

The Berean Christadelphian

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

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

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

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

WANAQUE, N.J.—Memorial 10:45 am—Home of bro. David Sommerville, 224 Conklintown Rd., Wanaque, N.J. 07465; Phone (201) 835-4751. Occasionally at home of sis. Ella Smith, Blooming Grove, Pa.

GREETINGS to all of like precious Faith.

On Oct. 7 our ecclesia held a special effort at which time bro. David Clubb lectured on: "Christ Is Coming Again: the Only Hope for a Troubled World." The following brethren and sisters made it a miniature Gathering: bro. & sis. Russell Frisbie (Baltimore); bro. Harry Phillips and sis. Wm. Phillips (Canton); bro. & sis. David Clubb (London); bro. & sis. Warren Rankin, bro. & sis. Edgar Sargent, sis. Helen Buchanan, sis. Norma Rankin, sis. Violet Rankin (Worcester).

Previous visitors in fellowship were: bro. & sis. Nick Mammone (Austin); bro. Gordon Jones and sis. Phyllis Jones (Richard).

Bre. G. Jones, N. Mammone and E. Sargent gave us stirring words of exhortation from which we derived spiritual benefit.

We regret that sis. Ella Smith is ill at present requiring hospitalization.

Much matter for spiritual consideration is provided in current world events, especially in the Middle East. May the signs in the political heavens and earth strengthen us to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.

—bro. David Sommerville

Bible Questions

WHO WAS...

Write the number of each item in List 1 beside the correct person in List 2.

LIST ONE—QUESTIONS

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Tanner? | 18. King of Zidonians? | 35. King of Damascus (NT)? |
| 2. Ethiopian? | 19. Abraham's servant? | 36. Captain host of Syria? |
| 3. Cupbearer? | 20. Governor of Syria? | 37. High Priest's servant? |
| 4. Areopagite? | 21. Tetrarch of Iturea? | 38. Governor Ahab's house? |
| 5. Silversmith? | 22. Ruler of synagogue? | 39. Governor beyond River? |
| 6. Coppersmith? | 23. Tetrarch of Galilee? | 40. Chamberlain of Corinth? |
| 7. King of Moab? | 24. Chief man of Melita? | 41. Ahasuerus' chamberlain? |
| 8. Priest of On? | 25. Tetrarch of Abilene? | 42. Governor of Judea (NT) ? |
| 9. King of Gath? | 26. Queen of Ethiopians? | 43. Captain Solomon's host? |
| 10. Mighty hunter? | 27. Captain Saul's host? | 44. Captain Absalom's host? |
| 11. Priest of Baal? | 28. Herod's chamberlain? | 45. Chief of Saul's herdmen? |
| 12. Jehu's captain? | 29. Captain Jabin's host? | 46. Centurion Augustus band? |
| 13. Prince of Rosh? | 30. Chancellor (in Ezra)? | 47. Centurion Italian band? |
| 14. Deputy of Achaia? | 31. Hezekiah's treasurer? | 48. Captain of guard (Egypt)? |
| 15. Deputy of Cyprus? | 32. Captain David's host? | 49. Captain of guard (Babylon)? |
| 16. Master of Israel? | 33. Honourable counsellor? | 50. Captain of host (Philistine)? |
| 17. Prince of Midian? | 34. Chief captain(Roman)? | |

LIST TWO—ANSWERS

- | | | | | | | |
|-------|--------|--------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------------|
| Gog | Abner | Tatnai | Bidkar | Ethbaal | Malchus | Demetrius |
| Oreb | Amasa | Pilate | Shebna | Eliezer | Lysanias | Alexander |
| Hege | Rehum | Achish | Joseph | Blastus | Nehemiah | Nicodemus |
| Doeg | Simon | Aretas | Nimrod | Erastus | Cyrenius | Potipherah |
| Joab | Gallio | Sisera | Naaman | Obadiah | Potiphar | Ebedmelech |
| Herod | Julius | Jairus | Publius | Benaiah | Cornelius | Nebuzaradan |
| Eglon | Philip | Mattan | Phichol | Candace | Dionysius | Sergius Paulus |
| | | | | | | Claudius Lysias |

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Wisdom

"The fear of Yahweh is the BEGINNING of wisdom; & the knowledge of the Holy is understanding"—Prov. 9:10

Wisdom, truly, is a Bible subject. Throughout the Scriptures of Truth it is mentioned 224 times, and in the book of Proverbs alone, it comes to our attention 52 times. One of the striking features of the Proverbs is the frequent use of the word wisdom. This book is usually regarded as a collection of moral axioms assembled by Solomon; but a careful study of it reveals it to be of a much higher character.

Because the word wisdom appears therein so often, it is only reasonable that we should ask, *What is wisdom?* Webster defines it as "a quality of being wise: ability to judge soundly, and deal sagaciously with facts, especially as they relate to life and conduct." Bro. Roberts, however, defines it in a very interesting way when he says: "Wisdom, then, in its most elementary conception, is the power and disposition to adapt means to the accomplishment of good ends."

Looking at wisdom from the creative viewpoint, behold the human frame and consider how we see; how we hear; and how we speak. Think of how we eat, and the digestive system that extracts life-giving power from our food. Think of the nerve system, and the blood stream as it flows through the body. Consider, too, wisdom in general as exhibited in the creation, and expressed in our 44th hymn—

"The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens—a shining frame—
Their great Original proclaim.
The unwearied sun, from day to day,
Doth his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty Hand.

Thus the majesty of the heavens enthral us as we join with the Psalmist and say—

"When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that Thou visitest him?"

Wherever we look we see the manifold works of wisdom. As we behold them, we are compelled to stand in awe with admiration of the wisdom that lies behind it all. But all of this great wisdom in creation is wisdom mechanically applied. Solomon is well aware of this, and his treatment of it is captivating. But, in the Proverbs, he deals principally with another form of wisdom—the wisdom as it relates to individuals.

Man, being gifted with intelligence and the faculty of reason, has the power of choice. In the Bible lies the foundation for his selection. It teaches us that there are two forms of wisdom—the wisdom of God, and the wisdom of man. There is such a vast difference between these two forms that Paul says,

"The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

Paul says further,

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved (or, being saved) it is the power of God . . .

"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe . . .

"Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men"

—1 Cor. 1:18, 21, 25.

Solomon presents a similar case in Eccles. 2:13, when he says,

"I saw that wisdom excelleth folly as far as light excelleth darkness."

This is the wisdom Solomon deals with in the Proverbs—*divine* wisdom made known unto the sons of men by Moses, the prophets, the Lord Jesus and his apostles.

People do not come into possession of either form of wisdom naturally—both have to be sought after. As we said before, man has the power of choice. If he set his heart on temporal things—on the things of this life, and determines to make a name for himself in the world; or if his ambition is to become possessed of much of this world's goods and riches; or if his aim be to set his heart on pleasure, then he will choose the wisdom of this world.

But if he sees the folly of all this, and realizes that even though he gain the world he must still lose his life, then he will choose the wisdom of God, and he will search for it as for hid treasure. This is where he exercises the wisdom of individual practice.

The wisdom of God is from eternity, and inseparable from the Great Creator. Listen to His declaration—

"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was . . .

"When He prepared the heavens, I was there: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth, when He gave to the sea His decree that the waters should not pass His commandment, when He appointed the foundations of the earth—then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him . . .

"Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.

"For whoso findeth me findeth LIFE, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death"—Prov. 8:22-36.

What beauty of expression, and what plainness of speech!

We have this word of wisdom in our possession. We must not, however, treat it as a miser treats his treasures—sealed up in a bag, and be content with a mere knowledge of the first principles of the oracles of God. There must be *progression*—not a broadening out, but a holding fast to the narrow path that leads unto life. There must be a crying after knowledge, an inclining of the ear unto wisdom, and an application of the heart to understanding. There must also be a seeking, and a searching as for hid treasure. Then, says, wisdom, we shall understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. Again we read—

"Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding"

—Prov. 4:5-7.

Does that not signify that it is possible to memorize wisdom in its various aspects without understanding what it means? Yes, it is possible to memorize the first principles of the Truth without discernment, or comprehension.

Therefore, says wisdom, with all thy getting get *understanding*. That is, exercise the power we possess to understand God's plan of salvation, and comprehend its meaning. What we accomplish in understanding the wisdom of God, depends upon the amount of energy we expend in searching for it. As Paul says,

"He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."

No, wisdom is not acquired with a slack hand. If we obtain sufficient knowledge to be baptized, and then sit back and take it easy, and go after the pleasures of this life, how are we to attain to the knowledge of God that results in the love and reverence for His name? *It cannot be done*. "Therefore," says Paul,

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

"For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"—Heb. 2:1-3.

Some day our journey will be ended, and our trial finished, and then there will be a verdict. The decision and judgment will either produce great joy or sorrow. If we desire joy then let us listen to the voice of wisdom as she cries in the places of the paths, and at the coming in at the doors. And let us listen to her voice as she speaks and says—

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding"

LOVE IN THE SCRIPTURAL SENSE

"Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you."

That love requires a distinct effort. It cannot develop itself in a selfish bosom. It is an impulse created from within ourselves; not by the natural lovableness of the object. Its cultivation help to assimilate us to the supreme source of love, and tends to amalgamate and improve inferior elements.

In an ecclesia, while there are those who by the power of truth are made lovely, there are those who, by reason of weakness, are destitute of power to attract. To these, this love make advances in kindly words and deeds.

We have loved God because He first loved us. The same principle acts between man and man, but at the same time we must expect failures. In some bosoms manifested love will have no power to enkindle a reciprocal flame, because the Truth does not dwell deeply.

A great many pass current among us who will be rejected. We must remember that few will be chosen; only those will be accepted who are the jewels; the precious stones of the Sanctuary transparent to the rays of the Truth, and yielding a beautiful refraction of them in the lovely tints of individual excellence. —**Bro. Roberts.**

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Approaching Judgments

BY BROTHER JOHN THOMAS

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God"—2 Thess. 1:7-8

"To him that keepeth my works will I give power over the nations: he shall rule them with a rod of iron . . . they shall be broken to shivers"—Revelation 2:26-27

PART THREE

IN turning to the New Testament, we must bear in mind that its grand subject is not judgment, but grace (John 1:17)—

"The Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1:17).

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them"

(2 Cor. 5:19).

