

The Berean Christadelphian

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

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

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

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

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

LOVING greetings in Jesus.

At the close of this another year of waiting, we wonder "How long, O Lord our Saviour, wilt thou remain away?" During these days of waiting we endeavour, with our Heavenly Father's help and guidance, to hold fast the Truth in these evil days.

Our monthly visits to Deerfield Beach to break bread with our bro. & sis. Fred Gulbe afford us much spiritual and mutual benefit. Bro. Gulbe, who was 83 last June, still takes his turn at presiding and exhorting at the Memorial Table. Sis. Gulbe, like all of us, is suffering the afflictions of the flesh. Their address is: Box 743, Deerfield Beach, Florida 33441. They always appreciate messages of remembrance from the brethren and sisters.

On Sunday, Dec. 27, we were greatly encouraged by a visit from bro. & sis. Bob Philip, of Toronto, Canada. Bro. Philip exhorted us to hold fast to God's sure Word of promise, drawing our attention to the frail and ever-changing rulers among the nations: Kennedy in America, Wilson in Britain, changes in Russia, India, Germany, Italy, etc. We were especially reminded of the great, and final, and lasting change that will take place when—

"The Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and His Name one."

We are always happy to have the company of any of like precious Faith who are able to visit us.

With much love in the bonds of the Everlasting Covenant.

Your brother in Christ Jesus,

T. S. Lumley

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.

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.

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.

EDITORIAL

The Joy of the Lord Is Your Strength

"And all the people went their way . . . to make great mirth because they had understood the words that were declared unto them"—Nehemiah 8:12

AMONG the many examples of faithful men and women, whose faith and works are recorded in the Bible, the name of Nehemiah stands high on the list. Although not a prophet, he was a prominent man of Israel, and left a record which has become a great source of instruction and comfort to many who know and love the Truth. His unusual character was of threefold formation:—

1. He adhered rigidly to his duties.
2. He was stern when opposing wrong.
3. Above all, he had an unwavering faith in God.

Nehemiah comes to our attention in the year 446 BC, which was the 20th year of the Persian king Artaxerxes, whom he was serving as cupbearer. The office was one of the most dignified in an Oriental kingdom, and it said much for the character of Nehemiah that he, a stranger and a foreigner, should have been appointed to such an office at the Persian court.

From his brother Hanani, he learned of the sad plight of his people in Jerusalem, and became sorely downcast when he was told that the walls of the city were broken down, and the gates were burned with fire. From a mere human point of view, there was no cause for his sorrow. He could have said,

"I have a high position in the service of the king, and am being well paid. It is almost 800 miles to Jerusalem, and there must be men there who can get busy and make the necessary repairs."

Consecrated service in the Truth alters the ways of the natural man, and causes him to seek the welfare of others. Therefore, when the sad news came to him, Nehemiah—

"Sat down and wept, and mourned, and fasted certain days, and prayed."

His fervent prayer appears in Neh. 1:5-11, and is a noble example for every one of us. Unlike the Pharisee in the parable of Jesus, he did not "thank God that he was not as other men." Nor was he unmindful of the majesty of God, for he opens his prayer in a most dignified manner—

"I beseech Thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love Him and observe His commandments.

Nehemiah not only recognized the supremacy of God, but he realized his own position, for he not only confessed the sins of the people, but said—

"Both I and my father's house have sinned."

If a man of his high calibre could evaluate himself in the way just indicated, should not a little self-examination convince us that no matter how firmly we try to walk in the Truth, we still come far short of the standard set before us? Is that not what we are to understand from the words of Jesus?

"When ye shall have done ALL those things which are commanded you, say,
"We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

Another severe lesson we learn from these words, is that there is no place in our lives for pride. It is one of the products of the flesh, and therefore one of the forms of sin that we are expected to overcome, for God hates it.

Pride has many forms. One can be proud of his achievements, of his social advantages, and many other things. It will be found to be synonymous with conceit, vanity and self-esteem and is, therefore, of the world, and extremely displeasing to our heavenly Father. Many are proud of their humility.

There are many examples in the Bible of how pride may be manifested, and there is much said about it. In Psa. 73:6 we read that—

"Pride compasseth them about as a chain."

Prov. 11:2 declares—

"When pride cometh, then cometh shame."

But one that should especially make us stop and consider is found in Prov. 13:10—

"Only by pride cometh contention."

Some time when we are meditating upon divine things, this would be a statement that we would do well to consider.

* * *

THE principal work of Nehemiah was the repairing of the city wall, which was accomplished in 52 days in spite of the opposition of those who sought to hinder the work. One of the outstanding features in the building of the wall is revealed in Neh. 4:13-18. In this section, he describes the manner in which all of the people worked together, and how they finished the job; for, said Nehemiah—

"The people had a mind to work."

This is all comprehended in the one word, "cooperation." The same idea is expressed by the apostles in such words as "like minded," "one mind" and "one accord." We should think seriously about it, because it is the only way possible for an ecclesia to succeed. If we do not work together, we will fail as Jesus said in Mark 3:25—

"And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand."

One of the engrossing features in the book of Nehemiah is found in 8:8. It was the occasion when the people gathered together on one of the streets, and Ezra the scribe brought the Book of the Law before the whole assembly "both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding." Ezra was assisted by several of the Levites who caused the people to understand the Law—

"So they read in the Book in the Law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."

That must have been a wonderful experience for those people, but in this they had no advantage over us. Many of our brethren can read distinctly, and give the sense.

As to "causing to understand," no people on earth are more blessed than we are. The works of brethren Thomas and Roberts were designed for that very purpose. If we are truly desirous of knowing the Truth, then by all means let us read their writings, but if we think it does not matter what we believe, then we should read the writings of those who criticize Eureka.

* * *

ON the first day of each week, when we come together, should there not be great gladness among us as we assemble on the basis of knowledge and understanding? Is it not knowledge that causes us to appreciate the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus?

Let us remember, by all means, that the Truth, which we have learned to love, is the only real thing of any value in this life.

On every hand, we see men and women striving with all their power to become successful in the arts or business. They boast themselves in their accomplishments, but these things are only temporary, and when we become unconscious in death, our cares will cease, and our advantages will be gone. This truth is firmly set before us in Ps. 49:16-20—

"Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him
"Though while he lived he blessed his soul: and men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself. He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.
"Man that is in honor, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish."

Wherein then lies wisdom? It will be found in the words of Jesus in Matt. 6:33—

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

If it is our ardent desire to meet with favor when the Lord Jesus returns, then let us keep continually before us such examples as that of Nehemiah, for surely few men, in any age of the world, have combined in themselves the qualifications that are essential for salvation more than he did.

—Editor

Driven Into the Wilderness

"Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" —1 Peter 1:5

By **BROTHER JOHN THOMAS**

THE probation of the Lord Jesus is an interesting and important study, especially that part of it styled the Temptation of Satan. Paul, speaking of him as the High Priest under the New Constitution, says—

"He was put to the proof in all things according to our likeness, without transgression"
(Heb. 4:15).

That is, "having taken hold of the seed of Abraham," "being found in fashion as a man," the infirmities of human nature were thus laid upon him. He could sympathize with them experimentally, being, **by the feelings excited within him when enticed**, well acquainted with all its weak points.

By examining the narrative of his trial in the wilderness, we shall find that he was proved in all the assailable points of human nature. As soon as he was filled with the Spirit (Luke 4:1) at his baptism in the Jordan, it immediately drove him (Mark 1:12) into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil (Matt. 4:1).

This was very remarkable. The Spirit led him there that he might be put to the proof; but not to tempt him; for, says the apostle—

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man" (James 1:13).

God, then, did not tempt Jesus; though His Spirit conducted him thither to be tempted, and that, too, "by the devil," or the enemy.

This enemy within the human nature is the mind of the flesh, which is enmity against God. It is not subject to His law, neither indeed can be (Rom. 8:7).

The commandment of God, which is "holy, just and good"—being so restrictive of the propensities which in purely animal men display themselves with uncontrolled violence—makes them appear in their true colours. These turbulent propensities the apostle styles "sin in the flesh," of which it is full; hence, he also terms it "sinful flesh."

This is human nature; and the evil in it—made so apparent by the law of God—he personifies as "pre-eminently A SINNER" (Rom. 7:12, 13, 17, 18).

This is the accuser, adversary, and calumniator of God, whose stronghold is the flesh. It is the devil and satan within the human nature; so that—

"When a man is tempted, he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed."

If a man examine himself, he will perceive within him something at work, craving after things which the law of God forbids. The best of men are conscious of this enemy within them. It troubled the apostle so much, that he exclaimed—

"O, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24). —or "this mortal body." He thanked God that the Lord Jesus Christ would do it; that is, as he had himself been delivered from it, by God raising him from the dead by His Spirit (Rom. 8:11).

Human nature, or "sinful flesh," has three principal channels through which it displays its waywardness against the law of God. These are expressed by "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." All that is in the world stands related to these points of our nature; and there is no temptation that can be devised, but what assails it in one, or more, of these three particulars.

The world without is the seducer, which finds in all animal men, unsubdued by the law and testimony of God, a sympathizing and friendly principle, ready at all times to eat of its forbidden fruit.

