

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.

**For the present, please send all Berean communications to:
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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

ESPERANCE 6450, Western Australia—2 Emily Street—Memorial 11 am; Class Thursday 7:30 pm—Bro. Ray Hodges (same address).

LOVING Greetings to our brethren and sisters of like precious Faith.

Sister Tina Quenby made a quick trip to visit us recently, and to share together the strengthening comfort and joy of the memorial meeting. We truly appreciate the pleasure of our sister's company.

It is our duty also to report that bro. Robert Johnson departed our midst in unusual circumstances, in that he gave no indication of his intention to leave. We have waited some time in the expectation of a letter, but such has not eventuated. Bro. Johnson and our ecclesia were subjected to some correspondence from past associates of bro. Johnson. This pricking—arising, as far as we can ascertain, from personalities—has, we feel, influenced bro. Johnson to quietly move on so as not to involve our ecclesia in past personality problems. We are disappointed at this loss of contact with bro. Johnson.

In November I made a quick trip to Perth, and had the joy of the memorial meeting with the Kardinya ecclesia. The following weekend, bro. Jeff & sis. Faye Hodges made their first visit to the new Kardinya ecclesia to share the bond of fellowship at the memorial meeting.

We thank the brethren and sisters for the many letters we receive: how much brighter they make the day appear! We also acknowledge our appreciation of the hours and expense devoted to the Tape Service. These tapes are a welcome source of instruction, exhortation, comfort, and unifying bond, particularly to isolated ecclesias. With love in the Truth from the Esperance ecclesia, —bro. Ray Hodges

SAN ANGELO, Texas—English Room, Castus Hotel (all except first Sundays)—S.S. 10 am; Memorial 11. First Sundays at homes. Rec. bro. Gary Smith, Box 28, Nolan, Tex. 79537. Phone near hall: (915) 653-5187 (Bro. N. Mammone).

LOVING Greetings to the Household of Faith.

Since our last correspondence we have had many visitors, which have uplifted our hearts with exhortations, and fellowship with those of like precious Faith. They were: bro. & sis. Ross Wolfe, sis. Lois Hurst (Lampasas); bro. Carwyn Smith, bro. David Vanpelt, sis. Susan Sumler, sis. Kay Wolfe (Houston); bro. & sis. Bob Wolfe (Wichita Falls).

It is strengthening to have 2 of like Faith join us in our ecclesia. We welcome bro. Ronnie Wolfe from Lampasas, and bro. Terry Webb from Houston.

Bro. & sis. Abel Duran have moved to Wichita Falls, and we commend them to that ecclesia. With love in the Truth, —bro. Gary Smith

DECEMBER ANSWERS OCCUPATIONS

1. Cain—Tiller of ground
2. Abel—Shepherd
3. Hege—Keeper of women
4. Luke—Physician
5. Jubal—Musician
6. Noah—Husbandman
7. Cush—Runner
8. Pilate—Governor
9. Amos—Herdman
10. Lydia—Seller of purple
11. Hagar—Handmaid
12. Julius—Centurion
13. Philip—Evangelist
14. Zenas—Lawyer
15. James—Fisherman
16. Gallio—Deputy
17. Mesha—Sheepmaster

18. Josiah—King

19. Lysias—Chief captain
20. Simon—Tanner
21. Asaph—Singer
22. Chuza—Steward
23. Aquila—Tentmaker
24. Dorcas—Garment maker
25. Rachel—Shepherdess
26. Gideon—Judge
27. Rehum—Chancellor
28. Shebna—Scribe
29. Balaam—Soothsayer
30. Huldah—Prophetess
31. Elymas—Sorcerer
32. Erastus—Chamberlain
33. Publius—Chief man
34. Michael—Archangel
35. Nimrod—Hunter
36. Goliath—Champion
37. Tiberius—Emperor

38. Candace—Queen

39. Deborah—Nurse
40. Lysanias—Tetrarch
41. Caiaphas—High Priest
42. Potiphar—Captain of guard
43. Barabbas—Robber
44. Gamaliel—Doctor
45. Tertullus—Orator
46. Zaccheus—Publican
47. Dionysius—Areopagite
48. Sosthenes—Ruler of synagogue
49. Nehemiah—Cupbearer
50. Alexander—Coppersmith
51. Demetrius—Silversmith
52. Tubal-cain—Metal worker
53. John Mark—Minister
54. Mithredath—Treasurer
55. Nicodemus—Ruler of Jews
56. Ahithophel—Counsellor
57. Ebedmelech—Eunuch

TO THOSE WHO LIKE THE BEREAN—

—we ask that you recommend it to others. We have no special interest in payment: that is optional. We are happy to send it free if so desired. We put a lot of work into it, and we would like to get it into the hands of any who would appreciate it.

The Times of the Gentiles

"If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"—I Peter 4:18

THERE are a number of things in the Mt. Olivet prophecy that are of deep interest. The one we'd like to speak of at this time relates to the *'Times of the Gentiles.'* Jesus had been telling his disciples about the forthcoming siege of Jerusalem, and the great distress that would come upon the land, and how God's wrath would be poured out upon the people. Then he added (Luke 21: 24)—

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, UNTIL THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES BE FULFILLED."

Scripturally speaking, there are but 2 classes of people in the world: *Jews and Gentiles.* The nation of Israel was brought into being when they left Egypt under the leadership of Moses. At Sinai, they received their national laws, and a system of religion designed to keep God ever before them in all phases of their individual and national life.

When they entered the Land of Promise, their occupation of it was conditional upon obedience. This is dealt with at great length in Deut. 28. In the event of obedience, Moses said that—

"If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and do all His commandments which I command thee this day, the Lord thy God will set thee on high *above all nations of the earth*" (v. 1).

In addition to that, other inestimable blessings are set forth in the following 12 verses. But if they should be disobedient, manifold curses should come upon them. And finally (v.64)—

"The Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other, and there thou shalt serve other gods."

There is no question about the Divine inspiration of this remarkably prophetic chapter. It has been fulfilled in all its minute and terrible detail. Read it, and lay it beside the history of this unhappy people. Israel, so highly favoured, was persistently disobedient, till, about 720 BC, the 10 tribes of the northern kingdom were carried away by Assyria. About 150 years later, the remaining 2 tribe kingdom of Judah was taken away by Nebuchadnezzar, and Israel—as a nation and a kingdom—ceased to exist. Summing up their history, God said—

"They have done evil in My sight, and have provoked Me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day" (2 Kings 21:15).

In the meantime, the 'Times of the Gentiles' had their beginning about 600 BC with the rise of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar as the 'Head of Gold' of the great Gentile Image—Dan. 2:38—and these Times have continued unto the present day, the period of the divided feet.

In the days of Jesus, the people of Israel—tho subject to the Gentiles—were still maintaining many of their national forms and characteristics; but were rapidly approaching the time of final overthrow—

"THESE (said Jesus) be the *days of vengeance*, that all things which are written may be fulfilled"

(Luke 21:22).

The period in which the 'Times of the Gentiles' are to be fulfilled is referred to in Scripture as 'the Day of the Lord,' 'that Day,' 'the latter days,' 'the last days,' etc. These terms are used by Jesus, the prophets, and the apostles. Peter writes in considerable detail of these times:

"There shall come in the last days scoffers walking after their own lusts and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?—for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation"

(2 Peter 3:3-4).

Of the promise of these times, he says (v.13)—

"We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Paul goes deeper in the subject, saying to Timothy (2 Tim. 3:1-4)—

"In the last days, perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, *lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.*"

It maybe said that natural, animal man has always been like this. And that is true. But surely never to the degree & extent that it is increasingly becoming in this generation—and at a time when man is making such protestations of civilization and advancement.

It is evident Paul is not speaking entirely of men of the world, for he says of them—

"Having a *form of godliness*, but denying the *power* thereof" (v. 5).

—and the context (vs. 6-7) shows he is talking of false 'brethren.' It is not our prerogative to accuse any brother of possessing any of these distinctive traits, nor are we expected to search for them. But Paul says there *will* be such in the last days; therefore we must not be surprised (nor too cast down) at anything that may happen.

As we peruse this list, and think on each item, we realize that *all human nature is subject to each of the items enumerated, but in various degrees*. Certainly the most subtle and pervasive of them is—

"Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."

Naturally, we all love pleasure. But the whole secret of life is to become such 'lovers of God' that all our pleasure is in Him. Where there is true love, all pleasure is bound up within that love.

The people of the world are pleasure-mad, and it is big and profitable business to cater to this childishness and immaturity by various methods. In the field of what they call 'sport,' where large crowds assemble to see grown men act like children, they are carried away thru the excitement of animal feeling to a state of mass-hysteria which satisfies the lust of the flesh.

But in this, there is considerable exertion required. Therefore new forms of indolent pastime had to be designed to bring 'pleasure' without effort. This has been accomplished by television, *the most insidious and mind-numbing form of 'pleasure' ever created*, by which men and women are able to loll in comfort while the desires of the carnal mind are excited and gratified.

Our consideration of Paul's words should excite within us a desire to check up on *our way* of living. How far into the world have we slipped? To what extent are we 'lovers of pleasure'? 2 Cor. 13:5—

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the Faith: *prove (test) your own selves*."

