

The Berean Christadelphian

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

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

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CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Meditation

IT is good for a man or woman to occasionally "sit solitary," as the Scriptures say; to forget for the time all earthly things; to put aside all hopes and fears, all thoughts of ambition and of disappointment; to banish from mind even home and family—and, with all earthly things forgotten and banished, to sit solitary with God.

Only by so doing can we really "feel after and find" God who, although not far from every one of His creation, has been nevertheless, found by very few—for the simple reason that most "mind earthly things."

Refusing to weigh temporal things against spiritual, accepting only the evidence of things seen, ignoring the overwhelming value of the unseen but eternal—they cannot, in the very nature of things, find God, for "they worship the creature rather than the Creator"; hence God is not in all their thoughts.

To really bring God into our mind and thoughts requires elimination from the mind of all else. It requires concentration; it requires meditation—

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

We can dwell in the secret place of the Most High and worship at His footstool, we can be alone with our God even in the midst of a large assembly, if we will, as completely as if we were alone in the midst of the desert with no companion but our thoughts.

Acceptable worship must be individual and personal. You cannot praise God for me; neither can I extol Him for you. The assembly can unitedly lift their voice and sing praises to Him Who has called them out of darkness into light, but unless the individual heart and mind joins in that praise (even if the voice is silent), that soul is not reaching the consciousness, at that time, of Him Whose ears are ever open to the cry and the praises of His children.

So, forgetting the things that are about and around us, as well as the things that are behind us, let us individually and personally come into the presence of God.

His merciful kindness has been, and still is, great toward us. Let us so acknowledge before Him. His Truth endures forever, and in the midst of all else that is crumbling to dust, "There is that changeth not." And because of this we rejoice and praise Him.

Apart from the intervention of God, all were destined to "be as though they had not been." But when there was no eye to pity and no arm to save, God so loved us that He gave His only Son to provide sure and eternal deliverance for us.

Therefore let us individually and personally acknowledge before Him, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and blessing." And in that quiet confidence and trust so becoming the people of God, let us say before Him—

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want"—Psa. 23.

—W.M.B.

Fraternal Gatherings

(If the Lord Will)

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EDITORIAL

The Scripture Cannot Be Broken

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

THERE are many things in various parts of the world—wonderful to see, and appreciate—that we seem to take for granted, failing to exercise wise judgment and keen insight in realizing their worth or importance. This is also true of things with which we come in contact in our daily routine, whether it be in factory, office or home.

Not many years ago, our homes were lighted with oil lamps, and they were heated by burning wood or coal in iron stoves; our water supply was obtained from wells by using hand pumps. There were no telephones, radios or television.

But times have changed, and in most homes we enjoy the convenience and efficiency of electric light, oil or gas furnaces, and our water supply is obtained by merely turning a small tap.

Science has brought about these changes in material things, and we are greatly indebted to this branch of knowledge or study dealing with a body of facts systematically arranged by which the operation of general laws is made known. A systematic knowledge of the physical or material world combined with skill and proficiency can bring much comfort and enjoyment to the human race.

However, when we turn to the matter of spiritual things, science is unable to help us.

Why not? Because, as we have said before, Truth is a fixed principle, and cannot be improved by man, no matter how far he may advance in higher education. The promises made to Abraham are unchangeable, for in the days of Paul, two thousand years after they were revealed, he referred to them with a full assurance of faith, as did Peter also.

At this point, it should be particularly noted that these two apostles were inspired by the gift of the Holy Spirit, and were delegated to preach the Gospel, and neither one of them made any attempt to change the promises with the idea of bringing them up to date. Observe carefully how Paul writes in the letter to the Galatians—

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:16, 27, 29).

This is not the only place where Paul speaks with such implicit confidence. Consider well the whole of Romans 4, where he deals at considerable length with matters relating to Abraham. Ponder carefully what he says in Rom. 15:8, where he speaks of the promises and how they stand so closely related to Christ—

"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the Truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers."

The manner in which he confirmed them, and made their fulfilment possible, is the most fascinating and essential part of his mission. In Heb. 9:26, the apostle declares that—

"Now once in the end of the world (age) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

In this supreme act of obedience, Jesus unsealed the gates of death and brought life and immortality to light through his resurrection, thereby opening the way by which the promises could be

fulfilled—not only to Abraham, but to all who have believed the Gospel and obeyed it by baptism, for this constituted them Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.

Therefore, after almost another 2000 years since Christ confirmed the promises, they are still valid, having the same force or weight as they did when they were made to Abraham. This thought is so well expressed in the hymn we so often sing—

"Jehovah dwells alone, no equal can He see; the unchangeable and mighty God, from all eternity."

* * *

THIS brief consideration of the promises made to Abraham is designed to **strengthen our faith in what is written in the early chapters of Genesis**. Our principal witness has been Paul, and we have absolute confidence in what he has written because of the manner of his appointment as an apostle. In Act 9:15, it is written of him—

"But the Lord said unto him (Ananias), Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my Name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

But there is another witness, and one greater than Paul to whom we are under deep obligation, even the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Son of God; the Word made flesh and therefore the manifestation of the Father, and could say as no other man could say—

"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life"—John 6:63.

We are profoundly indebted to him, for if he had not "endured the cross, and despised the shame," we would still be—

"Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."

Follow him as he walks the land of Judea, and watch him as he heals the sick, as he restores the sight of the blind, as he raises the dead to life, and does many other wonderful works, and then listen to him as he makes his appeal (John 14:11)—

"Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."

This man, Christ Jesus, has left us an indisputable record, and in that record we observe that he has endorsed the writings of Moses in many places.

In Matt. 19:4-5, he refers to Adam and Eve in the second chapter of Genesis, and specifies them as the beginning of the human race—

"Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said,

"For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh."

What more could we ask? Surely this disposes of all manner of scientific speculation, and places us on a rock foundation of which Christ is the chief corner-stone—

"In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."

CHRIST IS TRUE. He has proven himself to be who and what he claimed to be; for he spoke as no other ever spoke, and he accomplished works that no other man ever did, and climaxed it all by his glorious resurrection.

Therefore when he approves the writings of Moses, we have every right to believe what Moses has written. In fact, he places the full responsibility on us, when he says (Luke 16:31)—

"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

The writer of this message whole-heartedly agrees with brother John Thomas' words—

"The only book we study on 'theology' is the Bible; and the more comprehensive our knowledge of this becomes, the more intense our opposition to all the dogmas and 'names' of the 'religious world.'

"We undertake to interpret Moses and the Prophets in harmony with Jesus and the Apostles. When we succeed in this, we have 'full assurance of faith' that we are right."

The power of the Word of God should cause our thoughts to expand beyond the confines of ordinary human thought. **The more we study the Bible, the more we should try to adjust our way of thinking to God's teaching, rather than to attempt to force His message into our pattern of thought.** Editor.

The Vision of Nahum

"Who are they among all the gods that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that Yahweh should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?"—Isa. 36:20

BY BROTHER JOHN THOMAS

NAHUM declares the subject of his own prophecy—

"The burden of Nineveh."

"The burden"—**massa**— an oracle threatening to Nineveh. Nineveh, on the banks of the Tigris, was the capital of the Assyrian empire, which (while that city was the seat of government) is symbolized in Dan. 7:4 by—

"A Lion with Eagle's wings."

Moses informs us that the city was built by Nimrod, the beginning of whose kingdom was Babylon, Erech, Accad and Calneh in the land of Shinar—

"Out of that land he went forth to Assyria, and builded Nineveh" (Gen. 10:11).

In the days of Jonah, who was sent to preach repentance to it in the reign of Jeroboam II, king of Israel, it was "an exceeding great city of three day's journey" through, and though the one God was known, its wickedness was great, and, as might be supposed, its populace exceedingly ignorant; for God himself testifies, that it contained 120,000 persons that could not discern between their right hand and their left. Its cattle were also very numerous.

Diodorus Siculus says it was about 21 miles long, 9 miles broad, and 54 miles in circumference. Its walls were 100 feet high, and so broad that three chariots could drive abreast upon them. Its towers, of which there were fifteen hundred, were each 200 feet high.

At the time of its overthrow, Nineveh was very rich; for Nahum says, speaking of its gold and silver—

"There is no end of the store."

These riches, however, were not obtained alone by honest industry and gain; but by the conquest and spoil of other nations.

The lion being the symbol of the Ninevite power, he styles the king of Assyria "the old lion," the males of his family, "the young lions," the females of the harem, his "lionesses," and the heir apparent, "the lion's whelp." And, speaking of the way riches were heaped up in his vaults, the prophet says (2:9-12)—

"The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses, and filled his holes with prey, and his dens with ravin."

Besides this source of wealth, the spoil of nations, Nineveh was full of people devoted to money-making. It was the London of the ancient world, into whose bosom were poured the riches of Persia, India, China and the West, by the caravans, and navigation of its rivers—

"Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven."
—which shows that the Ninevite was a great commercial as well as military power.

* * *

THE moral condition of the city at the time of its greatest glory was excessively corrupt. Modern Rome is a fair specimen, in proportion to its size, or Papal Europe rather, of the impiety and abomination rampant in Nineveh; whose fate, therefore (with that of her sister Babylon) has become the type of that entire and complete desolation that awaits Rome and the government which supports her iniquity.

The moral condition of the city of Nimrod is apparent from the epithets bestowed upon it by Nahum, who styles her "the well-favoured harlot," "the mistress of witchcrafts." In her day she traded in nations and families, whom she sold by lies and robbery, as Rome has done, and continues to do at the present time. Nahum says—

"Woe to the city of bloods! It is all full of lies and robbery; the prey departeth not."
—that is, it is not restored. For this cause he threatens her with ruin. Destruction was to overtake her, "because," says he—

"Of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well-favoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts: upon all of whom her wickedness passed continually" (3:1, 4, 19).

The spiritual merchandise of the well-favoured harlot was forced upon the nations by her military power. By her riches she sent out large armies to compel the nations to receive her yoke; and to purchase—at the price of their religious liberty, civil independence, and precious metals—the lies she had prepared by the incantations of her astrologers, magicians, and soothsayers, who—when she was destroyed and her shame was displayed before the nations and kingdoms she had spoiled—emigrated to Babylon, and became the wise men and counsellors—the clergy and ministers—of Nebuchadnezzar, the heir of her departed glory.

* * *

NINEVEH'S success in these expeditions is boastfully displayed in Rabshakeh's speech to Eliakim, the vice-governor over the household of David, in the reign of Hezekiah.

This king had rebelled against Nineveh, which, in the fourteenth year of his reign, had spoiled him of much gold and silver. Judea was accordingly invaded by a mighty army under Sennacherib, who, being detained before Lachish, sent Rabshakeh to demand the surrender of Jerusalem. In delivering his message to Eliakim, (a type of Messiah, see Isaiah 22:20-25), he said (Isa. 36:4-7)—

"Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, to Hezekiah:

"What confidence is this in which thou trustest? Thou sayest (but they are vain words), I have counsel and strength for the war.

"Now, on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?