This sinful nature we inherit. It is our misfortune, not our crime, that we possess it. We are only blameworthy when— BEING SUPPLIED WITH THE POWER OF SUBDUING IT—we permit it to reign over us.

This power resides in "the testimony of God" believed; so that we—

"Are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1 Pet. 1:5).

This testimony ought to dwell in us as it dwelt in the Lord Jesus; so that, as with the shield of faith, the fiery assaults of the world may be quenched (Ephesians 6:16) by a "Thus it is written" and "Thus saith the Lord."

* * *

JESUS was prepared by the exhaustion of a long fast, for an appeal to the desire of his flesh for food. Hunger, it is said, will break through stone walls. "He was hungry."

At this crisis, "the Tempter came to him." Who he was does not appear. Perhaps, Paul refers to him, saying—

"Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14).

Some one "came to him" who was his adversary, and who desired his ruin; or, at least, acted the part of one on the same principle that the adversary was permitted to put the fidelity of Job to the proof. The trial of this eminent son of God, was perhaps recorded as an illustration of the temptation of the Son of God, even Jesus, to whom—

"There was none like in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil" (Job 1:8).

From his birth to his baptism in the Jordan, he was faultless. But in the words of Satan concerning Job—

"Did Jesus fear God for nought? Had not God made a hedge about him?"

Yes, God was his defence: and in keeping His testimony there is great reward." But, the adversary calumniated Jesus, in suggesting that his obedience to God had been prompted by mercenary motives. Jesus "feared" (Heb. 5:7), not simply for what he should get, but **because of his love for his Father's character as revealed in the divine testimonies.**

The adversary affected to disbelieve this, and to suppose that, if God would just leave him in the position of any other man, he would distrust Him; and eat of the world's forbidden fruit, by embracing all it would afford him. Thus, the adversary may be supposed to have moved the Lord to permit him to put the fidelity of Jesus to the test.

God, therefore, allowed the experiment to be tried; and by His Spirit sent him into the wilderness for the purpose. So the adversary went forth from the presence of the Lord, and came to him there.

Having arrived at the crisis when Jesus was suffering from the keenest hunger, the adversary assumed the character of an angel, or messenger of light to him. Being acquainted with "the law and the testimony," for which he knew Jesus had a profound regard, he adduced it in support of his suggestions.

He invited him to gratify the cravings of the flesh by helping himself. He was God's Son; but then his Father seemed to have abandoned him. Why not therefore use the power he possessed, whose presence in him was of itself a proof of God's approval of its exercise, and, "Command that the stones be made bread"?

But Jesus disregarded the reasoning; and set it aside by—

"IT IS WRITTEN, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Deut. 8:3).

Failing in this, the scene of the temptation was then removed to "the pinnacle of the temple"; and, as Jesus fortified himself by the Word, the adversary determined to be even with him; and in appealing to the pride of life, **so strong in the nature laid upon him**, to strengthen himself with the testimony likewise—

"If thou be the Son of God (as thou proudly assumeth to be), cast thyself down: for it is written,

"He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Psa 91:11-12).

But Jesus met him with—

"Again it is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Deut 6:16).

Lastly, the scene was shifted to a lofty mountain. From this position, by the power granted him, he showed Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world" visible from that elevation "and the glory of them."

He knew that Jesus was destined to possess them all; but that he was also to obtain them through suffering. Jesus knew this, too. Now, as the flesh dislikes suffering, the tempter proposed to gratify the desire of his eyes by giving him all he saw, on the easy condition of doing homage to him as the god of the world. Said he—

"All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; that is delivered to me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it.

"If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine" (Luke 4:6-7).

But Jesus resisted the enticement; and said—

"Get thee hence, adversary: for it is written,
"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

Having ended all the temptation he departed from him for a season. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee.

* * *

IN this manner, then, was he **put to the proof in all things according to the likeness of his nature to ours**, but without transgression. He believed not this angel of light (Gal. 1:8) and power, and would have none of his favours. He preferred the grace of God with suffering, to the gratification of his flesh with all the pomp and pageantry of this vain and transitory world.

Its "glory" is indeed delivered to the adversary of God, of His people, and of His truth: and to whomsoever he wills he gives it. The knowledge of this truth ought to deter every righteous man from seeking after it; or even accepting it, when offered upon conditions derogatory to the truth of God.

And, if those who possess it, such as kings, priests, nobles, etc., were what they pretend to be, they would follow Jesus' and Paul's examples, and renounce them all. Christianity in high places is Christ falling down before the adversary, and doing homage to him for the honor, riches, and power of the world. What fellowship hath Christ with Belial? Certainly NONE!

If the principle upon which the temptation of the Lord Jesus was permitted be understood, then the necessity of putting the first Adam to proof will be readily perceived. Would he retain his integrity, if placed in a situation of trial? Or, would he disbelieve God and die?

The Lord God well knew what the result would be, and had made all necessary provision for the altered circumstances which He foresaw would arise.

His knowledge, however, of what would be, did not necessitate it. He had placed all things in a provisional state. If the man maintained his integrity, there was the Tree of Lives as the germ of a superior order of things; but, if he transgressed, then the natural and animal system would continue unchanged; and the spiritualization of the earth and its population be deferred to a future period.

God's knowledge of what a man's character will be, does not cause Him to exempt him from trial. He rewards and punishes none upon foregone conclusions. He does not say to this man—

"I know you are certain to turn out a reprobate, therefore I will punish you for what you would do."

Nor does He say to another—

"I know thee that thou wouldst do well all the days of thy life: therefore, I will promote thee to glory and honor, without subjecting thee to the tribulation of the world."

His principle is to recompense men according to what they **have done**, not for what they **would do**. Thus he dealt with the Two Adams; and with Israel: to whom Moses says—

"The Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no"
(Deut. 8:2).

And thus also the Lord Jesus treated Judas. He knew he was a thief, and would betray him; yet he trusted him with the bag, and made no difference between him and the rest, **until his character was revealed.**

The Lord knew what was in the heart of Israel, and whether they would obey Him; but He subjected them to such a trial as would cause them to reveal themselves in their true character, and thereby justify Him in His conduct towards them.

My Days and My Ways

By BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

I have frequently been asked to write an account of my life. My life has seemed so common as to be devoid of interest; and I have a feeling that all human life, as it now is, is so intrinsically weak and imperfect as to fail in affording the requisite enthusiasm for literary effort.

Men as they are, and not as they appear in the atmosphere of narrative, are best described in the sober and literal words of the Scriptures which tell us that rich men are a lie, and poor men vanity, and all the glory of man as the flower of the field (Psa. 62:9; 1 Pet 1:24). While they live they are full of shortcoming and trouble—a fragile organization of corruption in the best state, and in a generation, disappear one and all in native dust.

Strongly sharing this feeling, I have hitherto refrained from the least record of a biographical character. If I make a beginning now, it is because I yield to the wishes of those whom I love, from whom I will pass away in due course of time.

I WAS born in the city of Aberdeen, Scotland, on April 8, 1839. There is no affectation in my use of Jeremiah's words—

"Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labor and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?" (20:18).

"Woe is me, my mother, that hast made me a man of strife and contention to the whole earth" (15:10).

But there are many alleviations that make it easy for me to say—

"The will of the Lord be done."

MY father was a seaman, and for some years later in life, captain of a small coasting vessel. He was a quiet, kindly, truthful man, without much force of character. He was much away from home, and we were all left much to the care of our mother, who made up for his defect of mental energy.

There were six boys of us, and one girl, the eldest—all of whom grew up to manhood and womanhood. There had been four others who died in infancy.

My mother was a superior woman of an energetic and strongly religious turn of mind. There was a mystery about her antecedents. We had no relations on her side of the house. My mother was educated in London, where she remained till her father's death, when she was sent back to her friends to Aberdeen, and there maintained herself as a school teacher till her marriage with my father.

My father's circumstances were very lowly, and my mother had many difficulties to cope with in the rearing of a large family. She successfully surmounted them all in a measure. She gave us all a moderate education, and brought us up in strict separation from loose and frivolous neighbours. Home was, however, rather a place of wholesome discipline than of love's comfort, though my mother was not wanting on that side when other things were right. Looking back, I can now realize her difficulties and her worth as I could not at the time.

We all received a religious bias, which was of value to us afterwards, though I had a rough time of it at the beginning in consequence of having soon to run counter to my mother's views, which were orthodox, and which she herself finally gave up.

At ten years of age, I was taken by my mother along with my brothers to hear a Dr. Thomas in a chapel opposite the Baptist chapel in John Street which my mother then attended. The usual preacher

in that place was a Mr. Hart, an eccentric sort of man who had once been a soldier, and who made a trade of "christenings" at 2/6 (50c) a head—anybody welcome.

On this occasion he did not appear in any way. The pulpit was occupied by two men—one an Aberdeen tradesman and the other the Dr. Thomas we had come to hear. Dr. Thomas was a quiet, stern, firm, neatly-made gentleman with jet black beard. His companion in the pulpit gave out the hymns and offered the prayer.

Dr. Thomas delivered the address. I discovered from the remarks afterwards made as the congregation were dispersing that the address was regarded as something extraordinary, and that it was on baptism. The address had not struck me at all. I was too young to receive any impression. I had in fact wearied and slept under it, and was glad when it was over.

