

The Berean Christadelphian

A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the exposition and defence of the Faith once for all delivered to the Saints, with the object of helping to make ready a People prepared for the coming of the Lord. Opposed to the unscriptural teachings of the papal and protestant churches of the world.

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“They received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many believed.”—Acts 17: 11.

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

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Watch Ye Therefore

"Ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye discern the Signs of the Times?"—Matt. 16:3

In Luke 21, Mark 13 and Matt. 24 we read of a discourse that Jesus had with four of his apostles, as they sat on the Mt. of Olives, overlooking Jerusalem. He told them at that time what the signs would be that would portend the end of that world (age), and also the end of the long period known as the Gentile times, or age, in which we live.

What Jesus said on this occasion was prompted by a question they had asked him in regard to something he had told them before they left Jerusalem while they were at the Temple. They had pointed out the Temple to him and said—

"Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here" (Mark 13:1).

Jesus had answered them—

"Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Mark 13:2).

Now as the five of them sat on the Mt. of Olives, overlooking the city, with its beautiful Temple of white marble, their minds still dwelt upon what Jesus had said about the Temple; so they asked him (Matt. 24:3)—

"Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world (age)?"

JERUSALEM'S DESTRUCTION

Jesus told them first of the things of the immediate future that would affect them personally. Terrible judgments were just ahead for Israel. They had about filled up the measure of their iniquity by the rejection of their King: all the blood shed from righteous Abel to that time was to be required of that generation—

"For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations.

"And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:23-24).

Jerusalem was doomed. It would no longer be a place of deliverance for God's people. His blessings and protection were about to be taken away from it. Jesus told them what the signs of its fall would be—

"When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed about with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."

Then he told them what to do. They were not to stay and fight for their beloved city and land, but (Luke 21:21)—

"Let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out."

Now it is to be noted from the history of those times that when the Roman armies came against the land, when the "carcase" of Israel was given to the "eagles," the Christians were forewarned. They knew what was coming; they fled as the Lord had told them to do.

THEY KNEW THE SIGNS OF THEIR TIMES, and were thus prepared to save themselves from the judgments that broke up and destroyed the Jewish system of things.

Are we as well prepared to save ourselves from the impending demolition of the present dispensation? Do we know the signs of our times, and **are we prepared** to escape "the things that are coming upon the earth?"

THE END OF THE AGE

As Jesus spoke to his immediate disciples, as recorded in these three chapters, his thoughts also were of the few who would be living at the end of the Gentile age. They would need to know the signs of these things. He speaks especially to us at the end of Luke 21—

"Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares."

Jesus thus indicated that many in our times would be the victims of the subtle influences of the times so that they could see but dimly (if at all) the dividing line between that which is of the world and the higher things of divine revelation.

It may be noticed, as we draw nearer to the end, as the days and the months go by, that less and less time is being devoted by the many to prayers, meditation and careful and diligent study of the Word of God.

There seems not to be time anymore when with reverence and godly fear, in our quiet moments, we can draw nigh to God in humble supplications in which our minds are purified, uplifted and strengthened—in which the high and holy things of the Spirit glow into flame and lighten the hope and faith that will lift us above the evils of our day.

What did Jesus tell us to do when we see these things begin to come to pass—when we see the fig tree budding and all the trees, and know that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand? These are his words—

"WATCH ye therefore, and PRAY ALWAYS, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately.

"Blessed are those servants whom the Lord shall find watching" (Luke 12:34-37). —E.W.B.

This was bro. Banta's last editorial in the Visitor.

EDITORIAL

Growth in Divine Things

"Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"—2 Peter 3:18

ALTHOUGH Peter does not stand out so prominently as Paul in the work of establishing the Truth in the first century, yet there are features of his work which tower singularly high in relation to the work in general of—

"Taking out of the Gentiles a people for the Name of the Lord."

The work that Peter was to do for his Master was both comprehensive and arduous, and required extensive preparation. His original name was Simon, or Simeon, but when his brother Andrew brought him to Jesus, the Master looked at him and said—

"Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone."

There are many interesting incidents recorded of Peter, such as his attempt to walk to Jesus on the water of the sea of Galilee; of his bold and intelligent avowal of the Messiahship of Jesus; of his

rash but affectionate rebuke of the Lord for speaking of his suffering and death that lay in prospect for him; of his conduct in first rejecting, with an earnestness bordering on horror, the offer of Jesus to wash his feet.

"I WILL NOT DENY THEE"

BUT the chief incident comes before us on the night in which Jesus was betrayed, when he advised the disciples that they would all be offended because of him. But Peter said—

"Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I NEVER be offended . . .
"Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee"—Matt. 26:33-35.

But the trial that followed was too great for Peter and, when confronted with personal charges, he indignantly denied that he even knew Jesus. However, when the Lord looked at him, he remembered what Jesus had said, and he went out and wept bitterly.

This was the turning point in Peter's life, for when he came before the Master, after his resurrection, Jesus received from him a profession of love as strong and as frequently repeated as his denial had been. After each declaration by Peter, Jesus said to him—

"Feed my sheep."

After the Lord's ascension, we find Peter taking the leadership of the disciples, and it was the voice of Peter that was heard on the day of Pentecost when he addressed the people of Israel in such a forceful and convincing manner.

But there is another momentous event in the life of Peter that we must never forget, for it was by him that the Word of life came to the Gentiles when he was sent to Cornelius to expound the way of salvation.

If, then, we are what we profess to be, members of the flock of Jesus, we will give wisely cautious heed to what Peter has to say in his two letters as he feeds the Sheep of Jesus.

GROW IN GRACE

IN the short space allotted for this message, it would be impossible to cover all the salient points, so we have chosen the one with which he concludes his second letter with this earnest appeal—

"But GROW in GRACE, and in the **knowledge** of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

According to Strong, the word rendered "grace" actually has the deeper and broader meaning of "graciousness." While "grace" means favor, "graciousness" means an abundance of favor or mercy, especially the divine influence on the heart, and its REFLECTION IN THE LIFE OF A BELIEVER. The idea is well expressed by Paul 2 Cor. 8:7—

"Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace (graciousness) also."

But graciousness, although a necessary characteristic of the brethren and sisters of Christ Jesus, is alone insufficient. Therefore, Peter couples with it that which brings completeness to the life of the believer—

"The KNOWLEDGE of our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Why does Peter combine these two? **Is it not because one is useless without the other?** Cornelius was a gracious man, who feared God, and prayed always, but it was necessary that he receive the knowledge concerning Christ Jesus. This combination united in him, placed Cornelius in a position that enabled him to grow in wisdom and understanding of the Truth.

CHRIST IN YOU

A short time ago, one of our brethren said—

"We will some day soon be face to face with Jesus, and our reception will be in proportion to how we have assimilated him during these days of opportunity."

That is a vitally important truth, and brings sharply to our minds the obvious necessity of GROWTH. In 1 Pet. 2: 2, he uses an excellent illustration—

"Like newly born children, thirst for the pure, spiritual milk to make you grow up to salvation."

However, if we continue in the milk stage we cannot expect to grow, for Paul says in Heb. 5:13-14—

"For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of USE have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

But it is impossible for us to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Saviour," unless we make the first-hand acquaintance of that which will **supply the nourishment** to enable us to grow. In the first place, we must read our Bibles daily, and surely there is no better plan than that which is set before us in **The Bible Companion**. Some have said that it is a man-made plan and should not be followed, but no matter what method we may use, it will be of necessity a human system.

To assist us in understanding the Bible, we should all read **Eureka**—"strong meat" indeed, desired and enjoyed in proportion to one's love of the "deep things of God." If we do, we will be amazed at the knowledge and understanding of Divine things that will gradually grow in our minds.

If we desire to grow in graciousness, then we should read **Nazareth Revisited**. By that means, we will develop a zeal of God that is "according to KNOWLEDGE." This is essential for, as Solomon has said in Prov. 11:9—

"Through knowledge shall the just be delivered."

And in Hosea, 6:6, God informed the people of Israel in this impressive manner—

"For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the KNOWLEDGE OF GOD more than burnt offerings."

FIRST PLACE IN OUR LIVES

IF WE are to attain unto a high standard of knowledge, we must permit the enlightening influence of the Gospel to have first place in our lives. It must never be lost sight of, or give place to any personal ambitions generated by self-esteem, and a desire for primacy. It matters not the extent of our knowledge and understanding of God's Word, unless such wisdom is dominated by love, as Paul has so beautifully expressed in I Corinthians 13.

Therefore, we must be on the alert continually as we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our beloved Saviour.

Watchfulness and introspection should be the keynote in the life of every believer of the Gospel.

We must keep cross-examining ourselves by the commandments and precepts of the written Word.

Let us awake to the responsibility which rests upon us because of our knowledge of the Gospel of salvation, and build up a character that will be well-pleasing to our heavenly Father.

Such a character will be indicated by the spirit of humility, and supported by courage and determination, so that the ecclesia will prosper, and be edified, and built up in love and the fruits of the Spirit will have free course among us, and we will have joy and confidence in our walk in the Truth—

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" — Ephes. 4: 3. —Editor.

Ecclesial News

PAINT ROCK, Texas

WE have been greatly encouraged by the association and fellowship around the table of the Lord with several visiting brethren and sisters.

On Feb. 9 bro. & sis. Bill Edwards from the Mason ecclesia assembled with us at the Lord's table. Bro. Edwards administered very encouraging words of exhortation. There were 9 brethren and sisters and 7 visitors present.

We were much encouraged to have sis. Eva Banta and bro. & sis. Charles Banta Jr. of the Houston ecclesia to meet with us around the emblems on Mar. 1.

