

The Berean Christadelphian

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

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

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

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

DENVER, Colo.—432 So. Emerson St.—Memorial Services 11 a.m.; Sunday School 10 a.m.

GREETINGS to the Household of Faith:

Our recent visitors have been bro. Fred Higham, Jr. (Detroit ecclesia), bro. John Randell (Southern California ecclesia), and bro. and sis. Braden Edwards (Canton ecclesia).

We were spiritually strengthened by words of exhortation from all our visiting brethren.

We appreciate them coming to be with us, as it gives us much encouragement to be associated with our brothers and sisters. —bro. John Osborne

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BOSTON, Mass.—Wesleyan Bldg., 581 Boylston St.—Bible Class 10:30 a.m.; Memorial 11:45 a.m.

AS 1964 draws to a close and we pass in review the time of our sojourning for the year, we make this, our report, to the Berean magazine.

As we do this it brings to our mind the fact that we are another year nearer to our Lord's return and the judgment seat, when we shall be called to review the history of our lives during our probation.

Although we may be few in number, and in the trials of our faith and weakness of human nature we may at times be discouraged, we have this consolation that we are not alone: for Christ has said that "Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them."

The knowledge of the Truth that has been engendered in our hearts and minds is a privilege that the world does not possess, for they are "without hope and without God in the world."

During the year we have had the cooperation and help of the Worcester ecclesia. Bre. Wesley Prentice and Will Davey have lectured for us on several occasions. Bre. Waid, Hanna, and Edgar Davey have given the word of exhortation at the memorial several times. We enjoyed their company and deeply appreciate their help and labor of love in the Truth.

Occasionally we have had one or two strangers attend the lectures.

As visitors from other ecclesias: on Mar. 22 we enjoyed the company of bro. N. Mammone and sis. Kathy Sommerville of New Jersey. Brother Mammone gave us the word of exhortation which was encouraging.

During the month of July we had bro. & sis. Gibson with us meeting around the table of the Lord on two Sundays, at which times we were again exhorted and edified by brother Gibson, which was a further stimulant to our spiritual needs.

While they were here we had many profitable discussions on the Truth, and in our study at our Eureka Class on Wednesday evenings.

Our great sorrow for the year has been the absence from the established assembly of the ecclesia of bro. & sis. Russell which has forced upon us the sad duty of withdrawal. It is our earnest prayer that their attitude might change, and again be re-established in fellowship with us.

During the summer we have had the privilege of attending two outings of the Worcester ecclesia at Worcester.

Such associations with brethren and sisters of other ecclesias of like faith are a source of spiritual comfort and strength, and help to keep us in the bond of unity and love in the Truth.

It is a pleasure to welcome any who may be able to avail themselves of this opportunity of meeting with us around the table of the Lord. —bro. Edgar A. Sargent

* * *

HOUSTON, Tex.—8008 Junius St.—Sun. Sch. 10 a.m.; Breaking of Bread, 11 a.m.; Lecture every 3rd Sunday, 7:30 p.m.; Eureka Class, 7 p.m. other Sunday Evenings; Exposition of Daniel, Wed. 7:30 p.m.

WE sadly report the "falling asleep in Christ" of our beloved sister, Ellen Johnson on Aug. 16, 1964. We were assisted in the necessary arrangements by our bro. John F. Packer, and sister Ellen was laid to rest August 18th in Cedar Bayou, Texas, where, with her parents, bro. & sis. J. O. Banta, and her brother Emitt Wilson Banta, she awaits the call to "come forth."

Sister Ellen was the wife of our brother Harry Johnson, and the mother of our brother Roy Johnson. She was immersed into the Saving Name, June 11, 1933. While we "sorrow not, even as others which have no hope," we look for that day when our loved one will arise with the dead in Christ at his coming, when—

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

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words . . ."

* * *

Visitors around the table of the Lord July 26th included brothers August Fabris and G. V. Growcott of Detroit; bro. David Clubb, and sisters Grace Cartlidge, Mary Gwalchmai and Ethel Ross of London; sis. Lucy Anderson of Buffalo; bro. & sis. H. A. Sommerville, bro. Nick Mammone, and sisters Cathy Sommerville, Grace Frisbie, and Ella Smith of Hawley, Pa.; and sis. Carolyn Thompson of Tyler.

Prior to the 26th we also had the pleasure of the company of sis. Jessie Hatcher of San Saba, and bro. & sis. Ross Wolfe of Lampasas.

The word of exhortation on the 26th was administered by bro. Growcott, who spoke on the Constitution and the Statement of Faith. A special effort that evening, although advertised in local media, attracted no stranger. Bro. Growcott lectured at that time; his subject: "The Evidence of Fulfilled Prophecy to the Bible's Truth and Inspiration."

Other lectures for July and August have included: "Daniel-Chapter Seven," by brother Roy Johnson; and "Man Has Not an Immortal Soul. Hell is the Grave," by brother Troy Haltom.

It has been our pleasure also to have a number of the brethren and sisters who attended the Fraternal Gathering at Hye to return to Houston with us for a few days. Besides those from Detroit, London and Hawley, there was also sis. Barbara MacIvor of the Toronto ecclesia. Sister Ethel Ross of London stayed on for a few weeks. We thank Him Who knows our needs, for the communion and fellowship of these brothers and sisters.

* * *

It is with deep sorrow and reluctance that we report the necessity of withdrawing fellowship from bro. & sis. R. H. Carney, sis. Arleen Carney, and sis. Rhoda Armstrong because of their continued absence from the Table of the Lord.

We feel a great loss in our midst, and hope and pray that they may see the urgency to return to the Body before the return of the Master. —bro. C. Banta

* * *

LETHBRIDGE, Alta., Can.—633 7th St. S.—Memorial 11 a.m.; Sunday School 12:30 p.m.; Lecture 7:30 p.m.; Bible Class Wednesday 8 p.m.

IT is with sorrow we record the death of our oldest member, brother Robert Henry Neville, in his 87th year, the husband of our sister Elizabeth Neville. Bro. W. Pickford spoke words of comfort to the brethren and sisters and friends, assuring them that we sorrow not as others without hope. We believe that Jesus rose again, and those who sleep in him will also rise again.

The grim reaper death still reigns in our midst, but Paul reminds us of that glorious day to come, when death will be destroyed, and Eden bloom on earth again.

To all the brethren and sisters of like Faith we say with Job—

"I KNOW that my Redeemer liveth!"

—bro. Wm. Blacker

* * *

SOUTH CALIFORNIA—Corner of E. Pearl & N. Palomares Sts., Pomona, Cal.—Sundays: Class 10:30 a.m.; Memorial Service 11:30 a.m.; Lecture first Sunday in month 3:30 p.m.; Bible Class Thurs. 8 p.m. at homes of brethren & sisters.

SINCE last reporting we have had one visitor to our memorial services. On July 19 we had the pleasure of the company in fellowship of sis. Grace C. Frisbie of the Honesdale, Pa., ecclesia. Always it is an occasion of joy when one of like precious Faith can be with us. By the association of those who come from a distance and are of one mind with us, we are assured there are others in the world who seek to uphold the principles of doctrine and precept we stand for.

We are reminded of many periods in the history of man since the days of Adam, when there have been only a few who have remained faithful to the laws and commandments of God, as in the days of Noah, and in Sardis—

"Thou hast a few names which have not defiled their garments."

Therefore let each one of us remain firm to the trust, for God has entrusted us with the words of HIS TRUTH.

We hope others will visit us, and we extend a hearty invitation to any coming this way to be with us.

We continue our monthly lectures. However, during the past few months we have not had any strangers to hear the Gospel message.

May we take this opportunity to remind all concerning our Gathering to be held, God willing, on Nov. 27, 28 & 29. It would be much appreciated if any planning to attend would inform us. In this way we can make reservations for their stay in California.

With love to all from your brethren and sisters here,

—bro. John T. Randell

Sterling Countries Subscriptions

If it is easier for you, domestic money orders or ordinary checks payable in sterling in England are quite acceptable. We can endorse them over and use them to pay accounts in England.

We are very happy to send the Berean free to any who desire it that way. Please do not hesitate to ask. We desire the circulation to be as wide as possible, and all to have it who would like it. Whether or not it is paid for is a secondary consideration. All may be assured that expenses are taken care of without burden on any.

EDITORIAL

He Raised Up unto Them David

"I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after Mine Own heart, which shall fulfil all My Will"
—Acts 13:22

THE life of David should arouse deep interest each time he is brought before us in our daily Bible readings. His record is one of the most complete found in the Bible and, like Moses, reveals the great part he exercised in the development of the nation of Israel.

He possessed all of the weaknesses of human nature, and was often overcome by the trials from which we all suffer.

But David always manifested complete faith in God, and displayed the right spirit when confronted with his failings, and during his periods of chastisement.

One thing that shines forth throughout his life was his love for the revealed wisdom of God in the Mosaic institutions, which he so vividly manifested in the Psalms, especially in Ps. 119—

"Open Thou mine eyes, (that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law"—v. 18.

"O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day" —v. 97.

"Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them"—v. 159.

When we look at David as king over Israel, we see a great contrast to the men in similar positions in our day. He was not always a king, nor was he the son of a king. He was an obscure shepherd boy, and a member of a large, humble family. He came into his position because of a visit of Samuel the prophet, whom God had sent to the home of Jesse in Bethlehem, saying, "I have provided Me a king among his sons."