The one thing that interested me and my brothers was the speaker's beard, which was a novelty in those days. As we went home together arm in arm, we vowed we should never shave. I had much occasion afterwards to know whom this Dr. Thomas was.

* * *

ABOUT a year after this incident, I left school. I was then eleven years of age. My first experience in responsible life was in filling my brother's place while he was either unwell or sent somewhere else by his employers. He was clerk or keeper of a "rope cellar" in connection with a rope factory in the neighbourhood of the ship-building yards of the harbour (for Aberdeen is a seaport).

My business was to keep a record on a slate of every article supplied to callers. It seemed very interesting work, as all work does to all boys, till they get enough of it and more and get to know what life as it now is really means—a struggle, a scramble, a merciless competition for mere liberty to exist: a state of things due to the larger and earlier circumstances that God hid His face from the human race for a season, because of sin, and left them to look after themselves—which they are not fit to do.

The work in the rope cellar did not last long, as my brother returned to his place. I had a strong desire to become a "cabinet maker," as joiners are called in Scotland. I got my mother to go round the shops with me, but they would have none of me: they thought I was not strong enough for such work. In this they were mistaken; but it was as well. Had they thought otherwise, it is certain my course of life would have been entirely different.

My mother then spoke to an uncle of mine, who got me into a small grocer's shop. I had not been long there when it became apparent that it was a drinking place as well as a grocer's shop, and my mother would not let me stay a moment after this discovery.

She then spoke to the leading printer of that town, who was a member of the Baptist congregation to which she at that time belonged. This gentleman was a lithographer as well as a letter press printer, and he gave me a place in the lithographic department under his son Ebenezer. Here I had lessons in drawing and stone work, and was making satisfactory progress when, at the end of three months, my mother thought I was getting hurt in the chest through stooping over the stones, and she obtained my removal to the letterpress department, where for more than twelve months I was engaged both at the press and case.

I cannot now remember the cause of my leaving Mr. Cornwall's, but leave it I did when I was about 13 or over, and found myself among the "unemployed." About this time my brothers went to sea, and I felt a strong inclination to follow their example. That I did not do so was due to a strong sense that came over me one day as I was walking among the ships in the harbour, that if I went to sea I would be cut off from all opportunities of improvement, and would probably grow up a barbarian.

This feeling was due to encouragement I received in superior directions from my sister, and to the interest I had begun to take in religion. My interest in religion dated from the hearing of a certain sermon to which I was taken by my mother. The preacher was a fervent minister from the Highlands,

whose intense, stimulating oratory found a ready response in the state of mind to which I had been brought by recent misbehaviour.

This misbehaviour consisted in staying away from night school which I attended after I had begun to go to work; and in spending the time on the streets with a companion who regaled myself and my brother with all sorts of crazy delights from the shop windows, to the ruin of health.

This had gone on for some weeks, during which I was the unworthy recipient of my mother's pity at my deranged physical state. Being found out, we were summoned before the schoolmaster by the boy's father, and subjected to an examination which made our teeth chatter with apprehension at the prospect opened out by their combined threats.

The result of the examination was that we were to be handed over to our parents for punishment. Though this was not so bad as we had feared, previous experience made it sufficiently alarming; but the cloud blew over. My mother gave me an awful lecture, the whole force of which was taken away by the concluding declaration that she would not punish me herself but leave me to the punishment of my own conscience—a punishment which at that time did not trouble me much.

Although the terrors of conscience were not very powerful at that early age, I was miserable enough, notwithstanding; and when my mother took me to hear the excitable preacher, I was fairly overcome by his glowing representations of the Divine mercy for miserable sinners. I was in tears during his entire discourse, and went home in a state of mind that lasted some time.

My mother considered me "converted," and her religious acquaintances rejoiced with her in the change, and encouraged me in the new views of my state. I tried to respond to their ideas as earnestly as possible, and became as absorbingly religious as was possible with me.

I conformed to the recognized ideal of religiousness according to the standard in vogue among the Calvinistic Baptists of Scotland. I had six months of tormented "experience," with occasional gleams of satisfaction—as to which I adopted the view that God and the Devil were thus struggling for mastery in my "soul."

I found great comfort in the reading of the sensational religious tracts which inculcated this view, and was especially solaced and encouraged by James Angell James' "Young Man's Anxious Enquirer."

In the reading of the Bible I found very little satisfaction, and that only in a very few selected parts.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH, IF THE LORD WILL

Faith That Works by Love

"For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God . . . Abraham believed God (had faith), and it was accounted unto him, for righteousness (justification)"

—Rom. 4:2-3

"Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?"

—James 2:21

THESE two passages of Scripture, claimed by some to be contradictory, have been the subject of considerable controversy. Sceptics have declared the teaching of Paul and James on the subject of faith and works to be opposed to each other; therefore, say they, they could not be divine inspiration.

Modern expositors of the Scriptures, who are not far removed from scepticism, try to explain what appears to them certain inconsistencies in the teaching of Paul and James by suggesting that they disagreed on the subject and that James is offering a refutation of Paul's teaching on the subject of justification.

All of which is just so much of the old man's foolishness, based upon the assumption that Bible writers merely expressed their own private opinions; thus denying the basic scriptural truth that—

"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

It is a sad thing that there are many who, in searching the Scriptures, take their own fleshly ignorance as a gauge of what is and is not consistent, instead of recognizing their ignorance and coming to the Word of God to LEARN.

It is made clear by a close examination of the teaching of all the inspired epistles that Paul and James are speaking on two aspects of justification— two aspects of one truth. They show that the divine requirement for salvation is a properly balanced combination of faith and works. Faith that LEADS to works; works that MANIFEST and perfect faith. This is made clear in James 2:22—

"Seest thou how faith WROUGHT WITH HIS WORKS, and by works was faith made perfect."

In fact, the Apostle Paul sets forth exactly the same thought in Eph. 2:8-10—

"By grace are ye saved through faith . . . NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast.

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto GOOD WORKS, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

This handiwork of God is sinful men and women made perfect through faith wrought "with works which God hath ordained."

Because of failure to comprehend this great truth of salvation by a combination of faith and works, certain religious leaders have taught the easy, flesh-pleasing doctrine of salvation by faith only, and some denominations today have this teaching as the central feature of their creed, a reaction against the other extreme of the Catholic Church which presumptuously teaches that men can do more works than are needed to earn salvation, which credit of works can be transferred to others.

Others have over-emphasized works as the sole basis for salvation to the exclusion of faith.

It is a great truth that few realize that without true scriptural Faith, works are of no value at all. God first purifies the heart by Faith, that the works which He hath ordained may go on and build for us a character well-pleasing to God that ALL the glory shall be, not to man, but to God.

Paul in Rom. 4, is speaking of that which justifies man before God, that is, faith alone, wholly apart from works.

James speaks of that which gives proof of and perfects faith, the outward expression of the faith which has purified the heart; for, without these works, faith dies and becomes of no value—an empty, fruitless theory.

Paul is speaking of the faith which justifies the sinner and makes him a saint.

James shows how the justified saint is made perfect by works of righteousness wrought with his faith. "Wrought" means "to work something into shape," so that the combination of faith and works moulds into the divine pattern the perfected man in Christ Jesus. —O.B.

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The Glory of the Latter House

"I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts"—Haggai 2:7

APPROXIMATELY 2500 years have passed since this declaration was made by Haggai to the returning exiles of the Babylonian captivity. The utterances of this prophet and those of Zechariah have an application to us as we stand at the end of Gentile times. Peter says (2 Pet. 3:8)—

"One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

In this connection we are asked by Hosea (6:1-2) to contemplate the love and mercy of God in respect to His people—

"Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up.

"After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."

We see the Jews now returning to their own land, after a period of 2500 years (2½ days), a harbinger of the fulfilment of the words of God through all the prophets.

At such a time we may expect a great shaking of the nations of the world, and the final filling of God's House with glory.

The prophets Haggai and Zechariah spoke to the Jews at the end of the 70 year captivity. The captivity began in the year 606 BC, at which time Daniel appears to have been taken to Babylon. 70 years from this date brings us to 536 BC, the year in which Cyrus made his famous declaration for the Jews to return to their own land and build again the Temple of the Lord.

Zerubbabel, with about 42,000 exiles, came home and laid the foundation of the Temple and built the altar. The work which started with much joy and happiness, was soon hindered by the opposition of the Samaritans in the north of the land, and through their jealousy they obtained a royal decree to stop the activity.

Jerusalem had been destroyed 586 BC, which event marked the final carrying away to Babylon of the remaining Jews. 70 years from this time two prophets raised their voices, at God's command, to stir up the exiles to the completion of the Temple, begun at the decree of Cyrus. The work lay idle for 15 years during the reign of Cambyses, the Ahasuerus or Artaxerxes of Ezra 4:6-7. In Ezra 5:1-2 we are told—

"Then the prophets Haggai and Zechariah prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel.

"Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them."

During these 15 years of delay the people had grown indifferent toward the work of God. They had turned to their own pursuits while the service of God lay desolate. Their first flush of enthusiasm had waned and given place to seeking their own advantage.