"Behold thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, upon Egypt, on which, if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it;

"But if ye say unto me, We trust in Yahweh our God: is not that He Whose high places and Whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem,

"Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?"

In this, Rabshakeh rejected the idea of the God to Whom the altar in Jerusalem was dedicated, being the true God; but on the contrary, maintained that the god worshipped at the altars on the high places, which Hezekiah had demolished, was the god men ought to worship.

He therefore continued, referring to that god, and said—

"Am I now come up without Yahweh against this place to destroy it? Yahweh said to me, Go up against this land and destroy it."

This sort of address, in the hearing of the multitude upon the wall, was very displeasing to Eliakim and his associates. The subjects of Hezekiah were prone enough to favor the claims of the gods of the nations; and might possibly come to the conclusion that Rabshakeh's account of the matter was correct; and that the miseries of Judea were the vengeance of the god of Nineveh, on account of the impieties of Hezekiah.

If this supposition should be revived and strengthened in their unstable minds, they might rebel against the house of David, and open the gates to the Assyrians to appease the wrath of Sennacherib and his god.

Apprehensive of such a result Eliakim and his friends interrupted Rabshakeh and said:

"Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language, for we understand it; and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people on the wall."

But Rabshakeh was too much of a serpent-diplomatist for that. He perceived his advantage and was determined not to forego it. If he could not persuade Hezekiah's ministers, he might move the Jews to revolt against them, which would answer his purpose as well. He wanted the city, and cared not by what means he obtained it.

Therefore, disregarding Eliakim, he turned to the men upon the wall, and cried with a loud voice in their language:

"Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria: thus saith the king:

"Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you.

"Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in Yahweh, saying—

"Yahweh will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

"Hearken not to Hezekiah; thus saith the king of Assyria,

"Seek my favor with a present, and come out to me, and then eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree,

"Until I come and take you away to a land like your own, that ye may live and not die.

"Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

"Where are the gods of Hamath, Arpad, Sepharvaim, Hena, Ivah? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?

"Who are they among all the gods that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that Yahweh should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?" (Is. 36:13-20).

Here, then, was a direct and mighty issue created between the god of Nineveh and Yahweh. The great Nisroch, the god of Sennacherib, had conquered all before him (for what the conquerors of the ancient world effected in the name of their gods, they attributed to them), while Yahweh's land was overrun, His cities laid waste, and the only thing left to Him was Jerusalem, and His altar in the midst of her!

It will be perceived that the issue formed was about Zion—

"Which Yahweh had chosen, and desired for His habitation, that it might be His rest, and dwelling place for ever" (Psa. 132:13-14).

Should Nisroch of Nineveh, or Yahweh of Jerusalem, possess the city and the land? This was the question, which in the Scripture is styled—

"THE CONTROVERSY OF ZION" (Isa. 34:8).

—a cause docketed long before, often called, but as often adjourned, and still in abeyance, awaiting final adjudication in the latter days.

The crisis was one of "trouble, rebuke and blasphemy." Nisroch seemed to have it all his own way. The word of Yahweh appeared powerless, for Judah could not stand in the battle; and his little army was cooped up within the walls of the beleaguered city.

In this extremity all that could be done was to keep the gates closed; and to wait and see the salvation of Yahweh. Hezekiah sent to Isaiah informing him of the king of Assyria's "reproaches against the living God;" and requesting him to pray to Yahweh for their deliverance, and the vindication of His Own Name.

The prophet told his messengers to tell the king not to be afraid of the words with which the king of Assyria had blasphemed Yahweh; for Yahweh said (Isa. 37:7)—

"I will send a blast upon him—and he shall return to his own land—and fall by the sword in his own land."

Rabshakeh having returned to Sennacherib, at Libnah, without an answer, he sent a letter to Hezekiah by others saying—

"Let not thy God in Whom thou trustest deceive thee saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

"Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered?

"Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; as Gozan, Haran, Reseph, and the children of Eden?

"Where is the king of Hamath, and Arpad, and Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah?"

The prowess of the forces of Nineveh Hezekiah knew to be great, for it was pre-eminently "the city of bloods"—the blood of all the nations had been poured out by her sword.

Nevertheless, he would not yield; for though reduced so low as to be unable to keep an army in the field, he had faith in the promises covenanted to his father David's house, and in the present assurances of Yahweh.

Hezekiah acted as a man who considered the controversy was between Nineveh and Yahweh; and not between himself and Sennacherib. He therefore laid the king of Assyria's letter before Yahweh in the Temple, where "He dwelt between the cherubim"; and earnestly invoking His attention to the document, besought His interposition, that—

"All the kingdoms of the earth might know Thou art Yahweh of gods by Thyself."

Yahweh did not answer Hezekiah in the Temple; but communicated with him through Isaiah in answer to his prayer. Concerning the king of Assyria, He said (Isa. 37:22-24)—

"The virgin daughter of Zion hath despised thee, laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

"Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? And against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high?

"Even against the Holy One of Israel. By the hand of thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, saying:

"With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof; and I will enter into the shadow of his borders, the forest of his Carmel."

This was the boasting of the Ninevite power, which attributed to its god Nisroch—the Great Eagle by whose wings its Lion soared aloft over all the earth—its exaltation and grandeur and triumphant invasion of Yahweh's land, which it flattered itself was destined to remain a vassal province of its dominion.

With the ancients as with the moderns, success was the criterion of right; because with the world at large it is a maxim, that "might is right"—yea, "divine right"; by which it justifies the most cruel despotisms, and sanctifies the most debasing superstitions.

All the "order" and "civilization" concerned in Nineveh believed that the Lion, winged by the Great Eagle, was more powerful than Yahweh, the founder and proprietor of a contemptible little kingdom in Judea. Not being of faith, they judged by sight.

Had not Shalmaneser, the Great Eagle's deputy, overturned the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, and carried Israel away into Assyria? (2 Kings 17).

Was not all that portion of Yahweh's land in the possession of Nisroch? Was he not the monarch of the mountains of Lebanon? Had Yahweh been able to stay his conquests, or save His cities from his power?

Here were facts, and facts were stubborn things. Could the "order" and "civilization" of the world be blamed for despising the Name of the God of the Jews, seeing that He could not protect His people and land from the oppression of their enemies?

It was despised, and, being despised, it was reproached and blasphemed; and He was taunted as a deceiver of His too-confiding and credulous partisans and friends—

"Let not thy God in Whom thou trustest, O Hezekiah, deceive thee!"

Could anything be more insulting, more calculated to arouse the indignation and fury of Yahweh?

But Nisroch's servants (whether the agents of the Great Eagle— Rev. 12:14—"the Bird of Jove," adored in Nineveh or in Rome,) judge of facts by reason's natural light, which always leaves in outer darkness those who are unfortunate enough to be led by it.

They know not the ways and purposes of God; for, not being His servants, He has not revealed His plans, principles, and intentions to them. Yahweh, no more than prudent and sagacious belligerents, reveals not His strategy to His enemies. He keeps their powers in the dark that, in digging pits for Him, they may be taken in their own traps.

What the kings of Assyria had done against Israel and the other nations, was not by the power of Nisroch, which was no god; but by Him whom they blasphemed.

In regard to Israel, they had been conquered and broken up, not because He was unable to defend them against Nineveh and her god, but "because they had sinned against Him," and because they walked in the statutes of the nations which occupied their country before they acquired possession of it, and in the statutes of the kings of Israel—

"Therefore Yahweh was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of His sight—out of their land, to Assyria."

As to Judah, she was not blameless in His sight; but walked in the statutes of Israel. Therefore it was that they also had been visited with war which hitherto had expelled them from the open country, and shut them up in their castles and fenced cities.

Their calamities would have been fatal to their commonwealth, only that they had a king (Hezekiah) that loved and venerated Yahweh's Name, above Nisroch and all other idols, which he detested. This zeal for Yahweh he displayed in that he—

"Removed the high places, broke the images, cut down the groves,
"And broke in pieces the brazen serpent Moses had made, calling it Nehushtan (a piece of brass), for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it."
"He trusted in Yahweh the God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any before him."

This high character of the king of the Jews procured for Judah an arrest of judgment, until the controversy concerning the Holy Land and city was settled between him and the Ninevite deputy of the Great Eagle, by plucking off its wings from the "old Lion" (Dan. 7:4; Nah. 2:11).

CONTINUED NEXT MONTH IF THE LORD WILL

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My Days and My Ways

BY BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths"—Prov. 3:5

PART THIRTEEN

FROM Leicester we went to Nottingham, another clean, interesting and thriving town. Here there was an ecclesia, which made our visit much more interesting to ourselves. We were made welcome guests at the hospitable house of bro. John Turney, who had a large and promising family of sons and daughters. Since then there have been storms and gales and wrecks: but some safely ride at their anchors still.

The phrenological lectures were a feature of interest in the town, but the brethren were the great attraction to us. They did not prove the thoroughly spiritual community that we imagined them to be. This was not to be wondered at in view of their quite recent emergence from Campbellism. There were some fine men among them, but their hold on the Scriptures proved to be but feeble.

One highly promising young man, indeed, fell away quite soon to open infidelity—a son of a very fervent father and grandfather, who both fell asleep in the Faith. His apostasy was preceded by a course of theatre-going and pleasure following in which, greatly to my distress, he was encouraged by a brother in another part of the country, who also made shipwreck at the last.

Others were but partly enlightened, and only partly in love with spiritual things: lively, nice, interesting people—but much more interested in EACH OTHER and in their HOUSES than in the great things of God, which claim the supreme affection.

This is not peculiar to Nottingham, nor to any spot on the earth's surface. It is part of the disease common at the time when God has temporarily suspended visible participation in the affairs of men, leaving His written Word alone to represent Him (a visible monument for which we are not thankful enough).

The effect of the mixed state of things was soon seen in frictions and fermentations, which at last ended in disruption. Disruption has continued more or less the order of the day ever since; and, indeed, must necessarily be the history of the Truth everywhere in the absence of its great centre and head, for this simple reason: some love the Truth and some do not, mistaking the love of the social circumstances generated by the Truth for the love of the Truth itself. (No discerning person will deny the truthfulness of this proposition.)

Now when two classes of persons in this condition associate together, sooner or later the divergence of their affections become manifest to each other. When this arises, antagonism, passive at first, becomes more and more distinct as circumstances afford scope for it, till at last it assumes the complexion of animosity, especially on the part of those who are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

Men of God have no animus, however much they may have to dissent from those whose eyes and heart are shut towards Him.

Of course, it is possible there may be much division where there is little or no godliness, and all the more because of the absence of godliness on either side.

Still, the presence of godliness does operate as an irritant. Godliness has not pleasure in irritations of any kind, but loves peace and seeks it; and is therefore liable to flee from the presence of strife and seek in solitude that communion with God which is obstructed by the disunions of men. There is a possibility of erring in this direction; for it is one of the appointments of God in the present evil state that godliness should fight the evil and earn the crown that waits a faithful course at the end.