Then, on Apr. 19, we had the pleasure of having bro. & sis. Ross Wolfe, sis. Lula Wolfe, and sis. Lois Hurst of the Lampasas ecclesia to meet with us. Bro. Ross gave upbuilding words of exhortation.

It is always a comfort to have visiting brethren and sisters with us to strengthen us in these trying last days. We hope these and others can come more often. —bro. M. Edwards

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Yahweh Came From Sinai

"Eloah shall come in from the South, and the Holy One from Mount Paran"—Hab. 3:3

By BROTHER JOHN THOMAS

THE nucleus of the Rainbowed Unity is in present existence at the "right hand of power." It is there in the form or "fashion of a Man," "justified by Spirit," and therefore Spirit: and "made strong" as—

"The Man of Yahweh's right hand, whom He has made strong for Himself"

(Phil. 2:7; 1 Tim. 3:16; John 3:6; Psa. 80:17).

This Spirit-Nucleus is the Lord Jesus Anointed, and by the anointing made what he is. He is the ETERNAL by Spirit manifested in flesh, justified and glorified.

As the nucleus of the Rainbowed Unity, he is not now standing upon the sea and upon the earth; but is in a "far country," whither he went many centuries ago to "receive the kingdom and afterwards to return" (Luke 19:12).

This return has long been expected and earnestly desired by his servants; but, as yet, their expectation has not been fulfilled. Nevertheless, at the time appointed, styled by Paul, "his own times," the manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ will be shown by—

"The blessed and Only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. 6:14-16).

This is the individual, personal, and simple nucleus of the Rainbowd Angelic Unity—omnipotence incorporate in one man—"the Man Christ Jesus"—the Spirit-Man, who says—

"Behold, I COME as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Rev. 16:15).

WHERE DOES HE COME TO?

BUT, where is he to come TO? Where will he first stand with his feet when he returns, having received power and authority to "revive his work in the midst of the years?" In what part of the globe, or spot of earth, will he take up his position, as the place where his saints shall be gathered to him, who "have made a covenant with him by sacrifice (Psa. 50:5)?"

Before replying to this inquiry, I remark, that different prophets in vision have seen him approaching Jerusalem at different stages of his course.

One sees something in point that another did not see; but by noting what they all saw, we are enabled to trace out his career till his "pillars of fire" stand upon the sea and upon the earth.

The blessing of Israel by Moses before his death is, unquestionably, a prophecy of their happy condition in the latter day, when "dwelling in safety alone," and "treading upon the high places of the earth" (Deut. 33:28-29).

The blessing upon Levi, Benjamin, and Joseph, is clearly indicative of this. Thus, of Levi, he said—

"Let Thy Thummim and Thy Urim be with the Man Thine Holy One, whom Thou didst prove at Massah" (v. 8).

This, in relation to Levi, has never been yet.

"And of Benjamin he said, The Beloved of Yahweh shall dwell in safety by Him."

This is yet future; for when the Beloved of the Father dwelt in the canton of Benjamin, his habitation was unsafe and his life in danger every day.

"And of Joseph he said, The ten thousands of Ephraim and the thousands of Manasseh, shall push the peoples together to the ends of the earth" (vs. 13-17).

This yet remains to be fulfilled.

YAHWEH CAME FROM SINAI

Now, in the preface of this prophetic blessing, it is written that Moses said—

"Yahweh came FROM Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints" (v. 2).

It was historically true that Yahweh came TO Sinai; but is there nothing more in this than an historical allusion?

Without other light than this affords, we could hardly answer the question with full satisfaction. We know that Israel's history is typical, and that the text is in connection with prophecy.

Still, "came" is so decidedly past time, that it causes one to pause before we affirm that it here predicts the future.

But the Spirit enlarges our conception somewhat on this point, in Psa. 68:17-18. Here it seems to indicate a future manifestation in the wilderness of Sinai and Paran—

"The chariots of Elohim are twenty thousands, thousands repeated: The Lord (Adonai) among them, Sinai the Holy."

Then follows, in v. 18, the prophecy of Christ's ascension, as Paul interprets it. After which in v. 22—

"The Lord saith, I will bring again from the depths of the sea."

The English Version interjects:

"IS among them AS IN Sinai in the holy PLACE."

But **Sinai bakkodesh** is equivalent to "in Sinai the holy." This conclusion is strengthened by v. 22, for how can—

"The Lord bring AGAIN from the depths of the sea"
—unless He gather His people in the vicinity of the Red Sea?

HABAKKUK'S VISION

BUT Habakkuk has made certain what—without his testimony—might be thought open to dispute. In ch. 3 he prays that Yahweh would—

"Revive His work in the midst of the years; in the midst of the years make known, or manifest; and in wrath remember mercy."

In response to this, he is favoured with a vision, in describing which, he saith—

"Eloah (singular, not Elohim) came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran.
"His glory covered the heavens, and the earth is full of His praise."

If this testimony had been faithfully translated, there would have been no obscurity in it. The prophet did not write—

"Eloah came from Teman."

The word rendered "came" is not **bah**, as in Deut. 33:2, where it is correctly translated, but **yahvo**, the future of the same verb, and therefore, to be rendered "shall come in." The text should be rendered thus—

"Eloah shall come in from the South, and the Holy One from Mount Paran."

ELOAH is the word used for the setter up of the kingdom, in Dan. 2:44. It signifies the Adorable One, or the Strong One. It is the Deity made flesh, and justified by Spirit, and equivalent to "the Holy One"—Messiah.

NEVER YET FULFILLED

I conclude, then, from this positive declaration of Habakkuk, that Moses spake not historically but prophetically. The coming of Yahweh to Sinai in the days of Moses was representative, as to power, place, and purpose, of his coming in the latter day. Since Habakkuk wrote the words—

"Eloah shall come in from the South and the Holy One from Mount Paran."
—the prediction has not been fulfilled in any sense. If it had, "His glory" would now "cover the heavens, and the earth be filled with His praise," which is **very far from being the fact**.

This, then, I believe is the place or country, to which the personal Son of Man, "the man Christ Jesus," will come first at his approaching advent. The region is admirably adapted for the manifestation of omnipotence, in the judicial manifestation of the mystical Son of Man, or Rainbow Angel.

The Peninsula of Sinai is the southern region which is reserved in solitude for a future display of great signs and wonders far transcending anything witnessed by Israel in the olden time. This Peninsula is formed by two arms running into the land from the north end of the Red Sea, and is bounded by the one styled "the tongue of the Egyptian sea" (Isa. 11:15) on the southwest, at the end of which is Suez; and by the other, or Elanitic Gulf, called also the Gulf of Akaba, on the east.

These waters form two divergent sides of a triangle, within the area of which are mounts Sinai and Paran, and a "waste howling wilderness," containing nothing to be desired. Moses styles it (Deut. 8:15)—

"A great and terrible wilderness, wherein were the fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water."

It is a dry, hot, sandy, mountainous region, that no government seeks to annex, and which no emigrants undertake to people. The few that are found within it are the descendants of Hagar—wild men whose hand is against every man, and every man's hand against them (Gen. 16:12).

The peninsula is filled up with mountains and narrow valleys, and desolate plains. And of these mountains, the chain or elevated circle of Sinai is the chief.

The wilderness of Paran lies between the southern border of Palestine and the Mediterranean on the north; Egypt on the west; Idumea, or Edom on the east.

"The Holy One," says Habakkuk, writing in Jerusalem, "will come in from Mount Paran." By the help of Moses, we understand that he arrives at Paran "from Sinai," which Habakkuk styles **Taiman**, "the South."

Habakkuk had a vision of what was to be transacted in the country of the South, which will be left in the rear by an advance from Mount Paran, after bringing affliction there on the tents of Cushan, and causing the curtains of Midian to tremble (3:7).

THE ORACLE OF MOSES

WHEN Moses delivered his prophetic blessing upon the tribes of Israel, he was in the plains of Moab, and soon about to leave them. This was about a hundred miles north of Mount Paran.

When Israel heard the blessing, would they not desire to know, in view of Moses' speedy death, where help was to come from to establish the blessing? In reply to this, the answer is found in the oracle (Deut. 33:26-29)—

"There is none like the Ail of Yeshurun, riding heavens in thy help, and clouds in His potence:
"The Elohim of olden time a refuge; and underneath the arms of olahm:

"And He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall command to destroy. Israel shall then dwell in safety alone . . . a people saved by Yahweh, the Shield of thy help and the Word of thy excellency!

"And thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

Where were they to look for Him in His coming to help? Where would He "rise up to them," when He should appear to destroy their enemies, and cause them to dwell in safety alone?

The answer to this in Deut. 33:2, presupposes the accomplishment of the enterprise; because, although it is yet in the future, it is as certain to come to pass, as if it had already been fulfilled. For this reason, the future event is foretold in terms of the past; and we read—

"Yahweh came in from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them. He caused to shine forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of the peoples; all His saints are in thy hand."

Moses speaks in this of an entrance FROM Sinai—a coming into the land from Sinai by way of Seir and Paran; not of a coming TO Sinai.

RISE UP AS THE SUN

The word **zahrach**, "rose up," signifies to "rise up as the sun," hence the sun-rising in Seir, and the "shining forth" from Mount Paran.

This Mosaic vision is unquestionably identical with John's in Rev. 10. The Ail of Yeshurun riding heavens and clouds, with a mandate of destruction in his right hand, is no other than the Rainbow Angel with the little scroll of fiery judgments in his hand; which, when executed, result in the deliverance of Israel, and the overthrow of all their enemies.