This becomes a warning to us as the antitype of these events are upon us. As trials and oppositions to the Truth increase there may be a tendency to feel that the work of God can wait on a more convenient time, when the things of the present moment are not so pressing. What happened to these natural Jews can easily happen in our lives. It is for this very purpose that the record is preserved for us—it is a merciful provision by God.

God will prosper the work done for His glory and honor. Therefore we must place His work before all else in our lives. God will at last bring all else to naught that is done for any other cause.

* * *

GOD is not and was not interested in temples as such. His only interest lay in the opportunity which their construction and their service provided in the lives of His people. In all these things there was scope for the manifestation of zeal and interest in the things of the Lord. So in the antitype we may find the counterpart as each occasion of our daily activities opens up for service to Him.

The Mosaic Tabernacle, undertaken in construction with such generosity and free-will service, has disappeared from the scene. Solomon's temple, Zerubbabel's and Herod's have each been replaced, and Roman and Turkish abominations have desecrated Mount Moriah, the ancient scene of God's presence among His people.

Is not the lesson very clear for each of us? When any edifice, when any individual, ceases to be of service to God, it will be cast away. Herein however there is a continued illustration of Divine mercy, that the evil day is delayed.

"This house, which I have hallowed for My Name, will I cast out of My sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people . . . **because they forsook the Lord their God**"
(1 Kings 9:7).

Let us recognize that God is behind all that happens in the lives of His people. The working out of the pattern is intended to draw us in faith to God. But if we are absorbed in the background of daily events and are not exercised in love toward God, we shall, like the temples of old, be removed as so much outworn scaffolding. Paul impresses this thought very emphatically in writing to the Corinthians. He leaves no doubt that the real Temple of God consists of **individuals**—

"Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the Temple of God, him will God destroy; for the Temple of God is holy, which Temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3:16-17).

He clearly sets before us the seriousness of our position before God. Do we realize that God is so very close to us? After the type of the Temple of Solomon, God's Spirit is shown to be closely associated with His people (1 Cor. 6:19)—

"Know ye not that your body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which we have of God, and ye are not your own?"
"Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."

Paul once more carries this illustration to the believers and to us when he is impressing the necessity of separation from the world—

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"
"What agreement hath the Temple of God with idols?—for ye are the Temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."
"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

With this assurance from God, there are great responsibilities in our lives—

"Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

* * *

THE events during the days of Zerubbabel were overruled by God for the trying of His servants, to prove their faith and trust in Him. Once more we have an illustration of Divine mercy in directing rulers and governors for the sake of His people.

There is another aspect which should not be overlooked in these circumstances—the prayers of the righteous were effectual in bringing these things about. Such men as Daniel had interceded on behalf of His children for the glory of God—

"O Lord, the great and dreadful God, we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from Thy precepts and from Thy judgments.

"Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all His works which He doeth: for we obeyed not His voice.

"O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for Thine Own sake, O my God: for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy Name" (Dan. 9: 4-19).

Is this our attitude? Do we recognize our own position before God? Or are we like the Pharisee? (Luke 18:11)—

"God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men."

Daniel, a faithful and righteous man, was overwhelmed with a sense of weakness and unworthiness when he contemplated the pure and holy majesty of God. Furthermore, he deeply felt, and entered into, and took upon himself, the weight of his people's sins. Such was the mind of Christ, and such must be ours. No man liveth to himself—

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

There is a great depth of fellowship and fellow-feeling bound up in this command.

If we believe we are the children of God—and we most certainly do—then we will see reason and purpose in the events of our lives and we will thank God and take courage.

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John 15:2).

If the returning exiles had believed and studied the words of Jeremiah as did Daniel, they would have been prepared for the events which came upon their efforts. They would have examined their own personal lives and minds. But it was necessary for the prophet Haggai to stir them up to personal examination—

"This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built.

"Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?

"Now, therefore, consider your ways" (Hag. 1:2-5)

We have just read from the mouth of Job—

"He buildeth his house as a moth, and as a booth that the keeper maketh" (Job 27:18).

Why do we read these things? Why are they preserved by God to our times? Paul advises us that all the Scriptures are written by the inspiration of God and are profitable for reproof and correction, and have been written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

In his exhortation to the people, Haggai draws attention to the Temple of Solomon, and compares it with the labours of the returning Jews. He said that their edifice was by comparison

nothing in their eyes. This may have influenced their zeal, but this was not to be allowed to be a deterrent.

Ezra recorded some years later t h e s e circumstances (3:11-13)—

"All the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.

"But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers who were ancient men, that had seen the first House, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy."

Some were discouraged. It was a day of small things, but it was the Lord's doing, and it was not to be despised. The day of small things calls for equal zeal and labor, though efforts may seem vain and unrewarded.

Zechariah lends his voice to this exhortation (4:9-10)—

"The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you.

"For who hath despised the day of small things? . . .

"The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth."

God had not forgotten His promises, but the people had. Have we, in this last age of Gentile rule, grown lukewarm to the operation of the hand of God on our behalf?—

"The Lord hath been sore displeased with your fathers.

"Turn ye unto Me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you.

"Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and from your evil doings:

"But they did not hear, nor hearken unto Me, saith the Lord" (Zech. 1:2-4).

* * *

JUST when these people are forgetting their Creator, He causes a change in the minds of the powers that be. A further decree by the Persian ruler Darius in 520 BC instilled new life in the land—

"Let the work of this house of God alone. Let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place.

"And the God that hath caused His Name to dwell there destroy all kings and people that shall put to their hand to alter and to destroy this house of God which is at Jerusalem.

"I Darius, have made a decree: let it be done with speed.

"And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah.

"And they builded, and furnished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia"

(Ezra 6:7-14).

God promised to immediately bless the efforts of this people, and it would be an evidence of the sureness of the Word of God coming to them. It would become a foundation for future generations, indicating the much greater blessing God has in store for all those who love and serve Him.

These small things were but a shadow of much fuller things to come. Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest were typical men, men of sign.

Thus we find in our readings the words of Zechariah and Haggai surrounded with very highly symbolic messages. To the faithful these messages would give assurance that though it was a day of small things, much greater things were to come in the fulness of the times. Thus Haggai stated—

"Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord,
"And WORK: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts" (Hag. 2:4).

When Israel came out of Egypt, and were encamped at the base of Mt. Sinai, God spake to them out of the mount, while the fire and cloud rested on the mount, and the earth quaked.

This event formed the basis of trust in God which the prophet was now endeavouring to kindle in their hearts. Israel had feared at the voice of the Lord. Yet He had given them good national laws intended to bring them unto Christ. As God had shaken the earth upon that occasion, so He now shows a day coming when not only the earth would shake but also the heavens.

There was to be a complete change of world government, as earthquakes have always signified. Rulers and ruled were to be entirely changed; earth and heaven were to quake. Said the prophet (Hag. 2:6-7)—

"Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land.

"And I will shake all nations, and **the desire of all nations shall come**: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts."

The verb is in the plural, and therefore bro. John Thomas renders this passage, "The desire of all nations, THEY shall come," indicating the revelation of Christ and the saints in the future as the desire of all nations, the NECESSITY of all nations—though they at present do not realize it.

Then the prophet further strengthens the people (vs. 8-9):

"The silver is mine, and the gold is Mine, saith the Lord of hosts,

"The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former.

"And in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."

The house of God geographically has been identified with Mt. Zion. Here God's glory descended in the days of Solomon, only to depart as shown in the early chapters of Ezekiel. God's glory never filled the temple of Zerubbabel. This temple experienced trials and defiling in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria. It was later rebuilt by the command of Herod the Great, only to be destroyed soon after by the Romans. In the last several hundred years the Mosque of Omar has defiled the mount.

The glory of the house in the latter days, when Ezekiel's prophetic Temple has become a House of Prayer for all nations, will be greater than the house of its original constitution under Solomon. Thus Ezekiel declares:

"The glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and His voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with His glory."

"And He said unto me, Son of man, the place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel FOR EVER, and My holy Name shall the house of Israel no more defile" (Eze. 43:2-7).

The "many waters" identify the multitude encompassed in Haggai's "they shall come." They are the "silver" and the "gold," selected by God out of the nations, those spoken of by Malachi (3:17) as—

"They shall be Mine, in that day when I make up My jewels (special treasure)."

* * *

THE antitypical decree of Darius, uttered by Christ from Jerusalem, is just about to sound forth, following the shaking of all nations when, as Haggai further states, God shall overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations (vs. 21-22).

This shaking is the antitype and culmination of all previous earthquakes, for it removes from the scene everything of an unstable nature, leaving only that which hath foundations.

Paul, commenting on the prophecy of Haggai, says—

"And this word, 'Yet once more,' signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

"Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:27-28).

In prophetic language of Rev. 16, we find the events of our own times depicted, the drying up of the River Euphrates, and the going forth of the French Frog-Spirits, thus preparing the world scene for the return of Christ with the saints, and to draw all nations upon the mountains of Israel for their judgment.

In the middle of these world shaking events the Revelator declares (Rev. 16:15)—

"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

In the same manner the prophet Haggai impresses the personal aspect of his message. He draws attention to the Law of Moses as a basis (Hag. 2:12):

"If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy?"