Nor is it the testimony of mere prophets to which we listen now—

"God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by a Son" (Heb. 1:1-2).

But while the grace of the message, and the divine dignity of the Messenger, thus wondrously comport with each other, what shall be said of the guilt of those who reject the message and despise the Messenger? And this is the guilt under which the world lies.

A few in each successive generation have had their hearts opened by the Truth, to receive the one and welcome the other. But as to the mass of mankind, yea, even in those countries where Christ is nominally owned, they join with one consent to slight, to neglect, to despise God's embassy of peace. Nay, worse than this: in nominally Christian countries, the name and the ostensible authority of Christ are used to consecrate the sins from which he came to deliver us—to bind more firmly on men's souls the chains and shackles from which he came to release us.

Christianity, instead of converting the world, as is the boast of our day, has itself been corrupted, and is the means—in this corrupted state—of plunging men (with fairer appearances) into deeper moral abasement than that in which it found them. **IT IS FOR THIS THAT JUDGMENT IS AT THE DOOR.**

God has long patience, and we know that His longsuffering is salvation (2 Peter 3: 15). He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3: 9). But ere long he who once came in humiliation will come in glory. He who once came to suffer and to save, will come to judge.

First must the co-heirs of his glory be quickened to know and to confess him. And when these have been all brought in by his favour, the One who has been owned by them in his rejection will come to receive them to himself. This is the first stage in his return to the earth. But wickedness on the earth will come to its full head, and he will descend, followed by his glorified saints, to execute the judgments of which we have been hearing in the Old Testament, and of which we have abundant warning in the numerous and explicit predictions in the New Testament as well.

I do not now refer to them as proofs of Christ's speedy coming. I now adduce them as following on in the train of those already cited from the Old Testament, and as premonitory of those approaching judgments which will shortly burst upon an astonished and affrighted world.

What can be more solemn than the testimony of our Lord himself? Does he not apply to himself the Psalmist's words as to the rejected Stone becoming the head of the corner? And while he intimates that any—during this whole period—who fall on this Stone, or stumble over it, shall be broken, does he not also warn us that the Stone itself is yet to fall? And that on whomsoever it does fall, it will grind him to powder? (Matt. 21:42-44). And elsewhere, he says the sign of the Son of man in heaven shall appear..

".. and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:30).

Does not our Lord in another gospel say (Luke 17:26-30)—

"As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the Flood came and destroyed them all.

"Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded.

"But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

"EVEN THUS SHALL IT BE IN THE DAY WHEN THE SON OF MAN IS REVEALED."

This was realized in the time preceding the overthrow of Judah's Commonwealth, and will doubtless be characteristic of that other day of the Son of Man when he shall come in power. Does he not set forth to us the whole subject of his rejection, and absence, and return, in the parable of the nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, AND TO RETURN?—

"His citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:12-14).

His servants were left to occupy in his absence. Among these, when he returns, he distributes the tokens of his approval or displeasure. But what becomes of the citizens who hated him, and would not submit to his reign?—

"But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and SLAY THEM BEFORE ME" (v. 27).

Such are the words of Jesus himself. And still further, he speaks of "days of vengeance" on the Jews, that "all things that are written may be fulfilled" (Luke 21:22). But are approaching judgments confined to the Jews? Nay: far from it!—

"There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars: and upon the earth DISTRESS OF NATIONS, with perplexity: the sea and the waves roaring.

"Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming ON THE EARTH: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:25-27).

True, the word to the DISCIPLES is (v. 28)—

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."

That which fills the world with forebodings, inspires with stronger hopes those who have hearkened to the Lord's voice. But even to these he says—

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

"FOR AS A SNARE SHALL IT COME UPON ALL THEM THAT DWELL ON THE FACE OF THE WHOLE EARTH" (vs. 34-35).

How awful are these words! Are any of those quoted from the Old Testament more pregnant with solemn warning and admonition?

But how is this? How can men's hearts be failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth—and yet this terrible day come as a snare upon all them that dwell on the earth?

Ah, there is no contradiction here. The premonitory calamities will awaken men's fears, and cause their hearts to fail, just as many hearts did fail in the convulsions of a few years ago (1848). But we have evidence all around us of how soon men's fears may be allayed: how a temporary lull soothes all to deeper slumber—slumber not disturbed but made still more fatally sweet by dreams of safety and prosperity and peace and plenty, and all that the heart of man desires to form a paradise in this evil state.

It will be at such a time that, as a snare, the Day of the Lord will all at once enclose them in the grasp of those terrific judgments from which there is no escape. As Paul witnesses—

"For yourselves know perfectly that the Day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

"For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child: and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 5:2-3).

Want of space compels the passing over of all intermediate testimonies, that we may listen for a moment to the beloved disciple, the prophet of Patmos, and to those wondrous revelations he was privileged to receive and to communicate. What have we as one of the earliest anticipations in his prophecy? Rev. 1:7—

"Behold, he cometh with clouds: and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him. AND ALL KINDREDS OF EARTH SHALL WAIL BECAUSE OF HIM."

Visions of judgment, one after another, are beheld by the apostle. Seals are opened, trumpets are sounded, vials of wrath are poured out. War, famine, pestilence, persecution of the saints; earthquakes, judgments upon natural objects, judgments upon commerce, and judgments upon all the sources of moral influence by which men are affected; a withholding of the light which had been previously vouchsafed; the letting loose of one horde after another of infernal enemies and tormentors till men shall seek death and not find it—shall desire to die while death flees from them.

These are some of the woes pronounced in this book upon the world of the ungodly. The final crisis of human iniquity is portrayed, and the principles marked out of which this crisis will be the full development. Then we are told of worse judgments still. The vials of God's wrath are to be poured out: poured upon the earth, and the sea, and the rivers and fountains of waters; on the sun; on the seat of the Beast; on the Great River: then, last of all, on the Air—

"And the 7th Angel poured out his Vial into the Air: and there came a great voice out of the Temple of heaven, saying, IT IS DONE!"

"And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings: and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great" (16:17-18).

Then we are told of a plague of hail, every stone about the weight of talent (v. 21). We have further details of instruction as to the ecclesiastical apostasy, and the war against Deity by the imperial power of the earth. We have the doom of Babylon, with all its luxuries, delicacies, and refinements—and heaven rejoicing at her fall. A mighty angel, taking up a stone like a millstone, and casting it into the sea, says—

"Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and be found no more at all . . . for by thy sorceries were ALL NATIONS deceived" (18:21-23).

But previously to the fall of mystic Babylon, the heaven opens: a white horse comes forth, and he that sat upon him, called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he JUDGES AND MAKES WAR. He is clothed in a vesture dipped in blood. He has on his vesture and on his thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

The armies which were in the heaven follow him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white & clean. Out of the mouth of this glorious One goes a sharp sword with which to SMITE THE NATIONS. He is to rule them with a rod of iron. He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

The Beast, and the kings of the earth and their armies, gather together to make war against him that sits on the horse, and against his army. The Beast and the False Prophet are taken, and cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone, and their followers are slain with the sword of him that sits upon the horse (19:11-21).

Such is the end of the course of this Aion, or "times of the Gentiles"! Its commerce and its pleasures, its politics and its religion, its philanthropy and its misanthropy, its hypocrisy and its blasphemy, its morality and its open wickedness—all find their termination here.

Reader, whoever thou art, if thou hast not been separated from this present evil world, by God's revelation to thy heart of His Son Jesus Christ, this is the end to which thou art hastening. Thou art unconscious of it, it is true, but this makes thy situation not one whit the safer.

Thou art like a man in a boat drifting down a rapid stream, with his back to the danger, and entertaining himself, as he looks up the river, with all the gay, pleasant objects which are flitting past him. But as each moment bears him onward to the falls where he must ere long be dashed to pieces, so my reader, thou art—with the poor world—gliding down to destruction. There is no hope of stopping the vessel: it must perish. God can snatch thee out of it, and rescue thee from the overthrow: and this is the only hope one can have concerning thee. God grant that these pages may be used to this end.

And we, brethren—what shall WE say to these things? The detailed proof that the judgments we have been hearing of precede and introduce millennial blessing, and that it is the personal return of Christ which brings these judgments—is purposely reserved for another occasion. But can we think of such a doom awaiting the world in which we sojourn, and not sorrow for its guilty, condemned inhabitants? Did Jesus weep over ONE city, and say —

"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes."

—and shall not our hearts yearn for a whole world that lieth in wickedness, and daily ripens for destruction?

And shall we be content, my brethren, with sorrowing? The hour of judgment, near as it may be, has not yet come. The door of mercy still stands open: yea, as yet it opens into the scene of those heavenly delights and bridal glories which Christ and his brethren shall share, ere he comes forth from the wedding to execute vengeance on his foes. And shall we not use the opportunity to sound forth the Gospel of God's grace? If it be true that judgment is at the door, instead of the gradual, peaceful introduction of millennial blessedness that some expect, shall we on that account be less urgent in our entreaties, less zealous in our labours, less instant and earnest in our prayers?

God forbid! Knowing the judgments which await the world around us, knowing that grace has rescued us from those judgments, and that when they are executed we ourselves shall (if worthy) be with him who executes them, is it possible that we can selfishly enjoy the thought of our own security, and leave the poor world unwarned, the grace of Christ and the Father's love unproclaimed, or poor sinners uninvited—unurged—UNENTREATED—to flee to the shelter of His open arms? O for more earnest love to Christ, and deeper compassion for our fellows!

Brethren, the time is short. The moments glide rapidly away. Soon will the only opportunity be gone that we shall ever have of confessing our Master, and seeking his glory, in the midst of a world which either rejects him openly, or the more decidedly rejects him in reality though owning him in appearance and in word.

May communion with him cause the fountains of compassion for those around us to gush forth! May men be gathered to his arms of mercy! May his people be stirred up to pray, and watch, and labour! May we humble ourselves, and stir up and exhort one another, and so much the more as we see the day approaching!

GENESIS 1 A FACT, NOT A "VISION"

There can be no doubt that the whole creation work described in Gen. 1 was a work that was done 6000 years ago. It is an absolutely correct record (apart from all scientific views of the case) that in six days, 6000 years ago, this sublunary creation was "bara"-ed, or put in order by angels, acting as the instrumental agents of the Eternal Spirit.

—Bro. Roberts, 1897.

