

# The Berean Christadelphian

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

**Edited and Published by:**  
**G. A. Gibson 294 Glebeholme Blvd., Toronto 6, Ontario, Canada**

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

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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

**BUFFALO, N.Y.—OF Hall, Kenmore & Myron Aves., Kenmore, N. Y. — Memorial 10:15 a.m.; Sun. Sch. 11:45 a.m.; Bible Class Wed. 8 p.m.**

GREETINGS in the bonds of Love and Truth.

We have been greatly encouraged and strengthened in our most holy Faith by association and fellowship around the table of the Lord with the following visitors: bro. & sis. Braden Edwards (Canton); bro. R. A. Waid (Worcester); bro. & sis. R. Philip (Toronto) on May 31, and sis. Philip again on June 21.

And recently, on Oct. 18: bro. F. Higham Jr. (Detroit) and sis. Ruth Hoage (Denver); on Oct. 25: bro. & sis. F. Higham Sr. and sis. Beth Higham (Oakville, Ont.).

We appreciate their coming to be with us at the Lord's table. Comforting and stirring words of exhortation were administered to us by bre. Edwards, Waid. Philip and Higham Sr. Our brethren's labor of love in the Truth is deeply appreciated.

We extend a most hearty welcome to all to visit us.

—bro. G. A. Kling

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**HOUSTON, Tex.—8008 Juntas 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 have been happy to have sis. Mary Cooper of Carlsbad N.M., with us around the table of the Lord.

—bro. C. Banta

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**MASON, Texas—Christadelphian Hall, Highway 386.**

LOVING Greetings to all of like precious Faith.

We had the pleasure of having a number of visiting brethren and sisters from the Houston, Lampasas and Paint Rock ecclesias meet with us around the Lord's table on Sept. 6.

Bro. Charles Banta Jr. of the Houston ecclesia spoke words of encouragement to strengthen one another through the Word, at the 11 o'clock service. In the afternoon we had a Bible Study on 2 Cor. 8 & 9.

There were about 20 brethren and sisters, besides visitors and children. We are always happy to have brethren and sisters visit us.

Let us all strive to keep the unity and purity of the Truth in these last trying days with full assurance that our salvation is nearer than when we believed.

Your brother in Christ,

—Bill Edwards

\* \* \*

**PAINT ROCK, Texas**

AS the year 1964 draws to a close, this is a report of our ecclesial activities.

On Mar. 22 we enjoyed the company of sis. Lois Hurst of the Lampasas ecclesia. There were nine that met around the table of the Lord, and the total attendance was 16. We met in the home of bro. Aris Edwards, Mereta Rd., San Angelo, Tex.

We were also happy to have sis. Lula Wolfe and sis. Lois Hurst meet with us on Aug. 16 and Sept. 13, in the home of bro. Melvin Edwards.

We welcomed bro. Bob Wolfe at the Lord's table on Oct. 18.

We are very pleased to have visiting brethren with us, and we hope they and others can be with us more often.

May we continue to press onward to prepare to meet our Saviour when he comes, and be among those that receive a crown of life that fadeth not away. —bro. Melvin Edwards

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### **VANCOUVER, B.C., Canada**

WE have had several visitors in the past few months. In the early spring we had the pleasure of meeting for the first time sis. R. Rafuse of the Richard ecclesia who broke bread with us.

On two occasions during the summer we have also had visits from our beloved sis. Virginia and bro. Art Tilling of Portland. We feel as though they are part of our small meeting here because they make the effort to visit us quite frequently.

We have also had a couple of enjoyable visits from bro. J. T. Randall of California, who gave us two stirring exhortations.

To bring the summer season to a close, we had with us for a few days sis. Mary and bro. Bill Blacker of Lethbridge. To me it was like old-home-week to have them here, for many wonderful hours have I spent with them when I lived in Lethbridge. Besides having enlightening chats, bro. Blacker gave us a beautiful exhortation.

The following Sunday we had the pleasure of another visitor from Lethbridge: sis. Doris Blacker, who stopped long enough on her way to Victoria to meet with us around Christ's table.

Our meeting, which consists of three, has been smaller because of the absence of sis. Newton who has been taking care of an elderly friend in White Rock. We are looking forward to her returning soon.

It is always a delight to have visitors of like precious Faith join us in our little meeting,

—bro. R. N. Hobkirk

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### **WORCESTER, Mass.—IOGT Hall, 1 Ekman St.—Sunday School 10 a.m.; Breaking of Bread 11 a.m.; Lecture 2:30 p.m. 2nd & 4th Sundays; Bible Class Tues. 8 p.m. twice monthly.**

SINCE our last report we have been glad to welcome the following brethren and sisters from the Boston ecclesia around the table of the Lord: bro. & sis. Sargent Sr., bro. & sis. Sargent, Jr., bro. Harry Thomson, and sisters Lancour, Strong, M. Davey and H. Davey.

Bro. Thomson has edified us on several occasions with the word of exhortation, and bre. Sargent Sr. and M. Russell have assisted us in our lecturing efforts. We greatly appreciate their labor on our behalf.

On June 7 and Aug. 9 we held our regular Ecclesial and Sunday School outings. On both occasions the greater part of the Boston ecclesia was present and we enjoyed a happy time.

We are sorry to report that our bro. & sis. Elliott, for reasons of health, have moved to Florida. We are going to miss them very much. Their faithfulness was an example to us all. Despite ill health and a 40 mile trip, they were rarely absent from their usual seats. We bid them Godspeed and pray that God will bless them and keep them. —bro. W. Davey

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## **EDITORIAL**

### **Not Endure Sound Teaching**

*"For the time shall come when they shall not endure sound doctrine . . . and they shall turn away their ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto fables"—2 Tim. 4:3-4*

THROUGHOUT the entire history of the human race, this declaration made by Paul has been true. In the Bible, there are many things of profound importance revealed and, among them, this stands out with remarkable clearness—that believers, as a body, will not sustain without impairment or yielding sound or wholesome teaching.

A notable example is found among the people of Israel, during the early stages of their journey out of Egypt. They had seen the plagues that God had brought upon Egypt, and they must have created a deep impression upon their minds; but even greater was the demonstration of God's infinite power when he brought them through the Red Sea. The effect upon them is shown in Exo. 14:31 —

"And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians; and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and His servant Moses."

We follow the record from this point until they reached Mount Sinai. During this portion of their journey they had witnessed the healing of the bitter waters of Marah, and the miraculous supply of flesh and bread to eat. If anything could have made an ineffaceable impression upon them, one would think the giving of manna would have done so, for by it they were sustained for 40 years.

Upon arriving at Mount Sinai, Moses presented to the people God's exceptional promise such as no other nation has ever received. In Exo. 19:4-6 we read—

"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought unto Myself.

"Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine:

"And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."

Moses presented this great promise to the people, and they answered him saying—

"All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."

Then followed that breath-taking display of divine power when God spoke to the people with a great voice, and gave to them the ten commandments. But even this awe-inspiring manifestation did not hold them to the covenant they had made: for only in a matter of days, while Moses was in the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said—

"Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him"—Exo. 32:1.

From this time on until the ten tribes were carried captive, and finally the remaining two, the history of Israel is characterized by backsliding and falling away. Even though there were periods of recovery under David, Solomon, Hezekiah and Josiah, they were short-lived, and when Jesus came upon the scene, only a small remnant was there to welcome him.

\* \* \*

IN the letter to the Hebrews, the apostle speaks in the third chapter of Israel's failure, and in vs. 12-14 he uses it as a warning in this way—

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

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

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

Warnings were also given by Peter, John and Jude, but especially by Jesus in his messages to the seven ecclesias in Asia. But how did the believers of the first century respond to their appeals? Were they holding the beginning of their confidence (their first love) steadfast unto the end? Here are some answers—

1 Cor. 15:12—Some were already teaching that there is no resurrection of the dead.

2 Cor. 11:13—Paul speaks of false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

2 Cor. 11:26 — Paul was in perils among false brethren.

Gal. 1:6-7—They were being troubled by those who were perverting the Gospel.

2 Thess. 2:7—The mystery of iniquity is already at work.

2 John 7—Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.

Rev. 2:4—Those in Ephesus had left their first love.

Rev. 2:14-15 — In Pergamos some held the doctrine of Balaam and others held the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.

Rev. 2:20-23—The conditions in Thyatira were much worse.

Rev. 3:1—Those in Laodicea were neither cold or hot, and Jesus said he would spue them out of his mouth. They boasted that they were rich, and increased with goods, and had need of nothing.

In the messages to the seven ecclesias, Jesus pleaded with them to repent and do the first works, and if not he would remove their candlestick out of its place. There were false teachers among them **whose presence should not have been allowed**, and as time went on they gained the ascendancy, and turned their ears from the Truth, as is the inevitable result when false teachers are permitted to remain.

This resulted in the light-stands being removed, and these unfaithful "fellow-servants and brethren" continued on the downward course until they eventually became the Holy Catholic Church.

\* \* \*

THE Truth had become submerged, and darkness covered the earth until the days of brother John Thomas who, as brother Roberts said, "During a busy life time, by mouth and pen, he contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." The Truth had been discovered, and presented in Elpis Israel and Eureka—books that have no peer aside from the Bible.

Ecclesias were soon formed by those who believed what he taught, and many thought the body would grow to a great multitude who would welcome Jesus at his second coming. But the human mind today is the same as it was 2000 years ago, and it will not sustain without impairment sound teaching. As in the days of the apostles, men arose in the body, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. In 1896, a brother writing to bro. Roberts said—

*"I am painfully surprised at the number of heresies, crotchets, and strange ideas in our camp, which are almost as perplexing as the sectarianism of so-called Christendom. We have dogmas, theories, crotchets, doctrines as varied as the mental status of the writers."*

We can see that this problem has been continuous from the days of the apostles. Do we imagine that the present time is different, or that we can safely ignore these things, and tolerate them, and do nothing about them, and still hope for the Truth to survive in the earth?