"And the priests answered and said, No.

"If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean?"

"And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean."

The sacrifice was holy, being offered to God. The garments of the priest were holy thereby. But that which the skirt of garment of the priest touched did not become holy by contact. But conversely, the defilement of death transmitted ceremonial uncleanness to all that come in contact therewith.

These things were intended to teach higher lessons as Paul illustrates in Hebrews, and were meant to bring the thoughtful to realize the principles of salvation, and the necessity for it.

The skirt was a covering. Christ is the covering provided by God, as shown from the Garden of Eden. This is the garment we are to be covered over with. It is the only covering leading to salvation.

This garment must be kept clean by our walk and conduct in the Truth. Just being covered by this garment will not bring salvation. If we seek the world and try to carry in our cleansed condition the fruits of the world God will not prosper our efforts. It will be as Peter says, returning to wallowing in the mire.

All that we do must be to the honor and glory of God—bread, pottage, wine, oil, meat are the labor of the hands, the meat that perisheth. The earthen vessel in which the sacrifice was sodden had to be broken; the brazen vessel had to be scoured and rinsed in water.

The returned exiles, cleansed from their sins by the trials of 70 years, had grown careless and were seeking their own ways instead of God's service. Thus Haggai illustrates that their efforts were not prospering (2:16-17)—

"When one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: When one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty.

"I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands, yet ye turned not to Me, saith the Lord."

But now the prophet illustrates that through the labours of the prophets the work was going forth with renewed zeal. Therefore God would once more bless the produce, and supply those things which were necessary, and it would be holy because sought in faith.

Just meeting each week under the name Christadelphian will not assure our salvation. The probabilities are all the other way, unless we walk in "fear and trembling." Once having been covered over with the holy garments—

"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water,
"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.
"If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." (Heb. 10:22-26).

We are naturally exposed to the world in our daily activities. The world is dead in trespasses and sins. We must guard against defilement thereby. We must remain separate in all our activities. The Law was to teach that sin is exceedingly sinful; to show how abhorrent in the eyes of God sin actually is. We must be clothed with righteousness of Christ. We must keep unspotted from the world. James declares (1:27)—

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this,
"To visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Jude tells us "to hate even the garment spotted by the flesh" (v. 23). The commendation of the ecclesia at Sardis is because they did this very thing (Rev. 3:4-5)—

"A few names which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.
"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment."

A final promise is given by the prophet Haggai in relation to Zerubbabel, the type of Christ and the saints, called out of Babylon (Hag. 2:23)—

"In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, My servant, the son of Shealtiel, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee."

In Zerubbabel the royal lines from David leading to Christ were united. This is evident in Joseph's line (Matt. 1:13), and Mary's line (Luke 3:27). Both lines emerged from Babylonian captivity. Both were faithful lines in the days of Christ's birth.

To be comprehended in the person typified by Zerubbabel we must also be God's servants, those who have "enquired of God" (as signified by the name Shealtiel).

A signet was a ring used by a king or ruler to impress his signature and stamp of approval—

"In the king's name, seal it with the king's ring: for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse." (Est. 8:8).

The signet therefore speaks of sealing up a message with Divine authority. To BE a signet is to have authority. This will be conferred on all those who are God's real servants now (Rev. 2:26)—

"He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations."

To "seal up a message" carries another thought. It is to make an end of a matter. The whole purpose of God is sealed up—completed—in Christ and the saints. It is the end of all trial and tribulation, when the Temple of God is with men.

Shall we be part of that signet when God makes up His jewels? Will the signature of God be written in our foreheads? John, in Revelation, links this signature with association in the new Temple of God (Rev. 3:12)—

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple of my God . . .

"I will write upon him the Name of my God, and the Name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new Name."

Are we READY for these glorious things? We are IF we—

"KEEP ourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21). —E.F.H

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Stewardship

"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: hut the honor of kings is to search out a matter"—Prov. 25:2

IT is the glory of God to conceal the riches and the greatness of His mercies, and His glorious plan of the ages, but it is the honor of those called to be kings and priests in His Kingdom to search out those treasures that are hidden in His Word.

What an exciting and rewarding thing it is to search out and discover these treasures! Unlike the world in its endless quest, we are never disappointed; never is our search fruitless or unprofitable. The gems of the Truth are real, unperishable, satisfying. We discover, like David, that the Word of God is sweeter than honey and more to be desired than fine gold. Yes, how good it is to search and to find!

But—we are not always anxious to search. Searching requires real effort on our part, and it is far easier—far more natural—to be concerned with temporal things.

Our will and our affairs easily take precedence over the Master's will and affairs. Christ said—

"Seek ye FIRST the Kingdom of God."

Let us take particular notice of the word "first." We are so apt to relegate the things of the Kingdom to "last" rather than "first," because the natural man is ever present to find some important reason why his affairs should come first, and God's work, last.

Our earnest wish and desire may be to enter the Kingdom—but wishing and desiring will avail little unless accompanied by intense and conscious and consistent effort and applications. We MUST give ourselves WHOLLY to the Truth's service if we hope to succeed. Paul's instruction to Timothy was—

"Meditate upon these things, give thyself **wholly** to them."

We have been called to be stewards—stewards in the Household of God. We all know that we will be called upon at the judgment to give an account of our stewardship.

Have we used the goods entrusted to our care for GOD'S use and pleasure? Or have we fine homes, cars, and things the world seeks fleshly pleasure in —pleasure boats, hi-fis, television, etc.— things that should not even be mentioned among the children of God — things that consume our time and resources and energy, and alienate us from the wholesome transforming effect the Scriptures COULD be having upon our characters?

It's either one or the other. We cannot be both. And half-and-half is worse than nothing at all. Either we are seeking to please the flesh, or we are striving as good stewards to please the Father. We are given many examples of good and bad stewardship in the Bible, and we are given ample instruction as to what is required of a good steward. Is all this loving instruction in vain?

Christ loved his brethren and gave his life for them. As faithful stewards our first concern should be for these brethren for whom Christ died, how we can strengthen and feed the flock of God. Our service in God's House should be ministering to their spiritual need as well as their physical.

Are we esteeming our brother better than ourselves if we allow temporal considerations to come before our brother's welfare? Where a man's treasure is, there is his heart also. Are our hearts in the right place?

We must give up all those things that pull us away from the works of a good steward, that tends to entice the weak flesh of our natural man to partake of worldly pastimes, so prevalent in this pleasure-seeking, godless world. What saith the Scriptures?—

"All that is not of the Father is of the world."

"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

"What concord hath Christ with Belial?"

"He that is not with me is against me."

We have to be very careful not to encourage friendships with the world unless they show signs of interest in the Word of God and are willing to study and share the joy of reading and meditation with us.

How long will it take us to learn that the price of faithful stewardship is ALL?—

"Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not ALL . . . cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33).

Jesus' disciples forsook all and followed him. The man who found the pearl sold ALL that he possessed to buy it. Are we giving our all, or are we in the class of Ananias and Sapphira, who foolishly held back part of the price? Do we give up only those things which do not interfere too much with our comfortable circumstances?

Are we faithful stewards? Let us turn to the Scriptures where there is a ready answer for every need.

Are you a husband? Love your wife as Christ loved the Ecclesia, give her honor as the weaker vessel, be compassionate and courteous, rendering blessing for blessing.

Are you a wife? The Scriptures speak expressly to you. Reverence your husband, be compassionate and courteous, adorning yourself with a meek and quiet spirit, rather than the outward adorning of fine apparel, being always in subjection to your husband.

Are you an elder brother in the Truth? Are you sober, grave, faithful, temperate, charitable, patient?

Are you an elder sister? Do you behave as becometh holiness, are you careful not to be a slanderer—a gossip? (How natural and easy it is to speak carelessly and unprofitably of others!) Are you teachers of good things, discreet, chaste, keepers of the home, good, obedient to your husbands?

Are you a young brother or sister in the Truth? Are you sober-minded, uncorrupt, grave, sincere, sound of speech?

Such a long list of virtues for each of us to cultivate! How much attention are we giving to them?

Life as a good steward is a serious and all-consuming thing. It cannot be treated lightly. God Himself has laid down the rules and we must conform our lives to them, if we hope for acceptance at the end.

—J.F.P.

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

Ye Are Complete in Him

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ"—Col. 2:8

ACCORDING to Col. 2:1, it is evident that Paul had not met the Colossian believers face to face—he had not met them personally and individually—and yet he expresses his deep, loving concern for their spiritual welfare—

“For I would have ye know what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.”

Here, as in many portions of his writings, is plainly revealed Paul's fellow-feeling for his brethren in Christ. And herein is Paul proving a reality which is the result of affectionate obedience to God. That is, the individual members of the Body of Christ are likened unto the individual members of the natural body; and, as there is a fellow-feeling throughout the different parts of the physical body, so also there **MUST** be a fellow-feeling one for another amongst ourselves, **if we are truly members of the Christ-Body**, as exemplified by Paul.

We should have a loving concern for all the brethren and sisters, including those we have never met personally. Also, our concern should find an outlet, if in no other possible way than through the means of communicating with one another by the written word.