Answers by Bro. Roberts

THE PRESENT PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

"We have a Great High Priest"—Hebrews 4:14

THE priesthood of Christ is one of the plainest teachings of the New Testament. In proof, we have but to refer to the following—

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Heb. 3:1).

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

"For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15-16).

"Called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 5:10)

"Whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus; made an High Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 6:20).

"But this man, because he continueth for ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them . . .

"For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, who needeth not daily, as those high priests to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's..

"For this he did once, when he offered up himself" (Heb. 7:24-27).

"But Christ being come, an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect Tabernacle, not made with hands: that is to say, not of this building" (Heb. 9:11).

"And, having an High Priest over the House of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water"

(Heb. 10:21-22).

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

In view of the above, there can remain no question as to the FACT of Christ in his present exalted position exercising the priestly office in behalf of those who become constituents of his House by the belief and obedience of the Truth.

But the question which has suggested itself to some minds is, What does this mean? Priesthood, argue they, implies a Deity to be propitiated: and that since God is gracious He requires no propitiation; and that therefore the priesthood of Jesus must be of another order.

The idea of Jesus pleading with the Father, they seem to think inconsistent with the fact that it is the Father Himself Who has made the first advances of love, and that Jesus is but the medium through which He seeks to reconcile the world to Himself (2 Cor. 5:19).

They argue that Jesus and the Father being "one," it is not possible that there could exist even that mild degree of antagonism involved in a request by the one that the other should act differently from his disposition. They are therefore disposed to suggest that the advocacy of Christ bears towards his people rather than towards the Father—that he is an Advocate FROM the Father TO us, rather than an Advocate with the Father for us.

There is a certain amount of truth in these suggestions, but they are defective in omitting other elements of truth that require to be taken into account before a truthful result can be arrived at. The bearing and nature and objects of Christ's priesthood can only be apprehended in the light of first principles, taken together without the leaving out of any.

While it is a first principle that God is kind, it is also a first principle that—in certain relations—He is a "consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). Anger describes an attribute of His character, as well as love—

"He is angry with the wicked" (Psa. 7:11).

"He cannot look on iniquity" (Hab. 1:13).

"He is of purer eyes than to behold evil" (Hab. 1:13).

"He will by no means clear the guilty" (Num. 14:18).

This hostile disposition toward rebellion of every kind (a hostility—be it at the same time observed—which has its foundation in benevolence, for its objects and operation are the extirpation of the root of misery) finds shape and expression in the fact that the wages of sin is death; and is palpably illustrated in the Flood and the destruction of Sodom.

God will not tolerate sin: death and sin are eternally linked: and with sinners He will hold no intercourse—

"He heareth not sinners" (John 9:31).

This is the immutable law of the divine government; and this fact we shall find at the basis of the institution of priesthood.

Priesthood was an early institution in the relations of God to man. It existed before the Mosaic constitution of things, as evidenced by the case of Melchizedek in the days of Abraham, and probably was of antediluvian origin. Its existence embodies a principle which is practically illustrated more than once in the course of Bible history: namely, that God will not hear or deal directly with offenders, but will be entreated concerning them by those whom He regards with pleasure.

The plagues of Egypt were restrained at the request of Moses. Rebellious Israel were on the point of being devoured like Korah, Dathan and Abiram, when the intercession of Moses averted the outburst of divine vengeance.

Job acted as intercessor for his offending friends. They were thus addressed by the voice of God (Job 42:8)—

"Take unto you now 7 bullock and 7 rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering, and My servant Job shall pray for you;

"For HIM WILL I ACCEPT, lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, like My servant Job."

Jeremiah was told not to intercede for Israel (7:16)—

"Therefore, pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me, for I will not hear thee."

This implies that had Israel's offences been less grievous, Jeremiah's imploration WOULD have been of some avail. But the nation's wickedness had reached such a pitch that God said to him:

"Though Moses and Samuel stood before Me, yet My mind could not be toward this people" (15.1)

Now, with regard to Christ, we have the same principle, but in relation to a different matter. The intercessions of the Old Testament record had reference to the limited penalties of the time then present. They were instrumental in securing immunity from the temporary evils of mortal life. They had no effect as regards the dispensation of eternal results. It was not in the power of any arrangement in force before the appearance of Christ, to secure everlasting life.

The High Priesthood of the Law, under which the successor of Aaron once a year entered the Holiest to supplicate the blessing of Jehovah upon an offending generation, was only a type of the true mediation. As regards eternal life, the High Priest was no more in a position to be heard than any of the people. He was equally under condemnation with them, and carried the token of this fact in the blood of the slain lamb which he offered

"First for his own sins, and then for the people" (Heb. 7:27)

But though ineligible as an intercessor for life everlasting, the Levitical High Priest typified the Great Priest through whom mortal man might obtain a standing and a hearing in the presence of God, with reference to the forfeited gift of life for evermore.

The whole arrangement of which the High Priesthood was a part was of this typical character. Paul says that the "first tabernacle" was "a figure for the time then present" (Heb. 9:9). It allegorically prefigured the literal method by which human salvation was to be worked out.

This literal method is presented in Christ. He was a spotless Son of God, wearing the condemned nature of Adam. He suffered death, and thus met the demands of the righteous law that constituted man a mortal in the Garden of Eden. He was personally sinless, and thus presented in himself an open door through which, by resurrection, sin-destroyed life could return in triumph from the grave. It was in harmony with the law of God's operations to raise to life everlasting a righteous man. It would not have been so to resuscitate and immortalize a sinner.

Christ was the lamb in his meekness; the spotless lamb in his innocence; the slain lamb in his death. But he had to develop the literal counterpart to the living High Priest. This he did in rising from the dead and entering the divine presence to supplicate—in their individual details—those results which his own position as an accepted, immortalized, and well-beloved member of the human family, enabled him to acceptably intercede for.

God looks only on Christ. No human being can be heard on his own merits. No man can come to the Father but by the Mediator (John 14:6) The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son (John 5:22).

Whom the Son prays for will be given to him, and he has power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to as many as the Father gives him.

God's relations to the condemned children of Adam's race are readjusted in the last Adam, in whom the law has been upheld, magnified, and made honourable. All of Adam's race who cast off the Old Adam in the waters of baptism concurrently with a repudiation of the Old Adam principles and practices; and constitutionally put on the New Man—Christ Jesus—become morally incorporated with the new mediatorial man in the presence of God, and will be physically assimilated to him and by him at the resurrection.

But are there no transgressions after the initiatory union in baptism? Does the weakness of the flesh not continue still in operation, leading to remissnesses, failures of duty, and positive offences?—

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

Now, what is it that prevents these post-immersional sins from being as fatal as Adam's disobedience in the Garden? By what arrangement are Christ's people saved from the death-power of their own offences? The answer is in the words of John—

"If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

Again (1 John 1:9)—

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

See also the passages quoted at the commencement of this article. God heareth not sinners, but He hears Christ, and through him will forgive unto life eternal. We are, therefore, says Paul, having such an High Priest (one who sympathizes with our infirmities from having tasted them), to—

"Come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need"

(Heb. 4:16).

"He ever liveth to MAKE INTERCESSION for us" (Heb. 7:25).

And he intercedes for those who come to avail themselves of his intercession, but none else. It was only for those transgressors who brought the typical sacrifice to the priest at the door of the Tabernacle that the priest interceded. So it is only for those who make confession in prayer, and supplicate the divine forgiveness in the Name of Jesus, that Christ's mediatorial function will be exerted.

Israel did not worship the High Priest: they sought the Increate God of their fathers through the High Priest; worshipping without while he interceded within. So the people of Christ worship not Christ, but, in the Name of Jesus, worship God. And Jesus, in the presence of God maketh intercession. And God hears him, and through him—by the means of His personal will—vouchsafes the blessings sought. There is nothing in all this to clash with the fact that God is gracious to our worthless race. His love is shown in establishing an arrangement by which we have access to His favour and life for evermore. His love could not be allowed to violate any other attribute of His being. It must work in harmony with all His rules and methods of operation.

And this is what it does in the work of Christ. God was "in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19), but the METHOD OF RECONCILIATION was by sacrifice and mediation. God advances to us through Christ, but yet His advance takes the form of appointing a Mediator—

"To make intercession according to His will" (Rom. 8:27).

It need not be urged that present forgiveness of sins interferes with the operation of the judgment seat. If we were now made immortal in answer to our prayers for forgiveness, such a reflection might arise, but all that is done is the obliteration of the offences from the divine mind. If they were not so obliterated, they would be disclosed against us at the judgment seat to our condemnation. Unpardoned sins will be fatal, and the pardon is to be sought NOW in daily prayer without ceasing.

Yet—practically—the judgment seat will witness and administer the results of prayer. We know not till then if our prayers are heard. God knows now. He "knoweth them that are His," but it is not permitted us to know the secrets of His counsels toward ourselves until the Day which He hath appointed for the disclosure of them by the mouth of Jesus Christ, whom He has constituted Judge of the quick and the dead.

It would be a fatal mistake to overlook the priesthood of Christ, as now accessible to his Household by prayer. The Truth would be of no use to us if we did. The intercession of Christ is necessary to our salvation; and we can only set it in motion in our individual behalf by individual prayer. To live in disregard of this would be soon to decay from

our places in the True Vine, and, finally, at his coming, to drop as withered branches to the ground, to be bundled up for consumption, with all other fruitless branches, for any cause cut off.—1869.

Let Every One Please His Neighbour

FINAL (Sunday morning) ADDRESS, HYE, TEXAS GATHERING, 1973

"And it came to pass that the cloud was taken up from off the Tabernacle of the Testimony, and the children of Israel took their journeys"—Numbers 10:11-12

ROMANS, CHAPTERS 14-15-16

THERE came a time, in the lives of the. Children of Israel, when the Cloud went up from the Tabernacle, and they again took up their wilderness journey. We have just sung together Hymn 41—

*"Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
We are surrounded still with God . .
Oh, may these thoughts possess each breast,
Where'er we rove, where'er we rest
And, since Thou dost Thy Children see,
May we be holy like to Thee."*

In our day by day assembly under this Tabernacle, we should not fail to see in our surroundings—the green pastures, the quiet river below us, the pasturing sheep which we must pass on our way here, those sheep, young and old, browsing upon the natural verdure of this river valley—we should not fail to see in these things our own situation for the past seven days. We should be impressed with the exalted position we have enjoyed here—that of all the earth's millions, we a few, together with other brethren and sisters throughout the world, have been called to know the wonderful workings of an All-wise Creator.