If we look at David's failings, we are unable to understand why he was chosen, because we look at the outward appearance as Samuel did when the sons of Jesse passed before him. As he looked on Eliab, Samuel said to himself, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him." But when David was chosen, Samuel was informed that—

"The Lord seeth not as a man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart"—1 Sam. 16:7.

What a lesson for us who are so prone to look at the outward appearance, and criticize the failings (or what may appear so to us) of our brethren and sisters. This was one of the strong points in the teaching of Jesus when he spoke on the mount, for it was there he said—

"Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"—Matt. 7:3.

* * *

God has given us rich provision to strengthen and build us up so that we can face and conquer many things. Much of this is found in the life and works of David, and we must not fail to observe his great zeal for upholding God's Name and Word. Listen to him, even in his youth, when he came before Goliath—

"Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the Name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, Whom thou hast defied"—

1 Sam. 17:45.

The result was a complete victory for Israel. David did not endeavour to obtain any favour for the part he had played, but it reacted to David's detriment in stirring up the jealousy of Saul, which increased to such an extent that Saul determined to kill David. The situation became so intense, that

David had to flee for his life, and remained in hiding many months, during which time he was continuously pursued by Saul.

But in due time Saul was removed from the scene, and David assumed his role as king, but it was over seven years more before he was finally established as king over all Israel.

Even though David suffered intensely because of Saul's determination to get rid of him, we see the beauty of his character when the news reached him concerning the death of Saul and Jonathan. This is portrayed in his lamentation recorded in the first chapter of 2nd Samuel, from which we quote the following—

"The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided."

* * *

IN their determination to work out their salvation, there is a marked similarity between David and Paul. In the case of David, this purpose comes to our attention many times in the Psalms, particularly in Ps. 27: 4—

"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple."

Paul, too, passed through great suffering and persecution, but he was never discouraged. His determination to work out his salvation appears in all his letters, especially in Phil. 3:13:

"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

But this characteristic can also be seen in many of God's servants, some of whom are recorded in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, of whom Paul says:

"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."

Salvation does not come to us merely because we have believed the Gospel, and have been baptized into Christ. We must have a determination similar to that of Paul and David and, as Peter said (2 Peter 3:18), we must:

"Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

There must be a growth in the knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures. But let us be extremely careful that we do not become wise above that which is written. That happened during the early centuries after Christ, and it can happen now by men becoming highly "educated" according to the world's standards. Then turning to the Bible, they attempt to bring it into harmony with their scientific "knowledge", and when they fail to do so, they come to the conclusion that the Bible is wrong, or must be specially reinterpreted according to modern thought.

The knowledge of the Truth can affect us in one of two ways. It can stir us to the very depths of our being, and cause us to walk in newness of life, and be the guiding principle of all we say and do, and cause us to say as David did in Psa. 119:103—

"How sweet are Thy Words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!
"Through Thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way."

On the other hand, it may come to us as a mental pastime, as something to play with by questioning the translation of certain words, and by picking at this or that—something to gratify our intellectual pride, and display our superficial cleverness. By wasting our time on things of no value, we can easily come to love our worldly wisdom, and fail to love the Truth. The result will be as Paul has said in 2 Thess. 2:11—

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."

OUR final thought brings us to the closing days of David's life. He had a strong desire to discontinue the use of the tabernacle, and build a house of worship. Therefore it must have been a grievous disappointment to him when Nathan the prophet informed him that his plan did not meet with God's approval. But David went at once to the ark of the Lord, and offered thanks and prayer.

What a wonderful lesson for us! He did not become jealous, and try to hinder the work of one whom God permitted to build, but enthusiastically did all in his power to help and to prepare. Let us therefore ever keep this thought before our minds, and when another has a work to do in the service of the Lord, may we be found ready to assist as David did. —Editor

Growth

"Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and all hypocrisies and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby."

JUST as the child cannot develop into normal adulthood if its body is afflicted with toxins which prevent healthful development of the body, so one whose mind is continually poisoned by the perverse thinking of the carnal mind and a spirit of fault-finding cannot grow and develop spiritually, but remains a dwarf, never attaining to the stature of a full-grown man in Christ Jesus.

Just as all toxic elements must be purged from the body before healthy growth is possible, poisonous thinking—the natural "mind of the flesh"—MUST be laid aside before the spiritual growth can develop.

We may not all be efficient teachers, but we all have opportunity of feeding upon the Word of Truth by which we live and become grounded and settled in the Word and become full grown men and women in Christ Jesus. —O.B.

Financial Report: We have on hand \$365, with October paid for. Expenses to the end of the year should be about \$250 (for November and December issues).

Teach Us to Pray

By **BROTHER JOHN THOMAS**

"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" Luke 18:1

THESE are the words of Jesus, which he illustrated by the parable of the unfortunate widow (Luke 18). And what is it that this exhortation indicates more particularly as the object of prayer?

It is that God may avenge His Own elect, who cry day and night unto Him through many generations.

Those who have obeyed the Gospel of the Kingdom can alone offer acceptable prayer to God through Jesus Christ; for all the clouds of perfume John saw ascending from the golden vials to the throne, were—

"The prayers of the saints."

He saw no others; and could see none: for there is no fragrance in the exhalations of the disobedient. Prayer is a—

"Spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

Such sacrifice can only be offered by the true believers, who have been introduced into him by faith and the obedience it prescribes. Men have yet to learn that—

"To OBEY is better than sacrifice."

Prayers, and alms-giving, and praises, and breaking of bread, and morality of life (speaking in the dialect of men) are acceptable and delightful odours **when offered by the saints**, who are as "golden vials" in the Temple of the Lord. But when they burn from the hearts of the disobedient, the stench of corruption mingles with their incense, and becomes abomination in the nostrils of Him whose **precepts** they disregard—

"The sacrifice of the unjustified is an abomination to the Lord, but He heareth the prayer of the righteous . . .

"The Lord is far from the unjustified" (Prov. 15:8-29).

"The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (Psa. 34:15-16).

These testimonies are sufficient to enable an ingenuous and candid inquirer to discern the scriptural and appropriate medium for the expression of the desires of the human heart in their tendency towards the throne of grace. And, in discerning this, to rightly appreciate the valueless character of the Popish and Protestant rhapsodies which desecrate the Name.

Prayer cannot reach the throne unless it proceed from "a heart purified by faith working by love" and in which "Christ dwells by faith."

Such a heart is an OBEDIENT heart—a heart which has—

"**Purified** its soul in the OBEDIENCE of the Truth" (1 Pet. 1:22).

The prayer of such an one is incense before the throne, which arrives there as if ascending from Christ himself; because Christ dwells in them that have—

"The faith of Jesus, and KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS of God."

"We know that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshipper of God, and DOETH HIS WILL, him He heareth" (John 9:31).

Do they do the will of God, who, from whatever cause, do not obey the Gospel of the Kingdom which Jesus and the apostles preached?—

"If judgment begin at the House of God . . ."

—said Peter (who first preached it, in the name of Jesus as its King)—

". . . what shall the end be of them who obey not the Gospel of God?"

It will be seen from these premises that "sinners" include not simply criminals of flagrant delinquency; but all those pious sentimentalists also, who are upon such excellent terms with themselves, and who compose "the churches" of Popish and Protestant Christendom. Pious sinners who know not, obey not, the "GOSPEL OF GOD."

What they call "prayer" is the sum total of their superstitions—vain repetitions and rhapsodies, which, if answered, would wrap the universe in flames, and turn "the exceeding great, and precious

promises of God" into falsehood and vain deceit. No, no; He hears not sinners, be they devout or impious: His ears are not open to their prayers. In time of trouble—

"They cry, but there is none to save them; even unto Jehovah, but He answers them not"
(Psa. 18:41).

Christ dwells not in their hearts my faith (belief) of the:

"Things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus."

They believe not in the Kingdom, and understand not his Name; so that when they try to pray, their random outpourings call upon God to do things which would forever exclude the Kingdom from the covenanted land; and to grant them remission of sins upon principles which reduce the Name of Jesus to a nullity.

Acceptable prayer is the expression of the desire of a heart purified by belief of THE TRUTH (2 Thess. 2:13). If this definition be received, it is to be hoped that the inquirer will not be afraid of the conclusions to which it leads.

* * *

SEEING then, that it is only OBEDIENT believers of the Truth, styled "the saints," whose prayers can find access to the throne with divine acceptance, the question arises, "What ought they more particularly to pray for?"

As the establishment and glory of the Kingdom of God should be our ardent hope, so our prayers, before all things, should be for this. Thus the first petition in that pattern of prayer which our Lord taught his disciples is—

"Thy Kingdom COME; Thy will be done ON EARTH as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).

Shall we pray for OUR daily bread? Shall we pray for the forgiveness of OUR trespasses, and be fervent in prayer for what concerns OUR own particular interest, and shall we be unconcerned about the glory of GOD?

Great and many are the promises which the Divine Father hath given to us, respecting His Kingdom among men; respecting the universal dominion of His son. Let us pray, then, that His Kingdom may come; that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord may cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14). With David, in his last prayer, let us pray—

"May the WHOLE EARTH be FILLED with His glory! Amen and Amen! (Psa. 72:19).

