich and increased with goods, and had need of nothing." This, in symbolic speaking, means they considered themselves spiritual, and of great knowledge and piety, and thought well of themselves in a religious way. But here again the Word pronounces—

"And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor and blind, and naked."

This then gives us an example of self-righteousness, both individually and ecclesially. This is the "making broad the phylacteries." Christ condemned this in his day and told us to become as children for "of **such** is the Kingdom of God."

We must divest ourselves of earthly wisdom and desires and, as little children, come to our Heavenly Father and learn again how to do well—learn how to develop ourselves in Divine wisdom, how to grow again by obedience to God above, to develop ourselves into men approved before our righteous judge.

Only in this way—that is, to divest ourselves of earthly claims, and to put on the raiment from above found in the "Word of God"—can we become acceptable to the Creator of all things. THIS is obedience. This is causing—

"Our old man" to be "crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed" (Rom. 6:6).

This is to become "servants of Righteousness" rather than "servants of Sin" (Rom. 6:17-18).

The Lord Jesus Christ was the Son of God. It was required of him that he submit his will to the Divine will that—

"Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8).

How necessary then is it that we also follow the same pathway of submission to the Divine will, so that we shall share in the glorious result—

"And being made perfect he (Christ) became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that OBEY GOD"—Heb. 3:9.

—J.T.R.

Resurrectional Responsibility

PART THREE

SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES INVOLVED

"Them that do not obey the Truth . . . as many as have sinned under law shall be judged by law . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Christ"—Rom. 2:8-16

Now to begin a fuller consideration of the 11 basic scriptural principles stated last month.

1. *Enlightenment is INVARIABLY given as the ground of accountability and responsibility to judgment. That is—all who KNOW are held responsible to DO.*

"THIS is the condemnation (krisis—judgment) that LIGHT is come into the world" (John 3:19).

"To him that KNOWETH to do good, and doeth it not, to HIM it is SIN" (James 4:17).

"Better not to have KNOWN the way of righteousness than, after having KNOWN it, to turn from the holy COMMANDMENT delivered to them" (2 Pet. 2:21).

It is the fact that they have KNOWN—that they have received a COMMANDMENT—that the statement is based on.

Note well that it does not say: "Better not to have agreed to ACCEPT the command," but: "Better not to have **known**."

This is very significant. The latter is consistently scriptural. The former idea is entirely foreign to Scripture.

"If I had not come and SPOKEN TO THEM, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke RV: excuse) for their sin" (John 15:22).

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to EVERY creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that BELIEVETH NOT shall be damned (condemned)"—Mark 16:15.

"He that BELIEVETH NOT shall be condemned" (**kata-krino**— judged against, from "**krino**"—to judge).

How can any, in the face of this, deny the responsibility of wilful objectors — wilful non-believers?

"As many as have sinned in (RV: under) law SHALL BE JUDGED by law . . . IN THE DAY when God shall judge the secrets of men" (Rom. 2:12-16).

"You only have I (God) known of all the families of the earth: THEREFORE I will punish you"

(Amos 3:2).

Compare Ps. 147: "He (God) SHOWED HIS WORD unto Jacob . . . He hath not dealt so with any nation, as for His judgments, they (other nations) have not KNOWN them."

"And God said, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thine heart (sinned in IGNORANCE); THEREFORE I suffered thee not to touch her" (Gen. 20:6).

The principle is here again illustrated, in the fact that God spared Abimelech ON THE GROUND that his sin was not committed WILFULLY or KNOWINGLY. He did not KNOW he was sinning, and THEREFORE he was not judged guilty. His plea of innocence (v. 5) based on ignorance, was accepted.

"The times of IGNORANCE God winked at" (Acts 17:30).

Attempts have been made to avoid the force of these statements by flatly asserting that enlightened rejectors of God's commands are excluded from them; that somehow or other the principle so clearly stated in them is suspended in the case of this one particular class. Can anyone consider this a truly satisfactory position?

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2. *God has appointed a great day of giving account, AFTER life is ENDED.*

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but AFTER this the JUDGMENT" (Heb. 9:27).

"Judge nothing BEFORE THE TIME, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the HIDDEN THINGS OF DARKNESS, and will manifest the counsels of the heart" (1 Cor. 4:5).

Compare: "THIS is condemnation, that LIGHT is come, but men love darkness."

"God hath APPOINTED A DAY in which He will JUDGE (**krino** means 'judge,' NOT rule) the world by Christ" (Acts 17:31).

". . . shall be judged by the law IN THE DAY when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel" (Rom. 2:12-16).

It is perhaps hardly necessary to prove this point—that there is a great day of judgment coming. But the FORCE and SIGNIFICANCE of this fact, in relation to other statements of Scripture, and to the issue in question, is often missed.

The time of giving account by man to his Maker is this final appointed day—"It is appointed to men once to die—AFTER this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

Surely there are few, even among those who believe in the non-responsibility of enlightened rejectors, who believe that those who knowingly and wilfully defy or neglect God's commands to "all men everywhere" will not be punished AT ALL. But many fail to realize the relation of this to the great day of final accounting—the day that God has SPECIFICALLY APPOINTED AND DESIGNATED for the particular purpose of "bringing EVERY work into judgment."

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3. *Judgment in THIS life does not fill the scripturally-specified requirements of the final and individual 'giving-account' judgment 'after death' of Heb. 9:27, etc.*

In the first place, it is not according to individual merit, but according to God's particular purpose at the time. Sometimes judgment is visited swiftly, as Nadab and Abihu. And sometimes wicked men (for instance, some kings of Israel) are suffered to live out their full days in prosperity and peace while righteous people endure many tribulations. Other and larger issues determine the matter, rather than the judgment of the particular individual concerned.

"What if God, willing (rather— "THOUGH willing") to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction" (Rom. 9:22).