We have just concluded our reading of the Epistle to the Romans once more, according to the Bible Companion. These last chapters, read this morning, impress us with this family closeness: the oneness of the Body of Christ, the interrelationship of all our activities, our need for care and concern for each other, even as we have observed in these pasturing sheep down the river banks. Yesterday we read—

"Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13:14).

"Putting on" may be likened to donning a garment, endowing, covering with. We put on the Lamb of God. We put on his raiment. We must put on the Divine character which so clearly clothed Christ Jesus in all his actions and thoughts. This "putting on" is the clothing or adorning of the heart—

"Whose adorning, let it be.. the hidden man of the heart . . a meek and quiet spirit" (1 Pet. 3:3-4).

Unless this is accomplished, we are of that category of which Paul speaks to the Ephesian elders, on his last visit to them at Miletus. Among them, he said, would be found wolves in sheep's clothing. This must not be the manner of our adornment. It must be of the heart, as of the Lamb without spot and without blemish. We must therefore, having endowed ourselves with this characteristic, manifest the same loving care that Christ exhibited all through his life. As we read and reread his life, we find that his was not a selective care—just one here and there. He concerned himself with the whole flock, strong and weak alike.

As Paul later—after his trials and tribulations—manifested to the Corinthians, the "care of all the ecclesias" fell upon him. Our care likewise should be for all the brethren and sisters, wherever they be. The attitude of Cain—

"Am I my brother's keeper?"

—must be far removed from every heart. We, verily, brethren and sisters, ARE our brother's keeper—

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren,, ye have done it unto me."

So spake the Master, just before he laid down his life for his brethren. And if we have done it unto Christ, we have done it unto God. Again we read together yesterday—

"Him that is weak in the Faith, receive ye" (Rom. 14:1).

This verse includes all of us. We were weak, and without strength. That was our natural condition. If, while we were in that condition, God had not made the first move, we would now be strengthless in relation to eternal salvation—every one of us. God made the first move of love and reconciliation—

"We love, because God first loved us."

As we have read again this week in Rom. 5:6-8—

"When we were yet without strength (that is, weak, helpless), in due time Christ died for us. .

"God commended (introduced, exhibited, caused to stand near us) His love—His great love—in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Remember, this was the first move. We are all beneficiaries of that move, if we follow in the steps of His Son.

One more look at these pasturing sheep down by the river. We have noticed, as we passed, that some are robust and healthy, while others are lean and sickly. Similarly, we will notice a wide range of perception among those who are called to be the children of God. Their backgrounds, circumstances, capabilities and opportunities will all vary. Shall we question God's selection?

We know the lesson of the talents—brought to our attention this week in our studies together. Those talents which were bestowed were for the Master's advantage, while he is absent. This should teach us that the same divine measuring of attainment, during our sojourn, according to what we each have been given, will be a fair and just measurement. All have been created, formed, and moulded by God, as the Master Potter.

True, one talent should bring forth in kind, in full measure—but we cannot expect 10 for one. God alone has the right to determine the increase required. He alone knows each heart, and what is possible in each case. These are objective thoughts in relation to the flock of God, and of our own personal view toward the flock.

Personally, in relation to ourselves—and this is an introspective view—we each one must press with all our powers toward the mark of the prize of our high calling; must agonize toward that goal. We have been shown this week what agonizing really means, in the supreme sacrifice of Christ—

"Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.. Nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done."

"Being in an agony (in the Garden), he prayed more earnestly: And his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood."

Brethren and sisters, this was for us. Are we able, then, to enter into the same degree of concern for each other? Or are we indifferent and thoughtless toward our fellow-companions? If we truly enter into these things, we shall agonize for, or because of, each of our brethren and sisters.

Paul speaks in Rom. 8 about the whole creation being subject to vanity, and for a purpose: to develop us. But here we were shown that we all need help—

"The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26).

We do not know how to pray. We do not know what to pray for. But we are asked to pray, seeking Divine direction of our thoughts—

"He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (v. 27).

Christ knows. He went through this vale of tears. He knows how to intercede, for it is through Christ that we approach unto God in prayer. Paul's own disposition is illustrated in what he writes to the Colossians—

"For I would that ye knew what great conflict (agona—struggle, agony) I have for you" (2:1).

Can we truthfully say that we agonize for the welfare of our brethren and sisters—the brethren and sisters of Christ? That this is our chief concern in life? When we look at the lives of Christ's disciples, we see a varying cross-section of understanding among them. We will find the same situation throughout the Brotherhood today—differing degrees of perception.

In our growth in the Truth, we have all passed through (or should have passed through) various phases and degrees of understanding. Yet even today, who has attained to the plateau of bro. Roberts, of bro. Thomas, of the

apostle Peter, or Paul, or Christ? Paul tells us not to measure ourselves by ourselves (2 Cor. 10:12). In those well known words in 1 Cor. 11 he says—

"Be ye followers (imitators, copiers) of me, even AS I ALSO AM OF CHRIST."

Christ must be the primary pattern for all, even as he was for Paul.

As we read the gospel records we are impressed with the depth of the writings of John, when compared with the different style of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Is there a distinction? All were by the Spirit of God directed. It was Paul—whose epistles we have been considering this week, Paul the persecutor of the Brotherhood—who later had on one occasion to withstand Peter, because he was to be blamed. Yet it was the same Peter who could write, years later—

"Our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you" (2 Pet. 3:15).

These things should place a different perspective on what we see in our brethren and sisters: on how we should value their association. "Our beloved brother": this deep mutual affection appears again throughout Rom. 16, read among us this morning—

"Beloved in the Lord . . . Stachys my beloved . . . beloved Persis."

Are we so affectionately moved toward the brethren and sisters that God has given us today? Do we feel as the apostle did, about every one of OUR brethren and sisters with whom we run the race of life? We read yesterday in Rom. 14:3 that—

"God hath received him."

Whom had God received?—

"Him that is weak in the Faith."

If God hath received our brother, actually taken him unto Himself, it is important that we feel the same way. It is vital that we perceive the operation of God's hand in the lives of all our brethren and sisters. It is not for us to choose whom we shall associate with, except strictly according to the commandments of God: never according to our own preferences and desires. It is all for a purpose. Not one sparrow falls to the ground that God is unconscious of.

Naturally speaking, we would feel like James and John—to call down fire from heaven when things do not please us. If we react this way—the way of the flesh—we need the instruction of Christ, as he gently gave it to them—

"Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of" (Luke 9:55).

It is quite obvious, in reading the epistles, that Paul did not find conditions and situations always pleasing to him. In fact, many of the epistles which we read at least twice each year actually came into being as a result of situations that needed exhortation and guidance, and have been preserved to teach us also. For this we should be thankful to God that these things have been brought about for our benefit—and that, in the wise providence of God, by means of weaknesses and need for instruction in earlier brethren and sisters.

While varying talents exist, varying degrees of energy and zeal, of effort and agonizing, we must ever pray God in relation to our own selves that we faithfully use the full measure of strength and energy and ability that God has given to each of us.

"For God hath received him."

Paul desired to see a clear perception of the Truth in the hearts and minds of all his associates. His love was misunderstood, his zeal was laid to self-seeking, his concern for others as a desire for pre-eminence. This came upon him from without and from within. When he asked that the "thorn" be taken away, the Lord replied—

"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9).

Similarly we read yesterday from 2 Sam. 22:36, in David's beautiful prayer of thanksgiving—

"Thy gentleness hath made me great."

It was not David in his military exploits: it was David in his weakness, in his lowliness of mind, in his complete submission to the hand of God.

And so, with Paul, the thorn had to stay. The Lord had placed it there, to serve a beneficial and eternal purpose, to the glory of God and the spiritual welfare of the suffering apostle. And God causes the thorns to grow around the roses, and the roses are nonetheless beautiful and fragrant, amid the thorns.

"God hath received him."

The basis of all we do is defined in Rom. 14:6—

"He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.

"He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks. ."

That's the important phrase: "He giveth God thanks"—

".. and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not.."

And, again: "He giveth thanks." The principle of all our actions must be thankfulness to God for everything (1 Thess. 5:18)—

"In EVERYTHING, give thanks: for this is the will of God."

Every act and thought must be with the glory of God in mind. Then our actions will be acceptable. If we eat or refrain from eating—or do anything else—only to be considered as martyrs by our brethren, or to exalt our own position, then we have pride and self-glorifying. The heart is deceitful above all things.

Having been received by God, whether strong or weak, we each must perceive that we were all in need of having our infirmities removed, in need of being endured by God in patience and love, as He in our lives manifests His constant long-suffering, not willing that any one of us should perish. So Paul declares—

"Who are thou that judgeth another's servant? To his own Master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand" (Rom. 14:4).

Being received by God, we all—strong and weak, able and unable—are related to Him as His sons and daughters. We are all, every one of us, members of His family. We are all members of a common Body. We do not exist as separate entities, once we have entered into Christ, any more than any part of the natural body is able to function, or remain healthy, or even stay alive at all, without the life-giving nourishment which is by joints and marrow moved from place to place throughout our bodies. This natural operation we take so casually every day without concern—until one member ceases to function or to perform its constant service to the body.

"The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet" (1 Cor. 12:21)

That is, "I can manage quite well without you," or, "It does not make any difference to me what you do." That is not the spirit of the Truth, and it cannot be the spirit of any of the members of the Body of Christ. The whole orderly functioning of the Body is completely inter-related, and must respond in unison, as one entity, with joy and with sorrow. The Greek word for "please," in the command—

"Let every one of us please his neighbour."

—carries this meaning—

"To excite emotion, to be agreeable to."

In following Paul's analogy in 1 Cor. 12, we know in the natural that when one part of the body is affected for good or for ill, there is a complete response of the whole nervous system which alerts the basic functions to immediately provide what is necessary for the care of the affected member. Even so it is—or should be—in the spiritual Body of which we are individual components, operating in unison and harmony and immediate mutual concern. For, says the apostle (v.7)—

"None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."

Paul urges (v. 9) that it was for this perfect health of the Body that Christ died, and rose, and revived—

"That he might be Lord both of the dead and living."