* * *

IT is also the duty of the Christian to pray for the overthrow of all the enemies of Christ, and for the removal of everything which stands in opposition to his Kingdom.

As for our OWN particular enemies, we are enjoined to pray FOR them, and to bless them that curse us. But with respect to the incorrigible enemies of God, and of His congregation, though the Christian (in the absence of Jesus) is never to take vengeance into his own hands, yet he is taught to pray—

"Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered; let them also that hate Him flee before Him . . .

"Let the wicked perish at the presence of God" (Psa. 68:1-2).

"Let all thine enemies perish, O Lord" (Judges 5:31).

"Let all of them be confounded that hate Zion" (Psa. 129:5).

And we are called upon to rejoice over the fall of anti-christian persecutors who shed the blood of the saints—

"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her" (Rev. 18:20).

Respecting this Harlot of Babylon, who is "drunk with the blood of all the witnesses of Jesus," and all her progeny who reject the dominion of his principles, it is the duty of the Lamb's followers to pray—

"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood?" (Rev. 6:10).

And whilst Christians exercise faith in the promise of their Master, and look for his coming, it is their duty to pray that the heirs of the Kingdom may be duly stirred up to a true and genuine love, and to do the first works of the apostolic age.

Truly it is now a day of small things. With all their boastings, how little REALLY Christian morality! Yea, how little do professors in general know even of the FIRST RUDIMENTS of God's holy religion!

Instead of that spirit of love which the Gospel makes so indispensable, there is little but grudging and ill-will among them; and their zeal is at best about "mint and anise, and cummin," rather than about the "weightier matters of the law, such as justice, mercy, and the faith."

Amidst this general declension and corruption; this lamentable departure from the spirit and practice of Christianity, what duty is more incumbent on the true servant of God; or more in unison with his feelings, than to pray that God would grant that His Truth might arise and stand upon her feet; and, in faithful labourers, go forth, and run to and fro increasing knowledge, that professors might become wise and prepare themselves to meet the Lord, as a bride adorned for her husband? Certainly none!

* * *

WE add that it is also our bounden duty, in prospect of the great and terrible day of the Lord's judgment on the nations, to pray for those under whose institutions we find protection while laboring in the Truth, that it may be preserved in the midst of those great and general calamities which are to clear the way for the Kingdom of God.

It is our duty to pray for the authorities of the state, that they may be overruled and guided in all their councils and proceedings for the good of the well-disposed, and the repression of the lawless and abominable—

"That we may lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty."

But it is not our duty **only** to pray for the country of our sojourn to this end, but for the happiness of ALL nations; that the time may soon come when all the tribes of the earth shall remember, and turn unto the Lord—when, actuated and united by kindness and charity, they shall embrace each other as brethren, and we shall no more hear of "natural enemies," or "religious wars," nor of any other kind; but judgment shall dwell in the wilderness," and nothing but "righteousness in the fruitful field."

* * *

TO conclude, our duty, in the prospect of the coming of the Lord, is to pray that we may be prepared; that our dispositions and practices may be brought to a holy conformity to the principles of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, which are—

"Righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit."

—that we may not be found among the lordly and the persecuting; that we may not be found among those that sleep, nor among the scoffers that say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" but among those that watch and pray always, and who shall be accounted worthy to escape the judgment which shall fall upon the heads of the evil doers, and to stand before the Son of Man.

O ye "Christians," as ye call yourselves, how is it that ye watch and pray no more? That ye are no more concerned to glorify the Lord, and to be found of Him in peace? What is it that engages your attention and occupies your time?

Jesus Christ has promised to come again and to take to himself his Kingdom. How is it that ye think no more about it; that ye pray no more for it?—that ye watch the signs which he has given his servants with no more attention, nor cover yourselves with more godly jealousy? Is this your faith in one of the most interesting truths which the Word of God reveals? Surely that day will come upon you unawares!

O ye whose hearts are overcharged with surfeiting and wantonness; and ye men of the earth whose hearts are overcharged with the cares of this life, and who would rather that the Kingdom of God should never come than your ease be disturbed, or your carnal interest affected?

Ye, who are too busy about this world to think of that which is approaching; too much in love with the present state of things to sigh after the promised change; too earthly-minded to watch the signs of the times, or to realize the promises of Christ!

He shall come at an hour that ye think not, and cut you asunder as cumberers of the ground! It is not long ere the trumpet will sound and we must all stand before the Son of Man and receive according to our works.

1964 Fraternal Gatherings

(If the Lord Will)

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**

"If righteousness come by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain"—Galatians 2:21

PART SIX

THE Josephite asks—

"Are you prepared to give an absolute contradiction to Philip's assertion (John 1:45) that 'Jesus of Nazareth' was 'the son of Joseph'?"

It is needless to say that no contradiction is needed. Jesus was the son of Joseph by Mary, just as he was the son of David by Mary. The truth requires no softening down of the phrases which affirm his relation to one or the other. There is a place for them both in the truth of the matter. They are not displaced by the fact that he was the Son of God. They stand along with that fact: all points of truth co-exist. There is no incompatibility between them.

Many things appear to be in contradiction till their relation is perceived. The Josephite only recognizes one fact of the case—that Jesus was the son of Joseph. He leaves no room for the other, and much more important fact, that he was the Son of God. He excludes this, and extinguishes the "things concerning the Name of Jesus Christ." This is the fearful result of his error.

* * *

HE makes use of Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks to countenance his idea of Christ's divine sonship dating from his immersion, and not from his birth. His reliance is upon the words—

"From the going forth of the commandment . . . unto Messiah the Prince shall be 69 weeks"
(or 483 years).

This period expired toward the manhood of Jesus, and the Josephite argues that this fact establishes the conclusion that Jesus was not the son of God **till then**.

He fails to perceive that the expiry of the 69 weeks has relation to the period of his **anointing**, and not to his **sonship**. Jesus was not anointed with the Holy Spirit till the expiry of the period indicated in Daniel. He was not manifested or fully constituted "Messiah the Prince," till then; but—had there been no work of **preparation** leading up to this event?

The Josephite himself recognizes the birth of Jesus 30 years before, in the line of David—his registration according to proper legal forms, and his training in righteousness as a qualification for the position to be afterwards occupied.

Now if Daniel's prophecy admits of this amount and kind of preparation before "the fulness of time," it admits of the other preparation, in which the Josephite refuses to believe. If it admits of his being born son of **Joseph** 30 years before his anointing, it admits of his being born son of **God** 30 years before his anointing.

The contention is not as to his anointing, but as to his sonship. Daniel's prophecy proves what can never be in dispute, that the Christship (or Messiahship) of Jesus is to be reckoned from his anointing (christing) with Holy Spirit at his baptism. But on the question of when he became the Son of God, it throws no light. It avails nothing for this. It throws us back for a settlement of this question upon larger considerations and more specific evidences.

* * *

NOTHING so clearly manifests the utter hollowness and impotence of the Josephite theory and the spiritual perniciousness of it, as his attempt to define the means of justification. He says—

"If I am asked, 'How then can man be justified with God, and how can he be clean that is born of a woman?'—I answer, By doing what God has commanded to be done to that end."

By this answer, he destroys the mission of Christ in its very inception, and subverts the whole course of apostolic teaching, for if his answer be true, there was **no necessity for Christ's manifestation in the flesh at all**, and no truth in the testimony that it is HE who is our righteousness and salvation, having been—

"Delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25).

If a simple compliance with commandments were all that was necessary to justify men, Christ's first advent was merely an incident, and not a necessity, or a vital means of salvation. By the Josephite principle, we could have been saved without it; because, if Christ—a mere man—could do the things commanded, ANY of us mere men could do the same.

The virtue would be in the commandment, and not in anything Christ had done. By "doing what God had commanded to be done to that end," we could have been justified without his death and resurrection.

But this principle is a great fallacy. It was demolished 1800 years ago by Paul, who spent a great part of his life in exalting the Cross as against the Law, and in establishing the proposition that—

"If righteousness come by the Law, then is Christ DEAD IN VAIN" (Gal. 2:21).

As applied to perishing men at the present stage of divine operations, the principle is true, that we become justified "by doing what God has commanded to be done to that end," that is, believing the Gospel and being baptized. But the matter in dispute has relation to the state of things existing **before** this stage was reached, and the means by which the doing of God's commandments became available for justification. The principle is true only after, and in consequence of, what Christ has done.

Taking our stand with Christ, in the days of his flesh, it ceases to be true. There was no way of salvation then extant, except in the faith that had always pointed forward to him, and which was only prospectively valid, depending for its efficaciousness on what he was to accomplish. He had to die, and to rise again.

God could command nothing that would impart justification unto life apart from this, because the law of sin and death barred the way. This had to be surmounted without violation or compromise, and it was done by a SINLESS MAN, standing in our nature, as our representative to suffer the death that had constitutionally passed upon all men, and to secure life unending by a resurrection.

In this respect the Josephite is at war with the Truth in its most vital point, and in collision with the great bulk of the apostolic testimony, which is emphatically a testimony concerning the cross, as a symbol of our justification through Christ's personal accomplishments.

On the Josephite premises the first advent of Christ was a superfluity; there was no necessity for his sojourn in the flesh, and his submission to death. His appearance on the scene might have been reserved for the moment when he could enter into his glory without challenge.