The south end of the Dead Sea is about 110 miles east of north from Akaba, at the north end of the gulf. Between these two points runs a valley, called towards the north, El Ghor, and towards the south, El Araba, and forming a prolongation of the valley of the Jordan. There is a chain of mountains on the east of this great valley, forming the continuation of those which surround the eastern side of the Dead Sea. The portion of this chain eastward of El Araba is Mount Seir—

"Yahweh rose up from Seir unto them."

Near this are situated the ruins of Petra, the ancient capital of Edom; and due north of these, and still in Idumea, and southeast of the Dead Sea, is BOZRAH, so noted in the prophecy of Isa. 63:1.

Rising up from Seir with "His face as it were the sun," he advances "in the greatness of His strength" to Bozrah, and thence still northward through the plains of Moab, to the vicinity of Nebo, where Moses died.

The upper region of Sinai forms an irregular circle of 30 or 40 miles in diameter. From one of these peaks a view is commanded of some parts of the two gulfs of Akaba and Suez; also innumerable ranges of rocky mountains, but around the mount the open places are but few.

Such is the elevated platform upon which is to be inaugurated the Most High and Holy Heavenly, — that glorious company variously styled—

The everliving NAVE of Deity, containing the Testimony, the Bread of heaven, and the Life;

"The glorious and fearful Name YAHWEH Elohaikka," of **Moses** (Deut. 28:58);

"The YAH that rideth in the deserts," of **David** (Psa. 68:4);

The "King YAHWEH Tzvaoth," of **Isaiah** (6:5);

The "FOUR LIVING CREATURES with the likeness of a Man," of **Ezekiel** (1:5, 12);

The "MAN with the voice of a MULTITUDE," of **Daniel** (10:5-6);

The "YAHWEH Elohim of hosts, Yahweh His memorial," of **Hosea** (12:5);

The "YAHWEH Givborim—the Yahweh-Mighty-Ones" of **Joel** (3:11);

The "SAVIORS who come up on Mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau," of **Obadiah** (v. 21);

The "MAN OF BETHLEHEM Ephratah" with his companions who delivers Israel from the Assyrian, and wastes Assyria with the sword, of **Micah** (5:2-6);

The "Eloah upon his horses and' chariots of salvation" of **Habakkuk** (3:3, 8);

The "FOUR CHARIOT-SPIRITS of the heavens," and the "One Yahweh and One Name" of **Zechariah** (6:1, 14:9);

The "SON OF MAN," the "Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes," the "Rainbow Angel," and the "144,000 who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes," of **John's** Apocalypse—

—*all the things signified by these diverse forms of speech are essentially one and the same Theophany or God-Manifestation, simply expressed by the words: THE ETERNAL SPIRIT BY SPIRIT INCORPORATE IN JESUS AND HIS BRETHREN.*

The above passages, all symbolic illustrations of the Scriptures' great central theme of God-Manifestation in a glorified Multitudinous Unity, are well worth looking up and studying.

1964 Fraternal Gatherings

(If the Lord Will)

HYE, Texas: July 27 to August 2

Write: Bro. C. Banta, 815 Boston Ave., Deer Park, Tex., 77536

TORONTO: October 10 & 11

Write: Bro. G. Gibson, 294 Glebeholme Blvd., Toronto 6, Ont., Can.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA: November 27, 28 & 29

Bro. E. Higham, Ap 2, 1729 Raymond Hill Rd., S. Pasadena, Cal. 91030

The Divine Sonship of Christ

By **BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS**

"When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law"
Gal. 4:4

PART THREE

THE Josephite theory creates a difficulty which is insurmountable. **If Christ was a mere man, how is it that he was sinless?** Was any other man ever known or heard of without sin? Experience says "No;" and the Bible says —

"There is not a man that liveth and sinneth not."

"If any man say he has no sin, he is a liar, and deceiveth himself."

How, then, are we to explain the fact that Jesus was without sin?

The testimony which the Josephites would throw overboard, explains it, because it reveals the source of Christ's high capacity and impulse in a divine direction, in a **divine paternity**.

This explains everything. The clay of fallen human nature, in the hands of the Divine Potter, was fashioned unto the likeness of the divine: that by the instrumentality thus established, a door of escape from the pit might be opened for this doomed race. Admit that Jesus was the son of Joseph, and then it is not true that —

"God hath concluded all under sin."

It is not true that —

"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

For Jesus is an exception: he was sinless, and yet by this theory a mere man; and if Jesus was sinless any other man might have been sinless; and Christ's being the Messiah was a mere accident; every man his own saviour, and Christ's Name ("JEHOVAH shall save by an Anointed") a great fallacy! This is the conclusion to which the Josephite premises lead.

THE APOSTLES AND THE MIRACULOUS CONCEPTION

THE Josephites say if the apostles held the doctrine of the miraculous conception, it would have been as prominent in their teaching as it is in the religious writing of the present day.

SO IT IS. Nothing is more prominent in all their writings than that Jesus is the Son of God, and every time this proposition is affirmed, the miraculous conception is proclaimed; for the divine sonship of Christ is a myth without it.

But the Josephites argue that because the phrase "miraculous conception," or some literal equivalent is not made use of by the Apostles, they did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God in that way.

Apply this to cases of ordinary paternity, and the fallacy will be apparent. We say such a man is son to so-and-so; we do not go further. The rest is implied—maternity is understood. The means are always involved in the expressed result.

It is sufficient to say that Jesus is the Son of God. The iteration of this statement is virtually a repetition and prominent setting forth of the miraculous conception; for it involves it. Jesus could not be the Son of God without it.

If other men who have not been miraculously conceived are called "sons of God," it is because they acquire this title from Christ, and possess it only in prospect of being made like him —

"We are all the children of God **through faith in Christ Jesus**" (Gal. 3:26).

By union with him, they are legally covered with his Name, and incorporate with his relationship. They are not adopted till the resurrection (Rom. 8:23; Luke 20:36). They are only sons by virtue of connection with him who was primitively and pre-eminently **THE SON OF GOD**.

The relation had its origin in him, and in judging of what constituted that relationship we must not look at those who have only a borrowed title; and say that because that they are mere men; therefore Jesus was.

PAUL'S TESTIMONY

THE Josephites demand a quotation from Paul (who, they point out, "declared the **WHOLE** counsel of God") in proof of the miraculous conception.

We possess but a fragment of the speeches to which Paul refers, when he said he had declared the whole counsel of God. What we have, however, taken in conjunction with his letters, furnish the proof desired. The very first thing recorded of him is that after his conversion —

"Straightway he preached Jesus in the synagogue, that **HE IS THE SON OF GOD**"
(Acts 9:20).

If it was believed at the time by any considerable section of professed disciples that Jesus was the son of Joseph (which the Josephites contend was the case), this shows the side of the question Paul took.

To say that he simply preached that Jesus was the son of Joseph, was raised from the dead and that this is what he meant by preaching that Christ was Son of God, is to play with words.

The resurrection of a son of Joseph is one thing; declaring that such a man is the Son of God, quite another. The propositions are not interchangeable. Christ was the Son of God **BEFORE** his resurrection.

A crowning proof is furnished in the incident recorded in connection with the cured blind man, who was cast out of the synagogue for confessing Jesus (John 9:35-37)—

"Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and when he found him, he said unto him,
"Dost thou believe on the **SON OF GOD**?
"He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?"

"And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is HE THAT TALKETH WITH THEE" (John 9:35-37).

When Paul, therefore, "straightway preached that Jesus was the Son of God," he proclaimed something that was a fact previous to Christ's resurrection.

Did he simply preach that the son of Joseph, a righteous man, was filled with the Holy Spirit? The suggestion seems absurd. He brought before their notice a man whose origin was direct from God, and, therefore, who was Son of God, as declared by his resurrection.

Paul's letters, more than Paul's speeches, (which are scarcely preserved), furnish conclusive evidence of the miraculous conception. In Gal. 4:4, he says —

"When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth HIS SON, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

The Josephites try to escape the force of this by citing the language of Job —

"Man that is BORN OF A WOMAN is of few days, and full of trouble."

As a mere matter of words, there is a coincidence, but the subject and nature of the allusions are as different as possible. In Job's use of the words, one can see the poetical association of weakness of origin with ephemerality of nature: but there is no poetry in Paul's words. His is the language of fact and logic.

He is here stating the mode of deliverance adopted by God with reference to those who, under the Law, were in hopeless condemnation. He says God "sent forth HIS SON" (not that He adopted a son of Joseph); and, indicating the method of the sending, he adds "made of a woman."

This agrees with Luke, Matthew, and Isaiah, who say that for this purpose, He begat a Son of His Own by a virgin of the house of David, overshadowing her with the creative power of the Holy Spirit.

It is very significant that Paul should have inserted the words "made of a woman" in such a connection. They are not the only words in which Paul, in declaring the whole counsel of God, affirms the divine sonship of Jesus. He says (Rom. 8:3)—

"What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God (hath done in) sending HIS own SON in the likeness of sinful flesh."

Here the sonship of Christ is placed in contrast to the weakness of the flesh. The Josephite theory destroys the contrast, since it makes Jesus part and parcel of that flesh, the weakness of which, Paul says made salvation impossible.

SON OF GOD FROM BIRTH

JESUS was the Son of God in his sending forth, and not merely at some stage of his life. He was Son of God by constitution. How else are we to understand Paul's other words—

"THOUGH HE WERE A SON, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8).