"Think ye that these Galileans were sinners above all Galileans, because they suffered these things? I tell you, Nay" (Luke 13).

Jesus here repudiates the idea that what happens to a man in THIS life is in strict accord with his degree of guilt or righteousness.

Consider the following scriptural statements about the prosperity of the wicked (right up to their death), clearly showing that there is no uniform and universal working out of retribution in THIS life for those who reject God's commands—

"Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him. Fret not thyself because of him who FROSPERETH in his way.

"For evildoers SHALL BE cut off . . . The Lord shall laugh at him, for He seeth that his DAY IS COMING . . . The wicked shall perish and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: into smoke shall they consume away. Wait on the Lord . . . He shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt SEE IT" (Psa. 37).

"The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the BASEST OF MEN" (Dan. 4:17) . . .

"The wicked walk on every side when the vilest men are exalted" (Psa. 12:8).

"All things have I seen in the days of my vanity; there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that PROLONGETH HIS LIFE in his wickedness." (Eccl. 7:15).

"Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and HIS DAYS BE PROLONGED, yet surely I know that it SHALL BE well with him that feareth God.

"But it SHALL not be well with the wicked, neither SHALL he prolong his days" (not a contradiction to the previous sentence, but referring to the time IN THE FUTURE when it SHALL be well with the righteous).

"There is a vanity which is done on the earth—that there be just men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous. I said this also in vanity" (Eccl. 8:12-14).

"Righteous art Thou, O Lord . . . Wherefore doth the way of the wicked PROSPER? Wherefore are all they HAPPY that deal treacherously?" (Jer. 12:1).

"The tabernacles of robbers PROSPER, and they that provoke God are SECURE, into whose hand GOD BRINGETH ABUNDANTLY" (Job 12:6).

"Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are MIGHTY IN POWER? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes.

"Their houses are safe from fear, NEITHER IS THE ROD OF GOD UPON THEM. They take the timbrel and the harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ.

"THEY SPEND THEIR DAYS IN WEALTH, and in a moment go down to the grave.

"ONE dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet . . . ANOTHER dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.

"Do ye not know that the wicked is reserved to the DAY OF DESTRUCTION. They shall be BROUGHT FORTH TO THE DAY OF WRATH" (Job 21).

The principle is very fully and clearly stated here—that in THIS life there is no relationship between a man's merits and his fortunes. But all accounts will be settled when men are BROUGHT FORTH TO THE DAY OF WRATH.

"I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the PROSPERITY OF THE WICKED. For there are NO BANDS (RV: PANGS) IN THEIR DEATH, but their strength is firm.

"They are NOT IN TROUBLE as other men; neither are they plagued like other men . . . Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish.

"These are the ungodly, who PROSPER IN THE WORLD; they increase in riches . . . When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me! until I went into the sanctuary of God: then understood I their end" (Ps. 73).

"Thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good times, and likewise Lazarus evil things" (Luke 16:25).

Judgment in THIS life often falls upon ONE generation, although many PREVIOUS generations have been building up the offence—

"That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

"Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon THIS GENERATION" (Mat. 23:35).

"The Lord sent against Jehoiakim the Chaldees, Syrians, Moabites, Ammonites, against Judah to destroy it . . . for the sins of Manasseh and for the innocent blood he shed" (2 Kgs. 24:21).

Manasseh died in peace. Thirty-five years later the nation is punished for his sins.

"Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and they shall afflict them 400 years. And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge . . .

"In the 4th generation they shall come hither again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full"
(Gen. 15:13-16).

That is, the generation of Egypt contemporary with Moses, and the generation of the Amorites contemporary with Joshua, were judged and punished for national sins which had been filling up over several centuries.

Judgment in this life does not on the one hand preclude the final, general, individual judgment; neither does it on the other hand necessitate it.

Some men are subject to BOTH judgment in this life AND at the judgment-seat; some to NEITHER; some to just the one, some to just the other.

Present judgment and future judgment are two entirely separate and mainly unrelated things.

If this clear distinction, both of CHARACTER and PURPOSE, between present judgment (individual or national) and the future, final giving-of-account at the judgment-seat is properly perceived (together with the fact that the Scriptures NEVER except anyone from the latter judgment but the ignorant, then the subject will be seen in its correct perspective.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH, IF THE LORD WILL

Children of Light

"The Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying. Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

"Tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: So shall thy seed be. And Abram believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness"—Gen. 15:1-6.

SO God promised to Abraham, the "father of the faithful." In Gen. 12:3 the great extent of the promise and purpose is revealed—

"And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Turning to the New Testament for a moment, we read what the apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians (3:7)—

"Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."

Returning to the Old Testament again (Gen. 15:1), we are facing two great divine realities: in the first place, the word "Shield"; and in the second place, "Exceeding Great Reward."

Was this reward limited only to Abraham? No, not by any means! God's objective was, and is, as stated by Paul—

"And it became Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering:

"For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one—for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."

* * *

GOD'S children are children of **light**, **wisdom** and **love**. Without these three spiritual characteristics, **they are not the children of God**. Concerning the first, LIGHT, Paul declares (1 Thess. 5:5-9)—

"Ye are all the children of **light**, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

"But let us who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of **faith** and **love**; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."

God does not want to condemn us. He is anxious that we walk in the light and thus gain His acceptance. He earnestly desires to bless us with wisdom and strength, if we seek with a pure heart.

And Paul says again, writing to the brethren at Ephesus—

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: **WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT**."

Strain every effort to subdue the flesh, and walk in harmony with your holy and exalted calling in Christ Jesus. Christ himself proclaimed this truth, as we read in the gospel of John (9:5)—

"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

And we hear Jesus telling his hearers (John 12:46)—

"I am come a light in the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."

WE turn our thoughts to the subject of WISDOM—the divine wisdom of the value of which we have read so much recently in Proverbs. The Spirit, through James, records a wonderful promise. Do we truly seek its blessing?—

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it **SHALL be given him**" (1:5).