* * *

OUR stay in Nottingham ended with a phrenological tea-meeting, in which we had no heart. The tea-meeting took place in the open air at the Arboretum, and would have been a very pleasant affair had it been on the basis of enlightenment towards God and submission to His appointment; but as a mere festival of the flesh, it was not far from being nauseous—glorifying man who is not worthy of it, and deifying a science that merely shows us man's dark interior.

(For the high-sounding names of his organs—"conscientiousness" "veneration" "benevolence" etc. —are, when rightly understood, but names of CAPACITY, not of endowment. They are the mere description of POTENTIALITIES depending upon divine education for development, apart from which man is a barbarian).

Our next move was to Derby, but whether we stayed there or not I cannot at this distance of time be certain. If I had not been there many times since in another capacity, I would have remembered. My companion thinks we stayed, and it seems very likely on the face of it, but the memory of it has clean gone—except a dim impression to the effect that the visit was a failure on account of the religious opposition felt by the Derby people towards phrenology.

Such an opposition would be logical if immortal soul religion were the truth: for, certainly, phrenology takes the bottom out of immortal soulism by showing that human mentality is an affair of corruptible organization, not of incorruptible and detachable essence.

Some were sharp enough to see this, but the majority comforted themselves with a kind of intellectual juggle to the effect that the brain was but the musical instrument on which the soul

performed, and that, of course, when the strings were short or loose, the performer was not responsible for the abortive sound.

The fallacy pleased shallow minds that preferred to be both phrenological and orthodoxical, especially such as were not much in earnest on the latter point, who constitute the overwhelming majority. But higher minds resented the absurdity, and scouted phrenology as the invention of the devil. That this was the highly respectable and unenlightened state of mind among the Derby people, I should greatly doubt from subsequent experience.

* * *

FROM Derby we went to Sheffield, a large town well known throughout the world for its cutlery manufacture. It struck us as being a gloomy place of belching chimney stacks, grimy houses, and smoke-laden atmosphere; but it has since improved greatly, like all other English places.

The population seemed worse than the place—all gone after a low-form sectarianism or the most vulgar and rabid atheism.

"Iconoclast," as Bradlaugh used to be called in those days, had a large and enthusiastic following; so had Fidler Joss, or some such hell-fire mountebank.

There was, of course, a middle class of the better sort, the frequenters and supporters of religious "causes" and educational movements, but having no Scriptural knowledge of any moment, and no understanding of the hope of Israel, or the wonderful purpose and work of Israel's God as declared by the prophets and the apostles. It was a doleful place for pilgrims of Zion.

However, in this respect also, a great change for the better has taken place. There is now an intelligent and thriving ecclesia in Sheffield, so that, spiritually, the place presents the same contrast of tidiness to its former state that it does in the state of its atmosphere and the aspect of its streets.

How delighted we should have been in 1861 to have found such an ecclesia as exists in 1891. The time had not come. It was phrenology then, which is poor stuff to feed on. A melancholy spectacle is a human being in the state of maudlin self-contemplation induced by the exclusive study of the cranial science.

However, it is better than the absolute self-ignorance that is usual; and there is a time for it, which the intelligent will survive, coming out at last into the clear light of intellectual equilibrium, in which the mind is a sort of mirror of the universe—reflecting all truth in just proportion.

The phrenological lectures and examinations took very well in Sheffield—the lecturers being careful, with pole-balancing agility, to offend neither the infidels nor the sectarians. To the one, they spoke of the brain being the instrument of the soul, and to the other—well (with a wink), no one knew much about it, and it was as well not to burst the boilers in getting to heaven.

The only distinct impression we took away from Sheffield was that the world, with its energy and clever wrong-headedness, was a much more difficult problem than we had any idea of; also that its sorrows were deep and incurable.

We lodged with a widow whose type was new to us in those days, but which we have since found is not scarce: glib, shallow, effusive, highly receptive to sympathy, but having no affinity for thoughts or ways or questions relating to wisdom.

They can entertain you by the hour with recitals that are of no moment to a human being under the sun. Yet what can you say? There they are, with their scanty natures, their empty purses, and their harrowed feelings. It is part of the nightmare of the world. You can only drop a word of sympathy, do some little act of help, and pass on with a groan.

Portionless widow ought to be taken charge of by the State—occupation afforded, maintenance allowed. How many "oughts" there are! Well—nightmares only last for the night. The

day will break and the shadows flee. Our widow wept when we said good-bye. We have not seen her since. She has probably passed off the scene.

OUR next place of call was York. In the evening, Mr. Wells opened the ceremony. "We have come," said he, "all the way from New York to have a look at you in old York. We consider ourselves missionaries: we bring knowledge of a special kind which it will be good for you to know," etc.

There were wicked winks among the subordinates at this way of putting the phrenological enterprise, seeing that nothing but the imperious necessities of business would have brought busts and skulls and pictures to a York platform.

There was a certain amount of truth in the statement, but it was sadly diluted and watered down with grosser facts. The great aim was to please men that they might be induced to part with a little of the circulating gold into phrenological pockets (in a perfectly legitimate way, of course; but still, there it was).

I asked Mr. Fowler, at a quiet moment in the examination room, while at this place, why he did not delineate inferior characters in language they could understand.

(He would say, for example, to a man villainously deficient in conscientiousness:

"You are characterized by a moderate degree of circumspection; it would be well for you to cultivate this quality for the sake of a proper balance of your powers."

(The initiated understood the meaning of the hint, but the man himself went away with a gratified sense of moral proficiency.)

Mr. Fowler said it would not do to tell just the naked truth; that people would resent it, and it would do them no good, whereas by suggesting that they were good and only required to be a little better, they were kept on good terms with themselves, and stood a better chance of any improvement their case was susceptible of—to all of which, of course, no exception could be taken from the phrenologist's point of view.

But it made me feel that phrenology could be no fitting calling for one who desired to be led and guided alone by the issues of truth, and above all, who wished to be identified with God's work among men.

This feeling, combined with new family prospects, and the unsatisfactory nature of our irregular ways, led me to reconsider our course. Was it wise or otherwise for us to remain connected with a travelling phrenological firm?

The problem grew so strongly on me as to unfit me for meals. At York, we were nearer Huddersfield than we should be again for a long time to come. What would it be to run through and see how my former employer was situated? Resolved. We had now been about five months on the wing. Phrenological business was not very brisk in a cathedral town. I easily obtained permission to visit Huddersfield.

The editor of *The Examiner* was glad to see me. I found he was badly suited with the man that had come in my place. When I ventilated the idea of my returning, he readily fell in with it, and it was arranged that he would give notice to his reporter, and that I should give notice to Fowler and Wells.

On my return to York I told Mr. Wells what I was thinking of. He took it very kindly, and I think the proposal to leave them was not altogether unwelcome, as the throng of business had begun to ease off considerably, and the stoppage of my salary would be a welcome retrenchment. Perhaps also my strong Bible preference interfered with my perfect suitability for their service on all points.

At all events, it was easily arranged that at the expiry of a month's notice I should be at liberty to leave them. From York we went to Durham, then to Newcastle-on-Tyne, then to Sunderland, and

from Sunderland we returned to Huddersfield, to resume the jog-trot life of a provincial weekly reportership.

CONTINUED NEXT MONTH IF THE LORD WILL

Cleansed by the Washing of the Word

"That he might present it to himself a glorious ecclesia, not having spot, wrinkle, or any such thing, but be holy and without blemish"—Eph. 5:27

AS we come around this table of our Lord, our aim should be to worship our Heavenly Father in spirit and in truth, and to remember our Saviour in the way appointed, and be refreshed and cleansed in heart and mind.

We all know this and accept it generally, but if we have not prepared our minds by reading and meditation upon God's Word, we are as it were before Him naked.

It is true we read at this assembly, and we hope and pray our minds have been admonished and built up by it. But if we are to be fully clothed and prepared in the way that is pleasing to our Heavenly Father, we must stand daily at our Master's gate, desirous of doing that which pleases Him. And we learn what pleases Him from reading daily of His Word. This is the means He has afforded us for this purpose—and **there is no other**.

Then to His Word we must go, prayerfully, eagerly, searchingly, with meekness that we may find Him. He has said—

"Seek ye **FIRST** the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

"Seek and ye **SHALL** find; knock and it **SHALL** be opened."

We are, then, without excuse if we appear before Him naked.

* * *

THE apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians and to us, says (2 Cor. 5:14-17)—

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead:

"And he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again.

"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold, **ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW.**"

Now let us endeavour to understand Paul's teachings. Since Christ has redeemed us, we must no longer recognize the flesh. We can no longer be servants of man nor have fellowship with those of the fleshly mind. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians says (5: 8, 11, 15)—

"Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.

"Walk as children of the light . . . and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

The days in which we live are just like the days of Noah and Lot. The world is ripe for the judgments of God to be poured out upon it. Peter says—

"God delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked."

Our experience is the same on every hand when we come into public. The voice of the flesh utters its filthiness and we loathe the things that pour from their lips. It becomes us then to take the necessary antidote—

"Come, My people, and shut thy doors about thee."

Keep separate as much as possible, and read God's Word and think upon it. Pray without ceasing for deliverance and preservation from a corrupt and wicked generation. This is what the Spirit by Paul commands us to do (2 Cor. 6:17-18)—

"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, saith the Lord Almighty."

Our only possible escape is the way God has provided—cleansing by the washing of the Word. Let us not deceive ourselves into thinking we can of our own selves do the task or achieve salvation some other way.

Let us not rest on our position because we have learned the Truth and been immersed and think we are safe from the world's pollution. God's Word, though wonderfully designed for its purpose, cannot cleanse us by one application, as witness the case of Naaman the leper—seven times, or a complete cleansing. It is necessary that we bathe in it constantly—allowing time for it to do its work. Our lifetime is none too much. In 2 Cor. 7:1, Paul shows us the need of keeping these things uppermost in our minds:

"Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

We, as sons of Adam, have no light within. But we are to become children of light. How do we do it? David says of God:

"The entrance of Thy Word giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple"
(Psa. 119:130).

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (v. 105).

The means is wonderfully provided and God's Word must be infused into our minds. We must understand God's plan of redemption and bear witness to the Truth. We must be able to talk with intelligence on the precious things hidden in God's Word—

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

We must not allow the shame of our spiritual nakedness to appear. And more than that, we as lively stones must be carved and chipped into the image of Christ. Morally and intellectually we **MUST** bear his image. This means as God's chastening hand chisels off the things of the flesh by trial, we are purified and shaped into a useful vessel.

But if we refuse or neglect to suffer the necessary processing of God's Word working in us, then we are only fit for the dunghill. God's commandments are designed to help us in the matter of shaping our lives after the pattern of Christ.

We must not just say we accept them, and then not live by them. Jesus asks (Luke 6:46)—

"Why call ye me, Lord, and **do not the things that I say?**"

And Paul says (Rom. 8:9)—

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

And this we understand as holiness, purity, spirituality, kindness, compassion, humility and a forgiving spirit. But we do not allow ourselves to stop there. We have another side to look at.