Did he not learn obedience before he was thirty? Did the Father not pronounce Himself "well-pleased" with him at that age, at his baptism, which was part and parcel of his obedience? And what was the basis of this approval, publicity proclaimed, if it was not his obedience which he had learned? This obedience he HAD learned "though he were a SON."

Therefore he was a Son in the first instance, instead of only becoming one in some recondite sense by the anointing of the spirit at his baptism. He was a Son, because of his direct procreation by the Father through Mary, without human intervention.

This explains Paul's other words, in which, declaring the counsel of God, he virtually affirms the miraculous conception, those in which he quotes Ps. 40:6-8—

"When he cometh into the world he saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but A BODY hast Thou prepared me . . . Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God."

"He taketh away the first that he may establish the second, by the which will, we are sanctified by the offering of THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST once for all."

All this is intelligible in view of the miraculous conception. The sacrifices under the Law were incapable of taking away sin (v. 4), because the sin of a human being could never be punished in an animal. Sin requires the death of the sinner; the Law admits of no substitution. It fastens on the offender and destroys him, and that which commits him to destruction holds him in destruction.

The only remedy in the case was the one that has been adopted, and that was for God to manifest Himself in the nature under condemnation, and meeting the full requirements of the Law in death, vanquish it in a resurrection necessitated (on account of sinlessness) by its own operation. This plan was foreshadowed in the words of the Spirit through David—

"Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not."

As an ultimate arrangement, sacrifices were worthless. They were merely part and parcel of a provisional order of things, established intermediately to teach preparatory lessons, and pointing, allegorically, to the real remedy in contemplation. As a final means (which ignorance was apt to regard them)—

"In them Thou hast no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come."

The Spirit was to accomplish the real work, and to enable it to do this—

"A body hast Thou prepared me."

The body required to be sin's flesh, that is, the nature of Adam, which by reason of sin, was under condemnation. This was one ingredient in the preparation—

"He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham."

"He was made sin."

"He was sent forth in the likeness of sinful flesh."

But had the body been a mere product of Adamic procreation, it would not have been serviceable for the purpose. A mere human being would have been a sinner.

Had Jesus been the natural son of Joseph, he would not have been the body prepared; because as the son of Joseph, he would not have been sinless, and though he might have "died for our sins," he could not, as a sinner, have risen again, for that which kept all the children of Adam in bondage would have held him, and the scheme of salvation would have been a failure.

It is in resurrection after suffering where the success is achieved (1 Cor. 15:17). This success, as between God and man, is limited to Christ, but he is invested with power and authority, as a mediator, to operate towards all who come unto God by him, and to dispense the results of his victory to all who receive them by faith. He is their judge and life-giver—the resurrection and the life.

Being begotten by the Spirit, Jesus was a prepared body; for by this means he was made capable of sinlessness. He received a stamp and capacity of mind which qualified him for greater accomplishments than were possible in the polluted channel of merely Adamic generations; and was thus qualified to be the Saviour of the world.

PAGAN CORRUPTIONS

AS TO the idea of miraculous conception dating back into antiquity, it is not worth much. The misapplication of truth in times of ignorance, does not destroy it. The ancients believed that the righteous became gods after death. Is it therefore untrue that it is the destiny of the righteous to become elohim, after the death state is at an end? The heathen fable was the truth in distortion.

The Babylonians believed Nimrod to have been miraculously conceived; is it therefore untrue that the true Captain of salvation—the seed of the woman—who was promised from the earliest times, and whose tradition was misapplied to Nimrod, was "sent forth made of a woman?" There is an ingredient of truth in fables sometimes.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH, IF THE LORD WILL

Our Walk to the Kingdom

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope"—Rom.15:4

AS WE meet around the Table of our absent Lord, these words of the apostle are very appropriate, for—related to him by being baptized into his Name—we stand in a privileged position in these latter days.

We are, however, not immune to the attraction of the present world around us, with its craving for joy and pleasure-seeking, for we are leaky vessels, mortal creatures of the earth. This is where the meeting at the request of the Master can, and does, help us on our "narrow-path" journey. Our thoughts are drawn together to those things which concern our eternal well-being, made possible by the sacrifice of Christ as the Lamb of God's Own providing.

Essential for us also are the words of exhortation, whether we hear them or read them from time to time. The words and thoughts conveyed to us must have that same effect upon us as the apostle Paul wanted it to have on his brethren and sisters, as expressed above. The words of Truth otherwise would be meaningless and our efforts wasted; we should not glorify God. So our work would fail and our hope be lost.

A very sad ending to a life which began when we saw the light of the glorious Gospel revealed to us, when the power of God worked on our minds, giving us the will to know more about God and His plan! We were overjoyed at knowing that there was a hope of life beyond that which we now live.

This transforming first joy CAN remain with us! How? By allowing the words of Truth and soberness to overcome the weakness of our fleshly minds and thoughts. If we allow the Truth to develop our minds according to God's ordinances, above all we shall please Him, and find that all of our ways, though diverse, converge each day, each week into a pattern of beauty and holiness with a peace of mind that keeps us above the darkness which surrounds us and enables us to focus our minds upon the things that matter—upon the more sound and sure principles of divine appointment. Paul says (2 Tim. 3:14-17)—

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

"And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

"That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

PERFECTION

That PERFECTION is the goal which we must earnestly **strive to attain**, is further indicated by such words of the apostles as the following—

"Warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man **perfect** in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:28).

"Now the God of peace . . . make you **perfect** in every good work to do His will" (Heb 13:21).

"But the God of all grace, Who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Jesus Christ after that ye have suffered a while, make you **perfect**, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (1 Peter 5:10).

That this absolute perfection has not yet been attained need not excuse us, that we may say, "We cannot expect to reach perfection." We evidently are expected by God's grace and forgiveness, to be **accounted** perfect.

That this high and spiritual state of mind and character could ever be reached without prayer for guidance, assistance and FORGIVENESS—could ever be so reached by any of those called saints in Christ—would of course be impossible. But, nevertheless, our constant AIM must always be to perfection however we may appear to fall short of it.

When we are thus enlivened and strengthened with spiritual food and nourishment, then all those things in the world around us which tend to encroach upon the narrow path we tread, can be swept aside—and our path is clear ahead.

In such circumstances the Master's words are our comfort and solace on our pilgrimage, for he is our example—

"Take my **yoke** upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find **rest** unto your souls."

Now is the time for us to do our work that our labours may merit the Master's approval at the judgment seat. Hence the urgency of the injunction—

"Exhort one another daily **while it is called To-day.**"

THE PROMISE SURE

There is no doubt, from our reading of God's Word regarding the final consummation of the Divine purpose which is outlined for us in the Bible, that its fulfilment is assured.

The only doubt is whether WE shall be numbered among those worthy of the "Rest which remaineth to the people of God." This will depend upon how **much we heed the Spirit's counsel** contained in the message or "good news" to which we have listened. Faithlessness and unbelief are dangers from which none, who is flesh and blood, is immune.

Let us then strengthen our faith, and soften our hearts by cultivating the mind like those of Joshua and Caleb after their return from viewing the land of Canaan: who were able to say, above the others who brought an evil report—

"The Lord is with us, fear them not!"

The wise course to follow, that we may succeed where Israel failed, is outlined by Paul (Heb. 4:11-14)—

"Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest . . .

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."

All who apply these lessons will be recipients of the reward promised. They will enjoy eternal rest, in the sense of relief from burdens appertaining to mortal experience, but work in plenty in the administration of those just and righteous laws by which the earth itself will finally be brought to that delightful condition foreseen by the prophet—

"The whole earth sitteth still, and is at rest."

HOLD FAST

We have every reason then to "hold fast," as the apostle says. Through the sacrifice of Christ we are able to draw near to God (Heb. 10:22-25)—

"Our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.
"Exhorting one another; and so much more, as ye see the day approaching."

God told Jacob at Bethel (Gen. 28:15)—

"Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest . . . for I will not leave thee."

In the many centuries that have passed, until the day that God will have done all that He has promised, the divine hand has never been slack in the control and direction of the affairs of Jacob and his posterity, with the final end in view—

"In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

In this blessing can we hope to rest if we then follow the direction of the apostle in Heb. 12:1-2: —

"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

And verse 28—

"Let us have grace, (margin: let us hold fast) whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

—living in hope of having a part in that Kingdom by running the race with patience, that now, in the words of the Apostle Paul to the Colossians (1:9.10)—

"Ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding:
"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;
"Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness:
"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."
—D.K.W.

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Hell Is the Grave

Eternal Torture of the Wicked False and Unscriptural

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death"—Rev. 20:14

PART TWO

WHERE is the necessity or reason for either resurrection or judgment at the return of Christ if the dead go to their reward at death? It would not only be unnecessary—it would be plain absurdity!

RESURRECTION

BUT the Scriptures say there **will** be a resurrection, and that it is necessary. We find the day of judgment always associated with resurrection of the dead, and we find resurrection from the grave held out as the **only hope of life after death**.

Paul devoted 1st Cor. 15 to refuting the contention that there will be no resurrection. He says (vs. 16-8)—

"If the dead rise not . . . then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."

And in v. 32, after describing the perils he encounters, he says—

"What advantageth it me, if the dead rise not?"

His argument is meaningless if men go to heaven at death for their reward. But **Paul's** whole hope of reward was centered in resurrection of the last day, as he says in Phil. 3:8-11—

"I count all things but loss . . . I have suffered the loss of all things . . . if **by any means** I might attain unto the RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD."

Jesus said (John 6:39) that all those whom the Father had given him he would—

"Raise up **at the last day**."

And in Luke 14:14, he declares that the righteous—

"Shall be recompensed **AT THE RESURRECTION OF THE JUST**."