He distinguishes clearly between the wisdom of the world and the spiritual wisdom that is the gift of God, with its beautiful divine qualities—

"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable; gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (v. 17).

* * *

In Proverbs 9 9-10, we read—

"Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser, teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and **THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY IS UNDERSTANDING.**"

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LET us now consider our last word; no doubt the most important of all is LOVE. In his first epistle, John exclaims with wonder and joy—

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not" (1 John 3:1).

And of this wonderful characteristic of spiritual love he says in chapter 4—

"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us.

"God is Love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

"Herein is our love made perfect.

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:16-18).

There is no better way to try to attain to perfection than the way set forth in the Word of God, as portrayed in those characteristics — namely **Light, Wisdom and Love.**

BUT at the same time we read that Christ was made perfect through SUFFERING—

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb 5.8)

His mission was to do his Father's will; he humbled himself. Though he were the Son of God, yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered—

". . . and became obedient unto death; even the death of the Cross.

"Therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every name"
(Phil. 2:9).

Why was it necessary for Christ to be **made** perfect through suffering — seeing we read that Jesus was always obedient to his Father? Was he not already perfect?

This question presents no difficulty to those that know the Truth. He was—

". . . made of a woman, made under the Law."

His trust in God's way was supreme. Jesus' faith was in the infallibility of God's wisdom, so he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. In the last hour, in his anguish, we hear him say—

"THY WILL BE DONE."

He could visualize the coming glory that was set before him, so he could endure the death of the cross. The prophet Isaiah sums up all this in such a sentence—

"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53:11).

Jesus Christ fully justified the divine method, and God was well pleased with the vindication of His wisdom, justice and love. This was demonstrated at the time of his transfiguration by the overshadowing cloud and the Voice from it—

"This is My beloved Son, hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5).

The apostle Peter makes a strong point about this occasion (2 Pet. 1:17)—

"For he received from God the Father, honor and glory, when there came such a Voice to him, from the excellent glory,

"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased

"And this voice which came from Heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount."

And Peter tells us in glowing words of the purpose and glories of the revelation that has been given us (2 Pet. 1:3)—

"According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue,

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

How wonderful are these joyful, heavenly things that the Spirit of God sets before us! And in God's great love and mercy we have an unshakeable foundation of assurance and conviction, as Peter declares

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."

(2 Pet. 1:19).

Finally we remind ourselves of the solemn fact that it is only "he that OVERCOMETH" who will be given to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7).

Let us take courage, and exhortation, and warning, and determine from this moment to give all our energy and attention and desire to running the race that is set before us, that we may have right to eat of the Tree of Life; and hear the welcome words from our Lord Jesus Christ—

"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."
—F.G.

Woman, Why Weepest Thou?

PART TWO

"Then went in also that other disciples . . . and he saw, and believed . . . For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead"—John 20:8

TWO women are watching as these two men, these two well-known rulers of the Jews, but doubtless strangers personally to them, carefully take down the body, prepare it for burial and carry it a little way into a tomb nearby. They were Mary Magdalene and the "other Mary," that is, the wife of Cleopas.

Finally, after seeing the stone rolled against the entrance, they returned home and prepared spices and ointments, and rested the Sabbath day.

All this, from the death of Jesus on the cross—the begging of the body from Pilate, the removal from the cross, the burial, and the preparation of spices, had to happen between 3 o'clock and 6 o'clock on Friday afternoon, before the Sabbath began.

There has always been controversy concerning what day of the week Jesus was crucified. Many, on the basis of a full 3-day interpretation, and by a double-Sabbath theory (Passover Sabbath and weekly Sabbath), move the crucifixion back to Thursday and some even to Wednesday.

But bro. Thomas' beautiful exposition of the Son of Man fulfilling the work given him to do by the Friday night, "resting according to the commandment" during the Sabbath, and arising the first day of a new week to a new life and a new work, strongly inclines us to the simple view that the crucifixion was on Friday.

* * *

THE women appear to have bought more spices on Saturday evening, after the Sabbath was ended. Then, very early Sunday morning, they came to the tomb to perform more fully and carefully the service hurriedly rendered by Joseph and Nicodemus on Friday afternoon.

The 4 women named as coming are those same faithful ones who remained close to Jesus right up to the moment of death — Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less, Salome, mother of James and John, and Joanna, wife of Chuza, who was steward to Herod. (The word "steward" implies the position of general manager of the household like Eleazar of Damascus in Abraham's household). We are told that "other women" also were with them.

The mention of the time of day is quite specific, and unquestionably purposeful. They appear to have left home while it was still dark, and to have arrived at the tomb just after the sun had risen.

John speaks of, "While it was yet dark"; Mark says, "At the rising of the sun"; Matthew says, "As it began to dawn."

Two parts of the record give the strong impression, doubtless intentionally, that the Resurrection itself occurred very close to the same time, possibly between the time they left home in the dark and the time they arrived at the sepulchre as the dawn was breaking.

Matthew (28.2) mentions the opening of the tomb **after** describing the woman leaving home, and as a **present**, connected event, not a past one; and Matthew again (28.11) also specifically says the watch came into the city with their report just as the women were going to tell the disciples, as if they had waited for them to leave.

Everything seems to happen very closely together, and the natural impression from the record is that the resurrection had just occurred and the watch were lying in a stunned condition nearby when the women visited the tomb.

* * *

ALL four records mention Mary Magdalene first among those who visited the tomb. John mentions no one else.

Combining the records seems to give this sequence of events:

As they approach, they are questioning among themselves how they are going to remove the great stone blocking the entrance. It would be a large flat, round stone like a wheel that was rolled in a groove and dropped into a small depression in front of the entrance.

It seemed to be a very serious obstacle, but as so often happens, when they reached the spot they found the obstacle had been removed, the worry needless, the problem non-existent.