Those words were penned 68 years ago; and if the writer could come to life and look around, we are convinced that he would find the things he mentioned have more than doubled. This is not mere assumption, but a statement based on facts which can easily be verified by examining Christadelphian magazines over the past 75 years.

We are aware of the sad but necessary action to preserve the truth against these things taken by the faithful from time to time in bro. Roberts' day and later.

When the Spirit of God spoke through Paul, and stated that certain conditions would exist in the last days, described as "perilous times," and then uttered a prophecy with which we are all familiar, we should—if we are truly interested in our eternal welfare—**examine ourselves to see how we stand in relation to it.**

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

Let us not overlook the fact that this is the same Spirit that commanded Moses and Joshua to present themselves in the tabernacle in order that they receive a charge from the Lord. In Deut. 31:16, we read—

"Behind, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land whither they go to be among them, and will forsake Me, and break My covenant which I have made with them."

The fulfilment of this prophecy is well known to all of us, and has been referred to briefly in this message. Any statement made in this message regarding false teachers is not in any sense intended to be condemnatory. That is left entirely to the Word of God, for by it we will be judged. Our purpose is to call attention to facts, and let those who hear decide for themselves.

For almost 50 years, we have been familiar with the works of brethren John Thomas and Robert Roberts. In the beginning, we became convinced that what these brethren brought forth from the Scriptures was The Truth, and to this day we have never changed our mind. Therefore, we have no patience with those who attempt to belittle them by telling us that they were only searching for truth. If they did not have The Truth, how do we know whether we have it, and if we do not have it, and are still searching for it, we are of all men most miserable.

Here are some of the doctrines that are being taught in opposition to what brethren Thomas and Roberts taught—

1. That the first 3 chapters of Genesis are not a record of creation but merely a report of a vision that Moses had in which he was informed during a period of six days the details of God's creation. (This is to remove contradictions between the millions of years quoted by geologists and the 144 hours of Genesis).
2. That the time of Adam was up to 10,000 years ago.
3. That Adam was only the first "real" man, not the first "man."
4. A later theory is that when Paul said Adam was the first man, he was speaking of a mystical Adam, comprising all who sin in Adam.
5. To maintain harmony of Scripture, we must have a symbolic serpent in Genesis. Confusion results if the serpent in Eden is taken as a literal snake.
6. That the Holy Spirit is now possessed in the brotherhood.
7. The traditional interpretation of the historical section of the Apocalypse is no longer accepted by an increasing number of students.
8. That only the baptized will be raised from the dead.
9. It is not clear from scripture evidence that the righteous dead do not virtually rise immortal.
10. That no matter how dead an ecclesia, or ecclesias, may be, or how corrupt in doctrine, we have no right to leave them.

*We earnestly plead with all who still believe The Truth as rediscovered and taught by our faithful pioneer brethren Thomas and Roberts, to seriously and prayerfully examine their fellowship position in relation to these modern inventions and innovations.*

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## **Through Much Tribulation**

*"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth"—Hebrews 12:6*

**By BROTHER JOHN THOMAS**

MAN in the first estate is "a little lower than the angels," but in the second, or higher, estate, he is to be "crowned with glory and honour," and to take his stand in the universe upon an equality with them in nature and renown. Man's first estate is the natural and animal; his second, the spiritual, or incorruptible.

To be exalted from the present to the future state and inheritance, he must be subjected to trial. From the examples recorded in the Scriptures, it is evident that God has established this as the rule of His grace. That is, the principle upon which He bestows His honours and rewards is to prove men before He exalts them.

Probation, then, is the indispensable ordeal to which every man is subjected in the providence of God before he is accepted as "fit for the Master's use" (2 Tim. 2:20-21).

By these examples, also, it appears that man's probation is made to bear upon the trial of his faith by testing his obedience. An untried faith is worth nothing; but a faith that stands the test of trial is—

"Much more precious than gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire."  
—because the sustained trial will be—

"Found unto praise, and glory, at the appearance of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:5-7).

An untried faith is a dead faith, being alone. Faith without trial finds no scope for demonstration, or evidence of its existence. Thus, it is written—

"Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.

"Thou believest that there is one God: thou doest well. The devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"

"Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"

"Ye see then that how by works a man is justified, and NOT by faith ALONE"

(James 2:17-24).

Paul says (Heb, 11:6)—

"Without faith it is impossible to please God."

And it is also apparent from James' testimony just recited, that the faith with which He is pleased, is a faith that is made manifest by works; of which Noah, Abraham, Job, and Jesus, are pre-eminent examples.

Now, this "precious faith" can only be educed by trial, for the trial elaborates the works. This is the use of persecution, or tribulation, to believers; which in the divine economy is appointed for their refinement. Peter styles the "manifold persecutions" to which his brethren were subjected, "the trial of their faith"; and Paul testified to others of them, that—

"It is through much tribulation they must enter the kingdom."

Probation is a refining process. It purges out a man's dross, and brings out the image of Christ in his character; and prepares him for exaltation to his throne (Rev. 3:21). We can only enter the Kingdom through the fire (1 Cor. 3:13); but, if a man be courageous, and "hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end," he will emerge from it unscorched; and be presented holy, unblameable, and unrebukeable (Col. 1:22-23) before the King.

A man cannot "honour God" more than in believing what He promises, and doing what He commands; although to repudiate that belief, and to neglect, or disobey, those commands, should highly gratify all his senses, and place at his disposal the kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.

Not to believe the promises of God is in effect to call God a liar; and no offence, even to men of integrity in the world, is so insulting and intolerable as this. "Let God be true," saith the Scripture. His veracity must not be impeached in word or deed. If it be, then "judgment without mercy" is the "sorer punishment" which awaits the calumniator.

The unswerving obedience of faith, is the "faith made perfect by works," tried by fire. God is pleased with this faith, because it honours Him. It is a working faith. There is life in it; and its exercise proves that the believer loves Him. Such a man it is God's delight to honour; and, though like Jesus he be for the present "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," the time will certainly come when God will acknowledge him in the presence of the Elohim, and overwhelm his enemies with confusion of face.

*Probation before exaltation, then, is upon the principle of a faith in the promises of God  
MADE PRECIOUS BY TRIAL WELL SUSTAINED.*

There is no exemption from this ordeal. Even Christ himself was subjected to it—

"By the grace of God he tasted death for every man. For it was fitting for God, that in bringing many sons to glory, He should make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

"For in that he himself hath suffered being put to the proof, he is able to succour them who are tried" (Heb. 2:9-18).

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered: and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that OBEY him"

(Heb. 5:8-9).

He was first morally perfected through suffering, and then corporeally, by being "made into a spirit" by the spirit of holiness in his resurrection from the dead. I say, "morally perfected" for, although he was without transgression, his perfection of character is predicated upon his "obedience unto death."

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## **The Divine Sonship of Christ**

### **PART EIGHT**

*"Ever learning, and never able to come to a knowledge of the Truth"—2 Tim. 3:7*

#### **THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE FIRST TWO CHAPTERS OF MATTHEW AND LUKE**

**By BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS**

THAT Jesus is the Son of God is the foundation of the faith of Christ, and that this sonship is an actual sonship, by procreation of the Spirit of God, and not a mere legal or moral relation, or a sonship in any secondary sense, is necessitated by the nature of the plan of redemption by Christ; by the nature of the character of Christ; by the testimony of the prophets, and by typical foreshadowings of the Mosaic Law that went before.



The fact thus rests on a very broad and deep foundation, that cannot be undermined. These massive foundations have often been exhibited in these pages. It is not our purpose to enter upon them on the present occasion. We refer to them as indicating that the divine paternity of Jesus would stand an unassailable truth, even if the records of Matthew and Luke had no existence.

These records are, however, invaluable. They are the circumstantial illustrations of a truth which—though the nature of the case and the prophetic testimony necessitate it—we could not have so clearly and satisfactorily comprehended without them.

They explain to us the appearance and character of Christ, and make us privy to the divine method of procedure, from its incipency onwards, in the most wondrous work of God among men.

There is a class—a very small class—who do not receive these records, and who, more lamentably still, reject the truth which they so plainly exhibit. They accept the bulk of both Matthew and Luke, but reject the first two chapters in each, which contain the only record we have of the birth and early days of Jesus.

The fact of their rejection of these chapters has caused distress to some who, without looking at their reasons, have supposed there must be some ground for their attitude.

It is a question of the reasons. When this is investigated, it will be found that the reasons are altogether flimsy and insufficient: nay, that they are bad; and that the evidence in proof of the genuineness of the (by them) rejected chapters is more than decisive: it cannot be answered, it is irresistible. It leaves no room for doubt or gainsaying.

That, notwithstanding this, some would be found on the doubting or the unbelieving side, need not concern the believer of the Truth. There are such diversities and peculiarities of mental and moral incapacities and perversities that one must always expect an opposition party on every subject.

There always has been such a party in everything; and if a man is to wait till the opposition is converted before he accepts the Truth, he never will accept the Truth, but be found by Christ at his coming among those always weighing—always dubitating—

"Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth."

First, then, the evidence of the old manuscripts. Of these, not less than 800\* have been discovered in various countries since the revival of learning. Every one of these contains the two first chapters of Matthew's gospel with the exception of the single Codex Ebnerianus. But even this manuscript contains ch. 2. As it stands, it begins at 1:18.

\*Written 100 years ago. This is even truer now with further manuscripts discovered.

All the ancient versions contain Matthew 1 & 2, including the old Syriac, which is supposed to be nearly, if not quite, coeval with the apostolic age. So with Luke 1 & 2. All the old manuscripts and versions contain them.