Why did he come 1800 years ago? The scriptural answer is—

"To PUT AWAY SIN by the sacrifice of himself."

The very first chapter in which he was introduced to Israel by John, has reference to this purpose—

"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

The very first explanation of his name is concerned with the same truth—

"His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins."

The revelation of his approach in the seventy week period has to do with the same great lesson—

"To finish transgressions, and to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.

"Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself" (Dan. 9:24-26).

Isaiah's delineation of his first appearing is heavily burdened with the same fact—

"He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

And finally the triumphant song of the redeemed multitude lays hold even in the hour of consummated glory, of the great work of Christ in the flesh—

"Worthy is the LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN . . .

"Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God BY THY BLOOD, out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:12, 9).

Now if Christ was a mere man, how could he take away the sin of the world? If it be answered "by obedience," the answer is a true one, but for the present purpose it is not sufficiently explicit. It comprehends but does not define the truth in the details now in question. Two points are involved in it which must be clearly and separately seen.

First, his obedience involved death, for—

"He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8).

Now, if he had been a mere man, his death would not have availed for the taking away of sin, but would have been as final to him as to any unjustified son of Adam; for as a mere man he would

have been a transgressor, at some stage of life at least, and **a single transgression would have brought him within the clutch of death**, in which the transgression that made him captive would have held him captive.

But (and this introduces the second point) he was obedient in all things, and from the first, which, as a mere man, he could not have been—all experience being the proof, supported by the testimony of the Scriptures, that all have gone astray—that there is none that doeth good, no, not one—that there liveth not a man that sinneth not.

He was **perfectly** subject to the divine will, which, as a mere flesh-born, he could not have been, for it is one of the characteristics of the merely natural mind—the mind formed as the result of impressions on brain flesh in the slow course of experience—that it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (Rom. 8:7). It is wilful and foolish, from the sheer force of its own nature. This is absolutely true of every human being in the first stage of existence—

"Folly is bound up in the heart of a child" (Prov. 22:15).

But Jesus was an exception. Of him, the Spirit in David speaks thus—

"Thou art He that took me out of the womb; Thou didst make me to hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.

"I was cast upon Thee from the womb; Thou art my God from my mother's belly"

(Ps. 22:9-10).

The meaning of it is practically illustrated in Christ's converse with the doctors while only twelve years of age. His inception by divine energy gave an affinity for things which is lacking in us poor sons of the earth. The Spirit enstamped the perfect image of the Elohim on the product of Mary's womb, and gave to the powers of his mind that perfect balance, which sin had disturbed in the first Adam.

Thus there would exist in him that soil for the quick germination of divine ideas, and a strong affinity for the divine relation which was impossible in the first Adam, and impossible with us—impossible with Adam, because the weight of painful ancestral experience did not exist to incline the balance on the right side; and impossible with us because we inherit a nature hopelessly out of balance—the instincts and propensities far exceeding in development those higher faculties that distinguish us from the brutes.

Thus constituted, Jesus was capable of developing a spotless character, and having our condemned nature upon him, he could stand in our stead. He died for us. He rose again. He was without sin. Death had no claim on him as an individual—

"God raised him up, having loosed the pains of death, **because it was not possible that he should be holden of it**" (Acts 2:24).

Having risen, he is immortal (Romans 6:9)—

"Christ being raised from the dead **dieth no more**: death hath no more dominion over him."

"He raised him from the dead, now no more to see corruption" (Acts 13:34).

As Jesus says of himself—

"I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold **I am alive for evermore**" (Rev. 1:18).

It is his exaltation to this position that is our salvation. He is now an immortal representative of the human race, and having in himself, for us, fully met the law which requires our death, he is permitted, nay, appointed, of God, to offer us a redemption from sin and death, on condition of faith and obedience.

It is to him we have to look. He is the appointed life-giver and judge; God will entertain no human approach unless it come through Christ. He is the only channel of prayer, the only source of hope (Acts 4:12)—

"There is none other name given among men whereby they may be saved."

There is not the smallest chance of salvation for any being apart from him. IN HIM is deposited the life offered—

"He that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11-12).

When men and women believe the Gospel, and are baptized, their sins are remitted on account of the connection which is then and thereby established between them and Christ; because as their representative, he has taken away sin, and brought life and immortality to light.

By the assumption of his Name, and the full surrender of the heart and mind to his authority, they are privileged to become heirs of the life and kingdom which are his. He becomes to them (1 Cor. 1:30)—

"Wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and REDEMPTION."

Belief of the Gospel and baptism do this for them, **on account of what Christ has accomplished in himself**, and not that God has appointed those as the means IN THEMSELVES of securing remission of sins and the inheritance of life in the Kingdom of God.

There is a reason in everything God commands. He does nothing arbitrarily. There is a reason why the Gospel and baptism are the things "commanded to be done" as the means of justification—they give relation to a real means of justification. They introduce us into him who was—

"Delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25).

Had there been no **resurrection** of Christ, even though a **death** of Christ, there could have been no salvation—

"If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain and ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17).

The Josephite theory would make John's baptism the means of salvation without reference to that which made it so.

The same principle applied to the Law of Moses would make it a law of life. The Law was a thing God "commanded to be done." True, but not as a means of justification unto life. But why? Because it was **impossible**. The Law was weak through the flesh (Rom. 8:3). The flesh was under condemnation, and could not, on account of its weakness, develop a righteousness that would give a title to resurrection. Paul says—

"If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law."

But it was impossible that a justifying righteousness could come by any law, or any commandment, except through the **provision of a man who would be capable of keeping it**, who should die for the sins of those who were weak, and be able by reason of his holiness to rise from the dead. This arrangement was a stumbling block to the Jews, who—

"Going about to establish their own righteousness, had not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3).

Some of the Jewish brethren had still, through the power of early association, a hankering after the Law as a means of justifying righteousness. To them he says—

"A man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ . . .

"If righteousness came by the Law, THEN CHRIST IS DEAD IN VAIN" (Gal. 2:21).

Paul here unmistakably connects the death of Christ with the development of a justifying righteousness; but on the Josephite theory all this is excluded, for in Christ, he gives us a mere man, born after the flesh, simply and purely to be a king. And for righteousness, he throws us back upon our puny death-stricken selves in the performance of something God has arbitrarily and without any meaning, "appointed to be done to that end."

* * *

We shall at once anticipate 2 objections. It might be said:

"Was not Abraham justified, and all the prophets, long before the death of Christ?"

Truly so, but only by prospect. Their justification, so to speak, was dated forward. As a matter of divine recognition, it was a fact existent in their lives, but as a thing to have actual effect in their deliverance from death, it could not become operative till Christ opened the way. He—

"CONFIRMED the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. 15:8).

Without his death and resurrection, those promises must have remained a nullity, and the justification of the ancients would have been a myth. His death has as much to do with the remission of the sins of those who died before him as with the remission of our sins who live so long after him. This is evident from the following—

"For this cause he is the mediator of the new testament (covenant), that by means of death FOR THE REDEMPTION OF THE TRANSGRESSIONS THAT WERE UNDER THE FIRST TESTAMENT, they which are called (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the faithful of other times) might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. 9:15).

The next objection might be—

"On the principle laid down, belief of the Gospel and baptism ought to ensure salvation, as a matter of certainty. All such testimonies as—

"The unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.'

“Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no wise enter the Kingdom of heaven.’

—are meaningless, if Christ becomes to those connected with him, a justifying righteousness."

The answer is that there are two stages in this question which must be kept carefully distinct: before and after baptism.

Before baptism, a man can do nothing to save himself; all his righteousness is as 'filthy rags.'

After baptism, (he is in a position to "work out his own salvation," because his connection with Christ gives him a position in which his salvation is possible. This arrangement in Christ is all of pure favor; our destiny after introduction to this arrangement is all a question of works.

Baptism confers a title, but subsequent probation determines whether that title shall be taken away, or ratified, at the judgment.

* * *

AS TO the argument on the genuineness of the disputed chapters in Matthew and Luke, we must deny that "the argument turns upon the genuineness of these chapters."

The question stands upon much broader ground. The argument interweaves itself with every utterance of apostolic teaching, and the evidence presses itself upon us at every stage of divine revelation. The history of Christ's life, and the doctrinal application of his achievements by his apostles, involve and necessitate the fact narrated circumstantially in Matthew and Luke.

These chapters, it is true, contain precise information which is not elsewhere to be found; but that the miraculous conception rests upon them is totally at variance with the fact.

They clearly fill in what would be an enormous and painful blank in their absence. They allay the perplexity and the cavilling that would arise in the presence of such a life and such a character as Christ's, were we without the information that he was the son of God, by a direct divine procreation.

But that they originate, or singly uphold the great doctrine, is utterly untrue. It rests upon the broad basis of all the promises of God; it is upheld by almost every stroke of the apostolic pen; it is inwrought with the very substance and essence of the scheme of salvation.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH, IF THE LORD WILL

Faithful in Unrighteous Mammon

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth . . . but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven . . . for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

AS we look around us in this world of today, we behold a sad state of affairs. Vain proud man, weak mortal flesh, striving, laboring with all his energy to attain unto great, yes, and ever greater riches, wealth, possessions, large homes, surrounding lands, automobiles, and everything this wicked, evil generation has to offer.