And nowhere do we find either reward or punishment promised before then.

HADES

Hades in Greek, as **sheol** in Hebrew, is the general term for the place of the dead. The Greek had another word for "grave" used specifically. This was **mnemeion**, as in—

"Jesus therefore cometh to the grave—**mnemeion**" (John 11:38).

"The graves—**mnemeion**— were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose"
(Matt. 27:52).

Hades appears 11 times in the New Testament, and is always translated "hell" except 1 Cor. 15:55, where it is "grave." This is a quotation from Hos. 13:14, where the original is **sheol**. Acts 2:29-31, where **hades** is used, is also a quotation from the Old Testament (Psa. 16:10) where the original is **sheol**.

So it is definitely established that the Holy Spirit uses the word **hades** as an equivalent for **sheol**. And the Septuagint (Greek translation of old Testament) uses the word **hades** throughout for **sheol**. So whatever **sheol** means, so we are to understand **hades**.

Hades in Greek, has just the same primary meaning as **sheol** in Hebrew and "hell" in English. It is derived, according to the lexicons, from **eidon**, "to see," with the prefix a, meaning "not," therefore it means "not seen" or "unseen."

All 11 passages where **hades** occurs are consistent with the meaning of **sheol**—the universal hidden resting place of all the dead, and none give any possible suggestion of, or support to, the orthodox ideas of hell, except one, Luke 16:23, the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, which will be examined later.

This is the only instance, of all the 76 occurrences of **sheol** and **hades**, that gives any hint of consciousness or torment, and it will be apparent when we examine it that Christ is speaking in parables, and is using a popular superstition to confound its own supporters.

In Rev. 20:13-14, we learn that **hades** ("hell" in our version) is to be "cast into the lake of fire." To the orthodox conception, this presents an absurd paradox. To them, **hades** IS hell, and the lake of fire is hell, therefore hell is going to be cast into hell, and that will be the end of hell—how then can hell be eternal? And what is the hell that hell is cast into in order to destroy hell?

But in the true scriptural picture there is harmony and reason. **Hades** is the grave and the lake of fire is a symbol of everlasting destruction. As the final glorious conclusion, death and the grave, the signs and inseparable accompaniments of this mortal dispensation, are to be abolished, destroyed, consumed. Paul says similarly (1 Cor. 15:26)—

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

When the wicked have all finally been consumed into smoke and ashes, and all of this dying, mortal race have either been immortalized or destroyed, then there will be no more death, no more grave.

Death and **hades** (the grave) will have followed all other traces of mortality and evil into eternal oblivion. THIS is **hades** (the grave) being cast into the lake of fire—completely consumed and obliterated.

Paul says later in the same chapter (1 Cor. 15:54)—

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

Jesus said to Peter (Matt. 16:18):

"Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of **hades** shall not prevail against it."

And when he appeared to John in Patmos he said—

"I have the keys of **hades** and of death" (Rev. 1:18).

Christ's church is never, according to the popular conception, in **hell**, and consequently there would be no point in his having the keys of hell in order to open its gates for them.

But **death** and the **grave** DO claim them, but they do not eternally prevail over them. At his return, he will use these keys, and all whom he calls from the graves will come forth (John 5:28) just as he called Lazarus from the grave and he came forth. To this Paul refers when he says (1 Cor. 15:55-57)—

"O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? . . .

"Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

To have the keys of death and the grave is to have the power to open its gates and release those held therein.

GEHENNA

Gehenna appears 12 times, and is always rendered "hell." It has nothing to do with **sheol** or **hades** and to translate it by the same word as is done in the Common Version is unfaithful and inexcusable.

Gehenna is a proper name, and should be so used. There is no warrant for translating it "hell," just theological bias. It is the name of a place. It appears 13 times in the Old Testament and is always there treated as a proper name of an actual site—the Valley of Hinnom.

And in the New Testament, although truly it is used with a symbolic as well as a literal meaning, still it is on the literal meaning that the symbolic is based, and this cannot be understood if it is falsely translated.

For Jesus' allusions to it to be understood, the facts of the name and place must be known. And one fact we shall find throughout—it was a place of **destruction and corruption, and not of preservation in torment.**

Utter consuming destruction is always the fundamental idea behind this word.

The Greek **Gehenna** is a transliteration of the Hebrew **Gai Hinnom**, meaning "Valley of Hinnom." This valley of Hinnom was the refuse dump of the city of Jerusalem. It can be seen on any map of Jerusalem, curving around the south-western corner of the city. The Septuagint translators of the Old Testament into Greek use the word **Gehenna** where "Valley of Hinnom" appears in our version.

Originally, in this valley, there was a place called Topheth, and the history of the valley, as we are interested in it, begins with this place. The word Topheth is generally understood to mean "place of burning," and that is what it was. It was a place where, in the Canaanitish worship, human victims were burnt on an altar or sacrificed on the altar and the bodies then burned. Of King Ahaz it is recorded (2 Chr. 28:3)—

"Moreover he burnt incense in the Valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abomination of the heathen whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel."

The same is recorded of King Manasseh (2 Chr. 33:6).

As a result of these practices by the apostate kings of Judah, we find in 2 Kings 23:10 that Josiah, the reformer—

"Defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the children of Hinnom (**Gai Hinnom—Gehenna**), that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech."

This defilement by Josiah was the beginning of its use as the repository of the filth of Jerusalem. Here, right up to New Testament times, fires were kept perpetually burning for the consumption of the refuse of the city. The bodies of criminals were often cast into this place, as a final indignity and degradation.

Topheth is mentioned many times in Jeremiah 19. The prophet is sent there to prophesy against Jerusalem, and Topheth, the place of refuse and burning, is used as a symbol of destruction and defilement and consuming judgment.

Isaiah uses the same symbol in foretelling the destruction of Assyria. He says (Isa. 30:33):

"Tophet is ordained of old; for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it."

The use here is both literal and figurative, for while it was actually in this valley that the host of Sennacherib was destroyed, the prophecy obviously refers to the greater complete destruction of the latter day Assyrian power—the combined forces of Russia and Papal Europe.

In the New Testament the same is true. The literal Gehenna, just outside of Jerusalem, will figure largely as a site of the destructive fiery judgments to which the term is figuratively applied.

Thus the terms Tophet, Hinnom, or Gehenna were used to indicate devouring judgments and the destruction of anything that was cast out as useless and offensive and utterly consumed by corruption and fire.

Christ accordingly used the term of the destiny of the wicked, whom we have seen will be consumed to smoke and ashes by God's fierce anger.

As in the literal all which was rejected, undesirable, and unclean was cast into Gehenna outside the city, so into the consuming lake of fire outside the spiritual new Jerusalem will be cast all who are found unfit for access into the city.

Not one of the 12 references to Gehenna give any hint of sustained torment, but always, in keeping with other references to Tophet and Hinnom, to **burning consumption and destruction**. There is not the slightest support for the popular doctrine in any of the uses of Gehenna.

UNQUENCHABLE FIRE

Unquenched or unquenchable fire neither means everlasting fire nor everlasting torment. Unquenchable fire, as scripturally used, means fire that completely consumes its object and fulfils its purpose of destruction.

Sodom and Gomorrah "suffered the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7). It is not still burning.

God warned Israel (Jer. 17:27) that He would—

"Kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and shall **not be quenched**."

The fire was kindled, Jerusalem was burned, but the fire is not **still burning**. It was not quenched—it was not halted in its purpose.

Isaiah in the last verse of his prophecy, although he does not here mention Topheth or Gehenna, clearly refers to the same final judgment to which they are applied. He says—

"And they shall go forth, and look upon the **carcasses** of the men that have transgressed against Me:

"For their worm shall not die; neither shall their fire be quenched: and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

He does not, it is significant to note, speak of living persons in torment, but of **carcasses** being consumed by worm and fire.

TARTAROS

The third word in the New Testament translated "hell" in the Common Version is **Tartaros**. This occurs only once, 2 Pet. 2:4—

"God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to **tartaros**, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."

To the Greeks, **tartaros** appears to have signified a subterranean prison of dense darkness, or the outer void confines of the earth. And Peter here uses it as synonymous with **hades**. The chains of darkness and the reservation to future judgment are harmonious with this.

This verse is no support for the popular idea, but very much the reverse, for it describes hell as a place of darkness and confinement WAITING FOR judgment—a perfect description of **sheol** or **hades** scripturally understood, but nothing like the orthodox hell.

TWO PLACES APPEAR TO TEACH TORMENT

For this hideous and blasphemous doctrine, there are only two places in all the Bible which could be considered to give it the slightest shadow of support, and both of these upon examination demonstrate the utter baselessness of the belief.

It is almost unbelievable that on the basis of such meagre and twisted evidence, orthodox priestcraft should build such a repulsive and repugnant doctrine, in the face of the whole teaching and tenor of Scripture.

One would consider that men would be extremely reluctant to believe such things even on strong evidence, instead of eagerly snatching at isolated straws to support them in the very face of strong evidence. Unfortunately, the men who translated the Scriptures into our tongue were steeped in this error and have coloured their translation with it, as we have seen.

No honest and careful study of all the appearances of the words **Sheol**, **Hades** and **Gehenna**, and of the teachings of Scripture on the nature of man and the destiny of the wicked, could possibly produce the lurid nightmare that is the orthodox conception of eternal torments amid the fiery demons of hell.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

First, we ask, is this parable to be taken literally and all the other plain teaching of Scripture rejected upon the strength of it? We must face this issue squarely and choose. The Scriptures say the dead are asleep in the dust of the earth, they know nothing, they will come forth to resurrection and judgment at the last day. We have seen that this is the consistent teaching of the Bible throughout.