\* \* \*

THIS evidence is confirmed by the quotations made by what are known as "the fathers" of the primitive church. Barnabas, Clement, Ignatius and Polycarp have no direct quotations from the first two chapters of Matthew and Luke, but when their subject leads them to refer to these gospels, their words recognize the chapters as we have them.

Ignatius, for example, in his epistle to Trallians, speaks of Jesus as "of the race of David, of the virgin Mary."

In his epistle to the Ephesians, he says, Christ was "conceived in the womb of Mary, of the seed of David, by the Holy Spirit." He refers also to the star mentioned in the disputed chapter.

Justin Martyr adverts to the account given of the miraculous conception by the evangelists. In his apology to the Emperor, Senate and people of Rome, within forty years of the death of the apostle John (Polycarp being still alive), Justin publicly declares as a circumstance well known, how those who had written a history of Christ had expressed themselves on the subject of the virginity of Mary and of the miraculous conception of Christ by the Holy Spirit, his object being to contrast this account with the licentious amours of the heathen deities as given by their poets.

This evidence of "the fathers" is conclusive as to the books of the New Testament containing the account of the miraculous conception in their time. And it is beyond dispute. The "fathers" may not be trust-worthy as to the **meaning** of a scripture, but as to the fact of the **existence** of a scripture, no witnesses could be more qualified to give evidence.

\* \* \*

WHAT are the grounds of rejection?

Unitarian writers assert that the chapters in dispute had their rise among the Gentiles, among whom it was nothing new to suppose immediate intercourse between the Deity and human females, of which heathen mythology furnished several instances (as to which, it may be separately remarked that the men who can discover any affinity between the fabulous heathen accounts of the licentious amours of their gods with women, and the evangelical accounts of the miraculous conception, is ill-qualified to appreciate the difference between the most libidinous and the purest and most sacred of writings).

Unitarian writers produce no proof in support of their assertion. Their only ground of objection lies in the fact testified by Epiphanius and Jerome, that the chapters in question were wanting in the copies used by the Nazarenes and Ebionites; and also in the New Testament used by Marcion.

Let us consider whether this absence of the disputed chapters from the documents in question constitute any ground for objecting to them. This investigation we best conduct by asking what are the facts touching the Ebionites and Marcion.

\* \* \*

WHO were the Ebionites?

The first to mention the Ebionites is Irenaeus (about 175 AD), who speaks of them as a sect not only separated from the general body of Christians, but who opposed the doctrines preached by the Apostles, and rejected, not only the disputed chapters, but the greater part of the books of the New Testament, rejecting all the epistles of Paul, whom they called an apostate from the Law. They only made use of a Hebrew gospel, which they called Matthew's, but which differs from Matthew in many particulars besides the two chapters.

Here is a sect which rejected whole books of authentic Scripture, because they were contrary to their notions. How can a reasonable man accept such a sect as affording guidance on the question of the authenticity of two particular chapters absent from their version, but present in almost all other manuscripts throughout the world?

Their "Matthew" was impugned at the time. It was proclaimed a corruption of the genuine gospel, while the "canonical" Matthew, as we have it, was never called in question. Epiphanius (abt. 350 AD) says:

*"In that gospel which they (the Ebionites) have called the gospel according to Matthew, which is not entire and perfect, but corrupted and curtailed, and which they call the Hebrew gospel, it is written . . . (and he quotes).*

*"Thus" (he says) "they change the true account into a falsehood . . . They have taken away the genealogy from Matthew, and accordingly begin their gospel with these words, 'It came to pass in the days of Herod.'"*

Origen (about 225 AD) alludes to it thus —

"It is written in a certain gospel, which is called 'According to the Hebrews'—if indeed anyone is pleased to receive it, NOT AS OF AUTHORITY, but for illustration of the present question . . ." (then he quotes).

Passages quoted by Origen from it prove that the text of the Hebrew Gospel, read by Origen, was not the same as our gospel of Matthew, with which its friends suppose it to be identical. It differed on many points besides the first two chapters.

\* \* \*

THE absence of the first two chapters of Matthew from the Ebionite and Nazarene gospels is of no weight in view of their rejection of Paul's epistles, which even the Unitarians accept. The omission is accounted for in the way the rejection of Paul's epistles is accounted for; the two first chapters did not coincide with their notions, and therefore they struck them out.

The Nazarene and Ebionite copies of Matthew's gospel not only omit the first two chapters, but in several instances they contradict the other three gospels of Mark, Luke, and John, whereas the corresponding passages in the accepted gospel of Matthew agree with them, which shows which way the tampering has occurred.

\* \* \*

AS to Marcion, is his authority of any weight against any part of the Scripture? He omitted the two disputed chapters; but he also rejected the whole of the Old Testament, both the law and the prophets, as proceeding from the God of the Jews, whom he regarded as the creator of this world, in contrast to a higher Creator.

As to the New Testament, he made one for himself, consisting of only one gospel, supposed to be compiled chiefly from Luke, and only ten of Paul's epistles, which are altered from the received version in numerous instances, in order to make the text more pliable to his gnostic notions.

People who quote him against the miraculous conceptions are bound consistently to follow him in these variations as well. He did not admit Christ to have been born at all. Consequently, he begins his gospel thus:

"In the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius, God descended into Capernaum."

He not only omits the first two chapters of Luke; he omits also the account of John the Baptist, the baptism of Christ, and his visit to Nazareth. He also omits part of chapters 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24.

Those who quote Marcion as an authority in the case of the first two chapters, ought to accept him as such in all these cases. That they disregard him in these cases is a proof that even in their opinion, his authority is of no weight.

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WHEN we come to look at the internal evidence of the chapters in question, the case becomes irresistible.

1. *The narratives of Matthew and Luke would be incomplete without them.*
2. *The chapters themselves are in the inimitable style of the inspired writers, and such as a forger could not have written.*

There is found in the first two chapters of Luke's gospel in particular, no internal trace of forgery or fiction, but many of genuineness and truth. Here are no mistakes; here is nothing inconsistent with manners or with facts—nothing that accords not as well as truth could accord, with all we know of what went before and of what followed this narrative. Everything that is ascribed to every character, whether word or deed, is perfectly natural and proper.

The narratives of Matthew and Luke are both forged if either is: they agree perfectly together; and they reciprocally elucidate and support each other.

For example, Luke's story of the annunciation explains and supports Matthew's narrative in v. 18; and his story of the angel's address to Joseph in v. 20, and the subject of Mary's joy in Luke's v. 48 is explained and illustrated by what we find of Joseph's state of mind concerning his purpose, and his change of purpose in Matthew's vs. 19-20.

Some things in the narrative are of such a nature that they would be likely to bring the whole into controversy, and an ingenious forger would have avoided them as improbable; and there are such things as would hardly have presented themselves to his imagination; or, if they had, such as he would have rejected, lest they should discredit his fiction.

The story of Zacharias and Elizabeth for the confirmation of Mary's faith in the angel's prophecy, seems neither natural nor easy to imagine for the purpose; and had it been a fiction, the scene would not have been laid in a place so public and under the observation of so many people. The circumstances would not have been so numerous, so particular, and so extraordinary; nor would it have been remarked that the transaction was noised abroad and made deep impressions on the minds of the whole country.

Again, as in these things there are hazards of detection which a forger would not have incurred; so also, as in other instances, there is such wonderful propriety in numerous particulars as would not have occurred to an impostor.

For instance, the angels' message to the shepherds, considered as intended to engage their attention and belief is most admirably proper: it is conceived in terms all of them alluding to ancient prophecies of the Messiah, every one of which has singular pertinence and energy; and the whole shows deep scriptural knowledge, circumspection, comprehension, and attention of mind. This, again, seems more like the care of Providence than the invention of a deceiver.

Whether we consider—

1. The unaffected simplicity of the narrative,
2. The calmness with which Matthew records the murder of the infants at Bethlehem (a peculiarity characteristic of the sacred writers) without indulging in reflections on the cruelty of Herod, from which a common historian on such an occasion would scarcely have abstained,
3. The incidental coincidence in the casual description by the evangelist of the reigning powers that periods, with the accounts we read of them in profane history, or
4. The spirit of piety which pervades Luke's narrative—

—we may apply to these portions of the gospels what has been said of the gospels themselves—that the supposed fabrication of them is more wonderful, and more repugnant to our knowledge of the complexion of forgery, than the admission of them as authentic narratives.

\* \* \*

TO summarize—

On the one side (in **support** of the authenticity of the disputed chapters), we have the united evidence of ALL the accessible ancient manuscript and versions, supported by the recognition of the very earliest Christian writers, confirmed by the internal character of the chapters and the necessity for the event which they narrate, to explain the character and mission of Jesus of Nazareth.

On the other side (**against** the chapters) is the merely negative fact that the disputed chapters are absent from the Ebionite gospel, which at the time of its production was pronounced a corruption; and from the Evangelium of Marcion, a gospel which he wrote to suit his own heathenish notions, and from which he recklessly omitted, not only the disputed chapters, but everything that interfered with his peculiar ideas.

*The subject is really beyond all controversy. Low indeed must the Biblical critic rank who can gravely attempt to impugn the united evidence of all the manuscripts and "fathers" by such worthless documents as the Ebionite Hebrew gospel and Marcion's Evangelium.*

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## "Jesus Wept"

*"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"—John 13:35*

According to the Scriptures, all who have accepted the Truth have a record in heaven with the Father and the Son.

If we have kept the Lord's commandments, and applied ourselves earnestly to do His will, we shall have the greatest reward ever offered to mortal man.

God is mindful of all His creation. He says there is not a bird falls unnoticed. He tells us of the lilies, that they toil not, neither do they spin, yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as one of these.