It is not a condition that has occurred just recently, as man has always been of this state of mind; it is his nature—covetous, envious, proud and grasping. But in these last evil days the situation has increased tremendously.

This is the way of man, but not so with the "man of God." What beautiful words the Preacher has left on record for us in this connection, words of comfort and inspiration and great joy from the Great and Beloved Deity, the Almighty God, from Whom and of Whom are all things—words that we do well to meditate upon, so much so that they will be "sealed within our foreheads" with an imperishable impression.

In relation to man and his striving for perishing riches, Solomon says (Eccl. 5:13)—

"There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt."

Truly it is a "sore evil" which has spread like a canker, a sore, a disease which is humanly incurable. In v 10 of this same chapter it is recorded—

"He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase."

How much to the point are these words! Man is not satisfied with the simple necessities of God's provision, but is continually seeking more and more luxury and abundance. He is never satisfied, nor ever shall be.

This is also vanity. He takes no heed, has no desire, for the words of God's wisdom given us in 1 Tim. 6:8—

"Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content."

Who is content? They are never content. This is the way of man, the ungodly man—

"This also is vanity and vexation of Spirit."

* * *

BUT what of the man of God, the true servant of Deity, the Household of Faith, the brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus?

What shall we say then? Shall we, with the evil world, continue in sin—the desire for all these riches, worldly possessions, honor and pride, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life?

We look to be clothed upon with our "house which is from heaven." What a glorious House in comparison to this temporary dwelling place! Are we thankful enough?—ever grateful for this wonderful calling the Father hath bestowed on us, the sinful sons of man, to be called His sons and daughters? Do we value THESE riches, and eschew all others?

Returning again to Solomon in Eccl. 5:11—

"When goods increase, they are increased that eat them. . .
—whose god is their belly—

". . . and what good is there to the owners thereof . . .
—what profit is there in these things? Nay, but rather, these are things wherein there is no profit—

". . . saving the beholding of them with their eyes?"

The Psalmist says (49:11)—

"Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names."

How typical this is of foolish man! He is groping about in a great and vast darkness, unable to see that "Glorious Light" which is shining and open unto him in the Scriptures.

He has no more spiritual knowledge than the beasts of the field, although the power and means are divinely given to him to discern right from wrong—the eternal from the temporal.

But he continues to go along in his own blind way, in his short life span, which is but as a vapour which fadeth away, and he soon passes away and goes to his long rest, never to see light again. In the words in v. 12 of this Psalm 49, he is—

"Like the beasts that perish."

And Eccl. 5:15—

"As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came."

What happens to all the riches he has heaped up, and to all his vain labours?—

". . . and shall take nothing of his labor, which he may carry away in his hand."

What a pitiful end to such struggle and striving! How brief and futile are man's labours in this life!

* * *

OUR bro. Roberts leaves wonderful words of instruction on record for us, words that we do well to ponder over, read often, not just once, but often, over and over again. He explains to us the meaning of God's message to Baruch (Jer. 45:5)—

"Seekest thou great things for thyself? SEEK THEM NOT."

Baruch may have become a little weary of the continual self-denial involved in his companionship with a derided prophet of the Lord. He would see everybody around him looking after themselves, "seeking their own," as in Paul's day, even among the brethren (Phil. 2:21).

"From the least of them even to the greatest of them everyone is given to covetousness"

(Jer. 6:13).

Therefore as the majority were so engrossed in worldly gain, Baruch may have been tempted to spend his time to his own advantage, and seek the things of this life. But what was God's advice?—

"SEEK THEM NOT."

Are we to take it that God's Word, His Advice, was directed only personally or exclusively unto Baruch? Definitely not. There must be much self-denial on OUR part. We have a "name to live"—are we living according to this "Great Name?" If not, we are unprofitable servants and shall be cast into outer darkness. The apostle instructs (Rom. 12:16)—

"Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate."

And Prov. 23:4—

"Labor not to be rich."

Money-seeking is one of the greatest of evils, the "root of all evils," as the apostle says (1 Tim. 6:10). Peter calls it "FILTHY lucre."

Let it not be so with us, brethren and sisters, rather—

"Touch not the **unclean** thing: come out from among them and be ye separate."

But note the contrast, there is a way in which we must "labor to be rich," and that is, "rich in faith," strong in the Word. Herein lies an abundance of great wealth—richness in spiritual things — the "Pearl of Great Price."

* * *

A MAN once asked Jesus to make his brother share his inheritance with him, whereupon Jesus spoke this parable (Luke 12:16-21)—

"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying,

"What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?"

Note the words of the rich man "MY fruits" — not as it should be, "the fruits GOD hath given unto me." Is this not characteristic of all men—"my" this and "my" that? God does not enter the picture whatsoever—

"And he said, This will I do, I will pull down MY barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all MY fruits and MY goods.

"And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

But here is the result of this "sore evil" which Jesus is pointing out in this parable—

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul (life) shall be required.

"Then whose shall these things be, which thou hast provided?"

Now the time has arrived when it is no longer "my fruits," "my barns" and "my goods," as he no longer exists, he has passed away in death—

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

The memory of him is soon forgotten, he is "as the beasts that perish." Here is the sum and substance of the whole matter, in the next words of Jesus:

"So is he that layeth up treasures—riches, wealth, possessions, goods—for HIMSELF, and is not rich toward GOD."

Let us take heed unto these wonderful words of advice!

Are we "rich toward God"—dedicating our whole lives and efforts to HIS service—to the Truth—to the Brotherhood? Or are we pulling down—selling—our barns (buildings, houses) and building greater, to store our fruits, goods, furniture, automobiles, worldly possessions?

Let it not be so amongst us, but rather consider our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He had no worldly goods. He saith of himself (Matt. 8:20)—

"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests: but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

* * *

WE remember, too, Jesus' conversation with the rich young ruler (Matt. 19:16)—

"And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?"

The reply of Jesus was, that he should "keep the commandments."

He felt within himself that he had done just this and further asks—

"What lack I yet?"

Then Jesus tells him (v. 21)—

"If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me."

Did he listen to the words of Jesus, and follow his advice?

"But when the young man heard that saying, he WENT AWAY sorrowful, for he had great possessions" (v. 22).

This was asking too much of him. He could not part with his possessions—that which is "seen" and "temporal"—for the sake of the future, that which is "unseen" and "eternal."

He preferred this world's possessions to eternal life. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

The vast majority are in the same class as this young man. How does this affect US? We do well to be constantly on our guard. Jesus says very plainly (vs. 23-24)—

"Verily I say unto you, A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

"And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

That which is impossible for the camel to do, is likewise impossible for the rich man. Let us beware of the "deceitfulness of riches." They so easily steal away our chances of eternal life!

* * *

WE cannot do better than take the faithful patriarchs of old as examples of humble, meek servants of the Deity seeking to walk in His paths, and please Him only, rather than attain unto worldly comfort, honor and position. We first look unto Abraham, the "father of the faithful" (Gen. 13:2)—

"And Abram was very rich in cattle, silver and gold."

But all this did not cause him to seek for ease and comfort and the pleasures of this world (v. 3)—

"And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning."

Notice the word "tent" here—dwelling in tents, with his sons Isaac and Jacob, not in fine houses. His was a temporary dwelling-place.

Would WE like to leave our comfortable homes with all their conveniences, and live all our lives in a tent, to show our faith in God's promises?

Abraham left the comfortable city life of Ur—a great and prosperous metropolis with many comforts and luxuries of life (as archaeology has revealed)—and manifested his great faith and obedience by living for 100 years in a tent—summer and winter—in heat and cold. Do we realize what the mighty power of faith meant to these worthies of old? (Heb. 11:10).

"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God."

And again, Moses is brought to our attention in this same chapter (v 24)—

"By faith Moses when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

"Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

"Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt."

Like Abraham, so with Moses, for he had "respect unto the recompense of the reward."

We find the same situation with Ruth the Moabitess forsaking her kindred and people, that she, like Abraham, like Moses, might suffer affliction with the people of God. What a wonderful lesson! What beautiful words of Ruth—

"Entreat me not to leave thee! . . . thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

And then we cannot overlook David when he was the youngest and also the eighth to pass before Samuel (1 Sam. 16:12)—the youngest in that: "The elder shall serve the younger." Adam first upon the scene, and then Christ Jesus. The "eighth" signifying "perfection" at the end of the Millennium.

David was considered of no account among his brethren—a type of the Greater Son of David who was "despised and rejected of men," but who shall sit upon the throne of his father David, ruling this earth in righteousness and peace.

Neither did David prefer riches. His love, and life was devoted to the Father, the Great and Beloved Deity. Did not he say—

"Thy Word is sweeter than honey to my mouth."

"If riches increase, set not thy heart upon them."

"A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked."

Then we turn to Daniel. What did this beloved prophet of the Lord say when offered wealth, pride and position, from king Belshazzar? He answered (Dan 5:17)—

"Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another."

Daniel gave God all the honor glory, power and majesty, and sought nothing in this life. In Dan. 2:28 he says, not taking any credit to himself—

"But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the LATTER DAYS."

Are we not surely living in these "latter days," brethren and sisters, with Bible prophecy being fulfilled on every side—more so from day to day? The evidence is before us in great abundance. Are we prepared to meet the Master when he appears? Are we keeping our lamps replenished with oil?