Now we must either flatly reject ALL this testimony, or we must regard this story for what it truly and obviously is, a **parable** worded according to the false doctrines of the very class Jesus was addressing—the Pharisees.

As is apparent from the contemporary Jewish historian Josephus, this account of Abraham's bosom, the great gulf, the tormenting flame, was part of the Pharisaical tradition by which they made void the Word of God (Mark 7:13), and Jesus was merely confounding them with their own errors and "answering a fool according to his folly" (Pro. 26:5) and "taking the wise in their own craftiness" (1 Cor. 3:19).

Compare his treatment of a similar Pharisaic fable (Matt. 12:27) and how he picked it up and turned it against his adversaries—

"If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges."

We are clearly told that Jesus deliberately spoke to them in parables **that they should not understand** (Matt. 13:10-13; Luke 8:10). This parable is in the middle of an obvious chain of other parables, and opens with the same introduction.

Taken literally, it is not in harmony with the orthodox conception of hell that it is claimed to prove. So-called immortal souls according to popular belief, do not possess fingers and eyes and tongues, neither is there visibility and conversation between heaven and hell. Taken literally, it is an absurdity from any point of view.

REV. 20:10 & 14:9-11

The other place used to support the theory of eternal torment is Rev. 20:10—

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

Similarly in Rev. 14:9-11—

"If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation.

"And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.

"And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

Here then is the whole case for eternal torment—a parable, and a case of obvious symbolism.

We submit that any attempt to take the admittedly symbolic book of Revelation literally to teach doctrines that are at complete variance with the whole tenor of plain Scripture is extremely unsound and unjustified interpretation.

It would not be suggested that the wine of the wrath of God, and the cup of His indignation, and the beast, and the mark on the forehead, and the great city Babylon, all mentioned in these very same verses, are to be taken literally. All these things must be understood in harmony with the first principles of Scripture.

In Rev. 20:14 we have death and hell cast into this same lake of fire. Can death be literally cast anywhere? Is hell cast into hell? To childishly take isolated part of this symbolism to bolster unscriptural notions is not the course of honesty or wisdom.

The plain scriptural teaching on the state of the dead and the destiny of the wicked is too clear and repeated to give any excuse for false doctrines to be built on such passages as these.

And it could be mentioned in passing that the expression here translated "for ever and ever" does not in the Greek carry the same unlimited sense as the English, and must be understood in relation to the matter involved.

On the basis of all the foregoing, we conclude without doubt that HELL, as scripturally understood, is the grave, the silent, dark, unseen resting-place of ALL the sleeping dead, the land of oblivion and forgetfulness—and not the eternal, flaming torture-chamber of orthodox superstition.

—G.V.G.

Signs of the Times

Bro. Beauchamp is improving, and hopes to resume the Signs next month, if the Lord will. His address is: 141 Princeton Ave., Claremont, California.

A Vow of a Nazarite

NUMBERS CHAPTER SIX

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning"—Rom. 15:4.

THE Scripture, therefore, in all its parts, is profitable for instruction in righteousness. Much of that instruction, however, is not found on the surface, but is concealed in symbol and type, and requires investigation and study in order to obtain the benefit which it is intended to afford.

A FORM OF KNOWLEDGE

The Law given through Moses to Israel is especially of this character. It abounds with concealed truths—

"As a shadow of good things to come . . ."
—it contains a—
". . . form of knowledge and of the Truth."

With the light of the New Testament, and especially by means of the exposition given in the Epistle to the Hebrews, we are enabled to arrive at the meaning of the many symbols and appointments of that Law.

Apart from the references made by Christ and the Apostles, we should be unable to perceive anything beyond the mere literal significance of many of its institutions. Certain commands are therein given which we might, at first sight, consider had reference solely to the community of Israelites to whom they were addressed.

We have learned, however, that such is not the case—that the Law was designed for a greater purpose than this—and we are justified, therefore, in attempting to look beneath the surface in order to ascertain the application of such commands to the children of God in later days.

The Apostle Paul gives an illustration of this in reference to the command to Israel that they should—

"Not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn."
—which command, he says, was given (1 Cor. 9:10)—

"Altogether for our sakes."

This fact may reasonably cause us to look for other instances of a similar nature, and such an instance is to be found in the laws and appointments in regard to the Nazarite.

THE NAZARITE

The particulars concerning the Nazarite are to be found in Numbers 6. We are there told that if any man or woman desired to—

"Separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves to the Lord."
—they were to do certain things. It was quite optional for any one to become a Nazarite, but in the event of their so doing, they were to strictly comply with certain requirements.

The word Nazarite means "one separated," and a Nazarite was one who "separated" or consecrated himself unto God for a certain time. The "days of separation" might be few or many, according to the wish of the Nazarite; in some cases they extended to the whole life. Samson was to be a Nazarite to God—

"From the womb to the day of his death" (Judges 13:7).

In general, however, it was just for a period.

THE REQUIREMENTS

During the "days of separation," the Nazarite was commanded to abstain, or "separate himself," from wine and strong drink. Not because wine and strong drink are necessarily evil, for he was also commanded to abstain from "grapes" and "vinegar." The apostle says—

"Every creature of God is good, but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean."

To a Nazarite, wine and strong drink, and also grapes and vinegar, were forbidden things, and to him, therefore, they would be unclean. But not only was he to abstain from these things during his separation, but he was forbidden to eat anything that was derived from the vine tree—

"From the kernels even to the husks" (vs. 3-4).

He was to separate himself from the vine, and all its products, in every respect, to the very smallest detail.

Also, during his separation, the Nazarite was to permit no razor to come upon his head—

"He shall be holy and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long"(v. 5 RV).

He was likewise to be careful not to approach any dead body, to render himself unclean in any way even for his nearest friends and relations. All the days of his separation he was to be—

"Holy unto the Lord" (v. 8).

At the termination of the days of his separation, the Nazarite was to present himself to the priest with certain offerings; his head was then to be shaved and the hair burnt, and he was then at liberty to partake of wine again from which he had abstained during his separation.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING

IT IS manifest that there is a meaning to these things beyond that which appears upon the surface. It has already been pointed out that a Nazarite was one who separated or consecrated himself to God by a vow. Now this is the position of all the children of God. They are all spiritual Nazarites—separated ones. They have been called by the Gospel to be the children of God, and they have come out from the world, and, so doing, have tacitly vowed to be a separate people to God.

They are still in the world, but not of it; they are no longer free to serve themselves, but have become Christ's servants; they are therefore under his law—a separated, peculiar people. It is to such that the command is given—

"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean"
(2 Cor. 6:17).

Here, then, is our Nazariteship as saints; we are required to be separate, to abstain from the unclean, and to be wholly consecrated to God all our days; and, in our case, the separation continues during our entire probation.

We are commanded to be separate from the world and from the things of the world: to esteem ourselves as not of it; as strangers passing through it, guided by divine principles alone, and avoiding its defilements. We are required to do so, because it is evil; because it is the enemy of God; and though aspects of the world often appear harmless enough, the command is binding—

"BE YE SEPARATE!"

* * *

WINE AND THE VINE

The Nazarite was required to be separate from the vine. Now, if we turn to Rev. 14, we shall see that the vine is there used as a symbol of this "present evil world." In v. 14 we have brought before us the coming of Christ in judgment, having in his hand a sharp sickle; and he is adjured to thrust in his sickle and—

"Gather the clusters of the vine of the earth."

In v. 19 it is recorded—

"The angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God."

This symbolism is very expressive. We have frequent usage of the vine in the Scripture in regard to the nation of Israel. They are compared in Isa. 5, to a vine planted by God, which notwithstanding His care manifested in its cultivation, brought forth bad fruit. Verse 2 states—

"He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes."

The explanation is given (v. 7):

"The vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant; and He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry."

That which is here said in regard to the Israelitish vine is applicable to the "vine of the earth." The constitution of things upon the earth is evil: it is very fitly compared to a noxious vine which brings forth evil fruit—the fruits of the flesh. Some of the wine yielded by this vine is referred to in Rev. 17, where the Roman harlot is depicted as having a cup, the wine of which has intoxicated the nations. The saints must stand apart from this wine, nor indeed have they any relish for it.

Now and again, however, we have had brethren in our midst who have endeavoured to persuade us to drink again of some of this wine which we know to be impure.

The vine of the earth is destined to be destroyed; it is not always to cumber God's fair earth yielding its evil fruits, the harvest draws nigh: her grapes are fully ripe, and Christ is coming with his sharp sickle to reap and uproot the whole system of things, and destroy it in the great wine-press of the wrath of God. In this work of judgment the saints will be associated with Christ. They are to have the honor of executing "the judgment written"—

"This honor have all His saints." (Ps. 149:9).

The vine of the earth is to be destroyed by them in association with Christ. Meanwhile they are to stand apart from it; to be separate from the world and its concerns; to regard it as the enemy of God; to abstain from its wine, and to have no participation in its evil fruit.

In view of the fact that God condemns the world as evil, and that the saints are to be the instruments in reaping and destroying it, how reasonable is it, and how necessary is it, that we separate from it.

The Nazarite was forbidden to partake of **anything** connected with the vine "from the kernel to the husk." Here then is a lesson to us; to have no connection with or participation in the unfruitful works of darkness; to keep our garments unspotted from the slightest taint of worldly ways. As the Nazarite was to beware of partaking of the vine in every detail so we are commanded to avoid even the very "**appearance of evil**" all the days of our separation.