If God is mindful to notice the lily, how much more mindful will He be to consider man whom He has created for His pleasure! Especially so, if man seeks the will and pleasure of his Creator, rather than the pleasures of the world.

Ezekiel is told to warn Israel (33:11-12)—

"Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live."

"Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

"Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression;

"As for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness;

"Neither shall the righteous be able to live in the day that he sinneth."

The urgency in these words is for us. When we are summoned to be judged, we will have to give account of every idle word, and God knows even the thoughts and intents of the heart. There is nothing hid from Him. He knows all, hears all and sees all. And when we stand before our righteous and Supreme Judge, our past will unfold like a book and we cannot deny its record.

Recently the president of the United States was killed. Those of us who either listened on the radio or read the newspaper accounts, heard praise for this man echoed from the four corners of the globe. People who defied him, who spoke against him, who worked against him in his life, had only praise for him after his death.

This is a human characteristic. Is it reflected in our relationship toward the brothers and sisters? Are we going to realize only after some of us are gone, how much we meant to each other? Let us openly show our love for one another now, while there is yet time for love to do its healing work. Tomorrow may be too late.

Let each of us stop and meditate upon the unspeakable blessing that only Christadelphians share. Let us compare our blessing with that of the late president. This man with all his wealth and worldly knowledge was not allowed the privilege of knowing the Truth as it is in Jesus. Despite all the pomp and glory with which he was buried, in comparison to our own simple ceremonies, he will lie forever in the grave. He will remain in the congregation of the dead.

But our dead will rise again. And if found to be faithful, they shall receive position and honor far greater than man has ever known, and life everlasting.

\* \* \*

AS Christ walked along the shores of Galilee, he called to James and John, the sons of Zebedee, and told them to follow him. He told them he would make them fishers of men.

This is his call to us. He tells us to preach his Word in season and out of season, "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

The call to the knowledge of the Truth was a call to follow him. We promised that wheresoever he led us we would go. Have we continued to follow him in the narrow way, or have we wandered into the broad way?

Brethren and sisters, we can all see, we can all realize that the return of Christ is near at hand. The signs of our times are evident on every hand. Christ said that when the nations should cry, Peace, Peace, we should look for sudden destruction. All nations are tense and frightened. Hearts fail for fear. They realize the nuclear power the nations possess can destroy all life.

We, as Christadelphians, have been forewarned by the Scriptures concerning what shall come to pass. In Isa. 26:20, we are told of our consolation in the time of the end—

"Come, my people, enter into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

What a privilege it will be to be taken out of the confusion and devastation that will exist when the Lord—

"Cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity!"

Do we fully realize what a privilege it is to be hidden now in the protective hands of Christ, all our steps ordered and nothing left to chance? Of course, this privilege is ours only—

"IF we continue in the faith, grounded and settled and not moved away from the hope of the Gospel."

*The way some of us live our lives, what right have we to believe our lives are "hid with Christ in God"? This assurance applies only to those who are "dead" to the things of the world (Col. 3:3).*

Will the angel be able to see the blood of Christ on the lintel post of our hearts, as in the Passover of the children of Israel? Do our lights still burn brightly, or have we allowed the oil to run out and the wicks to become charred? Do we do our daily reading merely as a duty? Only when it is convenient? Do we read with the same hunger and relish we would eat a good meal?

The Bible, and the labours of our brethren gone before us, are our only source of spiritual food. This food will enable us to survive the days ahead and to be well nourished children of God. Why neglect it?

If we were to see one of our brethren sick, or hungry or cold, and near death, would we say, "I have food at my house, come and get it"? No, we would prepare it, and take it to him, and beg him to eat if necessary. Yet, we see our fellow servants of Christ spiritually dying, and we pass by on the other side, saying nothing.

Is it possible that we ourselves have become so weak we fail to recognize the undernourished? Do we selfishly think that others might have the same opportunity as ourselves, and so excuse ourselves of our responsibility to Christ?

Do we think it a sign of weakness to show concern and compassion, and even to shed tears over our brethren? Then WHY were those two little words, "Jesus wept," written into our Scriptures? Couldn't they have been left out just as well? They say so little (to the natural mind).

"Jesus wept" are words that reveal Jesus to us, and show us by example what God expects of us. Here was the Son of God weeping over the grave of one man. What compassion! What fellowship of suffering!

"Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!"  
"By this shall all men know ye are my disciples."

WHO shall inherit the earth? Is it the strong, the mighty, the proud? No, the Scripture tells us in Matthew that the meek shall inherit the earth. Let us take to heart the words of Zephaniah (2: 1-3)—

"Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired.  
"Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you.  
"Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger!"

A three-fold cord is not easily broken. With each of us striving together toward one common goal, how much easier it is to hold out against the world about us and the desires of the flesh! With a united front, working together in the bonds of love and peace, how joyous it is to meet here on this first day of the week with Christ in our midst.

Christ's great example of compassion and meekness is seen in these emblems before us. He came as a Lamb led to the slaughter. Because he endured the cross and suffered the shame, he will return as a Lion, taking vengeance on them that know not God.

As Christ was the first-fruits of them that sleep, let us let him be the first in the role of the Avenger. If we are found righteous we too will have part in God's vengeance of the nations, but as long as we are on the earth as mortals, we can do no better than to be as a lamb led to the slaughter, suffering the shame for the joy set before us. —H.C.C.

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## The Mind of Christ

*"If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his"*—Romans 8:9

THIS is a plea for a searching self-examination of our lives, to see whether we are on the way of life.

I do not believe there is sufficient realization among us of the magnitude of the divine call—of how deeply it should reach into and transform every aspect of our lives—of the great changes it must bring about in our characters and the direction of all our activities—of how we spend ALL our time and efforts and money.

The prize that we seek is infinitely beyond anything we can comprehend. For the devotion of a brief lifetime, God is offering us perfect joy for all eternity. The present is such an infinitesimal fraction of the future that it is the utterest folly not to give up everything possible in the present in order to assure the future. This folly will be tragically apparent at the judgment seat.

What God asks—and it is such a pitiful little compared to what He offers—is complete devotion, complete dedication, complete putting away of the present, complete consecration of the whole life to the service of God.

Everything depends upon the COMPLETENESS of the dedication. One-half will not do; three-fourths will not do; nine-tenths will not do. God requires ALL our life, ALL our interest, ALL our labor and activity.

The reason part time service will not do is that there is **no such thing** as part time service to God. We CANNOT serve two masters. If it does not involve the whole heart and life and strength and love, it is **no service to God at all.**

*It is the few who perceive this who find the way of life. The many who do not, only follow the way of death.*

Jesus expresses it most broadly and deeply when he says:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with ALL thy heart, and with ALL thy strength, and with ALL thy soul, and with ALL thy mind."

This, he says, is the **first** commandment. He says it comprises ALL commandments.

*The trouble is, that we can read commands like this, fully accept them, and yet never realize or comprehend the fulness and depth of their meaning—the magnitude of WHAT THEY REQUIRE OF US.*

If we could really and fully perceive the infinite greatness of the destiny offered us, it would completely transform our lives. Every thought and action would be affected. We would be entirely different creatures from the common world around us, instead of being so sadly like them in so many ways.

The best this world offers— its greatest riches, its fullest pleasures, its highest honours, its most distinguished powers and positions and opportunities—are less than NOTHING, compared to the destiny that awaits the approved of God.

In the ebb and flow of this uncertain world, the presidency of the United States is at the moment the greatest power and prominence to which man can aspire. Its honours are great, its powers and prestige are great, its opportunities for affecting human history and advancing human welfare are great. But all these things are mere children's mud-pies compared to the position of the LEAST of those who attain to the Kingdom of God.

*We know this theoretically. We fully accept it as a logical proposition. But do we FEEL it and LIVE IT IN OUR LIVES? Are our lives consistent with this tremendous conception? Or are we just a few more natural creatures thinly veneered over with a little religious sentiment?*

Do we conduct our lives in harmony with what we profess to be—THE HIGHEST ARISTOCRACY OF THE UNIVERSE —the divine, eternal aristocracy of righteousness—infinately higher than all the kings and presidents of this poor little passing world of wickedness?

We say, quoting Scripture—

"The whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19).

—and truly it does. Whatever is natural, whatever is human, whatever is not intelligent and purposeful godliness, is wickedness.

But how different are WE? Just believing a few first principles of Bible truth and calling ourselves Christadelphians does not automatically make us saints. It could much more easily make us hypocrites.

\* \* \*

PAUL says (Rom. 8:9), and this is the key passage of our subject—

"If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Here, then, is a clear test. Do we have the spirit of Christ?

*This is the most important question anyone can ask himself.*

First of all, what does it mean to have the spirit of Christ? How would you define it? How would you test yourself to see whether you had it or not?

*If we cannot define it, we can be reasonably sure we have not got it, because the spirit of Christ is only acquired by learning what it is in its various aspects of character, and consciously—effortfully—adopting it.*



We can begin to define it from this same Romans 8—

"They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit" (v. 5.)

This gets us a little closer, but is it really reaching us? Is this another of those statements that we accept without comprehending? What are the "things of the flesh" and what are the "things of the Spirit," and what does it mean to "mind" them?

The things of the flesh are the things of this present life—food, raiment, shelter, entertainment—all human and natural activity—the natural daily round of possessing and enjoying. The things of the flesh also include all natural thoughts, reactions, emotions, desires, affections, pleasures, etc.

Some of the things of the flesh are good and some are not. Those that are good are those necessary for the continuance of our life and maximum usefulness to God. Whatever does not contribute to this is a harmful detriment.

Where does the line of necessity come? Where does necessity end, and unfaithful stewardship and misusing our Master's goods begin?

*It is not for us to say in individual cases, but toe are sure that the Scriptures, frankly faced, leave no doubt that the line of duty cuts lower and deeper than most of us desire to live.*

The scriptural standard is—

"Having food and raiment, therewith be content."