This is no idle exhortation. The world has intruded very strongly into the Brotherhood. As we view the closing days of Gentile Times, looking in faith for the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, may we have the courage and wisdom to *place all our activities under the microscope of God's Word*, and undertake a comprehensive introspection, and give ourselves no rest until we are assuredly in true harmony and peace with God and His holy commandments of life.

The standard is high. The requirements are rigorous. The way is narrow—and 'few there be that find it.'

These are Jesus' words: not ours. Let us not indulge in the unwise practice of 'comparing ourselves with ourselves'—those around us—& so be put fatally off-guard. Let us compare ourselves with the Word—

"If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly & sinner appear?"

If these words of Jesus, Peter and Paul are not forceful enough to rouse brethren and sisters to the solemn, life-denying responsibilities of their 'high calling in Christ Jesus,' then only God's voice peeling from heaven in tones of thunder as at Sinai, will make them tremble (*but too late!*) in His Presence. That dread but glorious Day is near at hand. Let us have the wisdom in the short time left to spend every moment endeavouring to be ready for it.—G.A.G.

The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error

THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error"—1 John 4:6

BY BROTHER JOHN THOMAS

THE generation of the 'Spirit' of Christendom is a *natural process*, and susceptible of the following explanation. The brain, that part of the flesh which does the thinking of the man—styled by the apostle 'the thinking of the flesh'—Rom. 8:7—is an aggregation of organs so congenitally endowed as to be capable of manifesting moral or spiritual results, styled veneration, benevolence, conscientiousness, marvellousness, hope, etc. These sentiments are intrinsically blind, and incompetent to discern between the true and the false.

Like all the organs, they experience pleasurable sensations in their normal exercise. The pleasurable is not derived from the nature of the individual ideas or objects of the class of images peculiar to them, but from their healthy physical exercise. The worship of a piece of wood, or the bone of a dead man, is as pleasurable to Veneration as the worship of a king, an angel, or God. It is not the object worshiped, but the *worshiping action*, that gratifies the

organ. Every organ is excited by its own peculiar stimulus, irrespective of its intrinsic qualities. Set all the organs named into action by their peculiar excitants, and a spirit will be developed compounded of reverence, kindness, credulity, hope, conscientiousness, etc.

When this spirit is observed in Christendom, it is styled a 'christian' and 'holy' spirit. In Mohammedism, it is styled the 'spirit of the faithful.' And so forth. The particular creed is not regarded. The different creeds act as excitants, being adapted to different classes of minds. The spirit is the same, whether the creed-excitant be the Koran, the Mass Book, the Liturgy, or pulpit declamation. It is the spirit of the flesh, which sings consolation to its own ignorance, saying—

*"For forms of faith let senseless bigots fight:
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right"*

This same spirit reigns in all sects, and dwells in the hearts of all their pious ones. It is a spirit that talks a great deal about 'union' and 'grace' and 'love': love of souls, love of Christ, love of brethren. But the talk begins and ends in adorable self.

So notorious is it that the Bible has nothing to do in the production of this 'christian' (or rather 'Christendom') spirit, that when an *enlightened* faith is advocated as the basis of a genuine Christian spirit, it reviles the principle, ignores 'head religion,' and becomes marvellously enraptured with 'religion in the heart,' and 'grace in the immortal soul.'

'Religious experiences,' so called, are the vagaries of this spirit of the flesh. Babes are born into sectarian families dwelling in the mists of the Apostasy. As they grow up, they become infected with the 'strong delusion' everywhere present. Their Cautiousness is powerfully acted upon. They hear of eternal torments for graceless souls. They hear long and fervid 'prayers' for God to give them 'religion'; to send the Holy Ghost and fire into their heads to convert them. The spiritual atmosphere becomes intensely hot, and they begin to relax under the exalted temperature.

They sleep; they dream; and spectral images scare them in the visions of their heads. They awake, and find their organs permanently mesmerized, and—knowing no better—they declare it is the Holy Ghost that has converted them, and pardoned their sins.

Their infatuation is complete. They *have* experienced a change, & they *know* that the Bible has had nothing to do with it. In their case, then, they discover that 'the Spirit operates independently of the Word.' Of what value then is the Word to them? They were converted without the Word. They knew nothing of the Kingdom when they were converted. It is therefore of no vital consequence. Hence the Word is laid aside as the 'letter that killeth,' while the 'Spirit' makes alive.

Now, we believe in the existence of this Spirit. And we believe that it *is* this Spirit that converts the people. But we deny in toto that God, or the Holy Spirit, or the Truth, have anything to do with its operations.

We deny that the Spirit cherished by the Apostasy is anything else than that old perverse spirit styled by John 'THE SPIRIT OF ERROR,'—1 John 4: 6, and which is always in hostility to the 'Spirit of the Truth.'

All sections of Christendom profess to be 'taught of God.' The feelings and sentiments of their unenlightened hearts they attribute to the Holy Spirit, and thus impute to God the denying of Himself in teaching errors mutually contradictory of each other. Does He teach one man to worship dead men's bones and ghosts & go to the Pope's priest for absolution, and then teach another to protest against such practices? Does He teach *trans*-substantiation to the papists, *con*-substantiation to the Lutherans, and 'emblematicism' to Calvinists? Does He teach papists the Cross-sign, and Presbyterians that the Cross-sign is the Beast's mark? Does He teach some sprinkling, and others that immersion is the only way, and others still that both are useless carnal ordinances, and baptism of the heart is the only baptism?

Yet all these sectaries profess to have the 'Spirit,' & proclaim that they are all pious members of one 'common Christianity.'

Jesus said to the apostles—

"All things I have heard of My Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15).

"Take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh by you" (Matt. 10:19-20).

"He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me . . . He that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth Him that sent me" (Matt. 10:40; Luke 10:16).

Great indeed then must be the authority of the apostolic teaching—teaching that can be no less than the teaching of God. Truly might such apostles say, '*We are of God*'—1 John 4: 6, and exhort the faithful to—

"Be mindful of the words before spoken by the holy prophets, & of the commandment of *us* the apostles of the Lord and Saviour" (2 Pet. 3:2).

—for Christ makes their authority in doctrine equal to the Father's, Whose Spirit spoke by them all, teaching but one system of Truth from Genesis to Revelation. Being, then, thus divinely authorized, they laid down the following rule by which it might be known who, like themselves, were 'of God' and 'knew God'; and who had His Spirit, and who had it not—

"He that KNOWETH God *heareth us*; he that is NOT of God *heareth not us*. HEREBY know we the *Spirit of Truth* and the *Spirit of Error*" (1 John 4:6).

A man, then, deceives himself, if he say he knows God and is a child of God, and yet speaks in opposition to or not in accordance with the obvious teaching of the apostles. He deceives himself if he say he is 'taught of God,' and what he professes to have learned is contrary to their words. He deceives himself if he say he has the Holy Spirit—which is the Spirit of *Truth*—in his heart, and at the same time it can be shown by the teaching of the apostles that he does not understand the Truth. Yea, he deceives himself with the 'deceivableness of unrighteousness' if he say he has the spirit of Christ in disposition, or the Holy Spirit as a gift—even tho he understand the Truth—if that understanding leave him in disobedience.

Under all these states of self-deception, he may be very sanctimonious; talk a great deal about Providence, and grace, and love in the heart; roll up his eyes and lift his hand in pious adoration; have the gift of prophecy, understand all mysteries, and have all knowledge; he may have a faith that will remove mountains; he may bestow of his goods to feed the poor, and give his body to be burned—he may be proficient in all these striking manifestations—

But if he have not LOVE, which is the '*fulfilling of the law*'—Rom. 13:10—the 'doing whatsoever Jesus commanded'—John 14: 15, 21, 23, 24; and which '*rejoiceth in the Truth*' and believeth and hopeth all things promised and set forth in the teaching of God—1 Cor. 13: 6-7—then he is as 'sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. The Lord Jesus saith—

"He that doth not love me is he that doth not keep my sayings" (John 14:24).

To which the apostle adds (1 Tim. 6: 3)—

"If any man consent not to the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the teaching which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing."

Shall we then admit a man has the Holy Spirit in his heart because he talks piously, while he is ignorant of the apostles' doctrine, and consequently without true faith, and disobedient?

We do not believe in the holiness of a spirit that dwells in such hearts. The Holy Spirit dwells not in those who 'get religion' apart from the Word of reconciliation ministered in the writings of the prophets and apostles. The religion they get in this way comes not from the Spirit of God, but from the Spirit of Error, which reigns in the schools, colleges and 'sacred desks' of Anti-Christendom—the phrenal sentiments, mesmerically excited by the traditions of the Apostasy.

* * *

But, while we condemn such a spirit as this, and the sickly piety it generates, we devoutly believe in the Spirit of God, which is holy & true. This Spirit is co-eternal with God Himself. It is the emanation of His incorruptible substance: out of which He has generated the universe, by which He is present everywhere, and with which He pervades all things—Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13; 33:4; Psa. 104:30; 39:7. God and His Spirit are inseparable. His Spirit, in measure, sustains all created things in life; so that when withdrawn, they perish, and man returns to dust—Job 34: 14. In immeasurable combination with sinful flesh, the Spirit is '*God manifest in the flesh*.'—1 Tim. 3: 16, and named 'I SHALL BE THE POWERFUL,' or 'Jesus' in the Greek.