It is that we must "Earnestly contend for the faith." We must remember our sacred trust. We must not ourselves pollute the Truth in doctrine or in practice, and we must not at any price be slack in calling these things to the attention of our brethren and sisters. Otherwise the Truth would lose its power to deliver us from sin and death.

God will not be mocked. He is honoured only when we do what He commands us, and it is for our life that we must make the choice to obey Him. Anything other than His standard of holiness is a path which leads to our destruction.

So when Jesus says—

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness."

—it means, plainly and simply: FOLLOW THE PATH OF CHRIST. There is no other way.

Consider this man, a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"; a man who "loved righteousness and hated iniquity"; a man who was compassionate and merciful, yet he bare witness to the Truth and spoke out against the wickedness of the world with words suitable for the occasion.

In these, as well as in the other, we must follow him. Kindness, gentleness, meekness, a forgiving spirit, but not with toleration of error in doctrine or practice.

We must strive wholeheartedly to manifest the perfection exhibited in Christ. To be sure we shall fall short of it, but we must try our very best to live according to the pattern. Otherwise why is the pattern given? Let us not say we are not expected to try to reach perfection. **We have such a commandment** (Matt. 5:48)—

"Be ye therefore PERFECT."

* * *

THERE is much for us to do in the matter of cleansing and purifying and it has many aspects. We ourselves have been a part of that darkness which covers the earth. By birth from Adam we were just that, until the light of the Gospel shined into our hearts through the face of Jesus and we embraced it and were immersed into the all-saving Name of Jesus Christ.

So far this is all very well, but let us realize this is only the beginning. To really prepare ourselves for a participation in the Kingdom of God and to be a part of that great multitude which no man can number, we must come completely out of darkness both internally and externally.

Our minds must be purified and cleansed by the washing of the Word—made clean daily by prayerfully seeking the mind of God with our whole heart and mind, and following the instructions we receive from the Word.

We must keep ourselves unspotted from the world. This is the external. The apostle John says—

"God is light and in Him is no darkness at all."

This is why if we are to be associated with Him, we must be light because light and darkness have no affinity. We become light only by walking in God's light. Apart from Him all is darkness and death. John also says—

"He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

This is strong language. But we must realize it is true.

God's Word is designed to cleanse and purify us, and if we study it, praying for God's help and guidance and striving to obey Him from the heart, we may find deliverance in the day of judgment.

If we simply say, "God is merciful," and do not make the necessary preparation and effort in our lives, we can only expect to hear Christ's verdict—

"DEPART FROM ME, I KNOW YE NOT."

* * *

IN our readings we have had the case of Naaman the leper brought before us (2 Kings 5). When Naaman received the instructions for his cleansing, he was very angry. This shows us what we are as sons of Adam. The mind of the flesh loves to be honoured, especially the rich in this world.

He thought surely the prophet would come out unto him and strike his hand over the place and call upon his God. But the simple command was without ceremony — "Go dip in Jordan seven times."

But, he asks, "Are not the rivers of Damascus just as suitable or even better?"

We must realize that GOD MUST BE OBEYED. Be the command ever so simple or difficult, we must not try to substitute something else "just as good." This is what the world does.

Our deliverance, our very life, depends upon OBEDIENCE. Naaman's servants show him he must obey, and he dips seven times in Jordan and is cleansed. This is a lesson we should never forget.

This brings to mind another lesson when Jesus was washing his disciples' feet. Peter could not think of letting Jesus wash his feet. But after Jesus said, "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me," he was eager enough, and for head and hands also.

We, like Peter, must be washed also, not literally by the hands of the Master (which was but a type), but we must be washed nonetheless and it is by the "washing by the Word." Let us listen now to Peter (1 Peter 5)—

"All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace unto the humble.

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour:

"Whom resist stedfast in the Faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

"But the God of all grace, Who hath called you unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect; stablish, strengthen, settle you.

"To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever! Amen."

Let us then take the Spirit-Word. Let us joyfully, thankfully, cleanse ourselves in the way of God's providing. Let us ever seek first the Kingdom and God's righteousness.

Ask, seek, knock—that the way will be opened unto us of a glorious entrance into the Kingdom and we shall be among that multitude who shall raise their voices in everlasting song.

"WORTHY THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN!"

—B. R.

To Be Carnally-Minded Is Death

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

THE natural mind of man has no access to, or interest in, the Spirit-Word, and so cannot comprehend the things of God, the things which pertain to His purpose, or to divine principles in general.

The natural man's thoughts and aspirations are concerned only with those things which the natural man desires. To him the things of the Spirit seem vague, uncertain and valueless—even foolish, and suited only to the weak-minded and the fanatical.

The natural man may be educated in worldly literature and philosophy; he may be morally excellent according to the world's standards, eloquent, fascinating, and greatly admired and honoured by the world.

Yet, if he is uninstructed in the things of the Spirit, the spiritual content of the Scriptures is to him a complete mystery, and such he claims it to be.

In this connection, it should be kept in mind that this change from fleshly-mindedness to spiritual-mindedness is not an instantaneous operation, but a growth, as we read in I Pet. 2:2—

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby."

In I Cor. 3:1-3 Paul sadly reminds the Corinthian brethren that he could not speak to them as—

"Spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ."

They had comprehended the mere fundamentals essential to constituting them babes in Christ but, having arrived at that elemental state, they had remained there, and had not, by study and meditation and prayer, advanced to that high state of spiritual understanding where the natural mind no longer would control their thoughts and actions.

It is a sad thing that some who have learned the Truth—the basic first principles—never grow up in spiritual understanding, but are content to ever remain babes. —O. B.

Destroyed for Lack of Knowledge

"Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he"
—Proverbs 29:18.

THE two books of Chronicles are a brief resume of God's dealings with men from the Creation to the destruction of the Kingdom. Today we are brought to the final chapter in that history—a tragic history of wasted opportunity and unfilled expectations.

What glorious possibilities were open to Israel!—a holy nation, a chosen people, a sanctified vessel, to whom God had drawn marvellously near, and through whom He had condescended to reveal Himself to mankind.

But how miserably they failed! What prolonged distress and wretchedness could have been avoided if they had only hearkened to the gentle voice of divine instruction, speaking to them as a Father to His children. What useless sorrow, just because they would not learn!

Is it indeed true that we can only learn wisdom by the path of bitter experience?—only learn it when it is too late? Does man lack entirely the faculty of avoiding evil by timely self-discipline? Must human experience always be one endless cycle of heedless folly and hopeless regret?

Fortunately, we have the assurance that this is not the whole picture, although the broad course of Scripture and experience indicate that it is almost universally true.

But there have always been the exceptions. Our hope lies in discovering and applying that hidden source of divine power by which these exceptions succeeded in breaking the strong, downward gravity of the natural, and drawing themselves upward toward God.

From both the successes of the few, and the failure of the many, we must take lessons that will enable us to succeed.

* * *

WHAT happened to Israel? What went wrong with their bright beginnings—their eager enthusiasm for God? **And how could it have been avoided?** Did they voluntarily and consciously choose the path of self-destruction, or did it overtake them without warning from behind as the accumulated consequence of deeper and deeper self-deception and neglect?

To the very last moment they did not see the blow falling. Each increasingly ominous portent of disaster found them further blinded by the perverted fleshly exhilaration of a still lower descent into abomination and rebellion against God.

If they could have seen to the end the consequences of their course—if they had fully realized what was in store—if they could have **clearly perceived things in their true light**—would they have acted differently, before it was too late? Unquestionably, unless they were entirely devoid of reason.

So, in the final analysis, the whole trouble lay in their perception. True, what led them astray were the natural motions of their flesh, but everyone has them. A man is not a helpless slave to his flesh in any respect, **unless he chooses to be**. There is always available an inexhaustible supply of divine power, if man will only accept it to help fight himself.

But sometimes we are not very anxious to get rid of our idols, and after a few half-hearted attempts as a concession to our conscience, we find it easy to convince ourselves that it cannot be done.

THE PLEA OF WEAKNESS WILL NOT BEAR THE LIGHT OF DAY. God delights to make the weak strong, if they will unreservedly give themselves to Him. Most do not really WANT to put away their enjoyable little "weaknesses."

The trouble with Israel lay in their perception. They could not see. Darkness enveloped them, and they stumbled on to destruction, fighting against the light, mocking the messengers of God, twisting themselves tighter and tighter in the net of their own blind obstinacy, till the wrath of God rose like a flood, and there was no remedy.

Now all this is recorded for our admonition. There is something here for us. Something we must have. Each chapter adds its particular ray to that light which alone can deliver us from the same sad end.

Israel illustrates the **almost** inevitable course—the course which can be escaped only by constant, tireless effort and application, and by being **very different from the majority**.

God only proposes to save a very small remnant of the countless millions that come and go. And God is no respecter of persons. It follows then that those whom He selects must be exceptional to a very marked degree, and they must be constantly on guard to maintain this distinction.

Of what must this necessary distinctiveness consist? Not in accomplishments, or ability, or intellectual pre-eminence—but just one thing: putting God FIRST.

Putting God first consists primarily in keeping Him constantly in the forefront of our current consciousness. Remembering and not forgetting.

Many things fill our minds and come and go as memory is provoked, but it is what occupies our heart and interest and attention that counts. What or who is it to whom our mind irresistibly turns

whenever the pressure of the immediate present is relaxed? **That is the acid test of our affections.** Here we stand face to face with our real selves.

What or who occupies the secret, inner sanctum of our heart where at every opportunity we delight to retire and muse? This is where God looks, in making up His jewels, and if He does not find Himself there, He passes on. We may have lots of other things laid out to show Him, but He will not be interested in them. David said—

"Thy testimonies are my delight and the rejoicing of my heart.

"I have longed after Thy precepts. I have loved Thy commandments.

"Thy statutes have been my songs in my pilgrimage.

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

Extreme? Overstated? Too highly coloured? Poetic exaggeration? Not at all, though it may seem so to the crude, common, animal outlook. Here lies the difference between death and life.

David realized what the Scriptures are—not a book of ordinances for the regulation of servants, but a divinely-provided medium of intimate communion between a Father and His children.

Many express regret that the Bible is not more simple and precise. They complain because it does not give a clear-cut, straight-forward list of just what we must and must not do, and a convenient, orderly catalogue of just what we must believe.

But such people entirely miss its purpose. God has made it as little like a legal document, and as much like an affectionate personal message, as possible.

In the Old Testament, employing every shade of literary style, He tells us a story filled with vital and living characters, and in telling this story He skilfully weaves in all the lessons He wants us to learn.

In the New Testament He partly follows the same plan but much of what He has to say does not lend itself to this, so He writes us a series of very personal letters and sends them by a man who wins our heart by his simple humility and unconcealed affection. Paul does not dictate—he beseeches and entreats—pleads that he may be spared the sorrow of having to exercise his authority.

This method of presenting the Scriptures to us necessitates much application to draw out its treasures. But this is not a disadvantage. God has a reasonable right to assume that a message from Him will be eagerly received by His true children—that they will delight to dwell upon it day after day and search patiently for its hidden mysteries.