And Paul's accompanying observation is—

"For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can take nothing out."

The mind of Christ, and certainly the example that he gave us, is that we should be content with the bare necessities of life, and beyond that point should concentrate ALL our labor and time in the service of God. He gave us an example to follow, and he gently but very pointedly reminded us that—

"The servant is not above his Lord."

The apostles who followed him, and lived as he lived, call our attention to his example in this respect.

And even the bare necessities must not be our **primary** concern, for that is lack of faith—

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

We seem to be speaking more of restrictions—what we should not do, rather than that we should do, but this is not really the case. The biggest harm in many things of the flesh simply lies in the fact that they fill the mind and take the time and effort and attention from spiritual things.

We are called upon to be positively spiritual, to be **CONSTRUCTIVELY** spiritual—to "always abound in the work of the Lord." We are not called upon to be just negatively spiritual—just to not do things forbidden—we are here to work actively and to the fulness of our strength in the works of God.

In many things the positive will crowd out the negative if the positive gets big and strong enough.

We must not only "always abound in the work of the Lord"—we must **WANT** to do so, we must be lovingly and gratefully **anxious** to do so. God insists upon, not just all our strength, but—far more important—all our heart and soul.

If a brother or sister truly gets the spirit of Christ, truly IS Christ's, it will not be necessary to exhort them to "always abound in the work of the Lord."

It will not be necessary to exhort them to attend and support all the classes and meetings of the ecclesia. If they have the spirit of Christ, if they truly are Christ's—in heart and not just in name—they just could not stay away, if it were humanly possible to get there. Their whole heart and soul and mind would be with the brethren and sisters—those few whom God has given us as companions in the glorious pathway to the Kingdom.

Paul agonizingly travailed in birth over many, long after they had passed through the waters of baptism, that Christ should be truly born in them.

A brother with the spirit of Christ would not dream of missing a meeting he could possibly attend, or of not supporting to the fulness of his means, yea, and beyond his means, every activity of the Truth and work of the Lord.

\* \* \*

*"They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh."*

DO we regard our real life and joy as the time we are able to give to God's work, keeping all other activity to a minimum so that we can give the fulness of our heart and strength in thankful service to God?

Or do we live like the rest of the world—busy days, lazy evenings, pleasure-seeking week ends, minds full of worldly things—wrapped up in houses, gardens, cars, boats, sports, food, raiment, personal adornment and the pitifully childish decking out of these vile, perishing bodies—interested in the world's activities—excited about sports, stupefied by television?

The call of the Gospel is a call to WORK—lifelong work, and it does not mean just a poor little self-satisfied hour a week sending out lecture invitations.

*It means continuous day-in and day-out labor and dedication, in season and out of season.*

Consider a few passages —

"Who is a faithful and wise servant . . . blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh shall find so doing."

"Thou wicked and slothful servant! Take the pound from him and give it to him that hath ten pounds."

"Occupy till I come."

"Unto whom much is given, from him shall much be required."

"Depart from me: I was hungry and ye fed me not, thirsty and ye gave me no drink; naked and ye clothed me not, a stranger and ye took me not in."

"When ye have done ALL that is commanded you (who can ever feel they have?) say, We are unprofitable servants."

"ALWAYS ABOUNDING in the work of the Lord."

Are these discouraging? Not a bit of it! But they are challenging; they are thought-provoking; they are deeply searching and penetrating. Do we have the mind of Christ? —

"I must be about my Father's business."

If we have the mind of Christ we shall eagerly desire, like Paul, to "spend and be spent" in the service of our beloved Master. We shall resolutely strip our life of all non-essentials that cater to the flesh, and devote all our time and strength and goods to the welfare of the Truth and the Brotherhood.

"If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is NONE OF HIS."

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THE mind of Christ is more than eager labor for God. It is love, kindness, gentleness, patience, joyfulness, cheerfulness, rejoicing even in tribulation, eagerness to make peace, to forgive and seek forgiveness, to cover a multitude of sins. Let us frankly rate ourselves in these characteristics.

"If we would judge (**dia-krino**—examine) ourselves, we should not be judged" (**krino**)—chastened, punished, condemned by God."

PAUL says in v. 8 (still in Rom. 8) —

"To be spiritually minded is life and peace."

Therefore, if we do not have peace—inner peace—peace of mind—cheerful, joyful inner harmony—we are not spiritually minded—we have not the mind of Christ—we are none of his.

Upon what does peace of mind depend? Upon two things:

1. *Recognizing that "ALL things work together for good." That whatever happens is for the best and has a wise and loving divine purpose, and if fully accepted and properly used, will lead us forward on the way toward eternal joy.*

Therefore Paul could say—

"I rejoice in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience godliness."

2. *A consciousness of harmony with God, to the best of our present ability, and ever striving for closer harmony.*

We shall never be perfect. We shall never be able to do all we would, or as well as we would, but if our life as a whole is dedicated to God and to love, and we feel in ourselves we are each day getting just a little closer, we shall have peace of mind.

\* \* \*

THE mind of Christ is **unselfishness**. We shall never be any good to God as long as we are wrapped up in ourselves, wrapped up in our own petty pleasures and problems.

There is nothing smaller than a self-centered mind. There is nothing larger than a spiritual mind. It comprehends the universe. It comprehends eternity. It is free and untrammelled. It radiates power and goodness.

In the first eleven chapters of Romans Paul paints a broad and glorious picture of the purpose of God with mankind. It is tremendous and overwhelming, especially as compared with this petty, crawling existence, and Paul himself expresses the godly mind's awed and reverent reaction at the end of ch. 11 —

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God . . .

"For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory for ever!"

Then, beginning ch. 12, he brings the whole weight and force of this magnificent divine revelation to bear directly upon you and upon me —

"I beseech you THEREFORE, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice."

This word "beseech" is a strong one. In 2 Cor. 8:4 it is translated "with much entreaty." It carries the sense of great urgency—intense pleading and persuasion. It expresses Paul's deep conviction that this is the only POSSIBLE way of pleasing God, the only possible way that gratitude can respond to such divine love and wisdom.

"I beseech you therefore by the mercies of God."

He does not command, by the **judgment** of God, but beseeches by His **mercy**. We too must maintain this approach. The deeper we go into the responsibilities and obligations of the Truth, the more we must present them as a beseeching because of mercy, rather than a commanding because of judgment.

In view of the infinite mercies of God, His love, His forbearing, His kindness toward man in providing such a glorious destiny, I beseech you to present your bodies a living sacrifice.

**TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH, IF THE LORD WILL**

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## **We Shall See Him in His Beauty**

*"When we shall see him, there is no beauty, that we should desire him"—Isaiah 53:2*

IS it not by the way we ourselves feel, by the way we think, and the way we act, that causes something or someone to appear to us as a thing of beauty?—while we can let others pass by and we are quite unmoved and have no appreciation.

We know that is how it is with us in the Truth. There has never been, and there never will be any person or thing of greater true, inward beauty than Jesus Christ. He was designed and created by God and was perfection.

And yet, such is the wickedness of human nature with its warped and twisted ideas and worldly outlook, that Jesus, "was despised and rejected of men."

Can we who have come here this morning fully appreciate our position? Do our hearts burn with a sense of happiness and thankfulness to God for His goodness? We have read, we have heard, and we believe all that the prophets and apostles have written for our learning. To you, and to me, the arm of the Lord has been revealed. The doctrine of the prophets and apostles have been accepted by us.

Like the Ethiopian eunuch, many times we asked —

"Of whom speaketh the prophet this?"

What we had read had no meaning or understanding for us. Then in the mercy of God He sent a Philip who said—

"Understandest thou what thou readest?"

And we answered—

"How can we?"

Then Philip joined himself to us to answer our questions and what had been a clouded and misunderstood picture became clear to us in all its unsurpassed beauty and meaning. We could see the Lord Jesus with our hearts and our minds with understanding. And in due time we believed with all our heart. And like the eunuch we said—

"Here is water; what hindereth us to be baptized?"

So let us enjoy the position of privilege that is ours. The Father said to us by His Word—

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

And through the inspired Word we understood and believed. Now we are able to picture Jesus Christ with a full appreciation from this chapter 53 of Isaiah. Our minds give the picture. We see what happened in Eden; and the covenants of promise given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We see the prophets as they laboured and suffered through the sins of Israel. That forms the background of the picture.

And in the foreground we see a hill outside a city; and on that hill there stands a cross. We can see it in all its importance, and what was accomplished by it; the work of the Lord Jesus in all its beauty. What men could not do, and what they did not deserve; the merciful Father in heaven saw. He saw there was none to save an evil world.

The God of heaven revealed His arm, and by that arm He made salvation possible. Men did not know the way out; but the arm of the Lord spoken of by the prophets was Israel's Messiah. But a Messiah to please them would have been a man like Saul, of great stature and strength, and of superficial beauty. A man skilled in war and able to go out and fight their battles. A king to live in a great palace, with slaves and servants.

But that was not such a man as God gave them. This man was a quiet, meek, humble man; whose origin was as "a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." And his mother was a humble daughter of Israel.

He was born and laid in a manger "because there was no room for them in the inn." But this tender plant was nurtured by God, out of the dry ground that could produce nothing of itself but weeds and thorns and thistles. Yet God produced a plant of exquisite beauty.

But what did man do? They plucked up the plant and trampled upon it. And that is what the world is doing today with their ignoring of God, and their man-made ways of worship.

Thus we see the perversity of human nature, who in all their generations have scorned the beauty and the sinless perfection of God's Son. They prefer the honours and praise and the vain-glorious philosophy and pride of men.