"Why, then," he continues (v. 10)—

". . dost thou judge (condemn) thy brother?"

Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother?"

"At nought" means to treat with utter contempt; literally, "to put out as nothing." Remember that God is the Judge of all. In 1 Cor. 10:12, after referring to Israel's failures, Paul warns us that we should take heed—not to our brother—but to ourselves—

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

We are not "saved" now, except in a prospective sense. We are in the process of being saved. We cannot assume that because we have (or think we have) strength, we do not need to stand at the judgment seat—but that only those weak vessels must do so. Rather—

"ALL flesh (all inclusive) is as grass . . . that withereth."

All the strength of man must be humbled. All must recognize and confess that their salvation will only be a result of the mercy of God, and by nothing unto which we have attained by the use of our own faculties. Paul continues—

"As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God" (Rom. 14:11).

Such a quotation by Paul, at this point in his reasoning, is evidence that God will bring everyone who is responsible to the judgment seat. None have yet attained. There have only been a few—very special characters in God's purpose—who have been given any direct assurance that they will be in the Kingdom of God. And even such must stand before the tribunal of Christ, that their works may be revealed for all to see. Paul said of himself (2 Tim. 4:8)—

"There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

But he also said (2 Cor. 5:10)—

"We (including himself) must ALL appear before the judgment seat of Christ."

What for? To bless God. For God's glory. In these instances also, it will be clearly evident that their salvation has been predicated on the mercy of God.

Paul continues his exhortation to discern the effects of our action and conduct in relation to our brethren and sisters. Every word and deed must be mentally tested to be sure that they in no way cause our companions, our brethren and sisters, to stumble, or be offended, or depart from the Faith. We must be a source of STRENGTH and encouragement, not weakness and offense, to each other. Note what we have read in Rom. 15:1—

"We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and NOT TO PLEASE OURSELVES."

Our life in the Truth—and having put on Christ, that is the only life we should have—consists not in meat and drink, in pleasing ourselves, in catering to the flesh, to the carnal mind, to the exciting of fleshly desires and emotions—the empty things of this world that the Gentiles seek. Paul uses his own circumstances to stress and illustrate his point—

"All things are lawful for me" (1 Cor. 10: 23).

Because of his position, his strength in the Spirit, his very clear perception and discernment, he could have done many things which would in no way have affected his standing before Christ. His conscience would have been quite clear. But he hastens to add—

". . . but all things are not expedient."

This is the crowning thought, for it prevented him from using his position and his knowledge to please himself. He was very careful that at no time would he please himself, or consider his own desires and comfort. There are far more important and over-riding considerations than our own personal liberties and the indulging of our "freedom in Christ," due to our strength in God, and understanding in the Spirit.

If we believe we are among the "strong," we must share that strength and energy with our companions toward the Kingdom. We must be careful to do nothing to offend them, though we ourselves may perceive it is "lawful."

"All things are not expedient."

The word "expedient" (sumphero) means "to bear together, to bring together." If we please ourselves, ignoring the effect upon our brethren and sisters, we are not bearing or carrying the load together. We may be perfectly

"lawful," but we are not Christlike. We are self-centred, we are selfish, we are self-seeking. We are not manifesting what the Spirit requires of us—

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

This is the "royal law," which James defines as—

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour AS THYSELF."

This is the real fulfilling of the Law—

"To love the Lord our God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourself."

This IS 'excellent,' because in that word we are bearing one another's burdens. Every day, God endures—actually tolerates—us in our weakness and failures, with much longsuffering, because He is not willing that any should perish. He, by example and precept, calls upon us to endure and sustain our brethren and sisters in their weaknesses.

When Paul calls upon us to "endure," and tells us that true spiritual love "endures ALL things," he does not mean that we should be stoically indifferent to care for others' problems, or as though it were a painful duty we must resignedly carry. Rather he means we must wholeheartedly and sympathetically enter into the afflictions of others, as being partakers, or fellowshippers with them of their sufferings, just as the physical body must and does enter into the aches and pains of any part thereof—

"We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak."

The word "infirmity" is related to the same root as our word "asthma," actually, "not to have breath." "Breath" is used in a natural sense as that by which our life and existence are sustained, the living and breathing moment to moment. In this question it refers to spiritual perception. Notice the force of Paul's argument—

"If thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died."

Christ is the fulness of the power of God. And in his fulness he died for all such as Paul is speaking of. We are among that such. Shall we, in that which we think is our strength, bring to nothing the work of God in Christ Jesus?—

"For meat, destroy not the WORK OF GOD" (v. 20).

We are all the work of God, every one of us, strong and weak. "Meat" here is whatever we believe we have liberty in Christ to indulge in, regardless of the scruples or feelings of others. Paul presents the Christlike course (v. 19)—

"Let us follow after (pursue, press toward) the things which make for peace, and the things whereby one may edify (build up, strengthen, not tear down) another."

"Follow after" in this case does not mean trailing behind reluctantly. It is a strong, active word, the same word Paul uses in—

"I PRESS (dioko—pursue) toward the mark of the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:14).

His whole salvation depended on the energetic, zealous, striving for the prize. This is how we must "pursue" the things that make for peace among our brethren and sisters, and the edification—building up—of each other in love.

This does not mean at any time a compromise of the Truth. Paul is speaking of our following our own desires without Christlike love and concern for the feelings of others. Just to please ourselves, as we may feel that we have liberty and right, let us not destroy in any way the work of God—that which He is patiently accomplishing in those around us.

Where WE may fail, in regard to our brethren and sisters, in carrying their burdens, holding up the failing hands, strengthening the feeble knees, then GOD is able to provide in another manner. We can well say, as Mordecai said to Esther—

"If we altogether hold our peace (or do nothing in a time of need), then shall enlargement and deliverance arise from another place, but we shall be destroyed."

It will be said to many, in the great day of account—

"Inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me. Depart from me!"

Now is our brief day of opportunity to serve Christ in serving his brethren, and so to escape these dreadful words of rejection.

"Even Christ pleased not himself, but as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on me."
(Rom. 15:3)

Paul quotes this from Psa. 69, which speaks of Christ's last extremity, which we have considered this week. Paul illustrates (v. 4) that these things were written for our learning. They were not written for the prophet's immediate generation, but—

"For our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

—that we might learn patience and comfort from the Scriptures. Without these—patience and comfort—we will never have hope. Here, in the example of Christ, is the way we should act toward each other. Christ accepted or permitted the reproaches of God to come upon himself in enduring the cross.

Paul's reference to Psa. 69 at such a time is especially forceful in view of our memorial service this morning—

"Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul! . . .

"The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up: and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell upon me. . .

"They that sit in the gate speak against me: and I am the song of the drunkards . . .

"Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none: for comforters, but I found none . . .

"They gave me gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" (vs. 1,9,12,20, 21).

Then vs. 32-33 give the joyful side, if we respond to these things—

"The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God. For the Lord heareth the poor, and despiseth, not His prisoners."

If we are of the scripturally humble and poor, then God is working gloriously through Christ in our lives, as Paul goes on to say in v. 5—

"The God of patience and consolation grant you that ye might be likeminded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus."

That is, according to his beautiful example, and according to his commandments to his brethren. If we are truly part of Jesus Christ, if we have properly put on—been endowed with—Christ's sin-covering garments, we will joyfully act toward one another even as Christ has illustrated in giving his whole life to carry OUR burdens.

This week of fellowship together should have filled us with the fulness of God in Christ Jesus, as Paul expresses it in vs. 13-14—

"Now the God of hope fill you with ALL JOY and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

"And I myself am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are FULL OF GOODNESS, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another."

The loving care shown by Paul for the ecclesias is evident in the closing verses. He tells the Roman brethren that, if God permit, he will visit them in time to come, after he had performed a loving service on behalf of his brethren and sisters in Macedonia and Achaia for the needy believers in Jerusalem. If such were enjoying the spiritual blessings from the Jewish saints at Jerusalem, it was fitting that they share their natural blessings with them.

Paul assures the Roman brethren that he is willing to spend and be spent for his family in Christ Jesus. He knew that bitter persecution lay ahead, on the path that the Lord Jesus had laid out for him. He entreated them to pray unto the Father for him, that he might be delivered from unreasonable men, and from those that would oppose themselves in Jerusalem. But the prospect of certain affliction did not deter him from going forward on the set path of duty and service.

We come now to the final chapter (16) of his message to those at Rome. Here we find a list of names—a very interesting list of names, inscribed in the book of remembrance for certain actions and characteristics—

2: *"She hath been a succourer of many"—Phebe.*

3: *"My helpers in Christ Jesus"—Priscilla and Aquila.*

4: *"They have for my life laid down their own necks."*

6: "Who hath bestowed much labour on us"—Mary.
8: "My beloved in the Lord"—Amplias.

"Our beloved brother"—do we feel that way toward all those whom God has given us as companions Zionward? We must. This IS the Truth in its living fulness!

10: "Approved in Christ"—Apelles.

What a glorious assurance! It is for those who agonize for righteousness as Christ and Paul did, casting aside all else.

12: "Who labour in the Lord"—Tryphena and Tryphosa.
12: "The beloved Persis, which laboured much."
13: "Chosen in the Lord"—Rufus.
16: "Greet one another with an holy kiss."

Paul then turns to a warning exhortation, in reference to those who nominally are in the Body, but do not enter into the works of the Spirit. Their names are not in this list of life and spiritual activity.

He concludes with fraternal greetings to all that be in Rome, to all those he knew in Rome, from those companions who travelled with him. This was a greeting from those who laboured with the apostle, a salutation of love and fellowship which we have received and been comforted by this week, as we have laboured together toward the Kingdom.

Soon after, Paul took his journey to Jerusalem. We learn from the Acts that he was viciously attacked, and beaten, and taken prisoner, and that he languished in prison for 2 years in Caesarea at the whim of wicked men. Then of his arraignment before Festus and Agrippa, his appeal to Caesar, and of his consignment—because of that appeal—to Rome to the hearing of Augustus.

In Acts 27 we read of one of Paul's terrible experiences of "perils of the sea." Here we see his bold faith in God, and his concern for his fellow-travellers that they, through the mercy of God, might be delivered. They are shipwrecked, and winter on the isle of Melita.

In the spring, they renew their journey. So again, for us, brethren and sisters, "the cloud goes up from the Tabernacle." Once more we must take our journey.