Let us notice these great words of advice and allow them to sink deeply into our hearts—holy inspired words of Deity (Rom. 13:11)—

"And that, knowing the time that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

Up! Pray, and watch, and listen!—at midnight comes the cry. What is said unto one is said unto all: Be prepared!

* * *

LET US remember the apostles, Peter and Paul. Paul says (Acts 20:33)—

"I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel."

The apostle Paul was like the prophets previously mentioned—ever seeking to pattern his life after our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. His thoughts and interests were directed in other channels than worldly possessions—rather that of pleasing the Father.

And as for Peter, in reply to the lame man who was asking alms at the gate of the temple he said (Acts 3:6)—

"Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee."

"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk."

Peter neither possessed nor sought that which is in earthen vessels, that which is in relation to the flesh and all its thoughts and desires, the wages of which is death—but rather looked unto heavenly things.

Of these disciples of Christ, the few he chose out of all mankind, it is written that they were meek, humble, lowly. To this type of man will God look—unto fishermen, craftsmen, tent-makers—not the proud, the high and mighty, as He says through Isaiah (23:9)—

"The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth."

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ declares (5:14)—

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come on you.

"Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth eaten.

"Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire.

"Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days."

* * *

WE are all very familiar with those words of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:12)—

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall SUFFER PERSECUTION."

Trials and tribulations were the lot of our beloved Saviour, and we must have our portion likewise. Here is the point we wish to stress—

Trials and temptations beset us in many and various ways. Riches could be one of them. The question to ask ourselves is this: What is our reaction? How do we conduct our lives in the sight of the Deity?

This is the most vital and all-important question. Let us examine ourselves, "whether we be in the faith," and take heed unto the words of the Spirit in 1 John 3:17—

"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

There should be no difficulty in supplying the answer to this question. The love of God does NOT dwell in those who do these things. They are not acceptable unto God, vessels unfit for the Master's use. Verse 18 gives very good sound instruction in the way of life—

"My little children, let us not love in word neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

Not just hearers of the Word, but DOERS, for "Faith without works is dead."

So it is repeated unto us, forsake, reject that great and sore evil—the desire for riches and this world's goods, as in I Tim. 6:10—

"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the Faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

Here is the RIGHT path, the golden thread which we must take hold of (v. 11)—

"But thou, O man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."

He who diligently seeketh THESE things shall never lose his part in the race for Eternal Life.

Finally the conclusion of the whole matter is contained in 1 Tim. 4:13—

"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine: give thyself WHOLLY unto these things."

* * *

THE man of the world puts great confidence in his money and possessions. They are his gods—that which he worships. Not only so, but money will buy his way out of many difficulties—insure him against most of the vicissitudes of life.

But will their silver and gold, riches and money, save them in the day when God shall pour out His fury and His wrath upon all nations, all peoples, due to the intense evil and wickedness which exists upon this earth?

What does God say through Zephaniah in this connection—

"I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as a dust, and their flesh as the dung.

"Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath"
(Zeph. 1:17-18.)

That day is very fast approaching. The Signs of the Times that exist around us—increasing distress and perplexity in the political "heavens"—speak very plainly and indicate that "Gentile times" are about to close. There is a great day of retribution coming—

"Be patient, therefore, brethren unto the coming of the Lord.

"Be ye also patient: stablish, strengthen your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh"
(James 5:7-8).

Let us take particular notice of that word "patience"—an absolute requirement—as we recall the words of Jesus, in Matt. 10:22—

"He that ENDURETH TO THE END shall be saved."

—F. P.

ARTICLES FOR THE BEREAN

WE would like to have a much greater range of representation in the articles in the Berean. We therefore request all Berean speaking brethren to send in articles. They can be of any nature—exhortations, lectures or addresses on particular subjects. Those who are not speaking brethren could help by forwarding copies of addresses by others in their ecclesia which particularly strike them as desirable for publication. Double-spaced typing is preferred, but not essential.

Unprofitable Servants

*"When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say,
We are unprofitable servants"*—Luke 17:10

THESE words, "unprofitable servants," were spoken by Jesus to his disciples. It may appear strange that he should apply such words to them, in view of the fact that on other occasions he had promised them that they would "inherit all things."

But with "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little," we shall understand just what Jesus meant, and thus—

"Prove all things and hold fast that which is good."

The recompense of the reward that God proposes to give to those who diligently perform their obligations to Him is of God's grace or favor. On our part we have no legal claim that entitles us to eternal life in our own right.

Jesus pointed this out to his disciples in the parable of the man in the field, who, on coming to the house, was again expected to serve his master. He was not thanked for this service; for as a servant he was only doing his duty.

We do our duty in the service of the Truth, yet we do not profit God in this; for it is—

"In Him that we live and move and have our being."

As in the words of Elihu to Job (Job 34:14-15)—

"If He gather unto Himself His Spirit and His breath, all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again to the dust."

We can understand the words, "unprofitable servants," as used by Jesus, when we contemplate the hopelessness and helplessness of our own position apart from God's eye that has pity toward us, and His Own arm that hath brought salvation to His people.

The benefits and the profits to be derived from our service in the Truth are all on our side, since we are all subject to death and decay and unable to help ourselves. So it is—

"When ye have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants. We have done that which was our duty to do."

David speaks along this line of thought, and we see in a deeper sense the prophetic "spirit of Christ" speaking through David, for Peter quotes this Psalm and applies it to Christ—

"Preserve me, O God; for in Thee do I put my trust. O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, "Thou art my Lord, my goodness extendeth not to Thee; but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight" (Psa. 16:1-3).

Here both David himself and the Greater David recognize the need for a complete surrender of self to a righteous walk before God; yet he knew that his goodness was for his own benefit and for that of the saints, but that it extended no goodness to God. It was all from God to man.

Then in Job 22:2 we read—

"Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?"

The answer to such a question is, No, he cannot. But we can give God pleasure by subjecting ourselves to Him—

"But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word" (Isa. 66:2).

Even though God is mindful of us, yet we are not profitable unto God in the sense that we can render any benefit to Him. He is all-sufficient of Himself, and needs not help from man. We are the ones who receive the benefits, in that an all-wise and merciful God takes notice of us.

A wise man can be of great benefit to himself, especially if his wisdom be manifested toward heavenly things; for these are the only things of any lasting value. Apart from God's Truth that works in our minds, we would continue along the world in the procession from the cradle to the grave.

The first essential, then, that we need to learn, is our own unworthiness, and that naturally we stand related only to death as a result of sin, without any hope of escape whatever we may do, and that any advance in our fallen state is purely the result of the goodness and mercy of God.

The strength of Christ's words are laid bare before us here—

"So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, "We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do."

Self pride and self praise will avail us nothing, as Jesus said—

"Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" (Matt. 6:27).

None of us can. We are wholly dependent upon God for even the breath that we breathe.

What then is needed? Our part is to show humbleness manifested in a meek and quiet spirit which, as Peter says, in the sight of God is of great price. God has promised eternal life through His Own beloved Son, and concerning this it is written—

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

And so we come to learn that this promise of eternal life is a gift, and we have no right to it in the legal sense. It is a great prize that is promised by a merciful, kind and loving Father toward a death-stricken race of people—

"God so loved the world."

And Paul makes the matter crystal clear in his letter to the Ephesian saints—

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.

"For we are **His workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus unto **good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them**" (2:8-10).

We are all unprofitable servants, then, in the sense that Christ used the words; that is, we have nothing to boast about, when we do our duty as the servants of God. It is profitable as far as we ourselves are concerned, to be servants of God, but the profit is all on our side, and something to be humbly thankful for, and not to esteem ourselves for.

We see, from the above quotation, that there **MUST BE "GOOD WORKS"**—but they are "not of ourselves," but of—

"God Who worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

Let us therefore fervently pray that we may be among those few in whom God so works for His Own glory. This requires an emptying of ourselves of natural, fleshly desires and a complete self-dedication to the service and obedience of God. —W.J.P.

Jeshurun Waxed Fat

"According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted: therefore have they forgotten Me"—Hosea 13:6

MANY causes are listed for Israel's backsliding. Here in Hosea the cause given is prosperity. The great lesson here is that it is not in poverty nor adversity that the believer forgets God; it is when he should be the most thankful of God's blessing that he is most likely to forget God, having become so absorbed in the increase of his substance that he has little time to think of Him to Whom he owes the very breath that he breathes—

"Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.

"For the love of money is root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs" (1 Tim. 6:9-10).

It is often pointed out that it is the love of money, and not the money in itself that leads the believer away from the faith into many hurtful lusts, and this is true.

It is also true that it is not the amount of wealth involved, but the intensity of the desire, the extent to which one sets his heart and interest and attention upon riches, which determines the effect of wealth upon the mind. Craving for increased possessions is like the craving for intoxicants or opiates; there comes a time when there is no longer the will to resist the craving.

Jesus Christ, who said—

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

—and the Apostle Paul, who said—

"Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content."

—are looked upon by the world as mere idealists, whose teaching is altogether impractical in human affairs.

But they were not dictating a way of life for the godless, but for the godly, whose wealth consists not of earthly treasure, but spiritual wealth; not the wealth which gives more sorrow than joy

in this life, and nothing for the world to come, but riches which give the only genuine pleasure in this life, and a priceless and eternal inheritance in the kingdom of God. —O.B.