According to John, Mary Magdalene—before the angels revealed themselves—seems to have run immediately to tell Peter and John that the tomb had been opened.

(We cannot help but wonder why these two disciples did not accompany the women in the first place, especially in view of the problem of moving the stone. Why did the women go alone? What were the disciples doing? What was their state of mind?)

Perhaps the circumstances are purposely designed to make us think deeply upon the state of mind of Jesus' followers during this terrible period.

They had not only suddenly lost—under violent, tragic circumstances—the one who was the focus of their deepest love and devotion. This would be of itself a terrible shock.

But their whole world had been shattered. They had left ALL and followed him. They had put all their faith and hope—all their very life—on and in him—all their dreams for future, eternal divine blessing. Everything of them and in them was bound up in him, whom they had regarded as the very Son of God

For over three years they had enjoyed to the full his wonderful, sustaining presence, seen his countless miracles and manifestations of power, seen him put the nation's rulers to helpless confusion and humiliated silence time and again, while all the people thronged him and marvelled at him.

Then suddenly it all collapsed. Suddenly everything went dark, and began to violently close in on them. In a brief, terrible, unprepared-for fifteen hours, he was seized, abused, mocked, humiliated, and destroyed. And the whole weight of the long-infuriated and now triumphantly-revengeful wrath of the rulers would be turned against them—his closest followers.

We remember that when Jesus revealed himself to them they were assembled trembling, behind locked doors, "for fear of the Jews." Surely everything indicated that they had good reason to fear.

But the fear would not be the major aspect of their condition. The major aspect would be shock, terrible shock at the loss of their beloved Master, and the end of all they had built upon him.

Why was such a trial permitted? Why were their understandings previously veiled so they should not be ready?

The simple answer is: It was necessary. They had to be tried, torn, twisted, crushed to the utmost.

All of us, in our own small way, have experienced the transforming power of a great emotional shock. It searches the soul, it opens up the mind to its foundations, it rearranges all the courses of nature and sets things going in an entirely different direction. It is hard, but it is wholesome. It shakes out the dross from the mind, and makes men bigger and better.

From this time forward, these are all different men. It is as if they have passed through a violent metamorphosis, and henceforth are an entirely new type of creature. The old man died, and the

new man found his strength. Henceforth, they stand fearlessly before the rulers. Henceforth, they go fearlessly to prison and to death.

The double shock of Death and Resurrection appears to have been the divine means for effecting this transformation—this sudden growth from children to men.

Let us learn the lesson well, that we may yield ourselves completely to the Divine Hand and in the fierce crucible of sorrow, find the glories of spirit birth.

The record focuses our attention upon the women, led by Mary Magdalene—overwhelmed by the dreadful shock and sorrow, but still doing, in love, that one last, pitifully hopeless service that it was in their power to do.

Mary Magdalene has run away to tell Peter and John of the strange new development. Did it mean a last bitter, mocking disappointment, or dared they permit their crushed hearts to court further pain by opening them up to a ray of hope?

Peter and John rushed to the tomb

* * *

IN the meantime at the tomb, 2 angels had appeared to the other women in dazzling brightness, with the strange greeting—

"Why seek ye the living among the dead? Remember how he spoke unto you . . . that he should rise again the third day. .

"AND THEY REMEMBERED HIS WORDS."

This was the turning point.

From here on the glorious picture rapidly opens up wider and wider.

They fled from the tomb. "Trembling, astonishment, fear, and great joy," is how their state of mind is described.

* * *

PETER and John, running, arrive soon after they depart, with Mary following them. John gets there first, stops, and looks in. Peter catches up and goes straight into the tomb. He sees the linen clothes, and the head napkin by itself. There is great significance in this reference to the grave clothes and their position.

The word for "napkin"— **soudarion** — means literally "sweat-cloth." We remember the priests could not wear wool, because it caused sweat. Their garments must be all linen.

The name of this napkin, and its being specifically distinguished from the "linen clothes," strongly points to its being of wool. Linen is a symbol of spirit, as distinguished from the wool, or animal.

* * *

JOHN followed Peter in, and saw the garments and, it is recorded, he "believed." **HERE IS THE FIRST RECORDED BELIEF.**

Truly, the women ran from the tomb in an excited state of "fear and great joy" at the sight and message of the angels, but here is the first specific record of belief — calm mental conviction — and it was without the help of any supernatural message or appearance.

This was the disciple Jesus loved. Not having seen, he believed. Jesus appeared specially and specifically to Peter, and to his own brother James, but there is no record of an appearance to John.

Peter needed the comfort, James the conviction; but the beloved disciple was given the privilege of believing without seeing. He was honoured by the recognition that his faith need not rest on sight.

* * *

JOHN and Peter left the tomb and went to their homes, leaving Mary Magdalene alone at the tomb, weeping. As she wept, she stooped down to look into the sepulchre, and she saw two angels who said, "Why weepest thou?"

She said, "Because they have taken away my Lord." Mary's heart had been set on that last loving service to the body of her beloved.

Turning from the tomb, she saw Jesus behind her, but did not know him. He too said, "Woman, why weepest thou?"—his first recorded words beyond the grave

We cannot help but be struck by the typical aspect of the scene, as of Christ and the Bride—"Woman, why weepest thou?"

The long travail is over. The Seed has been born of the Spirit. "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth."

"And thy desire shall be thy Husband, and he shall rule over thee"—a sentence upon the Woman, a glorious promise to the Bride.

She still did not recognize him, but mistook him for a gardener. Then Jesus said, "Mary," and suddenly recognition flooded over her, and she exclaimed "Rabboni!"—a term of deep affection, respect and devotion—"My Master, Leader, Guide, Teacher!"

This was Jesus' first appearance after his resurrection. There must have been a reason why Mary Magdalene was chosen for this unique privilege—the first to see the risen Lord. Peter and John had been there but a few moments before. Jesus waited for them to go away before revealing himself alone to Mary.