*"And after 3 months" (Luke records), "we departed in a ship of Alexandria which had wintered in the isle..
"And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there 3 days. And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium ..
"And after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli, where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them 7 days . . "*

This would appear to be in order to break bread together.

"And so we went toward Rome. And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and the Three Taverns . . Whom, when Paul saw, he thanked God and took courage."

Brethren and sisters, from these associations together, let us feel of one another, as "our beloved brother," our brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus. For these wonderful associations together, let us—

"THANK GOD, AND TAKE COURAGE!"

—E.F.H.

CORNELIUS RECEIVING THE SPIRIT BEFORE BAPTISM

Some think this strange, but the impression of strangeness vanishes if we have in view the object to be accomplished. It was that God might stamp with His own approbation the offer of life eternal to the Gentiles, with whom, as Peter said, it had been till then unlawful for the Jews to mingle.

That this is the view Peter took is evident from what he says in Acts 11:17.

The outpouring of the Spirit on these Gentiles did not displace their water baptism, for THAT WAS THE VERY FIRST THING THAT PETER COMMANDED THEM (10:47): And it was not intended to deny the hopelessness of their position as Gentiles, which Paul affirms (Eph. 2:12)—it was to sanction their invitation INTO the way of hope (Acts 11:14).

And God foreknew their entrance therein—it was an anticipatory act, like Ananias addressing Paul as "brother" before the act of immersion (Acts 9:17).
—Bro. Roberts, 1897.

Current Events Fulfilling Prophecy

"Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt"—Job 11:12

CHINA A NUCLEAR POWER: Now China's nuclear missiles have range to wipe out Tokyo or devastate Russia's industrial heartland. In 2 or 3 yrs. expected to have 7000-mile 3-megaton missiles able to reach virtually all major targets in US. For 24 yrs. policies of most nations have depended on their relations with the 2 nuclear power, US & Russia. Now there are 3.

What would happen to US if Russia and China patched up differences? China's leaders have said they could lose 200 million people, & still fight back. Chinese population not concentrated in areas that can be targeted.

Peking is pressing development of solid-fuel missiles for subs: US could in time face 2 hostile sub forces cruising off its shores with nuclear weapons. Size of China's new silos being built indicate missiles bigger than Russia's 20-megaton SS-9. (USN 5:28)

NOTE: There is no specific prophecy, but it would surely seem China must be pro-Russian and anti-US at the Armageddon crisis, though at present it serves as a check on Russia until the proper time comes. Both are vicious, ruthless, anti-God dictatorships. Neither dares permit its enslaved millions any true freedom of thought or expression, religious or otherwise. Both tell their own people that the current detente with US is just a temporary expedient to get certain advantages. Truly they are national rivals for leadership of the Communist world. And Russia holds 100s of 1000s of square miles of Chinese territory taken when China was weak and divided. But even bitter rivals can join as expediency dictates (remember Hitler and Stalin). Both are viciously anti-Israel, which is the ultimate key issue.

WATERGATE & CORRUPTION. Last week, Watergate scandal revealed as part of a sad, slow process of the corruption of power—bending of ethics & laws into outright police-state tactics as Nixon Administration lost all sense of difference between U.S.'s welfare & its own.

Week's worst news was emerging picture of almost routine resort to illegality by top U.S. officials. Foreign countries wondering whether Nixon could continue to play a forceful role in world affairs. Support for Nixon has become a political liability in Congress. Senators up for re-election bending over backward to vote against Administration. (Nwk 5:28)

NOTE: Just now, when US needs moral strength and integrity to gain world credibility and to stand up to Russia, corruption for small ignoble political ends has made an open mockery of all its high-flown idealistic rhetoric. A strong, decent US might have rallied world opinion against the creeping shadow of Russian dictatorship. But that is not to be.

FINLAND: RUSSIAN IDEA OF MODEL COUNTRY: Moscow considers Russia-Finland treaty of 1948 would be ideal basis for treaty with W. Europe. Finland totally dependent on Moscow's will. Russia has monopoly in supplying Finland's arms. Finland forced into Comecon—the Communist version of Common Market.

Finns have no doubt about Russia's plans to extend power. They say withdrawal of US from Europe would end Finns' marginal freedoms: "If Sweden & Norway were in Finland's present position, then Finland would be in same position as Poland is today." (USN 5:28).

NOTE: This is exactly what prophecy requires—the "Finlandization" of Europe under Russia's thumb. Arab oil—Europe's economic lifeblood—may be a major factor in the enslavement.

VIET PEACE HOPES FADE: Things going from bad to worse in Indochina. N. Viets strengthening forces in South for major operation: building airfields, bringing in over 400 tanks. Communist campaign to kill village leaders: assassinations quadrupled in past 2 months. (USN5:28)

NOTE: Surely this was obvious from the beginning of the "peace" arrangement. US failed in Vietnam, and got out. The Communists now hold more territory than ever. They have Russia and China—close neighbours—strongly behind their drive to make all Indochina Communist. The military dictatorship in Thailand—US's current mainstay in the area—has just been toppled by revolutionary students.

GREEK COUP FAILS. Involved majority of Greece's naval units, plus elements of air force & army. Was betrayed: 200 officers, including dozen admirals & generals under arrest.

In return for keeping its only remaining naval base in E. Mediterranean, US gives large amounts of military aid to Greek dictators. Attempted army coup shows armed forces deeply unhappy & therefore an uncertain element. Now US not sure they were right in backing Papadopoulos. (Nwk. 6:11)

NOTE: Thailand in the East: Greece in the West. What shaky foundations US is building its anti-Russian defences on! Both are unpopular military despotisms. But they are the best allies available.

INDIA & AFRICA FACE FAMINE. Their land parched by drought, their crops dead & their cattle dying, 200 million Indians face disastrous famine in months ahead. A tragic mixture of drought & crop-destroying floods has crippled rice production in Asian nations from Ceylon to Philippines.

In China, 40 million face hungry months ahead. In Africa, situation's even worse. Most severe drought in 60 years has turned vast portions of 6 impoverished West African nations into arid wastelands: millions may die.

India confronted by possibly worst famine in living memory. Human greed & corruption have kept food & water from some of the neediest areas. Half-starved Indians line up for hours in over 110 degree temperatures for rations — but many leave empty-handed because of insufficient supplies. Shortages largely due to drought in North & floods in South.

Up to 80 pet. of livestock in Niger, Mali, Chad, Upper Volta, Senegal & Mauritania have perished. Farmers have exhausted food supplies & are scratching out an existence by eating seed grains stored for future planting—virtually guaranteeing hunger next year as well. Drought has wrecked millions of acres of cultivated & grazing land, making it unusable for years to come. Because of protein deficiency, 10s of 1000s of children destined to grow up mental & physical cripples. (Nwk 6:4)

NOTE: "Greed and corruption" are given credit for much of the misery. Greed and corruption are the basic constituents of the natural man, as amply testified by Scripture, and amply manifested by history—and by contemporary history more than ever before. Earth's population mushrooms—doubling every 30 years. Food is already short. Clearly the end is near.

BERLIN'S YOUTH SHIFTS LEFT. University of Berlin now hotbed of radicalism. Shift to left reflects similar move among all of W. German students. Some young people seemed to have completely swallowed Communist propaganda line. One fashionable theory among German students is that U.S. deliberately kept Germany short of food after WW II to force them into Western camp. (Nwk 6:11)

NOTE: Germany must unite with Russia. The obvious corruption of German and US politics is helping to drive Germany's youth into Russia's spider-web.

US's SLIPPING POSITION. U.S. being overtaken by other countries: will soon cease to be "richest country in world." As late as '68, U.S. per capita income exceeded other leading countries by 1/3 to 1/2. Now Sweden, Switzerland & Germany on same level; France, Holland & Japan soon will be. Given the faster rate at which foreign countries are growing, the basic trends can hardly be in doubt. U.S. international role will decline.

Mood of many Americans: "So what? " That misses the realities of a world where many countries have relied on U.S. to preserve peace & stability.

Could U.S. do something to keep from falling behind? Not much. U.S. became rich because it grew stably, & has not suffered the devastations of major wars that have set back other countries. But U.S. has never saved or invested a high fraction of its income, as other countries have. (Nwk 5:28)

NOTE: US has "wasted its substance in riotous living." It is becoming a "have-not" nation in terms of basic economic and industrial resources and raw materials. On the other hand, Russia has an immense and largely untouched treasure of mineral resources. US has taken its world dominion for granted as eternally assured, due to some assumed superiority of its people. Past empires have had the same delusion.

KIDNAPPING IN ARGENTINA. In past year, guerrillas in Buenos Aires have seized at least 6 foreign executives & extracted ransoms of \$¾- million to \$2 million. May be only beginning. Many companies refuse to report for fear of further trouble. Experts say ransoms in first half of '73 total over \$5 million; over \$20 million in past 2 years. Life for foreign businessmen in Argentina now practically unbearable: must move in irregular patterns; shift sleeping places; houses surrounded with barbed wire & bodyguards. (Nwk 6:11)

NOTE: Political terrorism is one of the major fulfilments of the prophetic "earth filled with violence" in the last day. "One sinner destroyeth much good." A small band of fanatical and dedicated terrorists can make democratic govt. impossible—especially where it is not strong and deep rooted.

"NO-FAULT" DIVORCES CATCHING ON. Divorce at all-time high in U.S., & easier to get than ever before. Almost 1/3 of states have "no-fault" divorce. In past year 851,000 divorces in U.S.: more than doubled in 10

years. The "no-fault" concept has begun to lead to "do-it-yourself" divorce—kits are \$25.00. In parts of California, divorce obtainable by mail. (USN6:4)

NOTE: Jesus said of both Noah's day and the day of his return, that "marrying and giving in marriage" would be one of the major signs. Clearly he did not mean marriage as such, but corruption of "marriage." Marriage, in any true, wholesome sense, is rapidly ceasing to exist in US, and elsewhere too. When the relationship is not mutually entered with the sincere dedication of faithfulness for life, then it ceases to have any claim at all to the term "marriage" in any sense, and is mere legalized fornication.