The Bible is circulated in uncounted millions. It is found everywhere—this personal message from a Father to His children. But, written as it is, there is no danger that rude and unsympathetic intruders will pry into intimacies and confidences that are not for them. To all such it is a sealed book—an incomprehensible mystery.

* * *

WHEREIN did Israel fail? What lessons are we to take from their failure? They lost their grip on the one thing that could save them. It gradually and fatally seeped away all unnoticed, because they neglected it. It is so natural to say:

"How utterly depraved they were! At least we do not do THOSE things — murder, violence, every conceivable form of wickedness! We ourselves must be doing quite well, considering how bad the flesh can be!"

But such a view misses the point. These things did not begin in this form. They started to slip very gradually and imperceptibly.

They are recorded to show, not how good we are in comparison, but how far it is possible to go, once the foundation is undermined.

They did not realize that the only safeguard was to keep a vision of God and His law bright in the forefront of their consciousness. Lose this, and there is no solid ground left. The full descent is just a matter of time.

Hosea, in the second reading, continues the same theme—

"Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel; for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

"They did not like to retain God in their knowledge: therefore He gave them over to a reprobate mind and vile affections."

—so Paul sums it up in writing to the Romans.

They would have preferred, perhaps, just to go part way. The depths to which they ultimately descended would have appalled them at first. **But there was no part way.** God did not allow it. When once they had chosen forbidden fruit, God saw to it that they had their fill.

"MY PEOPLE ARE DESTROYED FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE."

Transgression is just ignorance—trying to battle the inevitable—taking issue with the omnipotence of God—a persistent delusion that we are different from everyone else and that somehow we will escape the consequences of our folly.

Sin is obstinate and childish refusal to face the facts. God is the central fact of the universe. God's will, His power, His purpose—these are the basic facts which dominate eternity. They are inescapable. Sin consists in acting in a way that ignores these facts. Sin therefore is ignorance; often wilful, intentional ignorance. Peter says of the ungodly (2 Pet. 3:5)—

"For this they are WILLINGLY ignorant of."

To transgress divine law, we must either not know, or else not give full weight to, all the facts of the case. The cure is fuller knowledge. Paul says—

"No man ever yet hated his own flesh" (Eph. 5:29).

Yet sin is self-destruction. If a man holds his head under water, he will drown. He transgresses against the laws of nature, and nature is stronger than he, and he cannot escape from it.

This is far more true if he transgresses against the laws of God. He will perish. He is setting himself up against irresistible forces. He is making himself an obstacle in the way of an unalterable purpose. God has declared (Isa. 11:9)—

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

This leaves no room for ignorance, for the purpose is that knowledge shall be universal. Knowledge is light—

"If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not."

Here is the safeguard: keep out in the open daylight—away from the hidden things of darkness. Keep in the safe narrow beam of revealed light, accepting it in simple faith and holding to the center of the beam.

There are always myriads of unanswered questions along the edges on either side where the light only half shines and fades off into the darkness. It is very easy to become preoccupied with these—to spend precious time elaborating theories regarding partially-perceived shapes, or to halt stubbornly in the half light demanding answers where none are given.

"Fear God and keep His commandments.
"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."

Sin is lack of knowledge—natural darkness and ignorance—the blind groping of the thinking of the flesh.

The remedy is knowledge, divine knowledge, constantly increased by study. A gradual building up of enlightenment and education—line upon line, precept upon precept—gradually displacing the shifting chaos of ignorance and undisciplined natural feeling with a solid framework of knowledge and clear perception of eternal fact.

The textbook is the Scriptures. It has often been said by prominent men that a knowledge of the Scriptures is better than a college education—that is, even from a natural and worldly point of view and for natural ends. It gives a fuller and more rounded view of life and background of experience.

But its real purpose is to prepare us—not for the pre-eminence in the life that now is—but for that which is to come; to school us in the knowledge of God; to give us a proportioned groundwork for balanced and constructive self-development.

Its peculiar suitability in this respect is occasionally brought vividly to our attention by our conversations with others who have no knowledge of it.

The average individual, for example, appears singularly ignorant of history—even of the little uncertain light on the past that secular history offers

The reason is quite obvious—the average natural man has no incentive to investigate history. Apart from a knowledge of the plan of God, history is uninteresting, purposeless, and depressing to the mind.

The natural man, like an animal, lives within the restricted sphere of his own personal activities, absorbed in himself, ignorant and heedless of either the future or the past.

But the student of Scripture finds his view extended boundlessly in every direction. The world around him, and the long colourful cavalcade of history is invested with intense interest and purpose. He is like a man suddenly released from a dungeon and placed on a mountain-top.

The alphabet of Scriptural education is the historical detail of the Old Testament. This sketches, often in the briefest terms but always sufficiently, the general background upon which the inner significance of the play is developed.

This background is essential to a proper knowledge of the whole. Not, of course, every detail of it, but at least the general outline in its proper proportions.

We learn, and sometimes it seems that this is more important than anything else, that **there is nothing particularly unique about ourselves, our lives, our problems.**

An endless procession of humanity has preceded us. Every phase and shade of human experience and emotion has come, and gone, and come again, time without number. We are no different. We are no exception.

The rules of life and death were written long before we came. Every situation that confronts us is a well-trod path in which, of those who have passed, a few have succeeded by accepting divine guidance and the rest have failed.

And now it is our turn. The rules will not be changed on our account. We must write a record to put beside the rest. Life is complex, but the rules of life are simple—

"FEAR GOD, AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS."

Not asking for special favours and consideration, just because it happens to be us, but asking instead for the wisdom and strength and courage to take our place with the rest and fill our part as it comes to us.

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

The great, consuming pity was that the knowledge had been there—but it had slipped through their fingers. Gradually they forgot all about it. Once or twice they ran across it by accident, as in the days of Josiah, and there was a great scurry of self-searching for a while, but it soon slipped away again, and the old self-satisfied slumber returned.

How strenuously Paul laboured against this deadly tendency to relax and fall asleep! His constant keynote is, "Watch and remember!" In the chapter read this morning (Acts 20) as he takes his leave of the brethren at Ephesus, we enter perhaps more closely into his inner feelings than anywhere else.

A man of great capabilities, signally honoured in the service of God, yet appealingly simple and sincere. He was wholly unreserved and unashamed in his demonstration of affection for those whom he had begotten and laboured over in the Truth, knowing as he left them that many would not be able to hold on to the end—"Watch, and remember."

"Therefore WATCH, and REMEMBER, that by the space of 3 years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (v. 31).

Remembrance—

"Have these things always in remembrance."

"Stir you up by putting you in remembrance."

"Put the brethren in remembrance of these things."

And the words of Jesus, the night he was betrayed—

"Do this, in remembrance of me, until I come."

— G.V.G.

Forming a Character

"So walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him" —Colossians 2:6-7

PAUL'S advice to the Colossian brethren (and also to us) is to "walk IN Christ," after once receiving him. This is not an easy task, and the only way it is possible is by developing a character like his.

Now it has been said that in this country we mass produce almost everything but **character**; yet from the divine standpoint the development of character is one of the most essential and important things to occupy ourselves with, in our everyday lives.

The majority of men feel that the most important thing to occupy ourselves in is our external way of life—the way we obtain a living. This is because of the mistaken idea that we were put here on earth for that reason, and that such things are all the essential things of life. But food, shelter and clothing are only a means to an end, that we may continue in life for a few short years to "work out our salvation."

When we speak of character (that is, one that is approved of God), it is something quite different from the ordinary disposition and attitude of men.

It is generally felt that an earnest believer's character, which is quite different from the general run of men, is odd, peculiar, or even unsociable. Yet, in being different from the godless mass of mankind, the very essence of character is shown. The greatest characters of the past have been those

who were not afraid to be different, and it is these who have contributed more to society and to mankind than to the millions who compose the common undistinguished run of humanity.

The main reason for our existence is for God's pleasure (Rev. 4:11), and the only way God can receive pleasure from men is if they practise godliness.

The general class of men do not give God gratification, therefore they will not be worthy of eternal life in the age to come, or even deserving of life at the present. Threescore and ten years is plenty of time to "do the will of the Gentiles."

* * *

EVERY death brings to our memory Paul's words—

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die (Rom. 8:13).
(Truly we all die, whether we "live after the flesh" or not, but for those who so live, death is their final, eternal condition, and every death forcibly reminds us of this).

Nearly all mankind today are "living after the flesh." Only the few exceptions are different. Paul gives the reason for their difference in Rom. 8:12—

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh."

A debtor is one that owes something to someone. Those who are in Christ owe to God a great debt of gratitude, which can only be expressed by a loving and devoted obedience to His will. This will develop a character suitable for Christ's approval. This is "Faith that worketh by Love." We must develop this character NOW, so it will be perfected in the life to come.

It is of great importance that we develop (with God's help, of course) a God-pleasing character in this life, by overcoming, and "mortifying" the flesh. If we do not, there will be no place for us in the life to come.

In Rom. 8:10 Paul tells us what the presence of Christ in us does for us—

"And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

If we serve our bodies, as most do, then the material things of life, such as food, clothing, and present possessions become our occupation; then the carnal mind rules our lives. Paul puts it this way—

"For they that are of the flesh do mind the things of the flesh" (Rom. 8:5).

He goes on to say—

"For to be carnally-minded is DEATH."

This is so because the carnal mind is at enmity with God. For, says Paul, the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God. Therefore those that serve the flesh cannot please God.

We see, then, by Paul's reasoning, that there are two spirits at work in our lives—the fleshly spirit and the spirit of Christ. These are two different agencies: one that pleases the adversary, and the other that pleases God.

Those that have received Christ by baptism are commanded by Paul, in Col. 2:6, to "walk in him," both in word and deed. Paul feared for the Household. In Col. 2:8 he says—

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

Never in the world's history have the believers been in greater danger of the human reasonings and deceit, than in the age in which we live.

The current system of education places emphasis on position and wealth and the glorifying of the mind and material accomplishments of man, rather than on good character development and self-control. Progress and accomplishment in this life tends to promote the characteristics of the flesh. **The philosophy of our day is not based on Christ's law, but is directly contrary to it.**

* * *

DAVID'S training in life caused him to express his feeling of humbleness in this way—

"Who am I, O Lord? And what is my house?"

Jeremiah felt the same way—

"Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child" (Jer. 1:6).

And Moses stated—

"O my Lord, I am not eloquent, but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue."

The training of these men abolished pride and conceit; gave little opportunity for the provision of material things and personal pleasures; and stressed the great need for **building a character of godliness and self-control.**

Paul, in the wisdom of the Spirit, exhorts (Col. 3:16)—

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Secular music is not suitable or fitting in our position as called-out sons and daughters of God. Paul says (v. 23):

"Whatsoever you do, DO IT HEARTILY, **as to the Lord**, and not unto men."