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THAT we may fully appreciate the Lord Jesus in all his beauty, it is important that we see the picture clearly. For we can see that Jesus showed anxiety towards his twelve disciples. Several times he asked them questions such as—did they really see him? Did they see him in God's plan of salvation? He asked—

"What think ye of Christ?"

"Whom say ye that I am?"

"Hast thou not known me, Philip?"

*And Philip really had not known him.*

From Genesis to Malachi, from Matthew to the Revelation, we can read, we can see and know Jesus. And more so when we come to the table of remembrance. Here the words of this Isaiah 53 take on a full meaning. The prophet declares—

"Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."

And only a few of our generation really understand the meaning of those words. But such was Jesus—

"He who hath borne our griefs."

And he stood and cried—

"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

How true that can be! If we will but close our eyes and open our hearts before the throne of grace, then will our griefs and our sorrows seem to fade away. Yes, even though they be as bitter as ugly human nature can make them.

If we take our trials and our sufferings before him in earnest prayer, we know they will be shared, they will be borne by him, and eventually they will be taken away.

The perfection of inward and outward health is the divine promise given through the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet—

"He was taken by wicked hands and crucified."

Do we clearly understand all that was meant by these actions? Do we understand that it was the great love of God the Father Who permitted it?

The outside world cannot see it. Many say, "How could a God of love allow it?" Others say it was God Himself, therefore He couldn't have suffered.

But how much of the picture presented to us do WE understand? And all that was involved in the wicked hands taking Jesus and crucifying him? We know it was the love of God and the love of Jesus, because there were more than twelve legions of angels at hand that could have crushed the mighty power of Rome. They could have caused the tormentors of Jesus to fall down dead in an instant.

But in the great love of God, he allowed the body He had prepared to be broken. A loving Father allowed the only blood to be shed that could save mankind.

Let us look at the foreground of the picture, and see the sacrifice as it is presented to us by these emblems. Let us "Behold the man!" See him in all his beauty even while he suffers agony. Tormented and tortured—

"Yet as a lamb before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

The Father required it of him, and he obeyed. So let us take the exhortation and let us take the encouragement. Should we worry even if troubled in mind and body? The days are swiftly flying, and the return of the Lord Jesus may be very soon. That will reveal all that was meant by the sufferings we may have had.

Let us consider the beauty of the mind of Jesus as we study the picture and the cross. Recall his words to his two disciples—

"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to have entered into his glory?"

Jesus knew what was required, he knew all that was involved. He knew the cup could not pass from him unless he drank of it. Let us consider as we behold this man of beauty; and the love of God by the words of Isaiah —

"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities."

Yes, he was bruised in the heel, so that he might bruise the sin-power in the head. Glance again at the background of the picture. There we see the happenings in Eden; also the covenants of promise.

Thus we see that Jesus accepted the chastisement laid upon him by an all-wise Father; not only for Jesus' eternal good, but also for ours. He knew that eternal peace for all the Household depended upon his bearing that chastisement. He knew it was with these stripes that he and we should be healed. All had turned away from God and there was none to save. So —

"God laid upon him the iniquities of us all."

There we have the beautiful picture. Are we fully appreciative of it? When thanks is given for the bread and for the wine, do the words have a real meaning in our ears, in our hearts, and in our minds? Do we experience that wonderful feeling that God is close and watching us as we eat the bread and drink the wine—knowing these are the symbols of the broken body of Jesus, and his blood shed for the sins of many?

Also in the forefront of the picture we see the Son of God, the heir of the world, "brought as a lamb to the slaughter." And the spikes pierce his hands and his feet. Yes, he was suffering for you and for me.

Knowing it, does it guide us any in our manner of life as we seek the Kingdom? When we are ill we have gentle hands to care and nurse us. He had none but his mother to mourn for him; and she stood afar off.

"He was cut off out of the land of the living."

Weakened by scourging, the breath returned to God Who gave it. He had given himself for the sins of many—

"For the transgressions of God's people was he stricken."

In John 19 we have the fulfilment of the words written hundreds of years before. Year after year on the first day of the week we come to the table of remembrance.

*Do we ever give a thought how easy it could be to give our hands to those who crucify Christ? Without thinking, it is easy to again crucify the Son of God.*

Would any of us lend ourselves to be smiters? Yet, if we smite our fellow-servants we smite Christ. If we speak evil of brother or sister we speak without love to the devoted Son of God. Can we turn from those for whom Christ died? If we do, he will take it as done to himself.

Let us take a long look at the Son of God in the picture—his weakness, his strength, his sufferings and his patience. As we do, let our hearts be filled to overflowing with gratitude and thanksgiving, with hope, with determination that for us he did not die in vain.

Have we ever thought how it must have pleased God to bring His Son forth from the tomb? And there were also two angels to attend to him.

"That he might prolong his days, and see the travail of his soul."

For almost 2000 years Jesus has lived with immortal power at the right hand of God. He has seen and will see of the "travail of his soul." In this sinful world he can see just a few who recognize the perfection of his beauty.

Let us be sure we understand the reality of it all. Isaiah wrote several hundred years before—

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive."

And in due time the root out of the dry ground sprang forth. Jesus the Christ was born. Later, John beheld Jesus coming towards him and said—

"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

And God has appointed another day when He will "divide him a portion with the great." In the fulfilment the scene will be changed. The twelve legions will be there in power and great glory to put all things under his feet.

When Jesus was taken by wicked hands, and brought as a lamb to the slaughter, we were not there. But we will be there when God sends Jesus to finish his work. These are the realities made sure by his death and resurrection!

What comfort, what encouragement, that in God's mercy each one of us can share the realities of that future glory! Let us make use of our opportunity, that we may see Jesus in his beauty. To know Jesus is life eternal to everyone of us. So let us eat of that bread and drink of that cup. We know that:—

"He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

But those who eat and drink with their hearts pleading to God for forgiveness; for help; for encouragement—they will eat and drink with discernment. They shall see the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, in all his beauty.

*Beauty never surpassed, and never to be surpassed.*

"Thy body then may we discern,  
And cheered and strengthened be;  
That strong in faith our hearts may burn  
And agonize for thy return  
To reign on earth with thee."

— C.H.T.

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## The Judge Standeth at the Door

*"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"* Joshua 24:15

HAVING taken his farewell of Israel, endeavouring to deeply impress them with the necessity of a robust and clear-cut choice of service to God, Joshua died and was buried in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-serah in Mount Ephraim.

His great plea to Israel was to serve the Lord —

"Put away strange gods, and incline your heart unto the Lord God of Israel."

But as the history of Israel unfolds in Judges, there is deepening corruption, failure and disaster.

The word "Judges" is from the Hebrew word **Shofetim**, meaning "champions or rescuers," and we see the reason, as we do in all God's dealings with men. God raised up Judges over His people, to act as their champions or rescuers. But what a sad commentary Israel's history provides in response to God's merciful overtures to His people, a history which does not improve throughout the entire book of Judges, but rather worsens. In Judges 1:1-2 we are told Israel corrupted themselves more than their fathers, following other gods to serve them, and ceased not from their own doings nor from their own stubborn ways.

Therefore, instead of God clearing the land of the previous inhabitants, when Israel occupied the land, God left the nations among them, to try them and to prove them. If there was no improvement in Israel's conduct, over that of the heathen nations, why rid the land or subdue the people to Israel?

*God works with us when we work with Him, and when we choose the way of the world He uses the world to discipline and chasten us.*

So the record in Judges 3:5 tells us —

"The children of Israel dwell among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, and Jebusites."

And this brought about a kindred condition as existed in Noah's day, for they not only lived with the people mentioned but —

"Took their daughters to be their wives, gave their daughters to their sons."

As in the days of Noah, and every age since, this marrying into the world' was fatal to the preservation of the truth of God among them. The whole counsel of God is —

"Be ye SEPARATE and I will receive you . . . Be not unequally yoked: what communion hath light with darkness?"



Yet Israel became one with their associates, destroying that condition that would lead on to the implementing of God's desire to "fill the earth with His Glory." Instead of Israel proving themselves worthy of God's kindness and mercy, they did evil in His sight, forgetting Him and serving Baalim. Israel thus tied the very hands that had been so abundantly outstretched to bless them, so that which God had purposed in them did not mature.

As Jesus said, the very proselytes they made to Judaism became, by following their example, children of the adversary. Instead of leading them to light and righteousness, evil would and did go forth in self-promotion, and self-accomplishment until there finally became no remedy, and God finally sent forth His armies and destroyed them.

And today we see in spiritual Israel a re-living of the spirit of natural Israel, in spite of the fact that what happened unto Israel were for our examples, that we should not lust for the things that do not produce worthy characters in the robes of Jesus.

We are advised today to go out into the world more and mix with it, but that is not the cry of the Truth —

"Friendship with the world is enmity with God."

We can preach the Truth without that affiliation with the world. We do not find our meeting room filled as a result of conforming to the world. How few we find today can bring forth the recognition on the part of their associates that "They had been with Jesus," as was observed concerning the disciples' conduct. Jesus said—

"Ye are not of the world as I am not of the world."

This is the only guide for us, regardless of what man may advocate. The Scriptures define for us the true road to the Kingdom of God, and that road is straight and it is narrow, but what joy it produces to those who endeavour to traverse it, that even now we are able to see the grandeur of the Truth on the one hand, and the emptiness of life outside of the Truth on the other! How truly do the thoughts of the apostle James apply when he says (1:24):—

"If any man be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like a man beholding himself in a glass, and turning himself from it immediately forgets what sort of a man he is."

How fruitless is the world and its doings, yet how profitable is the doing of the will of God! Natural Israelitish history is given for our ensamples that we should not lust after evil things but after the things that are good.

*The good things referred to are numerous, both in this life and that to come. It is not a sad and fruitless enterprise, but filled with great joy, and full of glorious promise.*

James says (5:7)—

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

"Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."