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What Must I Do to Be Saved?

BELIEVE THE GOSPEL: BE BAPTIZED: OBEY CHRIST'S COMMANDS

"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."—1 John 2:4

THE most important thought—the basic principle of all scriptural instruction—is the supreme importance of OBEDIENCE—simple obedience to simple command—taking the trouble to find out what God tells us to do, and cheerfully, thankfully, carefully, promptly—DOING it.

Paul, writing to the Romans (ch. 5) hinges the whole course of human history and destiny on this issue—

"By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners.

"By one man's offence, death reigned.

"So by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous."

Paul shows that all human ills came through that one first act of disobedience.

Disobedience, which includes all failing or neglecting to obey wherever obedience is commanded, is rebellion, treachery, treason against the Infinite Power and Authority of the universe. This is strong language, but it is scriptural language.

Saul, the first King of Israel (as recorded in 1 Sam. 15) was given a plain, simple command—to utterly destroy a group of wicked people and all their possessions. He fulfilled **most** of the command, but not all. His own judgement was used in saving some of the cattle for a sacrifice to God. Coming back, he greeted the prophet Samuel, saying (v. 13)—

"Blessed be thou of the Lord! I have performed the commandment of the Lord!"

Samuel's ringing denunciation of Saul expresses the deepest, most fundamental lesson of all Scripture—in terms we should never forget (vs. 22- 23)—

"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in OBEYING the voice of the Lord?"

"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft; and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

"Because thou hast rejected the Word of the Lord, He also hath rejected thee from being king."

So Saul—though he ALMOST completely obeyed—though he protested that he **had** obeyed—lost all his kingdom and the favor of God, because he did not do **exactly** and **fully** as he was plainly commanded.

How many of us will find ourselves in the same position, as we stand before the judgment seat of Christ?

This incident was recorded as a solemn warning for all ages. We are told many times that the whole purpose of these records of Israel's history are to illustrate divine, eternal principles, and to teach us the basic lessons of life and death.

To gain God's love and favor, we **must** honor Him by ever striving to know and fulfil His will better and better. This must be our whole heart's ambition and desire, or we are running in vain.

We must guard ourselves carefully against the hazy idea of the churches that strict obedience is not important. The Scriptures give no countenance to such a deceptive, flesh-pleasing delusion. Jesus' parting words to his disciples (as given in the last 2 verses of Matthew's Gospel) were—

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations . . . baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

"Teaching them to observe ALL things whatsoever I have commanded you."

* * *

AT the Last Supper, Jesus spoke very solemnly and plainly about the **absolute necessity** of knowing and keeping his commandments—

John 14:21—"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."

John 15:10—"IF ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love."

John 15:14 — "Ye are my friends, IF ye DO whatsoever I command you."

"Ye are my friends IF YE DO WHATSOEVER I COMMAND YOU."

These are very plain words. They define the difference between life and death, acceptance or rejection at the judgment-seat of Christ. There is nothing the natural mind of man hates more than submission and obedience. Men will offer all kinds of worship, and devotion, and self-sacrifice, provided they can do it THEIR way. But Jesus warned (Matt. 7:21)—

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that DOETH THE WILL OF MY FATHER."

John is known as the "Apostle of Love," and his first epistle is all about this beautiful and essential virtue, but he does not, like so many today, misuse the argument of "love" to undermine the vital principles of **believing and defending specific Truth, and observing specific obedience to specific commands**. His inspired words are (1 John 2:3-4)—

"Hereby we do know that we know him IF WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS."

"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a LIAR, and the Truth is not in him."

Very strong words from the "apostle of Love"! Let us ponder them deeply.

In Matt. 12:48-50 Jesus said—

"Who is my mother? Who are my brethren? Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, the same is my brother, sister and mother."

And after giving many searching, transforming, revolutionary commands in Matt. 5 to 7—the fullest and deepest exposition of the divine way of life which he taught and exemplified, he concluded it all by saying (Matt. 7:24-26)—

"He that heareth these sayings and DOETH THEM NOT is like a foolish man which built his house upon the sand."

We know the end of the house built on sand when the storm of judgment came.

Paul, in Heb. 5:9, says Jesus is the—

"Author of salvation unto ALL that OBEY him."

And in the last chapter of the last book of the Bible, it is declared (Rev. 22:14)—

"Blessed are they that DO HIS COMMANDMENTS, that they may have right to the tree of life.

SOME may object—"We are not under law but under grace." That is true—a very deep and beautiful scriptural Truth—we can never **earn** a right to salvation—it must be of God's mercy and grace even when we do our utmost and our best. But surely it is clear that to interpret this Truth in a way to brush aside all these commands, and the vital necessity for obedience to them, is not sound doctrine. Paul said (Heb. 2:1-3)—

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

"For if the word spoken by angels (the law of Moses) was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which was spoken by the Lord himself?"

* * *

"BELIEVE THE GOSPEL" is the first of the 3 things to be done to gain salvation, as listed in the title of this article. The Scriptures we shall consider teach that—

1. *Knowledge and belief of the Gospel is absolutely necessary for salvation.*
2. *The Gospel is about the Kingdom of God, and therefore we cannot believe the Gospel (and therefore cannot be saved) if we do not know and believe the truth concerning the Kingdom.*

That a belief of the gospel is essential to salvation is clearly established by the words of both Jesus and his apostles. When he left his disciples, Jesus instructed them (Mark 16:15-10)—

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

"He that BELIEVETH and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth NOT shall be condemned."

Paul told the Romans (1:16)—

"The Gospel is the power of God unto **salvation** to every one that **believeth**."

And to the Corinthians he wrote (1:15:1-2)—

"I declare unto you the Gospel, **by which ye are saved** IF ye keep in memory what I preached unto you."

* * *

THAT the Gospel contains certain specific truths, and that knowledge and belief of those specific truths is necessary to salvation is shown by Paul's terribly strong and emphatic warning twice repeated to the Gal. (1:8-9) —

"If any man—if an angel from heaven—preach any other gospel than that which we have preached, let him be accursed."

Let us seriously ask ourselves, in the light of these words, do we have and support the one true Gospel—the "Gospel of the Kingdom"?

If not, we clearly come under this condemnation. It is a matter worthy of all our attention, effort and prayer.

If we will look into it, we shall be overwhelmed with the evidence that **the Gospel concerns the promised Kingdom of God on earth.**

The first 2 times the Gospel is mentioned in the New Testament (Matt. 4:23 and Matt. 9:35) it is specifically called "The Gospel OF THE KINGDOM"—

"Jesus went about all Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom."

Of the first 7 times the Gospel is mentioned, 4 times it is called the "Gospel of the Kingdom."

We find that a very large proportion of what Jesus said was about the Kingdom.

He spoke of the Kingdom coming, of God's will being done on earth as in heaven, of the "Son of Man"—himself—"coming in his Kingdom." He gave signs to look for, whereby we should know when the Kingdom was near, such as the return of the Jewish people to their own land.

He spoke of a coming day of judgment in which the rejected should see many coming from the east and west to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom, and themselves (the rejected) cast out.

We find "preaching the Gospel" and "preaching the Kingdom" used parallelly and synonymously. We find the apostles, who were told by Jesus to "preach the Gospel," repeatedly spoken of as "preaching the Kingdom."

Although it is not apparent in the English Version, the very word "preach" (**evangelizo**), as applied to the Kingdom, is actually a verbal form of the word "Gospel" (**evangelion**), and should literally be translated, "Gospelize," or "proclaim the Gospel."

The full force of all this can only be appreciated by personal study and examination and investigation; and the seriousness of the matter demands such study on the part of all who profess to love God and desire eternal life.

* * *

THE second part of our subject is "BE BAPTIZED."

On this subject, as on others, **careful obedience to command** is the key, and we must be guided exclusively by the Bible. We all know that there are many ideas in the religious world concerning what baptism is, how it should be done, to whom it applies, and how much it matters. In Eph. 4:3.6 we are told—

"Keep the **Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

"There is One Body, and One Spirit, One Hope, One Lord, One Faith, ONE BAPTISM, One God and Father of all."

See how important Baptism is! It is listed as one of the 7 vital things that make up the "Unity of the Spirit." How then could our faith possibly be complete without it?

The words "baptism" and "baptize" occur about 100 times in the New Testament. And here is one very important fact we would like to strongly emphasize at the outset (It can easily be checked by anyone who will look into it)—

Wherever "baptism" occurs in the English Version, the original word is baptizo. This is a common, everyday Greek word, with a plain, simple, definite meaning. It means "dip, immerse, submerge"—and NOTHING ELSE. It NEVER means sprinkle or pour.

It is used 100's of times in Greek writings before and after New Testament times. It always and invariably means "immerse" or "submerge"—that is, to put something down into a liquid so as to entirely cover it. It is often used of the sinking of a ship.

Not one case has even been brought forth in Greek writings where it is used to mean sprinkle or pour. (These are always represented by entirely different words.)

Therefore when Jesus and the apostles used the word "baptize," their hearers and readers would know **exactly what they meant**. They would never for a moment think of "sprinkle." They would clearly understand them to mean "immerse" or "submerge."