Spiritual-mindedness helps us to become "knit together in love." The art of knitting is used as an illustration of the piecing together of like material into a unified and complete unit. **Only the Truth, acknowledged and obeyed, can produce such a result.**

This "knitting together" of individuals causes similar thoughts, words and deeds. These characters are not of mass-production, but one or two, here and there, who—through faith—have the courage of their convictions to be different. Few indeed comply with the requirements which Paul gives us in Rom. 12:1—

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.

"And be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

In the next verse he says that man ought not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but rather in humility recognize his weakness and need for help and guidance. Paul further enlarges on the development of character when he says (Col. 3:12):

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another . . .

"And, above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one Body."

"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts" LET it. Permit it. Make room for it . . .

"And whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God."

— F.G.J.

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Firstfruits unto God

IN Lev. 23 we read of the three annual feasts that Israel were commanded to observe after they settled in their land.

The FIRST of these was the Passover in the month Abib, the first month of their sacred calendar, which was so designated when the Passover was instituted in the land of Egypt (Ex. 12:2).

The Passover lamb was killed in the evening of the 14th day, and then followed 7 days in which unleavened bread must be eaten. But on the eighth day, a special wave offering was required—

"Ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest, and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you.

"On the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it" (Lev. 23:10-11).

The SECOND feast came 50 days later—

"And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering, seven sabbaths shall be complete.

"Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number 50 days . . . ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves . . . they are the firstfruits unto the Lord . . .

"And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits for a wave offering before the Lord" (vs. 15-20).

The THIRD feast came in the 7th month, called the Feast of Tabernacles, or—

"The Feast of Ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labor out of the field."

This began on the 15th day, for 7 days, during which Israel dwelt in booths of—

"The boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook."

At this Feast of Tabernacles there was also a special observance on the 8th day—

"It is a solemn assembly: ye shall do no servile work."

* * *

FOR the careful student of the Word, these things are full of meaning, and as we look into them we see the richness and depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God. We will not fail to remember that all of the firstborn, both of man and animals, belonged to God, and in addition they had the command—

"The firstfruit of thy land shalt thou bring into the House of the Lord thy God" (Ex. 23:19).

Thus the first and best of everything that came to hand in Israel must be given to God, as a constant reminder that God demanded first place in their lives.

We are able, too, by reference to the later revelations as contained in the New Testament, to find the meaning of the ordinances connected with the 3 annual Feasts. Paul says (1 Cor. 15:20)—

"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."

Now we remember that the record says that he rose on the "morrow after the sabbath," on the first day of the week, after the Passover which he ate with his apostles on the night in which he was betrayed.

He was, then, the antitypical barley sheaf that Israel was commanded to wave on the first day of the week at the end of **the Passover, and his resurrection coincided exactly with this annual ordinance.**

Pentecost (50 days later) was also called the "Feast of Firstfruits," because two loaves of the first ripe grain were waved on that day (an 8th day also). Paul connects this with the resurrection of the saints at the coming of Christ—

"Every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

These are again referred to as the firstfruits in Rev. 14:4—

"These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."

Also in James 1:18—

"Of His Own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."

The resurrection of the firstfruits is called the "first resurrection," not with reference so much to the time of its occurrence but because it is the resurrection of the firstfruits—

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a 1000 years (Rev. 20:6).

The word "resurrection" in this passage refers only to those who are the subjects of a resurrection unto LIFE (John 5:29), as is evident from the words, "on these the second death hath no power." The wicked and rejected die the second death.

The Feast of Ingathering (Tabernacles) was typical of that great number both from the dead and living of the Millennium that will be brought into the fold at the end of the 1000 years' reign of Christ and the Firstfruits who reign with him. This comprises the "rest of the dead" (and living) who make up the full number of those the Father hath given Christ.

Together with the Firstfruits, they constitute the New Heavens and New Earth that John saw (Rev. 21:1)—

"AND GOD HIMSELF SHALL BE WITH THEM, AND BE THEIR GOD." —E.W.B.

Current World Events

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Pope Paul may visit Russia next spring—before his trip to Poland. His advisors favor a Moscow visit, feeling it would help religion in Russia (Nswk 12:20).

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Even as the Catholic Church adopted the new reforms, Pope Paul made another thrust toward the more difficult goal of organizing Christian unity. In a joint ceremony of reconciliation at Rome and Istanbul (Constantinople), the Pope and Athenagoras I of the Eastern Orthodox Church publicly committed to oblivion the mutual excommunications issued by their forebears in 1054 (Nswk 12:20).

"THE EXPLODING POOR"

By the end of this century, all the rich peoples of the world may find themselves facing the poor peoples in a constantly decreasing ratio.

The poor nations are boosting their populations much faster than the rich. Americans may multiply, by 2000 AD, from 195 to 300 million; growth in West Europe is likely to be a little slower. But world population threatens to advance from 3 to 7 billion in that time.

The growth of living standards is going in the opposite direction. The rich countries are getting richer rapidly. The poor, if not getting poorer, are falling increasingly behind. This then is the outlook: a small number of countries with a very high standard of living facing an enormous majority that are very poor.

Donors have become stingier as they have become richer, so that today they give a much smaller proportion of their income to the international community fund than in the past (Nswk 12:13).

INDIA

India's 480 millions face their worst food shortage since independence. Only continued huge imports of US wheat (600,000 tons a month) can ward off widespread starvation.

Since India's independence, US has sent over \$3 billion in grain, plus \$6 billion in economic aid (USN 12:13).

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India gets one-sixth of all wheat grown in US, but even if US shipments were doubled, India would still face disaster. Rainfall in India in many regions has been only 40 to 50% of normal. The wheat shortage promises to be 19 million tons—nearly 20% of minimum survival needs.

The whole problem is complicated by the fact that grain is helping feed 226 million sacred cattle, and millions of monkey gods (USN 12:27).

ASIA

Meeting in Manila, delegates from 26 nations (18 Asian) put the finishing touches on the long-needed Asian Development Bank, a regional version of the World Bank, to fight Asia's crushing poverty by financing industry, power, roads and transport (Time 12:10).

UNITED STATES

Johnson, in a blunt message, has put the world on notice that—after 20 years and \$115 billion US aid—that aid would no longer be given on a nation's needs alone, but in light of their economic policies and political attitudes (Time 12:10).

* * *

Vandenberg Air Force Base, US's key "Space Fortress" in California, suddenly has become busier and far more vital to defence than Cape Kennedy in Florida. This is where US is getting its real military payoff in space. In the last year there were 93 launchings from Kennedy; 117 from Vandenburg.

Spy satellites have been launched as well as other top secret projects. Soon military astronauts will be operating in space platforms that are as big as house trailers. Vandenberg will be the site of a rapid build-up of manned military flights.

Fired to the south (over 7000 miles of clear water), space shots enter polar orbit—flying north and south constantly as the world rotates from west to east below them, surveying the entire earth in a matter of hours, including Red China and Russia (USN 12:13).

* * *

There was much in the news media about the MILITARY significance of the marvellously successful rendezvous of Geminis 6 & 7, revealing the basic impetus of this whole space endeavour. What a fearful place wicked man will make this earth if Christ remains away much longer!

INDONESIA

This much is clear: Red China has lost an ally once on the verge of commanding 100 million Asians in a vital area. Indonesian Communists have lost. Backbone of the party has been broken by the Indonesian Army with wide-spread public support (USN 12:27).

JAPAN

Since the end of WW II, Japan has been a client-state of US. Though they signed a peace treaty in 1951, psychologically the US continued to occupy Japan.

Inevitably, this could not continue. Japan's 20 years of dependence is drawing to a close. Japan is a major power—world's 5th largest industrial nation.

One issue now to the fore is the continuing US possession of Okinawa.

Relations with Japan are excellent, but one thing would seriously upset all this—a direct military confrontation between US and China. As much as they like America, Japanese think of China as their Greece, Rome and England all rolled into one.

In addition, they are quick to admit a sense of guilt for the millions of Chinese who were killed by Japanese soldiers during the occupation.

And all this is reinforced by a feeling of identity with the Chinese as fellow Asians (a feeling also operative in the Vietnam war where Japanese see Orientals being bombed by white men). The whole China problem lurks in the background (Nswk 12:20).

AFRICA

Now is a perilous time in the history of the new Africa. Much of the continent is close to chaos. Danger of a major conflict between blacks and whites is increasing. Turmoil seethes throughout black Africa:—

Ghana—plagued by financial trouble. Nkrumah's anti-American blasts caused cut-off of US food shipments.

Nigeria—political turmoil keeps growing, with signs it may split Africa's most populous country wide open.

Congo—now under military dictatorship as result of latest political upheaval: still a tinderbox.

Angola—Portuguese troops fighting a jungle war against African rebels.

Sudan—civil war rages between Negro tribes and Moslem forces. In Khartoum, Communists battle Moslems.

Kenya—racial relations deteriorating. Black govt. forcing more and more whites off their land.

Rwanda & Burundi—thousands slaughtered in recent tribal riots (USN 12:20).

PROTESTANTISM

Holy Cross Lutheran Church of Seattle will merge with St. Margaret Episcopal Church. After discussions, both ministers decided that it would be best if Holy Cross Lutherans became Episcopalians.

Lutheran pastor Apman thinks the majority of his parishioners will follow him in the merger since they, like most US Protestants, are generally indifferent to the old theological quarrels of the churches.

In the Anglican Church many changes are being made. One drastic change, a new form of Holy Communion, is somewhat closer in structure to the Roman Catholic mass than the present service (Time 12:81).

* * *

A passion for a radical transformation of Protestant Christianity in all its contemporary forms and formulas is currently sweeping US churches. To Protestantism's new breed of social activists, the church as it now is structured is already doomed.

"I'd just as soon see Protestantism go down the drain," declares the Rev. John Morris, a young Episcopal priest, "For 5 years Catholicism has been the coming faith."

In truth, for 20 years US Protestantism, with few exceptions, has been telling Americans exactly what they wanted to hear.

Protestants can no longer sing, "Christ crucified, risen and coming again" with one voice. Less than half of American Christendom really believes it true.

Protestantism has gotten prosperous statistically, but on the inside it has no discipline, no integrity. Protestantism—for years comfortably established in the public imagination as the nation's official religion—stands revealed within a secularized American society as the empty, dispirited inheritance of a faceless and fragmented religious majority, the least-demanding option among the major religious faiths (Nswk 1:3:66).

THE WORLD

Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Formosa, Berlin, Korea, Congo, Cuba, Dominica, Lebanon—these are but a few of the places girding the world where war or the threat of war in recent times has required US military presence.

There are many more potential trouble spots—almost as many as there are nations. Rhodesia may bring a major crisis. Arabs vs. Israel, India vs. Pakistan are problems. Almost any Latin American country could produce more crises tomorrow. Africa is a maze of potential trouble spots.

Trouble unlimited is the declared policy of Communists—Russian and Chinese (USN 12:27).

Food looms bigger and bigger in world affairs (USN 12:13).

VATICAN COUNCIL

There is little doubt the Ecumenical Council was a major, momentous step forward in carrying Christendom's oldest, largest body into modern times and bringing it into closer contact with all men—Catholic or not, Christian or not, religious or not.