God speaks by His Spirit through prophets and apostles; therefore what they say, the Spirit says. God, by His Spirit, also spake through Jesus; so that what he said, the Father said. In their doctrine, therefore, the prophets, apostles, Jesus and the Father are one. *God has rarely spoken to mankind by His Spirit, except through certain selected individuals.*

What the Spirit caused them to utter has a quickening effect upon them that believe it. Therefore their words, which are also the Spirit's words, are said to be '*spirit and life*'—John 6: 63. Hence, when a man believes the Truth, he believes the Spirit: "Because the Spirit is the Truth" (1 John 5: 6).

But when he rejects the Truth, he resists the Spirit. It is absurd, therefore, for such—however pious—to profess to have the Spirit. The Spirit, in a moral sense, dwells in the heart when the Truth dwells there in full scriptural assurance of faith and hope, *and then only.*

Before the Day of Pentecost there were many believers of the Truth in Judea. Jesus was 'the Truth and the Life,' and many believed in him as such, & believed also the Gospel of the Kingdom he preached. They were truly pious people, who feared God, and were of good report, praying also to God always. They had been baptized, likewise, in the Jordan, with the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins—

"Applauding God, being baptized with the baptism of John" (Luke 7:29).

Added to this, they were approved of Jesus, who said to them—

"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

Are there any of the pious of our day who can put forth greater evidences of sanctity, or higher claims to the Divine favour, that they not only believed Jesus was the Son of Israel's God, but they believed *what he preached*, which 19th century sectarians do not.

But they did not receive the Holy Spirit 'in order that by its physical operation upon their hearts they may be converted; or, being converted, that they may be comforted and guided into all the Truth.'

Let the reader mark this well. We repeat, with all the emphasis that can be thrown into the words, that the saints—the personal friends of the Lord Jesus—*did not*, while he was with them, *receive the Holy Spirit*. No statement is susceptible of easier demonstration by Scripture than this. In John 7: 39 it is written—

"This he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him *should* receive, for *the Holy Spirit was not yet given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

Thus, men are invited *first* to believe. The Spirit is not promised to enable them to believe, or to convert them, or to 'give them religion.' But, if given at all, it is given to those whose faith has first inducted them into Jesus.

But it may be with apparent reason objected that this was true *before* the ascension, but that then Jesus was glorified, and therefore now the Spirit is given. We admit that (Eph. 4:8)—

"He ascended on high, leading captivity captive, and received gifts for men."

But these gifts were not to enable the recipients of them to believe on him, but were bestowed (1 Peter 1:22) because they *had*—

"Purified their souls in the obedience of the Truth in regard to spirit."

—and therefore had become clean vessels, or fit receptacles for so holy & peculiar a treasure. The apostles were first cleansed by the Word before they received the Spirit—John 15:3. And on Pentecost, the 3000 believed before the Spirit was promised to them—Acts 2:37-38. In short, *the Holy Spirit was only for the obedient in word and deed*—

"We are witnesses of these things [say the apostles], and so is the Holy Spirit, which God has given *to them that obey Him*" (Acts 5:32).

There is a sense in which the Holy Spirit operated upon the minds of men to produce faith in apostolic times, which, however, does not apply to ours. *He operated as a witness*. He spoke by the apostles, & confirmed what was spoken by signs & wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts. The seeing and hearing of these things with the organs of sense, was the operation of God upon the minds of the people, and the delivery of His testimony in this way is styled by Peter—1 Peter 1: 12—

"Preaching the Glad Tidings *with the Holy Spirit* sent down from heaven."

And by Paul—

"Speaking and preaching *in demonstration of Spirit* and power: that faith should stand in God's power" (1 Cor. 2:4-5).

But there is no such preaching as this now. The Spirit doth not bear witness by signs, wonders, miracles and gifts now. His testimony is confined to the written Word, which contains all that God has to say to men until Jesus comes again. There are no spiritual ideas or 'feelings' in Christendom worth one cent, which are not contained in or produced by the written Word. All else is spurious, and exhales from the flesh, like the spirituality of ghost-seers and seekers of the dead—

"To the Law and the Testimony: if they speak not *according to this Word*, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa.8:20).

The faith-producing power resides in the testimony. Hence Paul went to Corinth to 'declare the testimony of God'—1 Cor. 2: 1. No testimony, then no faith. 'The Spirit,' 'the Testimony,' 'the Truth,' 'the Word,' in regard to sinners, are but different phrases expressive of the same converting, or faith-producing, power. By this, and not by a physico-spiritual operation upon the brain, with or without the Word, does God beget men and women as sons and daughters—

"Of His Own will begat He us *by the Word of Truth*, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures"
(James 1:18).

—of whom Peter also, as one of them, saith that they were '*begotten by the Word of God*' which as good news as preached to them—1 Peter 1: 23-25. When these people's hearts were purified by belief of the Testimony—

"*With Thy precepts Thou hast QUICKENED me*" (Psa. 119:93)

"The entrance of *Thy Words* giveth light" (Psa. 119:130).

—*some of them* became recipients of the Holy Spirit, or 'spiritual gifts.' They were not bestowed upon all; but upon obedient persons, having certain natural and moral attributes qualifying them for a proper use of the gifts. The Spirit was given, not for their own private advantage, but for the profit of all the members of a particular heritage.

The gifts were imparted to the recipients that they might be—

"Perfected for the work of the ministry, in order that they might build up the Body of Christ" (Eph.4:12).

The ministry of God's heritages was 'THE MINISTRATION OF THE SPIRIT'—2 Cor. 3:8, through certain approved and qualified saints, styled—

"Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, overseers, servants."

—among whom were distributed:

"Diversities of gifts," "differences of administrations," and "diversities of operations."

—distinctively named—

"The word of wisdom," "the word of knowledge," "faith" for signs and wonders, "gifts of healing," "the working of miracles," "prophecy" or speaking to edification, exhortation and comfort, "discerning of spirits," "kinds of tongues;" "interpretation of tongues" (Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Cor. 12:4-10).

Here were 9 distinct gifts of the Holy Spirit; and all who possessed them could give indisputable evidence to others that they had them, *which modern pretenders to the Holy Spirit cannot do.*

The spiritual and temporal affairs of God's heritages were ruled by ministers thus endowed, as those (Acts 20:28)—

"Whom *the Holy Spirit* had made overseers over the flock, to feed the congregation of the Lord which he had purchased with his own blood."

It was from among these ministries that 'grievous wolves not sparing the flock' were to arise, speaking perverse things to draw disciples after them—vs-29-30. In process of time they arose abundantly, as Paul predicted. And from the perversities they established have fructified those ministerial shams which pertain to the Roman and Protestant sectarianism of the Apostasy.

The 'Ministration of the Spirit' placed by the Lord Jesus in 'the heritages' shone forth in each of them. The Spirit was the holy oil which supplied the lamps of the stem-body and its branches. Hence each 'heritage' was a 7-branched Lightstand burning with holy Spirit-oil. For this reason the 7 congregations of Anatolia are styled in the Apocalypse '7 Lightstands,' in the midst of which Jesus says he walked—Rev. 2:1.

Reader, consider what a luminous spectacle it must have presented to the faithful eye of an observer, surveying the Roman habitable, & beholding these Spirit-Lightstands, like cities upon lofty hills, shining in a multitude of its towns and villages!

But now turn and view the more extended Habitable of the 19th century. Dost thou now behold an illuminated world? Where are the heritages enlightened by the Spirit, shining forth on a retiring darkness? You behold ministrations in abundance on every side, but where in the midst of them do you discern the 'Ministration of the *Spirit*'?

You see multitudes of pretenders to spirituality in person and administration: but the thing—the *reality*—where is that? If thy vision be enlightened by the Word, canst thou perceive aught but darkness visible, a darkness that may be felt?

Thus the 'true Light' that shone so brightly in the days of John—1 John 2: 8 has passed away; and the prediction of Isaiah obtains, who testified that, when Zion should arise and shine because her Light had come and the glory of the Lord had risen upon her (60:1-2)—

"Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people."

The Ministration of the Spirit was established in a hierarchy provisionally appointed. The members of the hierarchy were not all of the same rank. Though all brethren in Christ, some held more elevated and important

positions than others. Those who ranked *first* were apostles; *2nd*, prophets; *3rd*, teachers; *after that*, miracles; *then* gifts of healings, helps, superintendents, diversities of tongues—1 Cor.12:28.

Thus the ministry of the Word was: first, the confirmation of the Word; next, temporal affairs; and tongues (so much coveted) last in honour and degree.

But this hierarchy was not intended to be permanent. It was to continue only till perfection should come—1 Cor. 13: 10; Eph.4: 13. The age of the apostles was the childhood, youth, and manhood of the 'One Body.' This Body attained the perfection of manhood when all its members came:

"... into the unity of the Faith, & of the knowledge of the Son of God."

This 'unity' was perfected when the Lord sent them a revelation of the times and seasons, by his servant John—Rev 1: 1. The 'Faith and Knowledge' were then summed up in what we now call the Bible, which came to supersede the 'Ministration of the Spirit' in a hierarchy. Spiritual gifts were withdrawn, and 'faith, hope and love' alone remained. Thus 'that which was in part' was done away—1 Cor. 13:10.