She naturally, overwhelmed with joy and love, sought to touch him, but he said—

"Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father."

Mary's privilege is further emphasized. She alone saw him in the state between grave and glorification. She was taken, as it were, into the intimate workshop of the Spirit.

He sent her to convey the joyful news to the disciples, and having performed this service, **we never hear of Mary again.**

* * *

THE other women are still on their way to tell the disciples of the angels' message. Before they reach their destination, Jesus appears to them, too. This time he permits them to hold him by the feet. The ascending to the Father has now been accomplished.

We get a hint in these events of the rapidity of spiritual things, and their freedom from the bonds and bounds that constrain the natural man.

The second appearance, like the first, is to women. We hear so little of these loving, faithful women all through Jesus' ministry. Though they continued with him, and ministered to him, they are so much in the background that it is only with effort we can piece together the meagre record concerning them, but in the darkness and sorrows of death they come into brief and glorious prominence.

How beautifully God hath provided a vessel for every need!

Surely it is our wisdom to yield ourselves to the Master's use, fulfilling with loving, wholehearted devotion the task that comes to hand. Whether it be in prominence or obscurity, in public or in private, in honor or humility.

This was woman's greatest hour, when all his disciples forsook him and fled. —G.V.G.

The Gospel Plan of Salvation

PART FOUR

THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

“When they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women”—Acts 8:12

The Importance of True Belief

See: John 17:3; Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17; Eph. 4:5; Luke 24:25-28. The things concerning the Kingdom of God constitute the Hope of the Kingdom, the Hope of the Gospel; and the things concerning the Name of Jesus Christ embrace the means by which the one Hope of the calling may be attained and enjoyed, Eph. 4:4.

Flesh and Blood Cannot Inherit

It is a Bible truth necessitated by the nature and eternal duration of the kingdom, that those who are to inherit it must live forever and never die. Luke 20 35-37; 1 Cor. 15:50-54.

Sin Must Be Removed

As no sinner can live forever, it becomes necessary for sin to be removed, cancelled or forgiven before immortality can be bestowed on any son or daughter of Adam. Hence the necessity for God to provide a body to be the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world, Heb. 10:4-12; John 1:29.

Perfect Obedience Necessary to Open the Way

It must be one whose obedience to God's law even to death might obtain a resurrection and a way might be opened up, through faith and obedience of the gospel, for the sinful sons and daughters of Adam to have their sins forgiven that they might stand approved in the sight of God, Heb. 5:8-9. It required the blood of Christ, the testator (or covenant victim) to confirm it and bring it into force as a sin-cleansing institution. See Rom. 15:8 and Heb. 9:11-25.

Isaac a Type of Christ's Sacrifice

The Abrahamic covenant was typically confirmed by the offering of Isaac on the altar and his figurative resurrection. (Abraham received Isaac from the dead in a figure, Heb. 11:17-20). This prefigured or typified the death and resurrection of Christ for the confirmation of the Everlasting, or Abrahamic, Covenant, and its fulfilment in him after he rose from the dead.

The Seed of the Woman

In the covenant which God made with Abraham, the one in whom (with Abraham) all nations are to be blessed, and who was to possess the gate of his enemies (Gen. 22: 15-19) was to be a descendant of Abraham in the line of Isaac.

The promise in Gen. 3:15 specified that the one who is to bruise the serpent's head should be the seed of the woman, but not of the man.

And the Son of God

In the covenant made with David, the descendant of his who was to suffer for iniquity and afterwards reign on David's throne forever in David's presence (2 Sam. 7:12-17) was also to be the son of God. v. 14; Psa. 89:25-38; Isa. 9:6-8.

God Manifest in Flesh

The Jewish Messiah was to be born of a virgin, and be called Emmanuel, which means "God with us," Isa. 7:14. This was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus, Matt. 1:23. The New Testament is introduced by the words—

"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

These were his fleshly progenitors in the line of his mother. See Luke 1:26-35. John tells us that—

"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14-16).

Son of God & Son of Mary: Not Part of Co-eternal Trinity

God was the Father of Jesus, and Mary was his mother. Therefore Jesus was not, as the trinitarians teach, the second person in a trinity of Gods, viz: "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, and these three of equal substance, power and eternity."

This hoary-minded Roman Catholic fable makes three Gods in one, and teaches that these persons in the trinity existed from all eternity.

This carnal fable contradicts the plain teaching of the Spirit in the Word of God, for example 1 Tim. 2:5—

"One God AND One Mediator— the MAN Christ Jesus"

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and man the man Christ Jesus."

See also Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6; Isa. 45; John 17:3; 1 Tim. 6:16. Christ derived his life from the Father, John 5:26, 30.

The Spirit Is Not a Person, but God's Almighty Power

The Spirit is not a personal God, but the almighty power of God which radiates from His person and fills the vast immensity of space, by means of which He knows, wills, and performs everything. Gen. 1:2; Psa. 139:2-12; John 33:4; Job 26:13; Psa. 104:30; Jud. 14:6; Num. 27:18; Num. 9:30; 2 Pet. 1:21.

The "Holy Spirit" is the **same** spirit in **special manifestation** in the performance of special functions or work. See Luke 1:35; Acts 10:38; Acts 8:17-19.

Jesus of Our Identical Nature "Tempted in All Points Like Us"

Jesus Christ, though begotten by the Holy Spirit operating on the substance of Mary in a miraculous way, was nevertheless of our identical nature and tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. Acts 2:22; Acts 10:38; Luke 4:18; John 14:10; Matt. 3:16-17; John 3:34; John 5:30; John 14:28; John 7:16; Matt. 19:17; Mark 15:34; Tim. 3:5; Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:14; Gal. 4:4; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Cor. 15:21; Rom. 5:15; Heb. 5:7-8; Heb. 2:17; 4:15.