If the translators had faithfully translated this plain Greek word into English, instead of carrying it over untranslated, the meaning would have been perfectly clear, but **they could not do this because, in their man-made traditions, what was once baptism had been changed to sprinkling.**

Whenever we read the word "baptize" in the Bible, let us translate it properly in our minds to "immerse," and thus get the true picture.

Let us remember Saul. When God tells us to do one thing, we are just mocking Him by doing **something entirely different** that man has invented and called by the same name.

This is one of the basic subterfuges of the mind of the flesh—to call an unscriptural thing by a scriptural name, and thereby confuse the picture and make the Word of God of none effect. In this matter of life and death, let us not be so foolish as to be deceived by such methods.

* * *

BESIDES the actual plain meaning of the word, all the EXAMPLES given prove baptism to be immersion and not sprinkling. In Matt. 3:6 we read—

"And were baptized of him in Jordan."

They were baptized in the river. And in v. 16—

"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway OUT OF the water."

In Mark 16:15-16 we have the same final charge of Jesus to his disciples as we quoted from the end of Matthew, in slightly different form—

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Invariably baptism FOLLOWS belief. There is no record anywhere of anyone being baptized without first believing, as Jesus specifies here. Sprinkling of babies is an invention of men that has no scriptural foundation, but is directly contrary to all scriptural teaching and example.

Note, too, that the promise of salvation is only to those who are baptized. In John 3:5, Jesus says—

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

Have you been "born of water?" Jesus took this matter seriously. The churches of today say it doesn't matter. Which is right? Which do you stand with?

We cannot get into the Kingdom without being "born of water."

What does it mean to be born of water? When we learn the true scriptural form and significance of baptism, we see very clearly and beautifully and unmistakably what being born of water means. The Scriptures speak frequently of baptism as a dying and a being reborn—a dying to the old life, a rebirth in the new—a dying to ourselves and a rebirth unto Christ and all the glories of the way of salvation which he, by death and rebirth, opened up to all who "abide in him."

No one who understands the true and beautiful significance of baptism could ever substitute man-made sprinkling for the true scriptural form of complete burial in water and rising up out of it to newness of life.

In the same chapter (John 3: 23), the true form is again clearly illustrated—

"John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salem, because there was much water there."

That statement would be a meaningless absurdity, if sprinkling were baptism. Truly God in His love has given us all the safeguards we need against man-made traditions, if we are wise enough to observe and accept them.

* * *

IN the book of Acts, we find many instances of the disciples carrying out Jesus' commands to preach the Gospel, and to baptize those who believe it. Acts 2 is the first instance and it is typical of all. Peter goes over the principal points of the Gospel—the position of Christ in God's purpose, his sacrifice, the nature of man and the sleeping state of the dead, the resurrection, the covenant to David, the return of Christ, the establishment of the Kingdom. And they said (v. 37)—

"What shall we do?"

And Peter told them (v. 38)—

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you, for the remission of sins."

Have God's requirements changed? If so, who has changed them? If baptism is for remission of sins (as the Scriptures say it is), then how do we stand before God as to our sins if we have not obeyed Him and been baptized?

In Acts 8, Philip is preaching in Samaria (v. 12)—

"When they believed Philip preaching (the original word is evangelizing — gospelizing) the things concerning the Kingdom of God, they were baptized."

And at the end of the chapter, Philip has taught another man, who says (v. 36)—

"See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?"

We'd like to draw attention to the fact that the baptism the Scriptures command is ALWAYS associated with **water**. Truly the Scriptures do speak of "baptism of fire" and "baptism of the Holy Spirit" and these thoughts have their place but it takes very little honest examination to show that the ordinary baptism that all are commanded to undergo upon acceptance of the Gospel is baptism—immersion—burial — IN WATER—

V.38 — "They went DOWN INTO THE WATER."

V.39—"When they were come UP OUT OF THE WATER."

* * *

IN Acts 10, as Peter is preaching to a man named Cornelius and his family (v. 44)—

"While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard."

This was a sign to Peter that these people, who were Gentiles, were accepted by God. The way of life was being opened to the Gentiles—

Vs. 46-48 — "Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?"

"And he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord."

Some believe that "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" does away with baptism in water, but here is positive proof that it does not. Although they had already received the Holy Spirit, they are commanded to be baptized IN WATER in the Name of the Lord.

So it is all through the Acts: Lydia and the jailor at Philippi, believers at Corinth, the believers at Ephesus.

In ch. 16, Lydia and her household, and the Philippian jailor and his household; in ch. 18 many Corinthians "heard, believed and were baptized"—the unvarying scriptural order. In chap. 19 the Ephesian believers were baptized. In ch. 22 Paul describes his own baptism. He was commanded (v. 16)—

"Arise, be baptized and wash away thy sins."

This is the ONLY way God has provided for sins to be washed away.

* * *

LET us consider two illustrations from the epistles of the importance and significance of baptism. In Rom. 6:3 we read—

"So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death."

We all know the importance of Christ's death in God's plan of salvation. Paul says that ONLY as many as have been baptized have been connected with it.

V. 4 — "We are buried with him by baptism into death."

See how important it is that baptism is done the true scriptural way! It must be a burial and a raising up again.

V. 5, "For IF we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

The opposite clearly follows—If we have NOT been planted in the likeness of his death by baptism into him, we shall not be in the likeness of his resurrection.

In Gal. 3, the same picture is presented—baptism is the divinely provided way—the **only** way—into Christ, into the promises, into eternal life—

V. 27—"As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

The importance of this statement cannot be overestimated. "As many"—no more, no less—**as many** as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

V. 29, "And IF ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

* * *

ONE more passage on baptism—to show its necessity, to show it must be a conscious, intelligent voluntary act (and not the sprinkling of a baby), and to show it is associated with water. Peter says (1:3:20), speaking of Noah's ark—

"Wherein 8 souls were saved by water, the like figure whereunto **baptism doth also now save us**—not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.

Baptism saves us, because it is the answer—the obedience—of a good conscience toward God. Therefore a man-made ritual on an unknowing babe is not baptism and has no value.

Summarizing, we find that the SIGNIFICANCE of baptism—what it accomplishes—is:

1. A cleansing, a washing away of sins.
2. A releasing—a making free from sins' bondage, and its inevitable accompaniment—death.
3. A death and rebirth—burial to the old, rebirth to the new.
4. A uniting—baptism into Christ—God's way of becoming part of him—covered by his victory over death.

We find the FORM of baptism is proven to be complete immersion in water by—

1. Its significance of a complete burying and resurrection.
2. All the examples in Scripture.
3. The plain, simple unvarying meaning of the Greek word.

And we find its absolute NECESSITY proven by—

1. Its significance—what it accomplishes (no other way).
2. The many positive commands to be baptized.
3. The unvarying example of Scripture. 4. It is a fundamental part of the 7-fold unity of the Spirit which cannot be complete without it.

* * *

THE third part of the subject is "OBEY CHRIST'S COMMANDS."

We have seen how the Scriptures in general, and Christ in particular, make it perfectly clear that only by a continual, wholehearted effort at careful obedience to Christ's commands can we hope for salvation.

The commands of Christ are not just the things he himself spoke. The Apostle Paul declared—

"If any man think himself to be spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commands of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37).

And Jesus himself said to his disciples (Luke 10:16)—

"He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me."

And not only is obedience required in ourselves, but we are commanded to have no fellowship with any who do not obey—

"If any man obey not our word by this epistle, have no company with him" (2 Thess. 3:14).

In no other way can a sound body be preserved.

* * *

THE Bible teaches throughout the very unwelcome and unpopular doctrine that man by nature is evil, selfish, foolish, and ignorant—that his natural thoughts are vain and corrupt—

"He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool" (Prov. 28:26).

"It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9).

And what stronger words or stronger contrast could we find than these decisive words of Jesus (Luke 16:15)—

"That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

This is why **specific** commands, **specific** guidance, **specific** instruction are so vitally necessary, to put and keep us in the right way.

Christ's commands, taken together, make up a way of life. The natural ordinary way of life is based on fear, and greed, and pride, and self, and pleasure-seeking—the "mind of the flesh."

Christ's way is based on faith and love and unselfishness—renouncing all thought of self. To the natural viewpoint, Christ's way is a very foolish, impractical way.

And so it WOULD be, if the Power of the universe did not stand behind it, and guarantee its success.

Paul told the Galatians:

"The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other."

"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with all its affections and lusts." (5:17, 24)

And he warns the Romans—

"If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die. But if ye through the Spirit do mortify (put to death) the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (8:13).

Analysing his own natural desires and reactions by the pure light of the Spirit of God, he said—

"In me dwelleth no good thing. I am carnal, sold under sin.

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

"I see a law in my members . . . bringing me into captivity to the law of sin in my members.

"The fleshly mind (the ordinary, natural mind of man) is enmity against God." (Rom. 7 & 8).

This is the consistent scriptural description of man in his natural state, a state that leads only to death. To attain to life, there must be a complete change, according to the commands of Christ.

The commands we plan to consider are real, actual, practical, measurable things. Natural man likes to keep religion hazy—a matter of feeling, and sentiment, and pious platitudes, but the commands of Christ are very CLEAR and SPECIFIC, and REVOLUTIONARY and HEART-SEARCHING.

Either we are obeying them, and are Christ's. Or we are not obeying them, and are not his. Everyone can very easily check himself.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH, IF THE LORD WILL

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