Spiritual gifts had answered their purpose. They had enabled Christianity to strike its roots deeply into society, so that no power could eradicate it entirely. God had presented His heritages with a complete Book, and He now said to them (Rev. 12:11)—

"Testify ... overcome the great Red Dragon by the blood of the Lamb, and by the *word of your testimony*, and love not your lives unto the death."

This injunction many faithfully obeyed; for in the 5th Seal period of their conflict, they were in a remarkable degree (Rev. 6:9)—

"Slain for the *Word of God*, and for the *Testimony* which they held."

—for in that persecution of 10 years duration, the Roman emperor—concluding that Christianity could not be suppressed while they were in existence—did his utmost to exterminate every copy of the sacred Writings extant. Many delivered up their copies to save their lives, & were consequently stigmatized by their brethren as *Traditors*. But multitudes jeopardized life, liberty, and estate, rather than be guilty of so vile a thing.

From that time to the present, the policy of the Beasts, their Image, and the Dragon, has been to suppress the Bible. It is the policy, likewise, of all in whom their spirit reigns: if not to suppress it, then to cause it to be interpreted by rules that prevent it testifying against their 'vested interests.' While Protestant Bible Societies diligently multiply and circulate the Scriptures in all parts of the earth, Protestant divines teach that the Spirit gives religion without an understanding of it, and that it is for the most part unintelligible. This teaching is almost as effectual in excluding it as the proscription of princes.**

**The modern and very effective method of destroying the power of the Scriptures while professing to honour them, is to multiply Versions' (actually human paraphrases) that freely introduce the doctrines of men and grossly distort and obscure the Divine Word. It would be very difficult, if not impossible, to learn the Truth and the mind of God from any of the versions since the Revised. And free and loose rewording, instead of faithful translating, makes it impossible to check the new versions' corruptions by concordances and lexicons.

The Bible, intelligently read by the people, if they were hearty in their convictions, would break up every sect in Christendom. But there is no fear of this result. The leaders of the people have brought the Bible into disrepute. They have taught the people to say that anything, the most contradictory, can be proved from the Scriptures. It has, therefore come to this: that the doctrine of the Scriptures is acknowledged so far as it comports with the stereotyped creed. And where it does not sanction this, it is to be understood as signifying something else than what the words declare.

In the ministration of the Spirit by a hierarchy, the 'Faith & Knowledge' were distributed in the preaching, teaching and exhortation among apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers. But when perfection of manhood—"the *measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*" —was attained, this distribution ceased. Bible unity of doctrine is now all-sufficient for making men 'wise unto salvation,' purifying their hearts and reducing them to obedience. Read what Paul says upon this point in 2 Tim. 3:15-17.

The Spirit dwells in a man *by this doctrine believed and obeyed*. Where the doctrine is not, the Spirit is not. But where the testimony concerning Christ dwells richly in a man in all wisdom, and he teaches it faithfully, the Spirit ministers by him, and says 'Come.'—Rev. 22:17. In these times, we have no faith in any 'inspiration' that comes in any other way than by the Truth believed. It is all delusion talking about 'having the Spirit' and at the same time being ignorant of the Truth. The Spirit does not dwell in dark and dirty places.

In the days of the Apocalypse, the 7 Churches of Anatolia were becoming thus defiled. They had left their first love. They were infested with the disciples of Balaam and the adherents of Jezebel. Death had overshadowed them; debility had seized upon them; and lukewarmness paralyzed their enterprise.

The Lord Jesus, who walked among them, saw that apostasy was establishing itself in their midst. He accordingly threatened them with various evils he would bring upon them, if they did not change their minds, & return from their misdeeds to the position from whence they had fallen. Among these threatenings was the very remarkable one that *the hierarchial ministration of the Spirit should be removed*. Thus to the 'angel' or hierarchy of the Ephesian heritage, one of the 'stars of his right hand'—Rev. 1: 16, 20, he says (Rev. 2: 5)—

"Remember from whence thou art fallen, and change thy mind, and do thy first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will *remove thy lightstand out of its place*, except thou repent."

As Paul had foretold, men had entered into the Ephesian hierarchy, saying they were apostles, but were not so. They acted perversely, teaching the doctrine and doing the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which were hateful to the Lord. We have no means of knowing whether his exhortations to repentance were regarded or not**. If they were, it was probably but a fitful and transient reformation.

**Many, using these letters in an effort to justify unsound fellowship, overlook this fact.

Those in the church who had tried these self-styled apostles & found them liars, would doubtless redouble their *efforts to eject them*, and to suppress their heresies, on receiving from the Patmian Exile the Lord Jesus' approbation of the stand they had taken. But experience teaches that when evil sets in, the resistance of faith is sooner or later overcome. For, tho Truth is mighty, righteousness will not prevail in Churches or States till the presence of Christ shall intimidate the vile.

This experience is illustrated by the fate, not only of the 7 Anatolian congregations, but of all the Lord's heritages planted by the Spirit in the primitive age. In all the Roman Habitable not one remains. Smyrna, Thessalonica, Athens, Philadelphia, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, etc., still exist; but as containing lights for the illumination of the surrounding darkness, they exist no more. The fate of Ephesus & Laodicea—uninhabited ruins—is the type of Christianity in those once populous and divinely-favoured cities.

The Lord's threat is an accomplished fact throughout the Habitable. The Lightstands have been removed, and the lights extinguished. Roman, Greek and Protestant hierarchies lord it over the countries, but they are carcasses without life.

From this view then of the Spirit in conversion, administration & gift, it is evident that we are not to be imposed upon by pretenders. If one come to us and testify that the Spirit of God converted him, we ask him what he knows about the Kingdom of God. If he tells us that the 'Church' is the 'Kingdom of grace,' and beyond the skies the 'Kingdom of glory,' we know that he is self-deceived, and the Spirit had nothing to do with his 'conversion'; for the Spirit—being the Truth—converts men *to the Truth*, and not to falsehood.

If another declare that he 'got religion from the Spirit,' and at the time knew nothing of the prophets, we know that he is self-deceived, for the Spirit preached the prophets by Jesus and the apostles.

If another say that he received the Holy Spirit when he was immersed—and yet have no more wisdom, knowledge, faith, hope and love than before he went into the water — we know he is self-deceived, for the Holy Spirit was never given unattended with results.

If another affirm he is converted, and has the Spirit in his heart, and at the same time makes a bonfire of all the promises, and denies restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land, we know he is self-deceived, for the Spirit dwells not in hearts that rebel against his testimony.

And what shall we say more? Time would fail us for enumerating the self-deception the 'pious' practise on themselves in matters concerning the Spirit. Our experience is that they who talk most about the Holy Ghost are—when tried by the Word—they who have it least. They mistake their own flesh-pleasing, spiritual pride for the Spirit of God with them. Hearts inhabited by God's Spirit 'rejoice in the Truth'— 1 Cor. 5: 6, because—

"The Spirit *is the Truth*" (1 John 5: 6).

But they who are ignorant or sceptical of the Promises, be they ever so pious of tone, face, or phrase—the bland and complacent 'spirit' that makes them 'feel so good' is the 'Spirit of Error,' ever most congenial to simple flesh.

Our conclusion then is this: that they who receive the Truth receive the Spirit *in receiving the Truth*; and that the measure of the Spirit enjoyed is that of the Truth believed, and intelligently and heartily obeyed. An ocean of free spirit could not produce more acceptable and highly spiritual Christian results than this. 1 John 5:4—

"This is the victory that overcometh the world—OUR FAITH."

—Herald, Dec, 1856

Answers to Bible Questions

BY BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

OUR CHILDREN AT THE LAST DAY

THERE is no revelation as to what will be done with the children of those who will be called away to judgment when Christ comes. Therefore we can only reason from analogy of past divine procedure. God has always shown respect to the friends and dependents of those who belong to Him. Even the scornful sons of Lot in Sodom were offered the opportunity of escape from the destruction impending over the place (Gen. 19:14).

If there were to be no further dealings with mortals after the coming of Christ (as the orthodox idea of the 'last day' presupposes), there could be no reason for expecting any consideration for the children and friends of the saints.

But considering that it is much otherwise, considering that the time will have then arrived for the first thorough taking in hand of the human race with a view to their blessedness in Abraham after chastisement, there is every reason to expect that the docile relatives and dependents of the people of God will be offered an asylum in the East, where the work will for some considerable time be confined. They may be among the strangers that come to sojourn in the land, to whom a settlement and inheritance will be given among the tribes (Ezek. 47:22-3). —Feb. '95

THOSE WHO SUBMIT WHEN CHRIST COMES

THE command promulgated to the nations of the world at Christ's coming to—

"Fear God & give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come" (Rev. 14:7)

—implies that submission will be accepted. So also with the precept belonging to the same era:

"Be wise now, O ye kings... Kiss the Son lest he be angry" (Psa. 2).

It is consequently probable that all who are contemporary with the arrival of Christ in the earth who submit to him will be permitted to escape the judgments that will destroy those who oppose him; and that they will be permitted to live under the Kingdom as subjects, to whom the door of eternal life at the close of the Kingdom will be open for them to enter, on the conditions of the Age.