VIETNAM'S WAR-TORN CHILDREN. Rare is the Viet child who hasn't been scarred by war which knew no fixed boundaries or front lines, & made little distinction between soldier & civilian, adult & child. There are 100s of 1000s of maimed & crippled children, who not only suffer physical agony but face a life of isolation in a society that has traditionally turned its back on weak & disabled. Up to 1½ million children have lost one or both parents. A tragedy of life & limbs whose magnitude we will never know. (Nwk 5:28)

NOTE: These are the tragic realities of man's animal struggle for power and wealth and glory.

DOLLAR KEEPS PLUNGING. Further turn from \$, scramble for gold at soaring prices. Experts take sceptical view of \$'s future. Watergate scandal is an important depressant. It's hard to find a bright spot in gloomy currency outlook: \$ in deep trouble: inflation out of hand everywhere. (USN 6:11)

\$ HITS NEW LOW. During past 2 years, once-almighty \$ has lost 26 pct. of its value against currency of other major nations. Last week it plummeted again to new lows. In past 2 years, while most major nations were making moves to lower trade barriers, US has been raising them. (Tm 7:16)

NOTE: In very recent memory, the \$ was the impregnable Gibraltar-rock on which all the world's economic and monetary stability was built (as it had been in the previous century on the British pound). No one thought to doubt its eternal strength. But greed, corruption, folly and mismanagement have succeeded, in an incredibly brief time, in completely destroying this foundation.

NATO's TROJAN HORSE? In wake of abortive coup attempt, a massive purge of Greek armed forces—suddenly spotlighting both the glaring deficiencies of Athens regime, & the vulnerability of US & NATO in E. Mediterranean. The instability of Greek armed forces came to light at very moment NATO was meeting to discuss growing Russian might.

Uncertainties in Greece carry grave implications for Western Alliance. Greece is key US home port in Mediterranean, & principal surveillance & communications post for NATO in S. Europe. One Greek officer said, "If NATO is counting on Greece for anything, they're crazy." The captains and officers of every Greek warship are being held for questioning.

Up to now, the junta has been able to count on resolute support of US. Whatever moral doubts it had about the dictator govt, US felt sure the govt. had Army behind it. But it's different now. Athen's position as a bulwark of Western alliance suddenly looking shakier. (Nwk 6:18)

NOTE: The Russian military dictatorship steadily builds its aggressive strength, while NATO squabbles (as in Iceland) and calamities (as in Greece) make it less arid less credible as a deterrent to Russian ambitions. Bro Thomas, 121 yrs. ago, said: "A pre-adventural Jewish colonization of the land of Israel will be going on while Russia is engaged in the conquest of the West"—Herald, Sept., 1852. At the time, both developments were scoffed at as impossible. Today we witness both.

OIL & ARMS. US enlarging its role as major international weapons supplier. Last wk. Nixon authorized sale of supersonic jet fighters to Marxist Chile & 4 other S. American countries. Earlier, US indicated willingness to sell Phantom jets to Saudi Arabia, which is negotiating for \$1 billion worth of arms. Kuwait wants \$500 million worth. Both countries want to protect their oil riches against attack from their Mideast neighbours. Russian-armed Iraq has already scared Kuwait with border incursions.

Saudi Arabia & Kuwait are 2 of biggest Mideast oil suppliers. US is helping to protect valuable sources of oil, & at same time reducing chances of these countries shutting off supplies to US, by making them as reliant on US for weapons, training & spare parts as US is on them for oil. (Tm 6:18).

NOTE: What a grisly traffic in death and misery! What a striking fulfilment of Joel's prophecy of the Last Days (3:9-13)—"Prepare war . . . beat your plowshares to swords . . . Let the weak say, I am strong . . . The harvest is ripe; the press is full—for their wickedness is great."

RUSSIAN MISSILES. Now have 1.618 ICBMs vs. US's 1054. Testing 3 menacing new models, one with MIRVs. (Nwk. 6:11)

NOTE: Sleeping, pleasure-mad US may awake some morning to the revelation of an infinitely-superior nuclear-powered Russia. Russia wastes no resources on luxury or folly or coddling its people. Its one goal is to crush US—its only barrier to world dominion.

EUROPE'S DIZZY WHIRL OF DETENTE. This week's opening of the historic European Security Conference in Helsinki, Finland, clearly signals how far East-West rapprochement has come since icy days of cold war.

Idea for all-Europe Conference first raised by Moscow in '54 to legitimize its hold on E. Europe; but proposal got nowhere till Brandt's Ostpolitik began to mesh with a Kremlin diplomatic initiative toward West. Pace of change has been dizzying.

By seizing initiative in bargaining with Russia, Nixon has seriously undermined W. Europe efforts to forge unified policy toward Russia.

Russia sees Conference as a key link in its campaign to weaken W. Europe's ties to US: hopes to convince West that detente is a substitute for defence.(Nwk 7:9)

NOTE: Moscow's plans seem to be moving apace. US was able for 20 years to resist the pressure for this show-window conference in which Russia has so much to gain. But the spirit in Europe has now changed. The shock of the vicious destruction of the democratic govts. in East Europe in the 40s, and the ruthless crushing of E. German and Hungarian freedom in the 50s, and of the Czechs in the 60s—all has now worn off with time. Europe wants to believe that Russia is satisfied with what it has devoured, like the blind little men at Munich in 1938 wanted to believe Hitler was satisfied with his past conquests.

DEADLY ARAB-ISRAEL DUEL OF TERROR. Last wk. in Paris, bomb under his car's front seat instantly killed Mohammed Boudia, suspected of being Black September's head man in Europe. Three days later, Israeli diplomat Yosef Alon shot dead in Washington. Latest victims of deadly underground Israel-Arab war around globe. Such incidents now commonplace: similar assassinations this yr. in Rome, Paris, Cyprus, Lebanon, Madrid & London have claimed dozens of lives. (Tm 7:16)

NOTE: Beyond being evidence of a worldwide era of violence, this particular strife (Arab-Israel) bears much more directly on the Divine purpose. It is the "perpetual hatred" always manifested by Edom (Esau) for Jacob, spoken of by Ezekiel (35:5)—that only the coming of Christ will terminate.

WATERGATE ON THE RHINE. Deputy Julius Steiner has admitted that in '72 he sold his vote to keep Willy Brandt in power—latest & most startling in a series of revelations of political scandal in W. Germany, involving bribery, cover-ups. Corruption coming to light could topple Brandt.(Tm6:25)

CORRUPTION ABROAD TOO. London: On heels of sex scandal that brought down 2 aristocratic ministers of Govt., British now learn that many local officials are corrupt, taking bribes. Bankruptcy proceedings brought to light a payroll for civil servants in operation of multimillion-\$ architectural firm. Several other cases unearthed.

Rome: Several members of Parliament caught stealing public funds. A Govt. tax office spent \$2-million in bribes for mayors & other officials. Nine years spent collecting evidence; 557 indicted; 300 of these had died by time case came to court. (USN 7:16)

NOTE: Political scandals are not new. They are as old as politics itself. The evil of the human heart inevitably infects all it touches. But surely it is significant that what calls itself the "democratic process" is exposed as so corrupt at a time when it is setting itself up as the defender of "freedom" and "justice" against the efficient autocracy of dictatorial Communism—efficient, that is, in developing naked military power. Bro. Thomas saw the fatal weakness of "democracy" in corrupt human hands, and he expected kings to replace presidents as the Gogian power extended its power over Europe. And so it has been. All East Europe has kings (that is, autocrats— tho the actual term king is not currently used). "Kings" in Bible times were not necessarily hereditary. More often than not, they were simply dictators who had achieved power by violence or intrigue (as in Communism today), not by hereditary succession.

BREZHNEV IN PARIS, troublemaking for US. Decision to spend 3 days in Paris on return from Washington summit is personal success for Pompidou. Brezhnev is rewarding France for pulling out of NATO, & maintaining policy of "independence." He's appealing to French ego, making French more touchy than ever toward US, building up France as "honest broker" between superpowers. It's an old Russian game. Brezhnev is happy to encourage France's bid for special ties to Russia. (USN 7:2)

NOTE: The "unclean spirits like frogs" are still up to their malicious mischief, gathering the kings of the earth to the battle of the Great Day of God Almighty.

FREAKISHLY FOUL WEATHER has struck so many parts of world in past year that meteorologists discern a complex, long-term change in climates. All agree the impact has been devastating to industry & most especially to world's already hard-pressed food supplies.

In May, 12½ million acres in Midwest & South US flooded: total damage \$400 million. Surprise blizzards cut multi-million \$ chunk out of livestock herds. Snowfall & tornadoes destroyed over half of Southeast's peach crop. California crops severely damaged by heavy rain, devastating cold, late frosts: many crops down 50 pct.

Picture bleaker still in India & Africa. Indian losses in billions of \$. Six African states near Sahara are equally parched & devastated. Ecological balance has been so savaged that may take 30 years to recover food generating potential. (Tm 7:9)

NOTE: Mankind's hold on life is far more precarious than this proud and Godless generation realizes. All breath is in the hand of God, Whose longsuffering alone withholds the annihilation of this rebellious race. With a slight change of climatic conditions, God could flood the earth with heat, wrap it in eternal snow, or bring famine and starvation to its wicked inhabitants.

CONGRESS OF HELSINKI. Meeting of historic significance gets under way this week. Has opportunity to create grand new design for the future of Europe. By creating a false sense of security at this conference, Moscow could lay groundwork for its future domination of W. Europe. NATO Sec-Gen. says bluntly: "Russia is trying to diminish— & eventually end—US presence in Europe by this conference". (Tm 7:9)

NOTE: The leaders of Europe can recognize the tendencies and the dangers, but the people of Europe do not care. Russia, allied with the Papacy, must gain control of Europe, and marshall it to Armageddon.

PHYSICS BY PHONE. In a little office at Tel Aviv University, the phone rings. The 1600-mile connection to Moscow has been made. Physics Prof. Mark Azbel begins in fluent English a lecture for Israeli students.

Azbel is one of 6 prominent Soviet scientists fired from official posts for wanting to immigrate to Israel, & then barred from leaving Russia. The President of T.A.U. appointed 3 of them his faculty. At least once a week the 3 are on phone to Tel Aviv. They're bursting with thoughts to communicate. Sometimes they talk literally for hours on some scientific point. (Tm 7:9)

NOTE: Perhaps not of much significance in the world picture, but a revealing sidelight on Russia, Israel, and the Jewish people.