Since he was concerned over his brethren, Paul writes to them and also writes an epistle to the Laodiceans (which we do not have today), giving instructions in Col. 4:16 that these letters be exchanged for their mutual benefit. We should see that his aim in writing to them was to build them up in the New Man in Christ Jesus, in whom they were complete (2:9-10), not merely to write about their problems and troubles.

Thus, everything in our lives—all circumstances and situations—are not simply problems and troubles as the people of the world understand and experience these; but rather, all should be viewed and understood in spiritual terms, with the full realization that all which is occurring in our daily lives is designed in the love and mercy of God to "work together for good" (Rom. 8:28).

So when we are faced with severe troubles and vexing problems, these are for the trial (testing) of our faith in God, that faith may be strengthened and, thereby, removing the severity from our troubles and no longer finding vexation in solving our problems. In fact, most of our problems and troubles themselves would no longer be encountered, but diminish in proportion to our faith increasing

towards the ideal we are striving for—even a faith that can move mountains, and a faith that works by love.

* * *

IN Phrygia, in Asia Minor, where Colosse was located (with Laodicea about 11 miles away), history tells us that in the first century when Paul wrote to the Colossians, this region of the world was rife with men speaking "mysteries" and "secrets." There were heathen philosophers expounding their mysteries and pagan religious teachers preaching theirs. There was much mystic thought in circulation, with everybody believing in such in some form or other, including the most learned and most "wise" and most respectable of that day and age. Some of this popularly accepted mystic teaching was creeping into the ecclesias.

In every age—with ours no exception—God's people are in danger of embracing man's ideas. Paul expresses this danger in various verses of his epistle to the Colossians, as in 2:8—

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Here, in another form of words, Paul again says that the pattern of completeness is Christ, and that outside of Christ all is of the flesh, of man, of the world.

We must beware, not permitting any man to beguile us (2:18), lest the traditions and rudiments of men and the world insidiously do their inevitable work of replacing the Truth with lies and vanity and things wherein there is no profit.

While there was much mystic thought and sentiment in circulation in Phrygia, Paul too speaks of a mystery. He combats false mysteries with what was once a true mystery in the Divine Plan of Salvation. Paul writes of that mystery which is salvation in Christ, offered by the grace of God to not only the Jews, but also to the Gentiles. Continuing to speak of the Gospel, Paul says—

"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the Word of God;

"Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is CHRIST IN YOU, the Hope of Glory" (Col. 1:25-27).

Pagan preachers and worldly philosophers spoke of their mysteries which were reserved for the initiated few only. In the Revelation, where the expression, "the depths of Satan, as they speak," is used, the underlying insinuation of those who use these words is the same. That is, these "depths" are to be fathomed (understood) exclusively by the initiated few.

But such theories of mysticism do not belong to true Christian doctrine, while they do belong to the tenets of mystical Babylon, as can be seen in its vain attempt to harmonize the ideas of pagan polytheism with the Oneness of the God of Israel, resulting in that mystery of the triune god whose chief characteristic is its incomprehensibility to the mind of man.

* * *

BUT Paul's inspired teaching is about a mystery that is now made known by God, so that it is no longer to be kept secret. And, because it is revealed, it is to be comprehended by the mind of man.

This is the FELLOWSHIP OF THE GENTILES—God's salvation in Christ extended to all mankind.

For since all (Jew and Gentile) have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and since all are of the same flesh and blood nature (sinful flesh), if God offers salvation in Christ to the Jews, He is just and gracious and will not exclude the heathen—the Gentiles—but will include them too in this glorious salvation in Christ, as many as will believe unto the ends of the earth (Isa. 49:6).

In order that the Colossian believers do not get the mistaken impression that this mystery of the fellowship was being whispered in secret to an esoteric few, Paul tells the Colossians that the Gospel is come unto them as it is in all the world (1:5-6) and that it is being preached to every creature which is under heaven (1:23). The Gospel was truly being proclaimed to all nations and peoples, as one witness to this historic fact is found in the following comment—

"Pliny . . . in his famous letters to the Emperor Trajan (not long after Paul wrote to the Colossians) writes:

"Many of every age, rank and sex are being brought to trial; for the contagion of that superstition (Christianity) has spread over not only cities, but villages and country'."

Even in remote, isolated places, the Gospel was preached and finding believers. This grand point—the world-scope of the spread of the Gospel—is further emphasized by Paul when he tells the Colossian believers of "Christ in you, the hope of glory," adding in 1:28—

"Whom we preach, warning EVERY MAN, and teaching EVERY MAN in all wisdom; that we may present EVERY MAN perfect in Christ Jesus."

So the Colossian Ecclesia was not a unique community. Nor were they to be content with broad generalities or vague principles regarding their salvation in Christ, which is characteristic of pagan mysteries and secrets. The Gospel is just the opposite, and the opening verses of chapter 2 indicate detailed knowledge—

"For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ,
"In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Again Paul is saying that ALL that constitutes COMPLETENESS is in and of Christ.

And of the word "acknowledgement" here used, we are given to understand that the Greek implies "full and accurate knowledge" or "thorough knowledge." Through Christ, this accurate, thorough, detailed knowledge is available to all believers, and is not confined to a select few or to an inner circle. This accurate, thorough and detailed knowledge is, of course, to be based only on God's Word, according to what has been caused to be written for our learning and instruction, accepting nothing that cannot be tested by God's Word to be true.

* * *

BUT even in using God's Word as the touchstone of truth, we must be careful to rightly divide (or handle) the Word of Truth. Our nature is to readily accept things which simply appear to be true, but are found on a close examination to be spurious. By "spurious," we mean not only that that which appears to be true is false, but also that it does not originate from the light source. One such example of truth-in-appearance-only is the worshipping of angels, mentioned by Paul to the Colossians in 2:8—

"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind."

On the surface, a plausible line of reasoning for the worshipping of angels can be construed from the Scriptures, as follows—

1. Angels are immortal spirit-beings (Ps. 103:20, Ps. 104:4).
2. They supervised Creation (Gen. 1:26).
3. The present world is in subjection to them (Gen. 28:12; Dan. 10:13).
4. The Law of Moses was delivered through them (Gal. 3:19).
5. They are in the presence of God (Matt. 18:10).

6. God's Name is in them (Exo. 23:21-22).

In addition, this plausible line of reasoning for the worshipping of angels is prompted by a "voluntary humility," by which it is implied a man considers himself too "humble" to worship the Deity directly, so he worships a lesser being, invoking angels. We see all these tendencies and many others in the rituals of the Apostasy, and we must constantly guard the Truth against their subtle influence.

From such reasoning and testimony as this, and against the background that was prevalent in the first century concerning the homage paid by men to sundry orders of deities and demons (still current in subtle disguise), we can see how even the very elect could be deceived into worshipping angels.

But the genuine test of whether or not such worship is acceptable to God are the overwhelming facts that—

- (1) Only God should be worshipped (Gen. 20:3) and
- (2) Nowhere in the Scriptures are believers commanded to worship angels.

From the vantage point of our day, we may feel secure and confident that such deception is self-evident to us and therefore we are in no such danger as were our first century brethren and sisters.

If so, then we are deceiving ourselves into thinking we cannot be deceived; and there is no more deceptive self-deception than that.

For the basic truth pertaining to the children of God (and to all men) is the same today as it was in the days of the Colossian brethren and as it ever has been since man first believed a lie. That is: **our natural inclination—the heart left to itself—continues down to our day to be deceitful and wicked (Jer. 17:9).**

The lesson is this: just as the first century brethren were vulnerable to the belief of worshipping angels, so also there are unscriptural matters of this spurious nature which in appearance are plausible but in truth are not pleasing in the sight of our Heavenly Father.

* * *

WE are complete only with the things pertaining to Christ. Anything not of Christ—anything from the outside—is not of Christ and spoils that completeness. We must seek to be rooted and built up in him (Col. 2:7), and grasp the substance and not the shadow (Col. 2:17), the word of Christ dwelling in us richly (Col. 3:16). We must agonize to—

"Put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:10-11).

While all the individual parts of the One Body must add up to the spirit and character of Christ; all the individual parts themselves must be complete in Christ. We must ourselves conform to the godly Image, as Christ was the image of the invisible God, translated by our bro. Thomas as—

"The effulgent mirror of The Glory, and the exact likeness of His Person."

So that there would be no mistake as to what Paul meant by this new image, he proceeds to exhort the believers to put on certain qualities of mind and heart.

But first (Col. 2:23) he had mentioned the "neglecting of the body," apparently having in mind ascetic practices. The doctrine of asceticism teaches that godliness is attained by unusual practices of self-denial and abstinence in reference to the physical body for the purpose of religious discipline.

Truly this definition, interpreted aright, would be in harmony with what God requires of us in overcoming the works of the flesh and manifesting the fruit of the Spirit.

But an ascetic (1) did not have a proper understanding of these things concerning sinful flesh; (2) he engaged himself in wrong practices and discipline: and (3) he gratifies the flesh after all! We believe the "Goodspeed" translation here reproduces the thought more clearly. Paul had been speaking about the world and human rules and regulations, and continues, saying—

"Such practices pass for wisdom, with their self-imposed devotions, their self-humiliation, and their ascetic discipline, but they carry with them no real distinction, they are really only a catering to the flesh" (Col. 2:23).