Christ's Death Not to Avenge Guilt or Appease God's Wrath

Christ's death was not to avenge the guilt of Adam's sin; nor to appease the wrath of an angry Deity as some teach; nor did he die instead of the sinner, as a substitute for sinners, as others teach.

But to Manifest God's Love and Righteousness & Open Way of Life

But he died to express God's love in preparing a Saviour who could and would make the necessary sacrifice that the law of sin and death which came into force by the first Adam might be nullified in the second Adam in a full discharge of its claims, through a temporary surrender to its power. After this, immortality by resurrection might be acquired in harmony with the law of faith in God's Word and obedience to His Law.

Righteousness Established; Sin Taken Away

In this way sin is to be taken away and acceptable righteousness established. See the following inspired testimonies: John 1:29; John 3:16; Gal. 1:4; Tit. 2:14; 2 Cor. 5:21; Acts 8:43; Rom. 3:25; Acts 4:12.

Jesus Now in Heaven as Melchizedek High Priest

Christ was raised from the dead by the power of God and exalted to spiritual, immortal and glorious nature and exalted to the right hand of His Father in heaven where he is officiating as God's high priestly mediator after the order of Melchizedec while a people is being taken from Israel and the Gentiles for his Name, to reign with him.

See Acts 2:24; Acts 5:30; Acts 10:40; Acts 17:31; Rom. 1:3-4; 1 Cor. 3:23; 2 Cor. 13:4; Rom. 6:9; Acts 3:13; Eph. 1:20-21; Heb. 3:1; Heb. 4:14-15; Heb. 8:1; Rom. 8:26-28; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 1:2; 1 John 1:9.

Messenger of The New (Abrahamic) Covenant

Jesus Christ was the messenger of the New (Abrahamic) Covenant, Mal. 3:1. He was sent with a message to the Jews, and as we have already shown this message was the Gospel or Glad Tidings of the kingdom of God promised in the oath-bound covenant made by Deity with Abraham and David. (See Chapters 4 and 5).

The Covenant Confirmed by His Shed Blood

After Christ had delivered his message to the Jews as the antitype of Moses (Heb. 9:19, 25) he shed his own blood to confirm the covenant and cleanse the heirs of promise from sin.

The Perfect Sacrifice

It was Christ's perfection of character that enabled him to fulfil the anti-type of the unblemished lamb that was offered under the Law of Moses for the national sin offering and also to fulfil the antitype of Aaron the high priest who offered the lamb in the holy apartment of the tabernacle on this side of the veil, (which the Spirit in Paul says typifies Christ's flesh (Heb. 10:20).

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH, IF THE LORD WILL

Exhort With All Longsuffering

"Therefore watch, and remember; that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears"—Acts 20:31

BEING "partakers of the heavenly calling" and being made "partakers of Christ," we need exhortation, edification and admonition that we might "hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm to the end."

Such conversation and speaking one to another as sons and daughters of God are quite needful during the testing and perfecting of our faith in God.

Without faith it is impossible to please Him, and the faith that does please Him must be proven under trial. Before us all without exception is a course of probation which has been described as, "the cross before the crown, humility before honor, probation before exaltation"—the only difference in our several courses being in their length, some being longer than others—but the same divine principle applies to all.

In the Deity's infinite mind He has chosen this principle by which His creative work is to be done to the glory and honor of His Name, His character of holiness, righteousness, wisdom and power.

But what makes the principle of probation necessary is the fact that, though we put on Christ in baptism and are aware that we must arise to newness of life, yet when we would do good, evil is present with us. We are still in the flesh, but must not mind the things of the flesh. We are still in the world (the total manifestation of fleshly things), but must not be of the world.

To exhort, edify and admonish one another is beautifully necessary in this state, as reflecting the power of salvation that is in the word of God. Our heavenly Father expects us to be thus concerned with one another of like precious faith, especially on the first day of the week when we meet to remember our absent Lord in the appointed way.

* * *

NOW there are a number of reasons why we need to exhort, edify and admonish one another while we continue in our present state and the Lord remains away. First, it is a fact known among us that "man doth not live by bread alone," that is, merely by eating literal food.

We must daily partake of spiritual food that the spiritual man in Christ may be sustained and grow.

Such food is to be derived from that which gave birth to the New Man, even the Word of God. Just as we seat ourselves around a table to eat literal food to satisfy the needs of the natural man, so also must we meet around the Word of God for the food of the spiritual man.

Of course we may do so alone, individually, by reading, study and meditation. **But it behoves the family of God to do so collectively or ecclesially.** This is right and fitting, giving occasion for mutual expressions of joy and gladness of being in the Truth.

We are often compared to leaky vessels in that we are not able to retain thoughts and ideas put into the mind, a fact that is dreadfully true in spiritual things; therefore we are in need of daily reminding in these things, just as we need daily natural food. Peter gave expression to this (2 Pet. 3:1)—

"This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance."

And what is brought to mind in so doing? The next verse answers,

"That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord."

The word of exhortation should serve the same purpose—directing our minds and affections to what is written in the Holy Scriptures.

We know that the flesh is weak, and that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. This is a truth that we are taught by personal experience. As it is written—

"The natural man receiveth not the things of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14).

It is because of this weakness, deception and foolishness of the flesh (which is ever present with us), that our spiritual man will desire and seek to be exhorted, edified and admonished.

It is a truth that we should all recognize, that from time to time we seem to need a reassurance and reaffirmation of our faith—that the things that are surely believed among us are not cunningly devised fables.

For example, as we continue to heed the command "labor not to be rich," we may at times be inclined to regret that we are doing so; but we take heart and are strengthened to continue steadfast when we hear of others in the faith speaking the same thing and agonizing in the same narrow path which leads to life.

It is the same with the Truth in all its particulars.

Our faith is built up and encouraged as we hear that our brethren are of the same mind and speak the same things and are striving to conduct their lives in harmony with the holy commandments we have received.