THE ETERNAL PARTAKING

The Nazarite, **when the days of his separation were expired**, was permitted to partake of the fruit of the vine. There is a parallel to this in our case. If we are separate from the present evil system of things for Christ's sake—if we deny ourselves of its pleasures NOW, and are consecrated to his service—the time will come when the earth, with all its pleasures and blessings, will be given into our hands. Paul assures us—

"The WORLD is yours . . . ALL THINGS are for your sakes!"

For the brief present we are required to stand apart; but if we are faithful, the day will come when we shall no longer be asked to abstain from the pleasures of the world; it will then be in a condition of righteousness, and will be possessed by the righteous who will—

"Delight themselves in the abundance of peace."

Let us be separate now: the day is at hand when the world will be ours, and all its blessings at our disposal.

There is another reason why we should be separate from the world—from the evil vine which is to be destroyed—and that is because we are constituents of the true Vine. Jesus said—

"I am the true Vine, ye are the branches."

The present system of things is to pass away, with everything related to it, but the True Vine, composed of Christ and his saints, will be planted in the earth never to be removed, and which will bring forth the fruits of the Spirit—which will blossom and bud and fill the face of the earth with glorious fruit, providing the wine to be partaken of in the feast to be spread in Mount Zion (Isa. 25:6)—

"In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely" (Isa. 4:2).

Here, then, is sufficient reason why we should patiently wait that day; meanwhile standing aloof from the "vine of the earth" in every respect, realizing that the harvest draws nigh—the time for its destruction, and for the planting of the true vine in its place.

NO RAZOR ON HIS HEAD

ANOTHER feature in regard to the Nazarite was that his hair was to be allowed to grow long. This was not customary amongst the Jews, and the Nazarite was to depart from the usual custom because God has so commanded. The apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 11:14 says—

"Doth not nature itself teach you, that if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him?"

The Nazarite would, therefore, by obedience to this command, be rendered peculiar, and would be subject to shame and ridicule. It would be a trial of faith and obedience to suffer this shame, but he would, if a faithful Nazarite, be heedless of the shame and peculiarity and unmoved by it; because he would realize that in allowing his hair to grow long he was obeying a divine command and doing the will of God.

Besides, he would recognize that the shame was only a temporary thing. At the end of the "days of separation," that which caused the shame was to be destroyed—his hair was to be cut off and burned, and the shame would exist no longer.

Here, surely, the application to the saints is plain. Faithfulness for Christ—entire consecration to him—will inevitably bring shame and reproach. The strict observance of Christ's commands will make us separate in every respect to those around us, and will cause us to be a "peculiar people:" our lives and actions diverse to others, who can have no sympathy with our endeavours to conform ourselves in harmony with God's will. As the "Bride," we must be humble, gentle, meek, unresisting, submitting in faith to oppression—qualities the very opposite from what the world in its foolishness and animal-likeness considers "manly" and admirable.

A peculiarity will be stamped upon us—our company will be disrelished, and we shall frequently have to suffer contumely and reproach for Christ's sake.

If we are wise, we shall not heed the shame nor be influenced by the opinion of those around us, but shall rather **rejoice in doing the will of God, no matter what the present results may be, for—**

"If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him."

There will come a day when the shame will be no more—when those who have faithfully borne reproach for Christ's sake will be honoured and glorified with him—

"The wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the promotion of fools."

Better is it to bear shame now for Christ's sake and participate in the future glory than to be honoured now and suffer "shame and everlasting contempt" at his appearing. We may be tempted to avoid the causes of shame, as the Nazarite doubtless would be tempted to remove the long hair that rendered him peculiar; but if we are wise, we shall be faithful to him who has called us, even though tribulation come upon us and those around us despise and ignore us.

HOLINESS

THE Nazarite was required to be holy all the days of his separation. Our days of separation extend through our entire probation and we are continually to be holy —

"Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16).

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"

(Heb. 12:14).

We are to walk —

"In holiness and righteousness before him—all the days of our life" (Luke 1:75).

Separation from the world, consecration to God, and holiness, must be the characteristics of the spiritual Nazarite.

To manifest this holiness requires continual effort and watchfulness; we are surrounded by evil—evil is within us—and we need to be vigilant and prayerful, lest we be entangled in the snares of sin and succumb to the suggestions of the flesh and of the world.

DEFILEMENT BY DEATH

THE Nazarite was forbidden to come near the dead, because such would be a defilement. He would, therefore, be careful not to do so, but it might be impossible in some cases to avoid it. An instance is given in Num. 6:9, in the case of a man dying suddenly near him, contact with whom he could not possibly have avoided. **Notwithstanding this, his proximity to the dead man was regarded as a defilement and a sin** (v.11)—

"He sinned by the dead."

But God is righteous, and a means of forgiveness was provided. The Nazarite was to bring certain offerings, and the priest was then to make an atonement for him.

There is a parallel to this in the case of the spiritual Nazarites. We are to be vigilant and watchful lest our garments be defiled (Jude 23)—

"Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh".

But owing to the weakness of the flesh—its "closeness" to us—there are many things which we do which we would not. In spite of continued vigilance and watchfulness, we frequently fail, and our garments are defiled and need cleansing. There is a means of forgiveness provided for such cases through the "offering of the body of Jesus Christ once"—

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

But this cleansing is not available for life of continual sin but, as John clearly warns us (1 John 1:7). **ONLY** for those who —

"Walk in the light, as he is in the light."

Let us be careful to "walk in the light," and then, if when so walking, we are "overtaken in a fault," there is hope in the means provided for our cleansing and forgiveness.

It behoves us, however, to remember that we are required to be holy—to be watchful, lest our garments should be defiled by the evil influence within and around. We are Nazarites; and we must therefore be separate and consecrated to Him whom we have vowed to obey.

THE PERFECT NAZARITE

IF we look at Christ we see the antitype of the Nazarite. He was a Nazarite—not according to the letter, but in the spirit. He was truly a separated one. He could truthfully say—

"I am not of the world."

He was as a lamb "without spot": holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. He bore the shame of the Nazarite—

"For thy sake I have borne reproach."

He "endured the cross, and despised the shame," unto the end of his life.

But the shame has gone for ever. He comes anon in glory, as the Branch of Righteousness, to take possession of the world which is covenanted to him—to remove the present evil, and, with his faithful and glorified saints who have followed in his footsteps, to be established in the earth as the true vine to fill the world with blessing and glorious fruit. —Christadelphian, 1889

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Faith Unfeigned

"Above all, taking the Shield of Faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked"—Eph. 6:16

THE apostle Paul writing to his son in the faith Timothy, in v. 5 of ch. 1 of each epistle, refers to "faith unfeigned" (in the 1st) and "unfeigned faith" (in the 2nd). In the opening verses of the 1st epistle Paul introduces himself and then calls attention to the futility of being so much engrossed in "fables and endless genealogies" which have a tendency to raise questions rather than godly edifying. We must not, as the natural tendency is, get sidetracked into inconclusive and repetitious crotchets, repeatedly harped on. We must advance our knowledge and study on a broad and balanced front.

At v. 5 he states in contrast what is real and genuine and practical and profitable—

"Now the end of the commandment is charity (love) out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

In 2 Tim. 1:5 he also speaks of the unfeigned faith that was in Timothy—

"Which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."

To feign a thing is to pretend, on a mere make-believe basis; while unfeigned is genuine with nothing artificial about it. Such is not a counterfeit faith, but one in which there is full persuasion and open manifestation—an active faith that guides the life. Unfeigned faith is not pretended, it is not false, with only an outward show, that like the dew upon the grass, is lost when the heat of fiery trials arises.

That true, genuine, unfeigned faith of the apostle's mind is that "hidden man of the heart" that is manifest in godly ways, and which in the sight of God is "of great price." It is a living faith that overcomes the fears and greed and lusts of the flesh, and displaces them as life's motive power.

FAITH COMETH BY HEARING

Although faith such as the apostle speaks of is not native to us, yet it is an essential virtue that we must develop; and the way—the ONLY way—it is developed he tells us in Rom. 10:17—

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

There is far more significance to this Scripture than the great majority realize. It is not a "once-for-all" process—just "learning the Truth," and that is it. Rather it is a constant, daily, life-long process—

"FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD."

The importance and necessity of faith is expressed plainly by Paul in Hebrews 11:6—

"Without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

In v. 1 of this Heb. 11, we find a definition of what faith really is—

"Now faith is the substance (ground) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

And he says in v. 2—

"By it the elders obtained a good report."

The elders referred to are those enumerated throughout the chapter, and the faith they had was genuine and robust—unfeigned—as is evident by a study of the individual lives of those mentioned—of what it caused them to DO, what it empowered them to endure and to overcome.

To Timothy Paul said—

"From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee **wise unto salvation through faith** which is in Christ Jesus.

There we see the source from which this strong faith comes—from **knowing** the Scriptures.

“OUT OF WEAKNESS WERE MADE STRONG”

IN our time we have places in different parts of the world that are called "halls of fame," where the record is kept of the lives and outstanding ability of the world's great men; but in Heb. 11 we have a "Hall of Faith." There we read of how the lives of godly men were developed in the fire of trial and affliction. Many of these trials touched vital and tender chords, even to great suffering and death; yet the trial of their faith worked patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.

It is well that we read this chapter often, and let our minds dwell on the great transformation that strong faith wrought in these people, making glorious examples of courage and endurance out of weak and common human clay. Do we have the mighty sustaining power of this faith? How much do we read and mediate upon the Word?