But as for those who know beforehand, and do not obey, there is no ground for such a hope in their case:

"Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name?" (Matt. 7).

This refers to the myriad professors who have filled the earth during Christ's absence, and who have made the service of Christ their ostensible work, but who have been 'workers of iniquity' all the while. —February, 1894

THE UNFORGIVABLE SIN

HEB. 10:26-27 refers to those whose insubordination to Christ has gone so far as the attitude described in vs. 28-29—

"Hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace."

The case is paralleled with the man who '*despised Moses' Law*' (v.28). A man may err through weakness without '*despising the law of Christ and treading him underfoot.*' All sin is dangerous, but '*There is a sin not unto death,*' as John says.

The '*wilful sin*' spoken of in Heb. 10, and '*blasphemy against the Holy Spirit,*' (Matt. 12:31), are in character the same. They are the resistance of human wilfulness to the claims of a manifestly divine law—the manifestation in the case being the works by which, in the apostolic age, it was attested.

We direct the attention of the 'weak and despondent brethren' to the explicit declaration of Christ that:
"ALL manner of sin shall be forgiven unto men EXCEPT the sin against the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 12:31).

If some, in our age, think they have sinned against the Holy Spirit, they make a mistake against themselves, unless they have done what the Pharisees did—which is very unlikely. These men scornfully attributed to human sorcery the works of Christ, which were of the Holy Spirit. They therefore insulted the Majesty of heaven in a way that Jesus says would not be passed over.

The weak brethren to whom you refer have not done this, unless they have joined the scorers of the world in blaspheming the Scriptures, which are the work of the Holy Spirit. And even then, it is questionable whether—in the absence of the open evidence of miracle—their responsibility would be so great as that which attached to men who saw the works of Christ, 'which none other man did.'

The brethren you refer to have sinned in other ways. You do right to encourage them to 'hope in his mercy.' The intercession of Christ is all-prevailing. It is God's Own provision—

"He ever liveth to make intercession for us according to the will of God" (Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:27).

Let them 'confess their sins, and forsake them.' This is the reasonable condition of forgiveness:

"Let them return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon them, & to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Is. 55:7).

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us" (1 John 1:9).

Jesus taught the disciples to pray for this:

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us."

He commands us to forgive '70 times 7.' Will the Father be less merciful? Only to the unmerciful will He show unmercy, or to the presumptuous, or the godless who fear Him not and pay no regard to His commandments.

To those who love Him, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight, He is 'ever merciful' and will pardon. Such will all say at last—

"He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Psa. 103:10).

It is well to fear, and stand in awe of His holiness; but it is never well to despair. It is better to try again, to:

"Strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees" (Isa. 35:3).

Tell the brethren it is better to die trying, than to accept failure beforehand. Hope—till the Lord himself at the judgment seat forbids. He is not likely to do this with those who love him & follow him, amid whatever weakness.

—February, 1894

ISRAEL 'ALL RIGHTEOUS':

While it is true Israel will be 'all righteous' when re-established in the Land of Promise under the New Covenant (Isa. 60:21), still the restoration will not be the *result* of their righteousness. See Ezek. 36:32: 'Not for your sakes, etc' Their righteousness is to be the result of special discipline (Ezek. 20:37-38). Their restoration is for God's glory (Ezek. 36:22-23).

—July, 1894

THE SUMMONS TO JUDGMENT

THE details connected with the summons to judgment at the coming of Chris are not revealed. The most we are told is that the dead will rise first (1 Thess. 4: 16), and that "He shall send forth his angels to gather together his elect" (Matt. 24:31), and that they shall be 'caught away' to the meeting (1 Thess. 4:17).

All beyond this is speculation, and of very little importance, for what does it matter how we are conveyed to the Lord's presence? It is the solemn fact that is all in all.

So also with the question of children too young to know the Truth, or of husbands and wives that are unbelievers. What is to become of them is a question on which no positive information has been vouchsafed. We can only reason from what the Lord has done in past interferences on this point, having in view the fact that the Kingdom to which the saints are called away is a Kingdom in which mortal flesh and blood will be governed for enlightenment and blessing.

God has always shown merciful regard to the friends and dependents of His people. The probability is that, like the willing Egyptians at the Exodus or Lot's sons-in-law at the destruction of Sodom, they will be offered the choice of removal with the saints.

As to previous 'notice' admitting of arrangements and adjustments, God is a God of order; and we can only say it is probable there will be such notice. But nothing is certain—except that the Lord *will* come, and that it will be *woe unto us if we are not ready*.
—November 1896

THE SABBATH

WE do not keep the Sabbath because Christ never enjoined it. The contention that the Ten Commandments delivered on tables of stone to Moses are a binding code on all disciples of Christ, is in entire opposition to the declaration of Paul that they were a 'ministration of death, written and engraven on stones' which has been '*done away*'—(2 Cor. 3:7,11); & that believers are no longer under the Law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14); and therefore at liberty on all 'questions of eating and drinking, and the observance of feasts, *Sabbaths*, and holy days' (Rom. 14:5-7); Col. 2:16; 1 Cor. 10:25).
—March, 1894

THE DEVILS THAT BELIEVE

THE 'devils that believe' (James 2:19) were the demoniacs—the deranged men and women—whose belief was of no value to them, being by mere servile superstition, and not the enlightened faith that works by love.

If the word 'demons' had been allowed to appear in the text (according to the wish of the American revisers), it would have presented no difficulty to you.

The word 'devil' is a different word, with a much larger meaning. You will find the subject amplified in the pamphlet *The Evil One*, and in the lecture on the Devil in *Christendom Astray*.
—February, 1894

WAS ADAM'S NATURE CHANGED?

"You said in 1869 that there was no change in Adam's nature at the time he transgressed. Now you seem to say there was. I see in the same article (1869) you speak of condemnation 'running in the blood,' which looks like the same position you take now."

Ans: Adam before and after transgression was the same nature, but in 2 different states—the 2nd state being expressed by the word 'mortal,' or subject to death, which is not affirmable of the first. The sentence of death became a physical law of his being: hence it has passed on us, who are derived from him.

We 'bear the image of the earthy' in its second or condemned state, in which it became heir to ills unknown to the first.

When the Dr. speaks of 'nature unchanged taking its course,' he means nature *unchanged into the spiritual body*. He does not mean that the law of death, inoperative before, did not set in. He does not contradict himself. The glib assertion that he does only indicates the superficial thinking of the speaker.
—February, 1874

THE FAULTINESS OF THE FIRST COVENANT

"For if that First Covenant had been faultless"(Heb. 8:7).

DID God make a faulty Covenant? No, not in the sense of its being unadapted for the purpose for which it was given, but in the sense only of being incapable of leading Israel to perfection—

"The Law made nothing perfect" (Heb. 7:19).

If you ask why it made nothing perfect, Paul's answer is that it was 'weak through the flesh' (Rom. 8:3). In itself, it was 'holy, just and good' (Rom.7:12), but those upon whom it was enjoined were incapable of meeting its requirements.

Why then was it given them? So that man's sinfulness might be manifested to himself (Rom. 7:13-14; 5:20); that every mouth might be stopped (Rom.3:19); and the way cleared for the manifestation of the mercy of God thru faith (Gal. 3:22; Rom. 4:16). It was a preliminary dispensation of the Divine government laying a foundation for a final result of a very glorious kind, but being in itself merely a proximate agency of that result.

No doubt 'finding fault with *them*' (Heb.8:8) refers to *Israel*, with whom He found fault in the message in which the description of the New Covenant occurs; but this does not interfere with the faultiness of v. 7, referring to the 1st Covenant. —January, 1894

PRIESTHOOD BEFORE THE LAW

PRIESTHOOD is as old as sacrifice; and sacrifice goes back to the gate of Eden. But it took time to develop in the definite form finally assumed. When men were few upon the earth, there was no need for one man to officiate for others: every obedient man offered his own sacrifice.

Priesthood consisted originally of the simple act of offering the sacrifice required. Abel appears in this character: afterwards Noah, Melchizedek and Abraham: so Isaac and Jacob.

After them, Levi & his sons, when Israel multiplied, took the matter in hand for others, before the times of the Law: probably by the direction of Jacob, and certainly because of the special aptitude exhibited, as written in Mal. 2:5-6. This was before the formal separation of the tribe of Levi in the wilderness, and the selection of the family of Aaron. And this accounts for the description of the Levites prior to that event as 'the priests that come near to the Lord' (Exod. 19:22).

The separation of the Levites in the wilderness when Israel became a nation, appears to be the natural culmination of the preparatory process going on in previous times. —January, 1894

ALIEN MARRIAGE

A BROTHER marrying out of Christ, while recognizing such an act to be against the law of Christ, undoubtedly places himself in the position of a sinner. *If he REPENT and CONFESS his sin*, the only course open to us is to receive him, leaving to Christ the question of whether his sin has been a 'wilful' sin in the sense of Heb.10:26. There is a sin unto death, but it is not for man to pronounce such fearful verdict. —June, 1894

HOUR FOR BREAKING OF BREAD

THE object of the breaking of bread is to 'show forth the Lord's death till he come' (1 Cor. 11: 26), and to keep Christ 'in remembrance' (Luke 22:19). The man therefore who talks about 'all the memorial meetings throughout the world being invalid' because not held at a particular hour, is a man who speaks not according to wisdom, but who speaks according to the impoverishing traditions of the Judaizing sectaries of the first century, who stickled for 'days and months and times and years' (Gal. 4:10). Do not give place to such an idea for an hour.