* * *

THE course of our probation before exaltation is set before us. Its purpose is to prove our faith in God, through Christ, that the faith may be subjected to the testing of fiery trials, removing all impurities and dross that by refining it may be pure.

Let us encourage, build up, and warn one another, because we are all leaky vessels and because we require reminding, since the flesh is weak. But weakness is no excuse for laxness. On the contrary it shows the need for **exhortation**, which means: "to encourage, incite, urge"; and for **edification**, which means: "to build-up, construct; hence to organize, to establish," and for **admonition**, which means: "to warn or reprove gently or kindly, but seriously; to remind, to testify, say again and again."

Let us briefly consider these three separately in line with the short definitions given.

* * *

FIRST, we have exhortation: If this means "to encourage, incite, urge," we may ask, "From what are we being drawn? and to what are we being encouraged?"

The answer may quickly come to mind, "We are being drawn away from fleshly things and encouraged toward spiritual things." Various portions of the Scriptures teach that the word of exhortation has this two-fold purpose, a typical example of which is found in Heb. 3:12-14—

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

"But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end."

Indeed, this is the true purpose of exhortation—to help keep us from the evil heart that causes departure from the living God, and to encourage the good and honest heart to hold the beginning of its confidence steadfast unto the end.

In these verses we are admonished to exhort one another away from the Old Man of the flesh and his deeds towards the New Man of the spirit with his fruit.

Once the Seed-Word has been sown in our hearts, we must commence to destroy all weeds and thorns that may choke its growth toward fruitfulness. In Galatians, Paul enumerates the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit, and declares that the works of the flesh will **keep us out of the Kingdom**, while those who bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, are living and walking in the Spirit, and so belong to Christ.

Paul is exhorting the Galatians in the two-fold sense spoken of—to subdue the works of the flesh and cultivate the fruits of the Spirit. We can no longer cater to the flesh, but must bring forth fruit meet for repentance.

Some say, "It's all right to exhort us, but don't tell us how to live."

This is a contradiction: for the exhortation must deal intimately with the believer's way of life—his daily life—his living day by day. Jesus said—

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

What is it to take up the cross but to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts in offering our bodies a living sacrifice holy, acceptable to God?

This is to be done daily, that is, day by day, every day. These words of Jesus and all his precepts and commandments which we have received through him and his apostles, apply to our personal daily conduct of each and every day.

The word of exhortation, then, applies directly or indirectly to our private lives, whether we are speaking of the Kingdom of God or the Promises made unto the Fathers, or of the Law of Moses, or any other Bible subject; **any and all may serve as encouragement to hold fast our confidence without wavering.**

We may even get words of exhortation from a public lecture on the Truth; for whether it be preaching the Truth or an exhortation, we should find ourselves urged on in the Faith with love and good works.

* * *

THE qualities of character in the new man are spoken of in (Hebrews 10:23:25):

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised); and let us consider one another to provoke to love and good works;

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

Here are true words of exhortation, striking not merely at things as they appear on the surface, but **going to the root of things:** the desires, causes, and motives of our every thought, word and deed:—

"Let us consider one another to PROVOKE unto love and to good works."

Is there room for improvement in our daily lives in the direction of love and good works? Certainly. Are we doing things we ought not to do? Let us strive to stop doing them. Are we leaving undone things we ought to do? Let us be up and doing. If we are unprofitable servants when we have done that which is our duty to do, then what are we when we are not doing enough, or when we are not doing anything?

Let us exhort one another daily in these things. Let us be more heart-searching. Let us provoke one another to love and good works.

By so doing we will help each other to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering. Our Father will be well pleased with us being so engaged with exhortation from His Word freely exchanged among us.

To Be Continued Next Month, If the Lord Will

Signs of the Times

AT THE present writing, world trouble spots and areas of tension, on the surface, appear to be receding, giving to the wishful thinkers and optimistic dreamers a few crumbs of hope that at last the tide is turning and the cold war is coming to an end.

There seems to be some hope of bringing the civil strife in LAOS to an end by the formation of a coalition government, but surrounded as it is with 6 nations of varied political ideologies and itself divided by diverse political factions, a stable government in Laos is still far away from realization.

The civil war in ALGERIA seems to be burning itself out, but there, too, smouldering fires of discontent are still burning.

In the controversy between the Dutch and Indonesians over NEW GUINEA, some settlement short of war seems possible at this time. Conditions in the CONGO are at a stalemate. LATIN AMERICA is quieter than usual.

And what appears to many as the most favourable sign of all is that the Soviets are assuming a comparatively tolerant line toward the Berlin issue and causes of tension in Europe, Southeast Asia and Africa.

But in this the old question bobs up: "What is Khrushchev up to?" And this is a good question, for often a calm forebodes a storm in the cold war.

On the debit side, it should be noted that, although tension and conflict appears to be lessening, no causes are being removed nor any hope of permanent peace established in any area of tension.

Meanwhile build up of Communist China military might near Quemoy and Matsu island is causing grave concern in Western capitals. In view of persistent reports of unrest in Red China and rumours of threatened invasion of the mainland by Chinese Nationalists from Formosa, speculation is rife as to whether the Red Chinese move is aggressive or defensive.

The U.S. rushes warships to the area and makes it clear that any attempt by Red China to invade Formosa would be met with devastating force, shows how easily a situation like this could spark a world war.

"PEACE AND SAFETY CRY" —FROM RUSSIA

A questionnaire sent out last fall by a Soviet controlled news agency, circulated in "many countries," asked the question: "How do you envisage the world and your own country 20 years from hence?"

To date 750 replies from 76 countries have been received. Eighteen of the letters received, obviously carefully selected to suit the Communist propaganda line, were recently published in the "USSR Magazine," published in Washington, DC, in the English language

These replies were received from "people in public life, government officials, scientists, writers and people of all ages and occupations, representing all shades of political and religious views."