"If the Roman Catholic Church had looked 450 years ago as it looks today," says Germany's Evangelical Bishop Dibelius, "there would never have been a Reformation."

Says US Lutheran Leader Fry: "Thank God the Council responded to the leading of the Holy Spirit as far as it did."

The Church has a new attitude toward Communism, contrasting with the almost crusading anti-communism of Pius XI and Pius XII (Time 12:17).

* * *

From the Vatican Council, 16 documents emerged, amounting to a blueprint for renewed forms of worship and ways of government within the Church.

- "On Ecumenism," committing Catholicism to work for Christian Unity, for the first time acknowledges Protestant bodies as churches that share God's grace and favor.
- "On the Church" proclaims the collegial concept that Bishops share power with the Pope in governing the Church.
- "On Liturgy" allows modern languages to replace Latin in most of the mass and sacraments.
- "On Divine Revelation" opens the way for Catholics to cooperate with Protestants in Bible projects.
- "On the Pastoral Office of Bishops" endorses a synod of Bishops to help the Pope govern the Church, and urges modernization of church administration in the Vatican Curia.
- "On the Church's Relation to Non-Christian Religions" removes the charge of collective Jewish guilt in the Crucifixion, and expresses esteem for the world's non-Christian faiths.
- "On the Apostolate of the Laity" calls for the world's half-billion Catholic laymen to take a more active role in church life.
- "On Religious Liberty" affirms that no man may be forced to act against his conscience or prohibited from following its dictates, except by demands of public order, but that all men have a duty to embrace Catholicism once they recognize its truthful claims (Nswk 12:20).

* * *

The Pope remains the infallible spokesman of the Church's will on matters of faith and morals.

All changes made by the Council are seen as part of a larger design—that of updating the Church and furthering the long-range goal of Christian Unity (USN 12:24).

RED CHINA

Red China will probably have medium-range (1,500 miles) ballistic missiles by 1967, and intercontinental missiles; (5,500 miles) by 1975—thus making it possible to send nuclear weapons smashing

into West Europe. Defence Minister Lin Piao arrogantly boasts that China's master strategy is to take over the cities of the world (USN 12:24).

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Red China's first H-bomb test is now projected for 1966, with the Chinese making rapid strides in producing conventional A-bombs. They now produce enough enriched uranium to make 50 A-bombs a year (USN 1:3:66).

VIETNAM

Russia's answer to Vietnam peace overtures: "The Soviet Union has been rendering, and will continue to render, full political support and the necessary economic and military assistance to the fraternal Vietnamese people" (USN 12:13).

* * *

In 1961 there were 1300 US military advisers in Vietnam. By 1962— 10,000; by 1963—16,000; end of 1964 —24,000, still technically designated "advisers." By last week, there were 165,000 US troops there. This will reach 190,000 in the next few weeks, and 250,000 by next spring. The Pentagon expects 300,000 or even 400,000 by end of 1966.

From almost every quarter come fresh portends that augur for an ever larger, even more costly war. Increasingly, the Pentagon explains US strategy in Southeast Asia in terms that go far beyond Vietnam, stressing the need for a US base complex on the Southeast Asia mainland (Nswk 12:13).

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Asia's big war is spreading beyond Vietnam. Laos, Thailand are now new fronts of one war. All Southeast Asia, if the Reds can manage it, will be dragged in (USN 12:13).

* * *

Laos, bordering Vietnam on the west, is a growing thorn in the US side. Cambodia, to the west and south, is proving an irritant to Americans and an apparent help to the Reds.

The Chinese have increased their support for North Vietnam. Russia is promising more help. Vast new amounts of military truck traffic are moving along infiltration routes to the south. A rapidly expanding communist build-up is forcing the US toward basic decisions.

Laos is being used with almost complete immunity by the communists of North Vietnam as their major supply line and marching route to South Vietnam. Once mud paths, they are now a series of all-weather roads.

There is no evidence anywhere in the area that the communists are getting ready to negotiate. All evidence points the other way—a major escalation of the ground war by the Reds (USN 12:20).

CRIME

The volume of crime in the US has risen 58% since 1958, and is growing six times as fast as the population. Americans in the 10-to-17 age group (about 15% of the population) were charged with 43% of all crimes against property in 1964. In rural areas, those under 18 accounted for almost half of the arrests for burglaries and auto thefts, and for more than one-third of all larcenies (USN 12:24).

RHODESIA

Zambia's moderate black African Pres. Kaunda is caught in an ever-tightening bind. He wants Britain to overthrow the rebellious white-minority Rhodesian government, but Britain will not send white British troops to fight white British troops.

Kaunda (though threatening to call in Red troops) admits that if he asked for Russian help, he would stand a very good chance of being captured at the same time he was being rescued.

For Zambia there are immediate worries. Rhodesia has power to isolate landlocked Zambia from its markets and suppliers and to cut off electrical power which produces Zambian copper (90% of Zambia's exports)—Zambia is the world's 2nd largest copper producer.

Britain has placed economic sanctions on Rhodesia's tobacco, sugar (the major crops), asbestos, steel, meat, etc. This made the embargo 95% complete (Time 12:10).

Small, backward, black-ruled Malawi's (formerly Nyasaland) main income is from the wages of 120,000 Malawis who work in Rhodesia. They will be the first to lose their jobs if Rhodesia is economically hurt.

At great expense, US and Britain are having to airlift all Zambia's oil supplies because, when they blocked oil to Rhodesia, Rhodesia blocked oil to Zambia and there is no other way to get oil to Zambia.

All this works to the satisfaction and advantage of Russia.

* * *

US is now in deeply in Rhodesia. Britain has a US promise to do anything required to bring Rhodesia's white rebels down. US wants to keep on good terms with black African governments: they control a lot of UN votes.

There is little enthusiasm in East Africa for a march on Rhodesia by an all-black army. Black Africa's leaders are widely divided. A few follow Nkrumah of Ghana, main champion of the "Black Army." A few others (as Malawi's Banda) publicly scoff at the idea. Moderates seem to carry the day in black Africa (USN 12:13).

* * *

Real worry in Africa is black frustration. If Britain cannot deal with Rhodesia's white rebels, then black African governments may become eager pawns for communists or anyone else willing to help them fight (USN 12:20).

RUSSIA

The world is turning more dangerous again. Russia proclaims a 5% boost in arms spending. Western analysts believe the real rise was much higher. Soviet leaders say they will send more help to Reds killing Americans and Asians in Vietnam. Visitors have recently found top Russians grim and cold.

China's Mao is talking tough. Soviet intent may be to show that Russia has the will and way to be tougher than Mao. **That's the danger** (USN 12:30).

* * *

Russia is aiming for world dominance in naval power. Main strength is being concentrated in coastal warships and long-range nuclear submarines.

Britain is likely to fade completely from its one-time mastery of the seas. West Germany, with US help, is becoming a big European naval power. Japan is once again becoming a major sea power (USN 12:27).

POLAND

If any solution to the ugly geographic scars that divide East and West Europe is ever to be achieved, a way must first be found to soften the bitter hatreds that today—20 years after WW II—still poison the atmosphere among its peoples.

Poles still recall with white-hot hate the 6 million dead left in the wake of Hitler's occupation. For their part, millions of West Germans bitterly demand back the lost territories east of the Oder and Neisse rivers taken from Germany after WW II. Poland is 96% Catholic (Time 12:24).

EUROPE

With US bogged down in an escalating war in Asia, squabbles suddenly are breaking into the open over the future of West Europe, and the US role there.

In West Europe the most vital US interests lie. At stake is an industrial plant far more powerful than that of Russia.

The squabbling for the most part concerns West Germany and its future place in Europe—what part it is to play in nuclear decisions, what steps might be taken to reunify West and East Germany, and whether Germany once again is to become leader in Europe.

The most important question is: Should the Germans, now the strongest industrial power in Europe, be allowed the participation they demand in the control and use of nuclear weapons for West Europe's defence?

West Germany's major weapon for getting what it wants would be a threat to seek closer ties to the Soviet Union unless it gets a voice in nuclear control.

DeGaulle is strongly opposed, and has given notice that West Germany's growing power must be held in check, even if it means a French pull-out from NATO and a Franco-Russian deal (USN 12:13).

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Here, in half an island in the Caribbean, 7,000 US troops are pinned down: Reds keep them there. Can the US, though the No. 1 world power, find the troops and money to police the whole world virtually alone? (USN 12:20).

Ecclesial News

This is a partial list, containing the information we have a record of having been given. Please notify us of any errors. Ecclesias and brethren and sisters in isolation not listed, please give us information.

AUSTRALIA

ESPERANCE, W. Australia—2 Emily St.—Mem. 11 a.m.; Class Thur. 7:30 p.m. Bro Ray Hodges (same address).

CANADA

EDMONTON, Alta.—Bro. & sis. David Blacker, 9338 90 Street.

HAMILTON, Ont.—Sherwood Rm., Wentworth Arms Hotel, Main & Hughson Sts.—Mem. 11 am. Bro. Clifford Cope, Apt. 4, 182 Hughson S.; (416) 527-5569.

JAFFRAY, B. C.—Bro. Fred Glazier.

LETHBRIDGE, Alta—633 Seventh St. S.—Mem. 11 am; S.S. 12:30 pm; Lec. 7:30 pm; Class Wed. 8 pm. Bro. W. Blacker, 1225 6th Av. S.; (403) 327-5663.

TO the brethren and sisters scattered abroad: Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus!

We stand on the threshold of another year, and we as strangers and pilgrims have passed another milestone in our journey toward the Kingdom of God. Let us lift up our heads, our redemption draweth nigh!

We have been pleased to have with us again: bro. & sis. David Blacker of Edmonton; bro. & sis. Frank Truelove, sis. Fred Jones, sis. Sarah Sadler, and bro. & sis. Edward Truelove, of Richard. The last two are staying with us for the winter.

The night is far spent, and the day of Christ is near.

—bro. Wm. Blacker

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LONDON, Ont.—Wells Academy, 306 King (just E. of Wellington); Ph. (519) 432-3481—S.S. 10:15 am; Mem. 11:30 am; Lec. 7 pm; Class Thurs. 8 pm. Bro. Dan E. Gwalchmai, 29 Devonshire; Ph. (519) 438-7730.

MONTREAL, P.Q.—Massey Rm., Central YMCA, 1441 Drummond—Mem. 11 am. Bro. E. Kercher, P.O., New Glasgow, P.Q.; Ph. (514) 438-2635. Phones near hall: bro. A. H. Johnson (514) 845-0359; sis Irene Baines (514) 768-5306.

RICHARD, Sask.—Mem. 10 am; S.S. 12 noon; Lec. last Sun 8 pm; Class Fri. 8 pm. Bro. Fred G. Jones, Rte. 1; Ph. Richard 6rl5.

TORONTO 17, Ont.—Leaside Gdns., 1073 Millwood Rd.; Ph. (416) 421-4944—S.S. 10 am; Mem. 11 am; Lec. bi-weekly 7 pm; Class other Sun. eves in homes. Bro. G. A. Gibson, 294 Glebeholme Blvd., Toronto 6; Ph. (416) 466-9980.