These thoughts convey to us what we may read in another portion, where we are told the long-suffering, or patient waiting, is to our benefit, yea, even to our salvation (2 Pet. 3:15).

Surely this should be to us a great incentive, to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear—not frightened, but a reverential fear—in which we shall be continually serving the Lord, in all meekness.

Returning to James 5:8 we get the true import of what is necessary in our days of probation, when the apostle says—

"Be ye patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

No half-hearted measures are here advocated, but a steadfast manifestation of our hearts in the sight of God.

"The Judge standeth at the door."

How true! We have but to take the thoughts of Rev. 11:18, that will most certainly verify the fact that the Judge standeth at the door. And if we need further instruction, as being of Spiritual Israel, James says—

"Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the Name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience."

And for further commentary upon the prophets and their patient suffering of affliction, we may read Hebrews 11, which is as an open book before us, relative to the lives of these just men who suffered for Christ's sake that they in turn may live with him. As we read and study these things before us in the lives of the prophets and apostles, we can join with Peter in his joyful exclamation when he says (1 Pet. 1:3)—

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead!"

And then the apostle goes on to tell us what that hope consists of—not of wishful thinking, nor wrought out in fanciful imaginations, but as we read in v.4—

"To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

Let our minds dwell upon these words, meditate on them, get their full import and power and comfort. What wonders they convey to us! Wonders and joys that most certainly should arouse us to an earnest sincerity, walking in the fear of the Lord, as the hope is reserved for us, with no fear of it being stolen or its fading, or its being insecure, but an inheritance reserved by God in heaven, and to be brought unto us in the last time (1 Pet. 1:4, 13). Where in this life do we find anything secure, anything permanent, anything on which we can build in confidence?

As we meditate upon this grand hope, we may read the balance of the first two chapters of Peter's first epistle, and how wonderfully we shall become fortified to run with patience the race that is set before us.

Compare Peter as he first was with Peter as he finally developed under the guidance of the Spirit. In the second epistle he calls unto us to gird up our minds and to hope unto the end, not without doing, but hearing AND doing, which is confirmed by the apostle as we read 2 Pet. 1.10—

"Wherefore the rather brethren, give DILIGENCE. . ."  
—no half hearted measures to be employed, but a diligent application of ourselves to the truth—

". . . to make our calling and election sure."

And we are assured—promised, guaranteed—that IF we do these things we shall never fall. And then is added that grand and full assurance of things so pertaining to a worthy walk and conduct of ourselves in the everlasting Gospel that is preached, as it is written—

"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you ABUNDANTLY into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

And let us be reminded that the words of instruction so given are not of man's own thinking, not based upon "cunningly devised fables," as so much of mankind's hopes are, but upon the sure word of prophecy, which in turn carries with it that irresistible power of fulfilment.

Though there may, and will always, be certain elements existing that would trouble us, and pervert the Gospel of Christ, yet there we have the Truth as the apostle puts it, a Truth which rightly divided and adhered to will gain for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.

By the apostolic precept and example, we are guided into the narrow way that will eventually lead to life, yes, eternal life! Let us then suffer the word of exhortation and be guided not by the will of men, but the will of God.

And seeing that we are looking forward to a realization of the saving grace of our Lord, let us beware lest we may be "led away with the error of the wicked, and so fall from our steadfastness," but "let the Word of God dwell in our hearts RICHLY," that, being of Spiritual Israel, and realizing why Israel after the flesh, or natural Israel, failed because of disobedience to the opportunities that were theirs—

"Let us grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"To him be glory both now and ever. Amen."

—W.J.P.

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## **Jeshurun Waxed Fat**

*"Lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord?"—Prov. 30:9*

THE glorious age of prosperity under Solomon had dimmed the real Source of blessings. Association with the world around had opened the doors to the entrance of foreign idols as forms of worship endorsed by the king himself. The restrictions of separation both in commerce and social behaviour were considered unbecoming to the golden kingdom of the world.

One by one the Divine ordinances were broken. All imperceptibly the standard was gradually lowered, as the love of God was replaced with the love of worldly praise, honor, prestige and glory.

*Such was the heritage that was left for Solomon's sons.*

The record of these things has been designed for our benefit. Like the Law of Moses, these historic annals are planned to show us the exceeding sinfulness of sin, to impress on our minds the waywardness of the human heart, and to instruct us concerning the magnitude of the mercy and love of God.

Applied personally to our lives, these events can be the avenue to salvation if we permit an inward examination of our thoughts and deeds.

*If we read them without this personal application, then the knowledge of them will rise to our condemnation in the day of judgment.*

If we concede such a declension could enter the hearts of a people separated to such close association with God as was Israel, we must agree that it can happen to us who have been called to kingship with Christ.

The national condition of Judah at the end of Solomon's reign becomes a type of the flesh unguided by the Spirit of God's teaching. How important that we recognize this condition in ourselves and apply to ourselves the lessons we read!

—F.H.

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## He Learned Obedience

*"It became Him, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering"—Hebrews 2:10*

WE memorialize the death and resurrection of our dear Lord. We are highly privileged to be here that we can fellowship one another through the Truth, the Son, and the Father.

Our minds are taken back in thought nearly 2,000 years as we look upon the emblems, when Christ and those twelve men partook of this memorial feast. That night Christ instituted the breaking of bread and the partaking of wine, and he enjoined upon his servants—

"Do this in remembrance of me."  
—a memorial of his death and resurrection.

Such a tremendous impress was made upon the world by the inspired apostles and their immediate followers, that Christ's resurrection has actually become a recorded fact of history. Most of Christendom will acknowledge a risen Christ, though most of them are totally ignorant of its import and meaning.

The great outstanding fact that escapes nearly all is that we have the sentence of death in ourselves—not that Christ died instead of us, and that somehow we have eternal life in ourselves—but, that Christ died that we might have life **through** him.

Apart from the Truth and Christ, we are but vanity, and must return to dissolution and dust. Christ must become a part of our life. Nay, more, he must become ALL our life. Paul says:

"To me, to live in Christ."

Christ must become the motivating center of our lives. We need to consider very carefully our every action that we do not offend him. He intercedes for us. His whole life was given to this tremendous work—that a remnant of men and women might be called from this seemingly endless procession of sin and death to the grave.

Think of it. Here is the first man to be made alive from death, with everlasting life. His work is ever progressing. He never loses interest in it. And WE have SUCH A ONE who never loses interest in you or me for our eternal good! He watches over us, and pleads the Father on our behalf.

Do we really "consider" him? In our everyday lives, do we consider him in the sanctity that the Truth brings us into? Do we think of it affecting him? It does—

"I know thy works."

This was the message he sent to the ecclesia in Philadelphia. Yes, he knows all our inmost thoughts. He sees all our actions. Yet, we can become so involved in our everyday affairs. We get our minds set on something we are doing, and we think that is all that counts. Perhaps we see the vanity afterwards, perhaps we do not.

We can see the reality of God's great love manifested in Christ in his prayer to the Father recorded in John 17—

*"I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world.*

*"I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me; for they are Thine.*

*"These things I speak in the world that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Thy Word.*

*"I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*

*"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

*"Sanctify them through Thy Truth; Thy Word is Truth.*

*"For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the Truth.*

*"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us."*

It is only through knowledge and belief of the glorious gospel of God, and obedience to it, that we can become one with Christ and God.

How displeasing it must be for Christ, when he sees us allowing the things of the flesh to stand in our way of salvation that he, through his sufferings and agony, has made possible for us.

Christ wept over Lazarus; he wept over Jerusalem because of the hardness of men's hearts, because of their unbelief. Paul says that Jesus, in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers with strong crying and tears (Heb. 5:7-8).

Just think of it, dear brethren and sisters: Jesus, the great teacher with strong crying and tears!

*We are too hard. It is good for us to weep. It is good for us to suffer, that we may become more sympathetic with those who are suffering.*

The Truth requires so much of the fight of Faith and contending for it, that we are apt to become too hard, that those other characteristics, longsuffering and charity, escape us.

Paul speaks of wrath and strife as the works of the flesh. That is very true. Sometimes we have to cause strife in contending for the Truth, but those who contend for the Truth are really not the ones causing the strife. It is those who bring with them the errors who are really the cause of strife and division.

We must never replace duty with love, never set them against each other. Obedience to God is fear and love combined. When love is perfected, it casteth out fear. When the Truth requires our duty—no matter how hard or painful it be—duty to the Truth must always come first, for this is the very essence of love.

Any other way will be found false and wanting. Wisdom has decreed that we love God with all the heart, soul, strength, and mind. We can so easily be tested in this respect and found wanting.

Yet God will not accept second place in our affections. He has told us just that. He expects us to love Him and trust in Him only. When we come face to face with a choice of either serving God and His beloved Son and the Truth, or of going along with those who have set aside His love for matters of convenience, and have not put His Truth first—there is only one way—

*Love of God must come first.*

So many have erred in this respect. They talk of love of brethren, when actually they have betrayed the Truth in several of its vital principles.

The judgment seat of Christ will be a great revelation. The servant that knew his Lord's will, but did not according to it, shall be beaten with many stripes.

We begin to realize the love, wisdom, severity, and terrible supremacy of God when we begin to comprehend why His beloved Son was required to render obedience even unto extreme suffering and a violent death upon the cross. Christ brought the flesh into obedience, which by nature is unclean and death-stricken. Paul says (Heb. 5:8)—

"He learned obedience by the things which he suffered."

Can we expect anything different? We must learn obedience, and, if necessary, we must suffer. It is the only way. Human nature—our natural state—CAN be brought into harmony with Divine will. It MUST be brought into subjection to the will of God.

It was because the supremacy of God was set aside that we see the two sons of Aaron struck dead on the spot when they offered strange fire. This is a good example of the terribleness of God when His authority is questioned or set aside.