However, in all the 18 letters published, there are no political views expressed except those favourable to Communism, and no reference to the Bible or religion except in a letter from France it is suggested that "the Golden Age" will have nothing in common with its **representation** in the Bible," which implies that the Bible representation of a golden age is fiction, and that the golden age of Communism will be brought through political and scientific progress

The other references to anything religious was from a U.S. correspondent who said: "Surely in the next 20 years men will have more faith in themselves, and less in an imaginary God."

UNIVERSAL PEACE PREDICTED

THE gist of the letters published is a confident prediction that within 20 years disarmament and universal peace will be fully accomplished; that when it comes, prosperity and plenty will be provided for all people the world over. (How true this may be, but not through Communism nor any human effort)

This "golden age," it is claimed, will be accomplished by abolishing colonialism and capitalism and the establishment of "world socialism." The sentiments expressed in the replies to the questionnaire are fully endorsed by Soviet officials as the position and the present purpose of the Communist world movement—to bring peace, prosperity and equality to all people.

All who are opposed to it (particularly the U.S.A.), are classed as tyrants, oppressors and warmongers who seek to enslave the masses of the people. All who are fighting on the side of Communism; all who are seeking to overthrow their governments in an effort to establish socialistic forms of government are represented as patriots seeking to overthrow their oppressors.

This propaganda is being circulated, not only in the U.S. by consent of the government, but in all the world in many languages. American publications in the Russian language are circulated in the USSR, but under great restrictions.

In the view of the fact that East and West propaganda runs exactly counter to each other, the whole truth cannot be found in either line, but all combined only increases the confusion, perplexity and tension in the world. Only "the wise," who "understand" God's purpose in the earth and the prophecies relating to our times, can avoid confusion over the complex world situation.

PREDICT COMMUNIST UTOPIA

IN THE Moscow News of June 16, much space is given to comments on the Moscow "Congress of Peace" to be held there in July. The purpose of the Congress is said to be—

“To make a fresh contribution to the battle against the threat of thermo-nuclear war which hangs over mankind.”

Opinions as to the success of the Congress, and eventual success of the "peace forces," are expressed by Soviet leaders in all walks of life. Through the efforts of the "international peace forces" they predict:

"Peace on earth and in space; a radiant future for man; an end to war and war preparation; abolition of all kinds of taxation; shorter working day with no drop in wages; free education and medical treatment; comfortable homes.”

After all the honeyed words about peace and good will, there is in all the Communist propaganda a veiled threat that if, and when Communism fails to convert the world and abolish capitalism, devastating nuclear war will be the only alternative, in which "socialist" forces will be the victors.

As Mohammed offered "the Koran or the sword" to peoples he sought to conquer, so the Soviets are offering Communism or destruction by nuclear war to a confused and perplexed world

RELATION TO THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

IN relation to the Signs of the times, this "peace" movement appears very significant. It portends a rapid growth of confidence in the ability of Communism to bring peace and prosperity to the world; it weakens the hands of the nations who are seeking to build up a strong front against Communist aggression; it is calculated to cause the peoples influenced by it to place less confidence in

divine providence and more confidence in the ability of mankind to establish a "golden age" through their own political and scientific advancement.

In short, it is furthering that world-wide movement to establish that era of godlessness, violence and corruption "as it was in the days of Noah."

These rosy pictures drawn by Soviet propagandists will act like opium upon great masses of underprivileged and gullible peoples till their hopes are dashed to the ground, and the effects will be terrible.

For the golden age "represented" in the Bible is the only such age ever to arrive on earth, and the God of the Bible is not "imaginary," but very real, Whose word has long ago foretold these very things to come upon the earth, and the utter failures of all human schemes to rob God of His glory by attempting to bring about that which He alone can and will do — establish universal peace and prosperity; and that only to be done by the elimination of all human government of every kind, with one King over all the earth. (Isa. 2: 4, Dan 2 44; Zech. 14:9).

Unquestionably Western leaders will brush off these expressions of peaceful intentions from the Soviets as pure propaganda, insincere and only a trap in which they hope to ensnare the distressed peoples of the earth.

But what these same people will think of it is another matter, and what success it will have in accomplishing its purpose is a thing which has non-Communist peoples worried

NOTES ON ISRAEL

The sad plight of Jews in many parts of the world emphasizes the fact that Israel is still a misplaced people, never to be at ease until they are "planted in a place of their own to move no more," and this modern season of persecution is slowly, but surely driving them to Palestine.

The situation in Algeria is especially critical and the Jews fear that the entire Jewish population of Algeria may be forced to flee when Moslem rule is established. Thousands of Jews have been migrating to France in recent months, and with more to come, it poses a problem for the French. And so an agreement under which France will help Algerian Jews settle in Israel has been consummated.

A part of this aid will include a boost in construction of immigrant housing. Israel housing officials predict an increase in Israeli population of 150,000 during this year. — O.B.

1962 WORCESTER FRATERNAL GATHERING

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

They would like to urgently request that all who plan to attend notify them as early as possible.

Write: Bro. Wm. Davey, Strawberry Hill St., Dover, Mass.

At the appointed time the wondrous sequel of Christ's past work on earth will become a fact. Attended by an august and imposing retinue of the angels, he will arrive on the earth at the spot chosen.

The dust of his dead will respond to the formative energy of his power, come to awakening form and life again, and come forth; the hearts of his living disciples will thrill with fearful gladness at the intimation sent abroad; in their mustering multitudes the living and the (in times past) dead will come to his presence.

The judgment will sit; the dread secrets of the divine remembrance will be disclosed, and to all will be meted out reward according to their works.

Oh, then the gladness of the chosen, who stand victorious on the rock of life eternal. Oh, the unavailing terror of the rejected multitude who depart with reprobation from the presence of the most glorious Son of God!

—**Bro. Roberts**

PRINTED IN U.S.A.