VANCOUVER 14, B.C.—at home of sis. (Mrs.) P. S. Randell, 8091 Selkirk; Ph. (604) 261-2664—Mem. 11 am. Bro. Ralph Hobkirk, 949 Belvedere, N. Vancouver; Ph. (604) 988-5941

GREAT BRITAIN

BIRMINGHAM 34—46 Falmouth Rd.—Mem. 11 a.m.—Bro. Leslie Allock.

KIDDERMINSTER—"Eureka," Bridgnorth Rd., Franche—Mem. 3 p.m. Bro. H. W. Pigott.

NEWPORT, Mon. — 3 Constance St.—Mem. 10:30 a.m.—Bro. Ken Williams.

PENGAM, Mon.—"Ashleigh House," Commercial St.—Bro. T. Lambert.

WALLINGTON, Surrey—Sis. (Mrs.) A. A. Jeacock, 10 Garden Close; Ph. Wellington 7485.

NEW ZEALAND

PAPAKURA—Bro. A. Starr, Ardmore R. D., via Auckland.

WHANGAREI—YWCA Hall, Rust Ave.—Mem. 10:30 am; Lec. 7 pm. Bro. M. T. Griffin, PO Box 55, Whangarei.

UNITED STATES

BALTIMORE, Md. 21207—3617 Forest Hill Rd.; Ph. (301) 944-3870—Mem. 10:30 am (home to home). Bro. Russell C. Frisbie (same address).

BOSTON, Mass. 02115—Hastings Hall, 320 Huntington; Ph. (617) 536-7800—S.S. 10:30 am; Mem. 11:45 am; Lec. 2 pm 1st & 3rd Suns; Class Wed. 7:30 pm at YWCA. Stuart St., Boston. Bro Kenneth MacKellar, 86 Walnut, Reading, Mass. 01867; Ph. (617) 944-9094.

AT the start of 1966 we send greetings from Boston to all of like precious Faith.

We have just enjoyed two Sundays together with the Worcester ecclesia. The first was Dec. 5 when we joined with them in Worcester for the Breaking of Bread. Then in the afternoon, after a delightful dinner, the Sunday School program was presented.

On Dec. 26 the Worcester ecclesia came to Boston to Break Bread with us, and after lunch our Sunday School program was conducted. Bro. Edgar Davey gave the word of exhortation in the morning, and bro. Wesley Prentice the talk to the Sunday School in the afternoon.

Both occasions were the source of much enjoyment.

It is our plan God willing, to interchange lecturing brethren during the Winter and Spring series. —bro. Kenneth MacKellar

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BUFFALO, N.Y.—100F Hall, Kenmore at Myron, Kenmore N.Y. 14217; Ph. (716) 877-9363—Mem. 10:15 am; S.S. 11:45 am; Class Wed. 8 pm. Bro Geo. Kling, 386 N. Ellicott Crk. Rd., Tonawanda, N.Y. 14151; Ph. (716) 693-6796.

GREETINGS in the bonds of Love and Truth!

With the drawing to a close of another year, we see the signs being fulfilled before us which Christ has given whereby we may know when the time is at hand for his return.

We witness today the distress of nations with perplexity—men's hearts failing them for fear of those things which are coming to pass on the earth.

Coupled with the fulfilling of these signs is the ever-present cry of 'Peace and Safety, but—

"There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

"For the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest; whose waters cast up mire and dirt" (Isa. 57:20-21).

There can be no peace on earth until the Prince of Peace doth come. In contrast to the world's fruitless efforts today to establish peace, we have God's sure word that (Psa. 33:10)—

"The Lord bringeth the counsel of the nations to nought.

"He maketh the devices of the people of none effect.

"The counsel of the Lord standeth forever.

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom He hath chosen for His inheritance."

In view of these divine declarations, let us so watch for the coming of the Lord in preparedness—

"Pressing toward the mark for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus."
—for this New Year may bring that notable event.

We have been greatly encouraged and strengthened in our pilgrimage by the visits of the following brethren and sisters with us around the table:

April 4: Sis. Mabel Sargent (Boston).

Apr. 25: Bro. & sis. Fred Higham Sr. and sis. Beth Higham. (Oakville); sis. Barbara MacIvor (Toronto).

May 16: Bro. R. Waid (Worcester).

Aug. 29: Bro. & sis. R. Philip (Toronto).

Oct. 24: Bro. Growcott, bro. & sis. Fred Higham Jr. (Detroit); sisters Mary Gwalchmai and Grace Carlidge (London); bro. R. Waid (Worcester).

Bro. Fred Higham Sr., Philip and Growcott gave us timely and stirring words of exhortation. We deeply appreciate our brethren's labor of love.

It is with much sorrow that in faithfulness and obedience to the commands of God and the rules based thereon in our Constitution, it has been necessary to withdraw fellowship from bro. Howard Trautwein Sr. for continued absence from the Lord's table.

On Oct. 24, the brethren and sisters of this ecclesia extended their heartiest best wishes to bro. Russell Waid and sis. Lucy Anderson in their new relationship, having been married in the Lord. We commend our sister to the Worcester ecclesia, our loss being their gain. Bro. & sis. Waid now reside in Worcester. May the blessings of the Lord rest upon them in their new bond of relationship.

—bro. Geo. A. Kling

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CANTON, Ohio 44704—1322 Fourth St. NE; Ph. (216) 456-2393—S.S. 10 am; Mem. 11 am. Bro. Kenneth Passwaters, 1922 Genoa SE, Massilon, Ohio 44646; Ph. (216) 477-1324.

DEERFIELD BEACH, Fla. 33441—Bro. & sis. Fred. Gulbe, 363 34th Terrace W.

DENVER, Colo. 80209—432 S. Emerson; Ph. (303) 777-9575—S.S. 10 am; Mem. 11 am; Class Tue. 7:30 pm. Bro. John Osborne (use above address); Ph. (303) 429-3023.

DETROIT, Mich. 48227—12954 St. Marys; Ph. (313) 273-7498—Mem. 10 am; S.S. 11:30 am. Bro. G. Growcott (same address).

EVANSVILLE, Indiana 47711—Sister Carolyn (Mrs. K.B.) Thompson, 3015 Blossom Lane.

HAWLEY, Pa.—IOOF Hall Main St. Route 6—S.S. 10:45 am; Mem. 11:45 am. Bro. David Sommerville, 224 Conklintown Rd., Wanaque, N.J. 07465; Ph. (201) 835-4751. Phones near hall: bro. K. Frisbie (717) 226-3507. sis. Grace Frisbie (717) 253-2534;

HOUSTON, Tex. 77012—8008 Junius—S.S. 10 am; Mem. 11 am; Lec. 3rd Sun. 7:30 pm; Class other Suns. 6 pm; Wed. Class 7 pm. Bro. Chas. Banta, 815 Boston, Deer Park, Tex. 77536; Ph. (713) 479-2568.

HYE, Texas

THE regular quarterly meeting was held on Nov. 7. During Sunday School there was an enlightening discussion on 1 Thessalonians 1.

Bro. Bill Edwards gave the exhortation, his subject being the lesson of the widow's mite.

Thirty-five brethren and sisters attended, with all the Texas ecclesias represented.

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LAMPASAS, Tex. 76550—Christadelphian Hall, Ave. I East—S.S. 10 am; Mem. 11 am. Bro. Wayne Wolfe, Star Route, Lampasas, Tex. 76550.

LENEXA, Kansas 66051—Bro. James Ross, 9122 Noland Road

MASON, Tex. 76856—Christadelphian Hall, Hwy. 386—Mem. 11 a.m.; Class 2 pm. Bro. W. Edwards, Ranch Rte., Harper, Tex. 78631; Ph. (512) 864-3064.

MIAMI, Fla. 33155—3428 SW 64th Ave.; Ph. (305) 667-7828—Mem. 10:30 am; S.S. 11:30 am; Class Wed. 7:30 pm. Bro. Thomas S. Lumley (same address).

NEW PORT RICHEY, Fla.—Bro. & sis. Chris Bird, 710 Pennsylvania Ave.

PORTLAND, Ore 97212—3344 NE 24th Ave.—Mem. 11 am; Lec. 7 pm; Bible Class Wed. 8 pm. Bro. Arthur R. Tilling, 2212 NE Prescott, Portland 97211; Phone (503) 287-3064.

SAN ANGELO, Tex.—English Room, Cactus Hotel—(2nd & 4th Sundays): S.S. 10 a.m.; Mem. 11 (Other Suns, home of bro. M. Edwards). Phones near hall; bro. Bill Muter (915) 653-7434; sis. LaRue (Mrs. Donald) Smith (915) 655-7665. Bro. Melvin Edwards, R 1, Paint Rock, Tex. 76866.

IT was a joyful occasion to have bro. & sis. Wayne Wolfe Sr., bro. Wayne Wolfe Jr., and bro. Bob Wolfe (Lampasas); bro. & sis. Charles Banta Sr. and bro. & sis. Charles Banta Jr. (Houston) with us around the table of the Lord on Oct. 24. There were 22 present, including 15 brethren and sisters. We were spiritually uplifted by the exhortation given by bro. Banta Sr.

All were invited to sister La Rue Smith's for lunch, so we enjoyed very much being together. We hope all can be with us again before long, and others also.

We know it is very essential for us not to neglect our daily Bible readings, and we should talk often one to another on those glorious words of Truth, to build each other up in the most holy Faith.

We also know that the Jews are gathering back to their Homeland, which it is revealed in the Holy Scriptures was to happen before Christ's return. If he should come tomorrow, are we ready to meet him—with joy if yet with fear?

We should seek the company of those who joy in the Lord, and not let worldly friends prevent us from obtaining eternal life at the judgment. Our time is short. May we do all things giving praise and honor to our Father in heaven, Who watches over us if we obey Him. —bro. Melvin Edwards

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SO. CALIF.—S.S. 10:30 am; Mem 11:30 am; Lec. first Sun. 3 pm; Thurs. Class 8 pm in homes. Bro. Wm. Sharp, 140 Princeton, Claremont, Calif. 91712; Ph. (714) 626-0490.

WARREN, Ohio 44483—Bro. Thomas Tulloch, 1043 N. Park Ave.

WORCESTER, Mass. 01607—IOGT Hall, 1 Ekman; Ph. (617) 753-4492—S.S. 10 am; Mem. 11; Lec. 2nd & 4th Suns. 2:30 pm; Class Tues. twice month 8 pm. Bro. W. Davey, Strawberry Hill, Dover, Mass. 02030; Ph (617) 785-0881

A BROTHER DESIRES TO HELP THE BLIND

DO you know of any brother or sister who reads Braille and who might be interested in the comforts that Braille could convey; or of any person enquiring into the Truth who might be helped to "see" the true Gospel through the help of Braille?

A brother with extensive experience in working with the blind on Bible matters has volunteered his services if there is a need. Please contact bro. Growcott, 12954 St. Marys, Detroit, Mich. 48227.

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