Then there comes the final 8 and beautiful picture of the end—

"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

A careful study of the lives of these individuals as recorded in this chapter would help us to understand the apostle's thoughts when he spoke of unfeigned faith; it would shut out all avenues of doubt and fear and bring us forth into that true sunlight of God's saving grace in which "faith unfeigned" with its strength and genuineness will obtain for us as it did for them "a good report." Let us then, while it is still called Today—

"Draw near with a true heart in full assurance of FAITH—having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith WITHOUT WAVERING, for He is faithful that promised."

"ALL THINGS BUT DUNG"

LOOKING at the life of the apostle Paul, we note that there was nothing feigned or artificial about him, neither was there anything counterfeit, but genuine sincerity and faithfulness. Not boastfully but from the heart he wrote to the Philippians (3:8-9).

"Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found of him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, t h e righteousness which is of God by faith."

The apostle's whole life was regulated or arranged so he might be well-pleasing to God in service to the Truth and the Brotherhood. Nothing else mattered for a moment; nothing else held his interest or attention. He had learned through the Gospel how to be abased and seek not his own personal advantage, but that of the spiritual man—

"Christ that liveth in me."

He thus kept under his body, and brought it into subjection to the holy laws of God, lest he himself might become a castaway. Can we say with Paul that the life we now live is Christ living in us, and that we are dead to the world and the natural interests of the flesh?

SONGS IN PRISON

THE sincerity and earnestness of the apostle's life may be seen from the incident of his imprisonment with Silas at Philippi. They spent their time, not in moaning over their unfortunate predicament; but in prayer and song to God. Cruelly beaten, painfully confined in stocks in the dark dungeon, not knowing what suffering the next day would bring—what had they to sing and give thanks about?

They had EVERYTHING eternal and worthwhile to rejoice and be thankful for, AND SO DO WE!

And on Mars Hill in the midst of an idolatrous and wicked people, Paul firmly presented to the mocking "wise" of the world the revealed facts concerning the real, true and living God—

"In Whom we live and move and have our being."

And later, in the face of the Spirit's warning that bonds and afflictions awaited him in Jerusalem, the apostle went forth unmoved, willing rather to die than deviate from duty.

This was not mere showmanship on the apostle's part, but that TRUE FAITH, that glorious, transforming faith, as gold tried in the fire, by which he became rich (though he suffered the loss of all things)—

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

He told the Ephesians—

"I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."

And he also warned them that after his departure, grievous wolves would enter in among them, "not sparing the flock."

These brethren knew of the truth and sincerity of Paul's words; for—

"They all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words he spake, that they should see his face no more."

What a full assurance of faith shines forth from his testimony as a prisoner before Felix, that though men declared his hope to be heresy, yet he knew the truth of those things whereof he affirmed! And before Agrippa and Festus, confident hope, born of unfeigned faith, stands out in calm assurance—

"I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness."

And as we study these things, let us try to enter deeply into the wonderful, heavenly spirit of the apostle's life. Let us also think of the words of James (2:5)—

"Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?"

FAITH THAT WORKS BY LOVE

THOUGH at this time we emphasize faith, yet we are not unaware of the fact that abstract faith alone will not save us. James asks (2:14)—

"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?"

The faith of Paul—the faith of all the spiritual heroes of Heb. 11—was not a mere professed belief—a mere technical conviction. It was life-transforming POWER.

Faith must be manifested in works or it is dead—

"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble.

"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? (Jam. 2:19).

The workings out of a living faith (unfeigned) is what Paul wrote to the Ephesians about when he exhorted them to walk worthy of God—

"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering forbearing one another in love."

BE STRONG IN THE LORD

At the close of his message he tells them—

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

His reason for the strength and armour is given—

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world—against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Such being the case, we must be well prepared for the fight, not with carnal weapons, such as sword and spear, but with the Truth in its various aspects: the breastplate of righteousness, feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

But "ABOVE ALL," the apostle says—

"Taking the **SHIELD OF FAITH**, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

This same thought is also expressed in 1 Thess. 5:8—

"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."

GROUNDING AND SETTLED

The apostle, writing to the Hebrews, speaks of a promise being left of entering into God's rest. The promise was not obtained by Israel, to whom it was first preached, because—

"They could not enter in because of unbelief — 'unfaith'—faithlessness."

And so the great call of the Gospel to us is to—

"Continue in the faith, **grounded and settled**, and not moved away; for as ye have received of the Lord Jesus, so let us walk."

We must be firmly "grounded and settled" in calm and patient faith—a faith that sees clearly through to the end, for—

"He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."

Our stability and confidence come from the Lord Jesus as we are—

"Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."

So we press on with assurance—

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

"Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Outward Adorning

"She painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window"—2 Kings 9:30

IT IS scarcely possible to add to the clarity and expressiveness with which the apostles' meaning on this subject comes out to the English reader, and especially if what Paul and Peter say are placed side by side, or merged into one comprehensive statement of the case thus:

"LET IT NOT BE"

"Whose adorning (says Peter), let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel."

That is, as Paul puts it—

"Not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array."

"BUT LET IT BE"

"But let it be (says Peter) the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit."

And with regard to their exterior, as Paul says—

"That women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety."

Incorruptible adorning within, and modest apparel without, is what the apostles here enjoin upon the daughter of Sarah. This we are told accompanied by good works, is at once becoming women professing godliness, and of great price in the sight of God; and further, that it was just the way in which the holy women of old adorned themselves.

A challenging and profusely ornamented exterior does not agree very well with the profession of the Truth. Such an exterior speaks only of vanity and the "lust of the eye," which (as John says) "is not of the Father, but of the world."

Neat and modest arrangements that do not aim at any undue display of the natural man, no doubt every way best coincide with the spirit and precepts of our holy calling, in one of which we are exhorted to be "clothed with humility."

The thing enjoined by the apostles is an edifying spectacle to behold. But the other thing, pleasing as it may be to the mere "lust of the eye," is an offence to spiritual taste.

There can be no doubt that modern fashion of cutting ladies' hair short, is a breach of the objects God had in view, in endowing women with long hair; for, as Paul says, her long hair is at once both a glory and a covering (or vesture, as the word is rendered in Heb. 1:12).

On the other hand, Paul evidently endorses the view, that it is a shame for woman to be shorn—in such a case shorn of her glory and covering; for what would be to the shame of a man in this particular, is to the glory of the woman.

—**Christadelphian, 1889**

1964 BEREAN CHRISTADELPHIAN TEXAS FRATERNAL GATHERING

HYE, TEXAS

If the Lord Will

JULY 27-AUG. 2

MON

JULY 27

9:00 a.m.

11:00 a.m.

3:00 p.m.

8:00 p.m.

SPEAKER, Bro.:

G. Growcott

Nick Mammone

O. Beauchamp

SUBJECT:

BUSINESS MEETING

"The Mind of Christ"

REVELATION 9:12-21

GOD: His Unity; His glorious Characteristics of Love, Holiness, Goodness, Wisdom and Power; His Self-Revelation in the Bible; His Gracious Call to Men to Approach Him for Life and Happiness.

TUESDAY JULY 28

9:30 a.m.

11:00 a.m.

3:00 p.m.

8:00 p.m.

Tip Hill

David Clubb

Nick Mammone

READ and DISCUSS DAILY BIBLE READINGS

"The Things Concerning the Kingdom of God"

REVELATION 10

SIN: Cause of all Sorrow, Evil and Death: What it is; How It Began; God's Provision for Its Removal Through Christ. Only a Very Few Escape—The Bible Tells How.

WEDNESDAY JULY 29

9:30 a.m.

11:00 a.m.

3:00 p.m.

8:00 p.m.

James MacIvor

Wayne Wolfe

John Randell

READ and DISCUSS DAILY BIBLE READINGS

"Working While Waiting"

REVELATION 11:1-13

DEATH: An Unconscious Sleep; Most Will Remain In the Grave Forever; The Responsible (Through Knowledge) Will Rise at the Last Day for Judgment—some to Punishment and to Return to Everlasting Death.

THURSDAY JULY 30

9:30 a.m.

11:00 a.m.

3:00 p.m.

8:00 p.m.

Bill Edwards

D. Sommerville

O. Beauchamp

READ and DISCUSS DAILY BIBLE READINGS

"Watch Ye Therefore*"

REVELATION 11:13-19

THE ONE TRUE GOSPEL: The Return of Christ to Destroy All Human Governments and Rule the Earth In Righteousness and Peace: This is the Gospel We Must Believe to Be Saved.

FRIDAY JULY 31

9:30 a.m.

11:00 a.m.

3:00 p.m.

8:00 p.m.

D. Sommerville

Troy Haltom

James MacIvor

READ and DISCUSS DAILY BIBLE READINGS

"Consider the Stranger"

REVELATION 12

BAPTISM: Complete Immersion in Water After Knowledge and Belief of the Gospel: The Only Way of Entrance into Christ and Fellowship With God. No Salvation Any Other Way.

SATURDAY AUGUST 1

9:00 a.m.

11:00 a.m.

3:00 p.m.

8:00 p.m.

John Packer

Wayne Jr. Wolfe

G. Growcott

BUSINESS MEETING

"A Privileged People"

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

SIGNS OF THE TIMES: The World Today In the Light of Prophecy Concerning the Conditions and Events of the Last Days of Human Wickedness and Misrule of the Earth

SUNDAY AUGUST 2

10:30 a.m.

John Randell

"The One Pearl of Great Price: Except a Corn of Wheat Fall Into the Ground and Die, It Abideth Alone"

PRINTED IN U.S.A.