The 'validity' of the breaking of bread depends upon the reality of our recollection of the Lord, and not upon the time or the place of our meeting, nor upon the chemical quality of the bread or wine we use. If a brother thinking otherwise is willing to conform to the wholesome practice of the brethren in the matter, let him alone. If he sought to enforce his views, you could not submit. —Dec, 1896

Seek the Lord, and Ye Shall Live

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"—Amos 3:3

THE PROPHECY OF AMOS

AMOS was one of the earliest prophets whose writings have come down to us. Only Jonah appears to have been earlier. Jonah prophesied concerning the conquests of Jeroboam II—2 Kings 14:25, apparently between the time Jehu lost these territories & Jeroboam regained them. In Amos' time they appear to have been already regained—6:2.

Amos prophesied in the days of Uzziah of Judah and Jeroboam II of Israel: around 780-740 BC. Isaiah and Hosea also prophesied under these kings, but they both continued until the time of Hezekiah, so they in all probability started somewhat later than Amos.

Our principal purpose in studying any portion of Scripture must be for lessons and guidance for *ourselves*. This, says Paul, was why it was recorded—1 Cor. 10: 11; Rom. 15:4. We must constantly remember this.

Amos' name appears to mean *Burden or Burden-bearer*. Except for the last few verses of the book, all is judgment, condemnation & punishment. Amos' prophecy is concerned principally with the northern kingdom of Israel. Judah and Israel were both at this time at the summit of prosperity. Uzziah and Jeroboam II were strong and competent rulers. And in both cases we are told the prosperity and strength were of God's mercy and testing. But these kings and their people thought it was of their own cleverness and ability.

Everything outwardly appeared in order, and even especially blessed by God. And truly they were blessed (2 Kings 14:26-27)—

"The Lord saw the affliction of Israel... and saved them by the hand of Jeroboam."

And concerning Uzziah—

"God made him to prosper . . . He was marvellously helped till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction" (2 Chron. 26).

Let us note well that just because God blesses us, it does not necessarily mean He approves what we are doing, or is pleased with us. It may be just the final test, the final manifestation of His patience, the final opportunity before a terrible judgment. It was so with Israel.

About 800 BC Assyria had crushed Syria, which had long oppressed Israel. Then followed a period of about 50 years in which Assyria was weak and inactive, which left Israel without major adversaries. With no strong close neighbour, and with Damascus in decline, Israel controlled the trade routes between Egypt and Mesopotamia, & Samaria became the thriving central market for East-West trade.

A powerful merchant class arose with their 'summer houses' and 'winter houses' and 'ivory houses'—against which worldly corruption and luxury Amos cries in words of simple righteousness. The poor were oppressed: the rich got richer, and accumulated wealth & lands at the expense of the poor. Then by the power of their wickedly-acquired wealth, they bought up & enslaved the debt-ridden poor. The Law of Moses was specifically designed to prevent this, and teach liberality and mercy; just as the Law of Christ is designed to prevent inequity and to teach large-hearted sharing and free liberality.

It was in this period that Amos prophesied of judgment to come. Israel was peaceful and prosperous, and very attentive to the external forms of serving and worshiping God. They were well satisfied with themselves: considering themselves to be greatly blessed for their piety and great religious activity.

The shrines and altars and images in Israel had been cleansed of Baal worship. They were now professedly devoted to Yahweh, but it was a manmade form of worship, and therefore an abomination. The only acceptable worship is that which God Himself specifies.

They had a false idea of God, like the heathen. There was no recognition of the necessity of righteousness and holiness. They thought God must protect them as long as they recognized Him and offered sacrifices to Him. It was a religion that was dead to basic inner goodness and fellow-feeling for others. Amos insists from beginning to end on the necessity of a pure, righteous, godly personal life.

All evil comes from one source: separation from and disharmony with God. Union with Him in heart and mind is the solution to everything. The closer the union, the fuller the solution. There must be an ever-increasing harmonizing and uniting of the life with God.

Amos was of Tekoa, in Judah, 6 miles south of Bethlehem, and 12 miles south of Jerusalem. It was on a high hill, the last outpost overlooking the wilderness of Judea. It was, or had been, a fortified city of defence, a watch tower—Jer. 6: 1. Rehoboam built it for defence—2 Chron. 11: 6. Bethel, where Amos was sent to prophesy, was the royal sanctuary & religious centre of the northern Kingdom—1 Kings 12: 29. It was 12 miles north of Jerusalem, on the border of Benjamin and Ephraim. It is interesting that the unnamed 'man of God' was sent there from Judah to testify against Jeroboam I, just as Amos was sent there to testify against Jeroboam II nearly 200 years later.

Amos was a resented intruder: without friends and in danger of his life, but he faithfully proclaimed God's condemnation to the high officials of Israel. The immediate result of Amos' labours was failure, as has been the usual case from Noah onward, but he fulfilled his necessary duty of warning Israel; & he was thus a faithful part of the eternal plan that can never fail.

This too has a bearing for us. Indolence, timidity and self-indulgence often hide behind the excuse that there is no use our proclaiming the Word of God, because none will listen. The flesh is always looking for an excuse. Noah could have said the same. If he had, he would have perished with the rest of the ungodly. Our duty is to proclaim the Word in season and out of season, and leave the result to God.

Amos' mission of warning failed. There was no response; and the judgments soon began to fall. Right after Jeroboam's long and strong reign, there was internal strife: 3 kings in one year: 2 murdered. The Assyrian invasion began; and within 25 years Israel was carried away, and the northern kingdom ceased.

Amos was a simple herdman and dresser of sycamore trees, a very humble, lowly class in the land. He was in no way trained as a prophet, nor had he chosen that work. God called him directly from his simple labour, and sent him to pronounce ringing judgments against the pious, prosperous, self-satisfied kingdom of Israel. We cannot help but think of bro. Thomas when we think of Amos: personally gentle and sympathetic, but rigidly resolute and unsparing in condemnation of ungodliness and ungodly systems.

We must combine these qualities. There must be deep sympathy and understanding and patience. But at the same time there must be uncompromising insistence on holiness, righteousness and condemnation of evil—but with sadness and affection: never with bitterness or aggressiveness. At Amos' personal plea—and Amos was herein typical of all godly sounders of the Truth—God's judgments that he was sent to proclaim were twice postponed. But at last they fell irrevocably.

Amos had a very vivid comprehension of the greatness & nearness of God. He lived close to God: knew His will: heard His message. He saw all things in nature and in history in a Divine light, and measured them all by Divine standards. He shows God as boundless in dominion, infinite in power, perfect in holiness: controlling the mighty forces of nature and the destiny of nations, and searching each individual heart.

Amos' emphasis throughout is on personal holiness and righteousness, *because of* the eternal holiness and righteousness of God. His is one of the few books of the Bible in which the word 'love' does not occur: righteous judgment is the keynote. Amos' message is of obedience, righteousness, judgment: Hosea's is love, mercy, reconciliation. Both are essential: we must have the 'whole counsel' of God.

Amos' book is a ringing denunciation of all inhumanity, injustice, oppression, selfishness, luxury, unconcern for others. He emphasizes—

Justice between man and man: a deep, living, God-fearing, brotherly justice, as portrayed in the holy Law of Moses;

That privilege and blessing carries great responsibility;

That failure to rise to that responsibility brings terrible judgment.

His message is:

"Hear the Word of the Lord: Let judgment roll as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream ... *SEEK GOD, AND LIVE!*"

The whole pattern of salvation is summed up in these 4 short words: '*Seek God—and live!*' It could not be put more briefly or more strongly. This is the simple message of the whole Bible, repeated over and over: to impress, and to remind. The book is divided into 3 parts—

1. *Judgment on 6 surrounding nations, & Judah (1:3-2:4);*
2. *The bulk of the book: judgments on Israel, the northern kingdom;*
3. *The promise of final glorious restoration (last 7 vs. of the book).*

The first part—judgment on surrounding nations—concerns, beside Judah, 6 nations especially connected with Israel's history. The first 3 (Syria, Philistia & Tyre) are strictly Gentile. The second 3 (Edom, Ammon & Moab) are blood relations to Israel.

Of the 3 Gentile nations, 2 (Syria in the north and Philistia in the south) were specifically brought by God from elsewhere in His purpose of developing Israel—9:7. They were both bitter enemies of Israel, and often used by God as judicial oppressors. The 3rd (Tyre) began as a Gentile friend and helper, but became a corrupter, & at last an enemy.

All these surrounding nations were related to David's Kingdom, & were subject to him. They are referred to again in the final verses in connection with the final blessing under the greater David.

The judgments on these other nations are an introduction & build-up to the principal message: the judgment of Israel. If God judged the Gentile nations outside His specific Law, how much more Israel, who had been so specially blessed and privileged! But Israel took just the opposite message: that they could presume on special lenity and mercy. And so with us. We talk glibly about God's terrible judgments on the 'wicked' nations: what about our own so much greater obligations and responsibilities? *That* is what our concern should be.