God has not changed. He does not change. He does not respect men's persons. If we question the authority of His word, or nullify a principle of His Truth—whether it be of resurrectional responsibility to the judgment seat of Christ, or the nature of man and the sacrifice of Christ—we may bring down the wrath of the Eternal One upon us, to be manifested at Christ's judgment seat. God said—

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

This standard has never changed, and it never will! King Saul lost the Kingdom because he failed in this respect (1 Sam. 15:18-30).

We have all these great lessons. Yet we never seem to learn the greatest of all lessons—the lesson that even Christ had to learn through his sufferings: OBEDIENCE to God's Word.

Saul did wrong "that good may come," or so he thought—

"We shall save all the best of the sheep and oxen, for sacrifices to our God."

Man's folly—we see it over and over again, man putting his wisdom against Eternal wisdom. The animal sacrifices mean nothing to God—unless man renders obedience and recognition in what they imply. Samuel's answer to Saul reveals this (1 Sam. 15:22-23)—

"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 hath also rejected thee from being king."

Saul only partly obeyed God's Word because he yielded to the suggestion of the people (man's voice). This is seen in his confession in v. 24—

"And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared the people and obeyed their voice."

This is the very dangerous practice we see in the intermixing of truth and error by man's contrivances, to bring about a uniting of bodies of people with divergent views.

Words are used to cover up meanings and subtle phrases are used that hide truths, and doctrines of truth that require a positive declaration are found to be lacking in that very positiveness that they do require, therein losing their force which is so necessary for the preservation of the Truth.

There is not the slightest bit of comfort in the Scriptures for that feeble notion that controversy must be avoided in the ecclesias. The conflict began in the days of the apostles and will not end until Christ returns.

\* \* \*

WE are bringing to remembrance that great victory over sin and error by our beloved Master. He said—

"I have overcome the world."

A great expression of truth! He had overcome the world in every sense. This great work of Christ is ever drawing to its finish. We are still in the night of Gentile darkness, but the night is almost over. The morning of that bright and gladsome day is about to break forth with such magnitude, strength, splendour, and glory, there can be no comparison.

In the meantime there is much to be done. We are to watch and pray, and we must not become involved in the affairs of this life, because we may lose our position in the one that is coming.

*This work of the Truth, though it appears at this present time of little moment, is still the most powerful force in the earth today.*

All else will vanish away, but the results of God's Truth—proclaimed and contended for now—will, in the day of Christ, be the eternal things, the everlasting and enduring things when all else has vanished away. May God grant us the wisdom to see and hear!

When our life's work in the Truth is finished, and the book of remembrance is closed, may we be able to exclaim with Paul—

"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:5-8).

—F.T.

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## **Fraternal Gatherings**

(If The Lord Will)

**HYE, Texas: July 26 to August 1**

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

*Please notify bro, Banta, preferably before May 1, of desired motel accommodation.*

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**Please notify us as SOON AS POSSIBLE of all proposed Fraternal gatherings. Many brethren have to select their vacation periods months in advance—often by January 1—to secure the time.**

It has been suggested that thought be given to a more orderly chronological and geographical distribution of our gatherings. We are very reluctant to further anything that could be the first beginnings of inter-ecclesial or Centralized decision-making or organization, for this is the historic way to apostasy. We would appreciate suggestions.

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## **Every Thought into Captivity**

*“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom ye have to do”—Heb. 4:13*

THERE is a lesson that we try to impress on our children as we strive to bring them up in the way they should go, and it is this: though we cannot see God, He sees us and is aware of all that we do.

We stress that this teaches us we must be very careful about what we say, and think, and do. This instruction is very plain, so plain that it is not likely that the children will misunderstand it.

Yet, how well have we as adults, baptized into Christ, learned this lesson for ourselves? This lesson, though so elementary that it is taught to the children, is a most serious lesson and all must learn it, for it will be a life and death matter when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Then we will be most interested in the record we have written during our probation, as to what we have said, and thought and done. If the record is good, then we will have occasion to rejoice, but on the other hand we may be ashamed, dismayed, and startled, for there may be things there we had forgotten, or not thought important.

We will realize then with vivid clearness, if we do not realize now, that God is aware of everything that we say, do and think.

Let us ponder a moment on the record we have written in the past—the past few days, or months, or even years, according to time of our probation. Have we been careful about what we have said? Have we kept the door of our lips, guarding them lest they speak evil?

All the words of our mouth should be righteousness, and wickedness should be an abomination to our lips. Yet, how often have we opened them to utter foolishness, or carry idle tales, or said things that do not reflect honor and glory to God?

It is recorded that Moses was the meekest of men, but on one occasion, we are told,

"He spake inadvisedly with his lips."

He was provoked into doing so by the murmuring of the children of Israel, and we might feel that he was justified in being provoked with them. Hadn't he borne patiently many times their discontent and complaints? It was a trial for Moses, and this time he failed.

Did God excuse him because he had been faithful on other occasions; did He ignore this failure because Moses' record had been good up to this time? What saith the Scriptures?—

"He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons."

We do not point out this failure of Moses to criticize—for this man of God stands out as a wonderful example of faith. We only tell the record as it is written in the Scriptures in order to show that if a man of Moses' stamp and character could fail under trial, what of ourselves?

*If God saw fit to punish Moses, then we must never presume that God will overlook or ignore those things we do that are contrary to His will.*

It behoves us then, to learn the lesson that God is no respecter of persons and will require each to pay the price for disobedience.

Do we ever speak inadvisedly with our lips? How careful and circumspect we should be in our speech, for we are told that—

"Life and death are in the power of the tongue."

Death, if our words are uncontrolled, and we speak frowardly. Life if we are slow to speak and our words always with grace, seasoned with salt.

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WHAT of the things we think? Often we may hold our tongue and refrain from speaking evil, yet retain evil thoughts in our mind. Paul tells us that we must—

"Bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

EVERY THOUGHT into captivity—do we even begin to obey this command? This shows us how completely our minds must be centered on the Truth; how zealously God requires us to strive that all our thoughts be directed toward Him.

We must put away, out of our minds, all that is unclean, and unsavoury, filling them instead with those things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report.

Are these the channels into which we direct our minds? Our minds must be constantly fed and nourished on the Spirit-Word, that we may be spiritually-minded.

*How dangerous it is to allow our minds to be drawn away from the Truth, and filled with the unlovely and impure things that the world calls entertainment.*

There is no place in the life of saints for worldly amusements—they cannot possibly lift our minds to that spiritual plane that makes them one with Christ. Can our minds contain and be concerned with eternal truths, and the perfecting of the Ecclesia as the Bride of Christ, and at the same time contain the things that will invariably be impressed there when we read, listen to, or look at the things designed to cater to, and entertain the flesh?

We have a choice—either we hearken to the voice of the serpent, which deceives, telling us—

"Go ahead, eat the forbidden fruit, thou shalt not surely die."

Or we listen to the gentle voice of the Spirit entreating—

"My son, give me thine heart."

"Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, and mind."

ALL the mind, not just part of it. We cannot share it with the pleasures and cares of this life—it must be stayed on God. The promise of "perfect peace" is only to those whose minds are "stayed, or fixed, on God." There can be no peace or real satisfaction from our lives in the Truth if we try to divide our minds between God and the world.

Let us give ourselves wholly unto the service of God, knowing that in so doing—

"The peace of God that passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."  
—J.F.P.

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It would save us considerable extra work, and it would ensure the receipt of the Berean without interruption, if all who move would notify us promptly of their address change.

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## **The Bible on Records**

The complete Bible on records is now available from the American Bible Society, 450 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

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## Ecclesial Directory

Will all recording brethren, and all in isolation, please send us the following information:

1. Ecclesial address and phone.
2. Meeting times.
3. Recording brother's name, address and phone.

Will **ALL** please send this, regardless of whether they believe we already have the information, or not.

As soon as we get sufficient response, we plan, if the Lord will, to print a list regularly.

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### The Restitution of All Things

QUESTION: *Peter in the address recorded Act 3:21 speaks of "the times of restitution of all things." What do the "all things" comprise? Do they comprise the Aaronic priesthood? If not, what are we to understand by Israel being "built as at the first" (Jer. 33:7)?*

ANSWER: Peter defines the scope of the "all things" right in this same verse (Acts 3:21)—

"Which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."

Whatever things are predicted by the prophets as the subject of restitution, are included in the "all things." Many are plainly specified: the land, the people, the reigning family of David, etc.

Some features are expressly EXCEPTED, such as the national covenant or constitution, which is to be a NEW one—

"NOT according to the covenant I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt" (Jer. 31:31-32).

And again, the Levites that led Israel astray in past times are, in the times of restitution, not to be allowed to—

"Come near unto Me to do the office of a priest unto Me nor to come near to any of My holy things" (Eze. 44: 10-13).

The Aaronic priesthood is also excluded by the establishment of the new (Melchizedek) priesthood in Christ, who is to—

"Build the Temple of the Lord, and bear the Glory, and sit and rule upon the throne, and be a priest on his throne" (Zech. 6:13).

Paul argues expressly on this change of priesthood in Heb. 7:12—

"The **priesthood being changed**, there is made of necessity a change also of the Law."

At the same time the covenant made with Levi, of an everlasting priesthood co-ordinately with the permanence of the house of David (Jer. 33:17-18) will be fulfilled in Christ in this way:

*With him will be the Apocalyptic 144,000 kings and priests, who not only comprise the faithful Levites of all ages, but are characteristically described as —*

"The priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok (righteousness), that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray" (Eze. 44:15).

As for Israel being built "as at the first," we may understand this as referring generally to the return of prosperity and favor, whatever form that favor may assume. The form of it is defined in such Scriptures as those to which we have referred. —R.R.

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