Therefore Paul plainly points out in chapter 3 the believers' death to the things of the world and the flesh, and their new life in Christ with their affections directed to heavenly things.

There is no doctrine of asceticism or mysticism needed to interpret what Paul means by mortifying (treating as dead) our members which are upon earth, since he enumerates: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which is really idolatry (v. 5). The Colossian brethren themselves once practised these, as does all mankind living according to things earthly. Paul further tells them they must put off anger, rage and spite; rough, abusive talk must be banished from their lips, and they must not lie to one another (vs. 8-9). Here, what we are required to overcome should be perfectly intelligible and is not included in the ascetic discipline Paul warned the Colossians against.

* * *

AND then, in connection with the new self, newly made in the likeness of its Creator, to know Him fully, where Christ is everything and in us all, Paul's words of edification are (Col. 3:12-15)—

"Put on therefore, as the elect (chosen) of God, holy and beloved, bowels (tender feeling) of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any many have a quarrel against any. EVEN AS CHRIST FORGAVE, SO ALSO DO YE.

"And above all these things, put on charity (spiritual love), which is the bond of perfectness (that which completes and fastens them all together).

"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts; to the which also ye are called in ONE BODY.

"And BE YE THANKFUL."

Here, too, there can be no doubt as to what Paul is saying—no need for asceticism or mysticism or self-glorifying self-affliction, but rather complete, wholehearted, thankful, JOYFUL dedication and devotion in love.

He speaks of love as the "bond of perfectness." The literal bond referred to, and which Paul has in mind, is said to be "an upper garment which completes and keeps together the rest, which, without it, would be loose and disconnected." In keeping with the new man putting on spiritual characteristics as one in olden times would put on clothing, this upper garment completes the dress and it holds all the dress in place.

How fitting that LOVE should be this bond which COMPLETES AND HOLDS TOGETHER the qualities of the spiritual character—without which all would be incomplete and not hold together, but fall apart!

Love, the bond of perfectness, binds and rules the Christ-Body. It is love which completes and holds the members of the Body together. We are COMPLETE in Christ. We are HELD TOGETHER in Christ.

May our hearts be comforted in reading and meditating upon this God-inspired message by the hand of Paul, our hearts be knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding. May Christ (The Glory) be in us, the Hope (promise) of Glory to us. —N.M.

The Mind of Christ

"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service"—Romans 12:1

PART TWO

THIS, too, is a familiar passage with Christadelphians. It has a powerful, stirring ring, and adds life to any exhortation.

But do we know what it MEANS? Have we DONE—are we DOING—what he so impassionedly pleads with us to do?

"That ye present your BODIES a living sacrifice."

Why our bodies? Why does he not say our hearts, our minds, our lives? Because he wants to drive it home in as practical and powerful way as possible.

Most people prefer to keep their religion indefinite and ethereal—feelings and emotions—sensations and experiences.

But Paul says, Present your BODIES, your hands and feet, your eyes and ears and mouth, you, yourself, in all your daily activity—your attention, your abilities, your strength.

"**A living sacrifice**"—a life of sacrifice. Sacrifice is a yielding up—an offering—a total devotion to a purpose. Sacrifice is a joyful thing—a privilege and an opportunity. The sacrifices of the Mosaic Law were for reconciliation, for thanksgiving, for fellowship and communion with God—a joyful seeking of His presence, a thankful recognition of His goodness, an expression of participation in the greatness of His purpose.

"**Holy.**" This is an essential part of the mind of Christ—

"Be ye holy, for I am holy."

"Be ye holy in all manner of conversation"

"Without holiness no man shall see God."

Holiness is separation, both mental and physical, from all that is unclean and defiling. The world is unholy, fleshly, carnal. All its actions are unholy—for they are natural and animal. "The whole world," says John, "lieth in wickedness."

Mankind is defiled because of sin. ALL natural thinking, ALL natural activity, is sin. It is part of the sin constitution; it is unsanctified. Ungodliness, unholiness, is our natural atmosphere and condition as sons of Adam.

Holiness is a repudiation of all that is natural, and a prayerful endeavour to think and act in harmony with all that is spiritual. It is a day-to-day and moment-to-moment subduing of the flesh.

Holiness in its deepest aspect is a purifying of the mind from natural thoughts and desires and reactions, and filling the mind continually with spiritual thoughts—thoughts of God and His goodness and His glorious purpose and revelation.

Holiness is feeding deeply on the Word of God—striving to fill the mind with its beauties—to expand the mind from the natural pettiness of the flesh to largeness and breadth of comprehension. Paul says—

"The natural man cannot know the things of the Spirit of God . . . but he that is spiritual discerneth all things . . .

"We have the mind of Christ."

Holiness is cleansing the heart by the washing of the Word, recognizing that the natural motions of the flesh are evil, selfish, impatient, unkind, harsh, proud, unclean—realizing that only by constant prayer and study and effort can the natural man be put to death within us, and the new man be created and nourished into newness of life.

The fruit of the Spirit—the mind of the Spirit—is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self control.

* * *

THE fruit of the Spirit — the mind of Christ—is **love**—a spirit of sympathy and kindness and compassion and mercy—a Godlike, Christlike outlook toward others—not condoning sin, but sincerely desirous of helping others out of the way of sin into the way of life — a deep fellow-feeling for all the victims of this death-tending body of sin.

This was the mind of Christ:

"I came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

This must be our mind too.

Holiness forbids us from associating with sin and error, but it is not ours to condemn, only to exhort and persuade.

The flesh is quick to criticize and condemn, to find fault, to talk of the sins and weaknesses of others. The flesh is very quick to impute motives, to pass judgment.

Truly we must preach righteousness, as Christ did, clearly and fearlessly; we must preach holiness; we must preach perfection. Truly we must condemn sin.

But we must do it as a doctor, seeking to heal and make strong, rather than as an eager executioner, zealous to destroy.

We must point out with crystal clarity, and to the best of our ability, what is wrong and what is right, what leads to life and what leads to death, what is of the flesh and what is of the Spirit.

But how sad—how unutterably tragic—when our condemnation of the flesh is made in the spirit of the flesh! And this we find is usually the case, for the loving, forgiving, reconciling, spiritual mind of Christ is so rare among men, even among men called brethren.

How quick we are to call down fire from heaven! How we like to feed our pride and self-esteem with what we like to call "righteous indignation" and "zeal for the Lord"!

Christ led a life of patience, and gentleness, and submission to evil, praying for his enemies, doing good to them that hated him, even as he taught his followers.

But on rare occasions, by the direct authority and inspiration of God, he spoke in burning condemnation of stubborn, entrenched wickedness and self-righteous hypocrisy which had seen the Spirit manifested in mighty power, and had presumptuously rejected it.

Because our flesh is evil, we would much rather copy him in the latter than in the former—much rather ape his special divine authority than follow his self-crucifying example.

"Love suffereth long, and is kind; love seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things; love covereth a multitude of sins."

* * *

THE fruit of the Spirit—the mind of Christ—is **joy**. This must be our basic frame of mind—joy in God, joy in His infinite goodness and mercy—joy in the assurance that all things work together for good, joy that—regardless of the trial and discouragements of the passing present—we are on the winning side, the eternal side, the side of righteousness and power, the side that is guaranteed the eternal victory.

Joy that we have been shown the meaning and purpose of the present groaning travail of creation—that it is merely the brief birth-pangs of a glorious eternal creation of righteousness—a new heaven and earth of eternal beauty.

These are the things to which God's love has called us, and all our frustrations and struggles and problems are stepping stones to that glorious destiny.

If we have the mind of Christ, we shall be filled with an unearthly joy and thankfulness that radiates to all around us. They will perceive, as men did of the apostles, that we have been with Jesus. We shall seek to communicate our joy to all, and embrace them in its transforming power.

We shall joyfully forgive seventy times seven.

We shall fervently pray for those who oppose and abuse us.

We shall eagerly return good for evil, thanking God for the opportunity that opposition gives us of manifesting the living power and beauty of goodness.

And we shall do this with joy and kindness and thankful humility that God has entrusted us with just a little bit of His divine wisdom to manifest to men the beauty of holiness.

* * *

THE fruit of the Spirit—the mind of Christ—is peace. Peace is harmony with God—

"Great peace have they that love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them."

We can never have peace while our heart is divided, or interested in worldly things. Peace can only come through single-minded devotion to spiritual things. Paul says to the Philippians (4:4-7), giving four sure, divinely-attested steps guaranteeing peace—

1. "Rejoice in the Lord."
2. "Let your gentleness be manifest to all men."
3. "Do not worry about anything."
4. But in everything— (there is the key word)—in **everything** by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God."

—and the promised result is positive and inevitable—

"The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, SHALL keep your hearts and minds in Jesus Christ."

Do we have this peace of God which he describes in such marvellous terms? Do we experience this quiet, unassailable, joyful tranquillity of which the world has no comprehension? We are invited to partake of it. The way is clearly shown—

1. *Rejoice in the Lord.*

In view of God's infinite goodness, there is no other possible frame of mind for His children.

2. *Be gentle, loving, and forbearing toward all men.*

In view of man's pitiful frailty and weakness, there is no other possible attitude for God's children.