The main part of the book (from the middle of ch. 2 to the middle of ch.9) again divides naturally into 2 parts—

1. *General judgments and condemnations (to the end of ch. 6);*
2. *Five special visions of calamity:
Locusts, Fire, Plumblin, Summer fruit. The Smitten Sanctuary.*

Amos dates his book—1:1 from 'the earthquake.' There are 8 literal, historical earthquakes in Scripture. The other 7 are all obviously miracles, so the great likelihood is that this one was too. They were—

Sinai Exod 19:18 *Jonathan* 1 Sam.14:15 *Uzziah* Amos 1:1 *Christ' death* Matt. 27:51
Korah Num. 16:31 *Elijah* 1 Kings 19:11 *Philippi* Acts 16:26 *Christ's return* Matt.28:2

This one made a very deep impression. Zechariah, 250 years later, refers to the terror it caused—14:5. Both references connect it with Uzziah: it may have been related to his presumptuous sin.

1:2—"The Lord will roar from Zion."

This word 'roar' (*sha'ag*) is the terrifying, paralyzing roar of the lion as he leaps upon his prey. We note man has borrowed this tactic: in the recent Mogadishu hijack rescue, 'stun-grenades' were used for momentary paralysis and shock. Here it indicates the judgment is imminent. This roaring from Zion is typical of the last days when—

"Out of Zion shall go forth the Law, & the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2).

It is, again, the lion-roar of the Rainbow Angel—Rev. 10:3.

1:3—"For 3 transgressions of Damascus, and for 4 ..."

Why is Syria at the head of the list? It was the worst and most recent enemy. From the days of Saul, it was almost continually at war with Israel. Even at this very moment, it—with Gog—is the most bitter of the foes who desire to destroy God's people and take their land.

God tells us by Amos—9: 7 that He had specially brought the Syrians and the Philistines to the land for His Own purpose, which was to discipline Israel. The movement of the Syrians and Philistines would *appear* very natural and self-determined. Men of 'science' in their mole-blindness spin endless learned theories on the supposed causes and purposes of national migrations. But God thru Amos gives the simple and all-sufficient answer: *He did it*. We are further told—

"When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. 32:8).

We must get this picture. We must think in these Divine terms. How useless and foolish are the ignorant theories of men!

Vs. 6-8 pronounce judgment on the Philistines. These were the people who gave their name to the whole land: Palestine. They were especially brought in God's purpose from Caphtor—9 : 7—most likely, Crete. They were among those left in the land to prove Israel—Judges 3:3. They were the 2nd great enemy of God's people, during the Judges & later: more especially of Judah, as the Syrians were of Israel. They were a highly developed people, with a strong political organization. They held the best of the land: the fruitful coastal plain.

Tyre is next denounced—vs.9-10, because they remembered not the 'brotherly covenant.' Hiram called Solomon 'brother'—1 Kings 9: 13, and he made a covenant with him—5:12. They were closely associated with Israel in the days of David and Solomon, and helped to build the Temple, but in Israel's distress they treacherously attacked them.

Edom too—vs.11-12 pursued his brother, and 'kept his wrath forever.' This enmity began with Jacob's deception about the blessing. The effects of actions continue long after: even today we still see the 'perpetual hatred' of Arab for Jew. Edom (*Red*: same root as Adam) typifies the flesh, the natural man. Isaiah and Ezekiel tell us Edom shall be desolate in the Millennium, when all the earth is blessed.

Ammon—vs. 13-15 was a son of Lot. Israel was not allowed to touch them when they came from Egypt. They were always hostile and barbarous. It was Nahash king of the Ammonites who, unprovoked, desired to put out the eyes of the men of Jabesh-gilead, and make them slaves, This led to the choice of Saul as king—1 Sam. 12:12.

Moab—2:1-3 Was the other son of Lot.

Judah—vs. 4-5 despised the law and kept not the commandments: a greater degree of responsibility and of punishment. Their own lies caused them to err. If we abandon the way of truth and righteousness, our own errors cause us to increasingly err: we create our own punishment.

We now come to Israel—2:6, the main subject of the book: from here to the end. The charge against them is injustice, mercilessness, corruption and luxury. God had established an ideal constitution under the Law of Moses: mercy, brotherliness, a simple way of life: constant renewal of the original equity & opportunity. But the flesh in its greed always takes advantage of the less able or fortunate, & is never satisfied.

God reviews His free blessings to them—vs. 9-11: destroying the Canaanites, delivering them from Egyptian bondage, giving them teachers in the prophets and examples in the Nazarites. We see here that the Nazarites were an important aspect in their national life: a blessing from God. But they corrupted the Nazarites: they resented them: wanted to bring them down to their own level.

2: 13—"I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves."

This is a marvellous and touching revelation. God feels. Paul says—

"Grieve not the holy spirit of God" (Eph.4:30).

Those who love expose themselves to hurt: and God in His marvellous mercy has condescended to love us. What great responsibility is ours!

Ch. 3 contains many well-known passages: some express basic truths more clearly than anywhere else in the Bible—

3:2—"You only have I known . . . therefore I will punish you."

God has spoken of the punishment of the nations around, as they have related to His purpose and His people. But Israel is very different. They are the *centre* of the purpose: infinitely closer and more intimate to God. God says—Rom. 1 that because of the obvious manifestation of Himself and His power and divinity in all the works of creation around us, *all mankind* are without excuse for not recognizing Him (how stupid is the folly of Evolution!).

So all are guilty to a degree, and He punishes in various ways, as He sees fit, and as His purposes require. But Israel stands alone as specially chosen and brought near and taught and favoured and *loved*. Their sins were again light and love. Here is where the comparison with ourselves enters. We few have been chosen from the earth's teeming and perishing millions to be called near to God, and shown the way of life and joy, and flooded with His personal love.

God does not call all. He calls as he sees fit, for His Own glory and purpose. But when He calls, tremendous responsibilities are involved, and tremendous opportunities. Life can never be the same again. We are no longer of the nameless multitude who live and die like animals, in ignorance. We must stand before Christ, & either be accepted forever into the Divine family, or pay the dread price of the rejection of the love of God. To us, as to Israel, He says—

"*You only have I known... therefore I will punish you for all your sins.*"

The way of righteousness is always presented as the only way of happiness and pleasure and true freedom:

"There is no peace to the wicked."

—and God makes sure there will not be. The disobedient may *seem* to prosper, but they never know true peace and joy, and the final bitter reckoning is never far away. This is the great lesson of Amos: the great, simple, eternal lesson of all Scripture—

"*Seek God—AND LIVE*" (5:4).

How simple, and obvious! But how universally ignored or forgotten, even by those who should know better. Truly, there are apparently attractive and desirable things to be given up, but how small and empty they are compared to the infinite joy offered to those who seek God with all their heart! And how disappointing most greatly desired things turn out to be, when at last we get them in this life. Like Solomon, we find at last that all is vanity, except one thing alone—

"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18).

3:3—"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

At the beginning, we have no 'agreement' or affinity with God. His is the mind of the Spirit, while we are wholly the mind of the flesh, & these 2 are at enmity, & are foolishness one to the other—Gal. 5:17; 1 Cor. 2:14.

But gradually, by the constant study of and meditation upon His Word, we come to assimilate to the intelligent mind of the Spirit, & lose the stupidity of the natural man. We are, as the Scriptures say—

"Renewed—transformed—in the spirit of our minds" (Eph. 4:23)

We enter more and more into the boundless, timeless Divine viewpoint. We put off, little by little, the corrupt, narrow pettiness of the flesh, and interest in fleshly things. Spiritual, eternal things become increasingly more important and more real to us.

This is a lifelong process: a constant, daily, *essential* process—if we are to be among the very, very few accepted at Christ's coming. This is the *whole* purpose for which we are given our present lives: to squander them on anything else is to guarantee failure.

3:6—"Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?"

Nowhere is this essential principle expounded more clearly than here. All things are of God. He watches and controls all: even to the fall of a sparrow. This is hard for us to comprehend, with our puny mental limitations, but we must *strive* to comprehend it. It is essential to our salvation that we steadily *grow toward* comprehending it. It is not just that God could be everywhere: He *is* everywhere. It is not just that He has power to see everything: He *does* see everything—

"Are not 5 sparrows sold for 2 farthings?—*not 1 of them* is forgotten before God."

Let us meditate on this till we begin to understand these things. This is the beginning of wisdom.

God is here speaking to His people. If there is evil, it is of God; & there is a reason. Usually it is a warning against, and a punishment of, sin. It is to make men *think*, and examine themselves: to make them realize that God is all-seeing and all-powerful—that none can successfully ignore His righteous laws, or set themselves against Him. Such evil on God's people is really a blessing of His love; an evidence of His Fatherhood and care—the chastisement of beloved sons—Heb.12:6.

Evil is not always an indication of sin, but sometimes of well-doing—

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

But its purpose is always the same: to teach something; to bring out inner characteristics; to test and strengthen faith by giving scope to its manifestation and exercise; to reveal to us our weakness and need; to manifest the uncertainty and brevity of present things.