GASOLINE SHORTAGE. Long-feared, now making itself felt: 1000's of independent stations forced to shut down permanently. Independents claim big oil companies contrived phony shortage to drive them out of business. That conclusion supported by attorneys general of 6 states who testified before Senate last week. Justice Dept. suing Texaco. (Tm 6:25)

NOTE: Man's evil and greed is apparent at every turn, confirming the Word of God.

ICELAND-BRITAIN FISHING CLASH. For Iceland, virtually a question of survival. Fishing is 20 pct. Of gross national product; 82 pct. of exports.

Iceland's govt. is Leftist. There's growing demand that Iceland reconsider its position in NATO. Militant Leftists in govt. pressing Prime Minister to keep his campaign pledge to close U.S.'s NATO airbase there. British have played into hands of Communists. (Nwk 6:4)

NOTE: Another big plus for Russia. Another hard blow for NATO. The quarrel has for the present been patched up, but the damage remains.

US'S ERRATIC TRADE POLICY. US international economic policy a mess; confused & confusing; open disregard for trading partners; actions running counter to announced goals & policies.

Last week new shock for foreigners: export controls on steel scrap & food products. Will create shortages & aggravate inflation overseas.

Soybean exports cut in half. Big sales to Russia & China: then sudden restrictions on regular customers in Europe & Japan. A staggering blow to Japs to whom US had repeatedly promised to supply all their needs.

Action strengthens France's charge that US cannot be trusted to honour its commitments (Tm 7:16)

NOTE: How can we explain this pitiful befuddlement of clever and intelligent men, except as a punitive, divinely-imposed confusion? We can understand crime and evil, because that is natural to animal man; but self hurting folly and bumbling inconsistency in high places seems a direct fulfilment of the divine threat to the wicked to make their wise men mad.

LATIN AMERICA DRIFTS AWAY. Widespread agreement that US hasn't been paying much attention to Latin America. Rampant nationalism combined with a growing political sophistication has made Latins increasingly suspicious of US intentions. With increasing frequency & success, Latin nations have turned to Europe, Japan & Communist bloc for military & economic aid they cannot get from US. (Nwk 5:21)

NOTE: US once took Latin American support & following for granted. This was a large part of her power in the early years of UN. But she has little support or friendship there now. Latin America is overwhelmingly Catholic, & great changes are afoot, as in other parts of the Catholic world. The sharp trend is toward Socialism & the Left as a deliverance from a long history of capitalist oppression & corruption, & US imperialism is inescapably identified with that unlovely past. The Church is riding the new wave.

BOOM YR. FOR MIDEAST ARMS. Shah of Iran got ball rolling with \$2½ billion arms deal. Saudi Arabia has earmarked \$1 billion for weapons. Kuwait ½ billion. Iraq, Syria & Yemen getting Russian arms. (Nwk 6:18)

NOTE: Mideast oil profits are saturating the area with vast piles of sophisticated instruments of mass destruction and violence. At the same time, tensions are building and emotions flaring. Students of prophecy have long been eagerly watching for the final inevitable explosion in that area which will eventuate in worldwide desolation and the end of all human rule on earth. We rejoice to see the scene being so energetically prepared for the last great, earth-redeeming conflagration. "Come quickly, Lord Jesus!"

CORRUPTION IN POLITICS. Not only Watergate: all across U.S. corruption keeps surfacing, at all levels. Result is growing distrust of politicians. Criminal cases involving public officials boiling up in many City & State Govts. Never anything like it in U.S. history. Temptation great; risks few; punishment light if wrongdoer caught. (USN 6:4)

NOTE: "Never anything like it in US history." CORRUPTION was the key to the Flood. Notice the striking, 3-fold repetition of this very word in Gen. 6: 12-13. Surely the grapes of wrath are ripe!

"COD WAR" THREATENS NATO. Iceland threatening to kick US out of strategic NATO airbase that keeps watch on Russian movements in key Atlantic shipping routes. Growing concern that Iceland may pull out of NATO altogether. It's a valuable link in NATO defences because of location.

For years, Russia has tried to lure Iceland out of NATO. Their hopes soared in 71 when 10 Communists were elected to the 60-man Parliament, & 2 Reds entered Cabinet. Now cod war gives Russia new boost. (USN 6:11)

NOTE: How shaky is NATO! Iceland is a strategic link—1/6 of its Parliament is Communist, with 2 Communists in the ruling Cabinet. Communism is not just a political party: it is a godless, worldwide conspiracy, advocating dictatorship by the violent overthrow of govts.

REASON FOR BREZHNEV VISIT. First & foremost, Moscow wants US technology, industrial equipment & credits on large scale, & guaranteed access to US feed grains. They want to convince US that close ties with Russia are far more valuable than ties with China. US cooperation is considered essential for success of their policy of better relations with Europe. Objective is to get recognition of their control over E. Europe, & to extend their influence to W. Europe.

What US can hope to get from Russia is relatively little. Many experts believe Nixon & Kissinger have overestimated Russia's bargaining strength & underestimated US's. (USN 6:11)

NOTE: For Brezhnev to so come with hat in hand, clearly Russia desperately needs certain things from US (like the wheat last year). And apparently US—for a fast \$—is willing to sell Russia the tools to shape US's own destruction. As the magazine points out, US has little to gain (except passing profits for the rich). As His purpose requires, God turns man's wisdom backward, and makes their wise men mad.

EMBATTLED US DIPLOMATS. Terrorists, striking at US personnel abroad, have taken lives, won big ransoms. US embassies & missions starting to resemble fortresses: bulletproof windows, stronger locks, alarms, close-circuit TV. Visitors, letters, packages screened as never before. Embassy limousines being refitted into armoured cars. Children ride guarded buses to schools. Officials vary daily routines to foil kidnapers; keep homes bolted. One embassy alone is spending \$350,000 a year on security equipment & guards. (USN 6:11)

UPSURGE IN INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM: almost an epidemic. World quite different from days when soldiers in uniforms marched across borders. Now we have reached stage when dissidents kill innocent people in hope of gaining their ends. US no longer immune from attacks on diplomats; even threat of guerrilla-type assassinations. In New York, twice as many attacks on UN diplomats as 3 years ago. (USN 7:16)

NOTE: What terrible, and yet what wonderful times! How hopeless is the prospect for unaided man to make a liveable world! Yet man, in the deepening gloom of this present jungle-age, keeps trumpeting his empty boasts of "civilization" and "progress."

MOST FREAKISH WEATHER in US history. Heaviest accumulation of rainfall ever recorded in East. An unprecedented volley of tornadoes. Floods that sent Mississippi & tributaries to record highs. Winter blizzards far to South. Over Memorial Day weekend, disastrous series of 196 tornadoes in 4-day period: over 700 so far: almost sure to top 1000 for year. (USN 6:11)

NOTE: By itself, this would not necessarily be significant. Weather comes and goes. But "most freakish in history" is the newsmagazine's own description. We must be cautious of misguided sensationalism, but combined with all other converging Signs, this adds force to the prophetic picture of a last-day warning from God to wicked mankind.

What Knowledge Needed at Baptism?

As to the question "How much knowledge is necessary for a candidate to have?" we would say, as much as will make him a believer in the One Faith and Hope of the Gospel, and not a believer only, but as will make this faith in him WORK BY LOVE, so that he may become *revolutionized* in his inner man, and made implicitly subject to the will of God as it is done in heaven.

Whether a man possesses this amount of knowledge may be known by the EFFECT. To mind earthly things, to be conformed to the world, to lay treasures upon earth, to love the world and things of the world, to be covetous and parsimonious, etc., etc., are the attributes of the UNRENEWED creature. IF by knowledge his heart be changed in these carnal affections, and he has become the REVERSE of all these, yea, ready to be offered up a living sacrifice to God's will, he has knowledge enough TO BEGIN WITH.

"We are renewed by knowledge after the image of him that hath created us."

How much intelligent faith of this kind is there in the world?

—Bro. Thomas.

(Bro. Thomas' above analysis of the type and amount of comprehension that is necessary at baptism may go far to explain some of the problems and disappointments that perplex our ecclesias today)

August Answers

WHAT KING . . .

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Ate grass—Nebuchadnezzar | 26. Gave David Ziklag—Achish |
| 2. Was hidden—Joash | 27. Wanted a vineyard—Ahab |
| 3. Was a leper—Uzziah | 28. Defeated by Barak—Jabin |
| 4. Spared Agag—Saul | 29. Sheepmaster—Mesha (Moab) |
| 5. Was blinded—Zedekiah | 30. Saw writing on wall—Belshazzar |
| 6. Was very fat—Eglon | 31. Last king of Israel—Hoshea |
| 7. King of Elam—Chedorlaomer | 32. Reigned in Heshbon—Sihon |
| 8. King of Salem—Melchizedek | 33. Dreamed of animals—Pharaoh |
| 9. Killed Josiah—Necho | 34. Abraham prayed for—Abimelech |
| 10. Eaten of worms—Herod | 35. Named only in Proverbs—Lemuel |
| 11. Married Esther—Ahasuerus | 36. Killed by Samuel—Agag |
| 12. Was suffocated—Benhadad | 37. Consulted young men—Rehoboam |
| 13. Burned himself—Zimri | 38. Allied with Rezin—Pekah |
| 14. Drove furiously—Jehu | 39. We have no king but—Caesar |
| 15. Built Samaria—Omri | 40. The great & noble—Asnapper |
| 16. Killed Benhadad—Hazeael | 41. Recovered from boil—Hezekiah |
| 17. Diseased in feet—Asa | 42. Tried to curse Israel—Balak |
| 18. Lover of David—Hiram | 43. Caused Israel to sin—Jeroboam |
| 19. Burial of ass—Jehoiakim | 44. Almost persuaded—Agrippa |
| 20. Allied with Ahab—Jehoshaphat | 45. Captive to Egypt—Jehoahaz |
| 21. 1005 songs—Solomon | 46. Sent Ezra to Jerusalem—Artaxerxes |
| 22. Had iron bedstead—Og | 47. Besieged Jabeshgilead—Nahash |
| 23. Put Daniel in den—Darius | 48. Took gold shields—Shishak |
| 24. Besieged Hezekiah—Sennacherib | 49. Married Ahab daughter—Jehoram |
| 25. Conquered Babylon—Cyrus | 50. Filled Jerusalem with blood—Manasseh |
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