Gentleness is the key to all worthwhile relationships. It is self-control and spirituality—beauty and dignity and maturity of character. The flesh is naturally rough and crude, and if we have the mere facts of the Gospel without its gentle spirit, our zeal for God will be but fleshly self-assertion and rudeness.

3. *Do not worry about anything.*

Worry is distrust, fear, unfaith, disbelief, lack of trust in God.

4. *Draw near to God in everything and for everything—in thankfulness and prayer.*

Drawing near to God does not mean merely pious supplication. It means a quiet and consistent effort to approach unto **the likeness of His glorious character and holiness.**

This is peace. This is the mind of Christ. This is the mind of the Spirit—the overcoming of the flesh and of the world. This is the way of life—the only POSSIBLE way of life—

"To be fleshly minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his" (Rom. 8:6, 9).

Paul commands (Rom. 12:10)—

"Be kindly-affectioned one to another, with brotherly love."

This clearly does not refer to times and circumstances when this comes naturally, for then we have no need of the exhortation.

Its significant bearing is upon times when circumstances would provoke us to be otherwise. Brethren are always brethren, no matter how they act. They must some day answer for it as brethren. Our kindness and affection may be the one needful thing in winning a brother back to the way of life, so in failing to manifest them we may have a brother's blood upon our hands at the judgment seat of Christ. We are our brother's keeper, and it is the erring ones that most need our love.

* * *

In chapter 14 (of Romans) Paul expounds and manifests by example one of the deepest and most powerful aspects of the mind of Christ—a divine principle of conduct that can solve easily and simply nearly all problems among brethren.

Paul is speaking of cases where the action of one brother, though perfectly legitimate in itself, causes concern or offence or distress to another. **HERE** is the great test of the mind of Christ—

"Let no man judge his brother, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

"If thy brother be grieved with thy meat—or anything you may do that is not essential to be done—now walkest thou not in love.

"Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died."

Christ gladly **died** for him, even while he was yet a sinner, in the hope of his redemption, but we wilfully distress others and cause them to stumble by persisting in things which they do not believe are right. V. 21—

"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

If we persist in anything that troubles another brother or sister, we create tension and estrangement that gradually erodes ecclesial unity and frays the bonds of affection that are essential to sound ecclesial life. "No man," says Paul in this chapter, "lives to himself."

Our every act has an eternal, unchangeable effect, for good or ill. A small evil may have everlasting reverberations. Speaking on the same subject to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 8:13), Paul sums up his own mind, and the mind of Christ—

"Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, **I will eat no flesh while the world standeth**, lest I make my brother to offend."

The pre-eminent motive of love is the welfare of others, and the forbearing of one's own desires and advantage for the common good.

Whoever is not deeply imbued with this sentiment as the main-spring of their lives is NOT A BROTHER OF CHRIST and need expect no welcome from him when he returns.

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

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

"Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification."

"For even Christ pleased not himself, but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."

Christ himself, the Son of God, the King of kings, the heir of the universe, pleased not himself, but chose the path of reproach and suffering and self-denial for the sake of others.

Paul again stresses this essential principle of godliness in writing to the Philippians (2:1-5)—

"Fulfil ye my joy; be likeminded; have the same love; let nothing be done through strife or pride . . ."

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus . . ."

—G.V.G.

Predestination

"Whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them. He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified"—Rom. 8:30

Many in the world have the hazy notion that man's final destination—by the idea of "predestination"—has already been predetermined, and it matters not what the individual may do, that it will not alter the final verdict one way or the other at the judgment seat of Christ. They cannot reconcile in their minds the 2 principles of divine foreknowledge and human free will.

It is true that man's final destiny has been determined, but not on the basis of man's "defeatist" view, as we may term it. When we come to understand the real meaning of "predestination," we also come to understand that our destiny has been determined, but upon different grounds from what is the general view of this subject.

In Rom. 8:29 we find words that bring us into the true focus of "predestination" as it speaks to us of the **foreknowledge of God** concerning those who are predestinated upon the basis of conformity to the image of Christ—

"For whom He did FOREKNOW He also did predestinate to be **conformed to the image of His Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

And the image of Christ is established only upon that true, loving, freewill obedience to his Father's will.

Many passages of Scripture declare that Jesus did conform to His Father's will, as Heb. 3:2, that says of Jesus—

"Who was faithful to Him that appointed him."

And Heb. 5:8-9—

"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."

Here we may notice of Jesus that—though he came under what we may term the category of "predestination"—**his salvation was determined upon his obedience.** This at once destroys the view that Jesus had merely to go through the motions to an assured and inescapable victory. His salvation was determined upon his own righteous obedience. His victory over death was "with strong crying and tears" (Heb. 5:7). To say that failure was impossible and he was inescapably compelled to obedience makes a mockery of his struggle and victory, and yet we know his supreme place in the divine purpose was revealed from the beginning.

It is true, as we find written in Acts 15:18, and which truth we can readily embrace, that—

"Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world."

Yes, God has laid down His plan relative to man's salvation. He knows and foresees all, from beginning to end. There are no limits to God's infinite foreknowledge.

God's plan of redemption was placed before the Lord Jesus, to which he must and did conform. God foreknew his character, his disposition, as God foreknows every son of Adam's character, **and it is upon this basis that "predestination" works.**

A beautiful illustration of this may be found in relation to Jeremiah, of whom God spake, saying (Jer. 1:5)—

"Before I formed thee in the belly I KNEW thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

And the life of this wonderful prophet shows to us that "Known unto God are all His works," for Jeremiah proved that he was that worthy prophet so ordained.

And it was not upon the basis that Jeremiah performed as a puppet performs, but upon the basis of a true character foreseen and destined to the work of a Great Creator.

Again we have another illustration in Esau and Jacob. Before they were born God had spoken of them saying they were the beginning of "two manner of people" and that "the elder should serve the younger." As it turned out, Esau was the firstborn, and therefore the elder.

These two sons of Isaac were the subjects of divine appointment. It was not without reason that God said concerning them, as Paul quotes (Rom. 9:13)—

"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

The life of these two men proved to be as God had so indicated, not on the basis that predestination is supposed to work, but upon the basis of God's foreknowledge of their characters and actions, as the lives of these two men proved. Esau's life proved that he was not the subject of God's work to be fulfilled, as a man of the field and cunning hunter, in his desire for the satisfaction of the flesh, while Jacob, was a "plain man living in tents."

Though chosen, foreknown, predestinated and blessed, yet Jacob's life was not of an unmixed prosperity, but rather filled with rigorous service, together with affliction and labor by which he "learned obedience." All this indicates the facts that, though "known unto God are all His works," yet trials and affliction are to be endured, that the predestination may work in God's choice of those who are His in the fulfilling of His will, and the manifestation of the wisdom of the divine choice, based upon divine foreknowledge.

The CHARACTERS needed to fulfil God's will and work in the earth are also foreknown unto God.

Man is to "work out his salvation in trembling and fear." God knows who will respond to His will, and who will not, but it is not on the basis that, come what may, our destiny is established. We are not made to perform without will, but according to our submitting our own will and actions is our predestination established by God's foreknowledge, as Jesus himself says—

"Not my will but Thine be done."

And thus we find the apostle saying in Rom. 8:30—

"Moreover whom He did predestinate . . ."

HOW did God predestinate? By establishing the way, the truth and the life, the line and demarcation that we must follow. According to this established formula has God worked, as Paul says—

"And whom He called, them He also justified."

—in the person of His Beloved Son. Hence then we see the beauty and grandeur of God's saving grace, not established as when we go to the stockyards and see cattle being loaded or unloaded—a fence on either side of the animal that it cannot possibly turn around.

God predestinates upon the basis of His infinite foreknowledge of what will be, and what man will do.

In God's purpose man is predestinated upon the basis of God's will and man's character. We are informed in Eph. 1:5—

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."

This truly shows us just how the great plan and purpose of God really works, as it says "according to His Will"—

"That in the dispensation of the fullness of time He might gather together in one all things in Christ."

And then the apostle goes on to tell us—

"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things."

Without our own volition or mind or disposition, in working out our own salvation? NO.

This very epistle, like all epistles, is FULL of instruction concerning what we MUST DO to obtain salvation, and warning against what we must put aside if we would escape rejection. This is meaningless according to the common view of "predestination."

For example (Eph. 5:5-7)—

"For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man (who is an idolater) hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.

"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

"Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

These solemn words were written to those to whom Paul said,

"We are predestinated to the praise of His glory."

It is clear he has in mind here, as in so many similar places, **only those who will in the end actually make up the redeemed**, though he generally addresses all his readers.

It is clear, too, that the predestination of which he speaks is **dependent upon faithful conformity with the way of life of which he speaks**, God alone knowing the end from the beginning—

"Whom He did FOREKNOW (to be faithful servants), THEM He also did predestinate."

Thus let us draw nigh to God. If we do, God will draw nigh to us (James 4:8). Here again James makes it clear that God's drawing nigh to us depends on our drawing nigh to Him.

And in the fulness of times, when He gathers all things together, let us hope in faith and obedience to have walked together in accordance to His will that we may have that glorious blessing of being with the Lord Jesus in his Everlasting Kingdom. —W.J.P.

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