3:7—"Surely the Lord will do nothing but He revealeth His secrets unto His servants the prophets."

Here again is a basic, oft-quoted scriptural principle for which we are indebted to Amos. It is a broad, comprehensive and comforting assurance that gives us incentive and confidence to study the whole range of the Divine Word of prophecy. It gives us confidence that there is a light to explain today's events, and what will come from them, as there has been for every generation.

Amos is working up to his basic message: his heavy message of condemnation and impending calamity to Israel.

3:8—"The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"

All fear when the lion roars. It is an ominous, terrifying sound, signifying that he has found and is falling upon his prey. How quick we are to recognize and fear and guard against natural dangers: but how slow to recognize, and even slower to do anything about, the much more terrible *spiritual* dangers that threaten us!

God had roared from Zion in His displeasure. To the ear of faith it was as real and near and terrifying as the nearby roar of the springing lion in the darkness. Would Israel have the wisdom to fear? They were too busy with their present prosperity, which seemed so real & important & lasting. But in less than 40 short years the whole nation was cruelly herded away as slaves in a foreign land.

V. 9 calls for the heathen nations to assemble to view the wickedness of Israel. That is, Israel's sins were such as to shock even the godless Gentiles. This is a strange, and yet sadly familiar phenomenon. Doubtless this too is of God: those who despise His love He gives over to a 'reprobate mind.' We remember Paul's words to Corinth—
"Such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles" (1 Cor. 5: 1).

I was deeply impressed in WWII how much more fair & considerate & patient & sympathetic—even under the great stress of national peril—some draft boards were with brethren than some brethren are with each other. Like Israel with the Law, to have the Truth without the spirit of the Truth seems to engender pride, self-satisfaction, and bitterness and contempt for others. The Catholic Church, directly descended (though apostate) from the apostolic Ecclesia, has the most vicious history of cruelty and corruption and wickedness in all human records. The flesh is an evil, deceitful, hateful thing; and men who have been called of God, unless they are transformed to holiness, tend to degenerate to demons. It is so easy, as Paul says, to use the liberty of Christ as a cloak of maliciousness. Doubtless this is Divine judgment upon abused enlightenment and privilege.

Luxury, self-indulgence by abuse of Divine blessings, and lack of consideration for others, are the sins with which Israel is charged—

3:15—"Winter houses ... summer houses ... ivory houses ... great houses."

How the flesh loves these monuments of unfaithful stewardship! They oppressed the poor, and crushed the needy—4: 1. How did they do this? The answer is quite instructive for us, because they did it quite legally and piously and self-justifyingly. Was it their fault or concern that others were less fortunate or less provident or had less ability? Were they their brother's keeper?

The Law of Moses was a divine, compassionate, spiritual dispensation with many provisions and safeguards for the comfort and care of the less fortunate or the less able. Under the Law, everyone *was* his brother's keeper, though not in the foolish modern way of burdening some so as to encourage others to be indolent. Today men do not give: they pass taxes to make others give.

Under the Law, they were not allowed to harvest their fruits efficiently, or reap their fields efficiently. They must deliberately leave some for the poor to glean—Lev. 23:22. They had to forgive debts every 7 years, and completely reapportion all real estate every 50 years—Deut. 15:1; 25:10. They could not charge the poor interest, nor refuse to lend to them. Every bankrupt, every failure—after 6 years bond-service to a successful man to teach him wisdom and industry—had to be set up again on his own, and *liberally* supplied with all the material necessities of success so he could try again—Lev. 25:36; Deut. 15:14.

The Law of Moses was all designed to teach that all things are of God, and given for the good of *all*—to teach the fundamental lesson that true living is loving, and true loving is giving. All were commanded to be liberal and open-handed; and to share their blessings freely.

Could it be possible that the Law of Christ requires less? When the people asked John the Baptist what they should do, he gave them the essence of Moses' Law:

"He that hath 2 coats, let him impart to him that hath none: & he that hath meat, let him do likewise" (Luke 3).

Very little is recorded of what this 'burning light' preached: do we realize the revolutionary significance of what is recorded? And when Christ himself came, he preached the same heavenly gospel—

"Sell what thou hast, and give alms ... Give, and it shall be given unto you: *with the same measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you*" (Luke 12:33; 6:30-38).

All this was the very *opposite* of the flesh, but it was and is God's required Way of Life. Doubtless the Israelites to whom Amos preached did everything legally according to *man's* laws, for they were very pious and proud of themselves. But to God, their way of life was selfishness and wickedness and oppression and greed.

At the same time, there was a tremendous display of religious observance and activity—

4:5—"Proclaim and publish the free offerings."

Make a big show and boast of all the extra, unrequired sacrifices you bring—

"For this liketh you." Or, margin: "For so ye love."

They loved to glory in what they *thought* they were doing for God. It is the same story today: a tremendous show of religion and charity, but an individual self-pleasing and self-glorification, and an ignoring of the holy commandments of God and the welfare of others.

Doubtless it was so in Noah's day, and in Sodom & Gomorrah: very religious, and meticulous in worship. We know it was so in Christ's day, and he said they were worse than Sodom and Gomorrah—Matt. 11: 23.

The point for us is that these hypocritical things are not far from any of us. We all have the selfish, wicked, self-justifying heart of the flesh to contend with. Only the daily, prayerful, meditative study of God's Word can save any of us from our subtle self-deceit.

Vs. 6-11 speak of the various ways God had already afflicted them: famine, drought, blight, plagues, sword, earthquake. But they were blind and deaf in their self-delusion. We must not make the same fatal error. We must consider every incident in our lives as lessons and disciplines from God: the blessings as tests, the evils as warnings. We must be alert and awake to everything that could teach us something.

Having disciplined them with restrained and limited severity many times, God is at last about to cast them off—

4:12—"Therefore . . . prepare to meet thy God, O Israel!"

This is another of Amos' sayings that has become proverbial. "*Prepare to meet thy God!*" This should be the over-riding and ever-present thought in the minds of every one of us. This alone, in all the world, is real. All else is passing shadows.

It should be *joyful, eager* anticipation. Surely, what could be more exciting and desirable? 'Prepare to meet thy God.' It is what the righteous have longed for for ages. It is the promise to the pure in heart.

But Israel, like poor stupid animals, took no heed of the glory of the invitation, nor the dreadfulness of the warning: so it has ever been.

Chapter 5 is a prophetic lamentation—

5:2—"The virgin of Israel is fallen: she shall no more rise"

But the invitation is still open:

5:4—"Seek ye Me, and ye shall live."

This is Amos' whole message: the message of all the prophets: "*Seek God, and live*" It is very simple, very elementary: but everything in life at last boils down to this, and this alone: "*Seek God: and live.*"

5:8—"Seek Him Who maketh the 7 stars and Orion."

Surely this alone is wisdom! We marvel of the glories and beauties of Creation—on the earth and in the vast heavens. We are invited to the intimate companionship of Him Who made them all. Why, then, is it that our poor crawling animal natures cling so blindly to grubby earthy things?

5:8—"Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord!"

They were so convinced of their acceptability that they *desired* the Day of the Lord: wicked, selfish, luxurious Israel! Is it possible to be so utterly self-deceived? That is the whole point. It is not just possible: it is very easy, very natural. We have the same picture at Laodicea—

"I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (Rev. 2:17).

But the all-discerning Spirit's verdict was: "Poor, blind, miserable, naked."

The flesh, the natural mind, is no guide. It is only by rigidly testing ourselves by the commands of God in their full strength and import that we can see ourselves truly. Isaiah says of this same people—

"They seek Me daily . . . They take delight in approaching to God. Is this what I have chosen: to bow the head as a bulrush and spread sackcloth under him? . . . Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the poor into thine houses, and clothe the naked?" (Isa. 58:2-7).

And Christ says the same, in condemning the religious hypocrites of his day. The message has not changed; nor has the flesh.

5:21-23—"I despise your feast days . . . I will not accept your offerings . . . Take away the noise of your songs."

They were truly a very religious nation. God's Name was ever on their lips. But what good is religion without *personal purity and holiness*, or piety without full-hearted love and service of neighbour?

Ch.6 speaks of the thoughtless and indulgent revellings in Israel, & the terrible sufferings and tremendous death-toll of the soon-coming 3-year siege of Samaria by the Assyrians.

The sufferings were indeed terrible, as they were later in Jerusalem. God is loving and merciful, and these were God's Own chosen people; but because they chose to ignore His commands and follow their own thoughts, He gave them over to the most dreadful miseries. His love and mercy were in His constant efforts to persuade them to walk in the way of wisdom and obedience, *before it was too late*. Love & mercy are for *now*: not for the judgment seat, if the now has been wasted.

6:13—"Ye say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?"

Paul says to the same attitude:

"What hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

And Moses said:

"It is the *Lord* that *giveth* thee power to get wealth" (Deut. 8:18).

The most foolish part of all man's foolishness is attributing anything to himself, and depending on and boasting in his own strength or wisdom or ability. God today, as foretold, has given men great knowledge and ability. Like in the last days of Israel, He has greatly blessed the race with opportunity.

But, like Israel, they have used it very wickedly—in rivalry, war, oppression and pride. What God gives, He can take away in a moment, and humble the highest and proudest in the dust. In 40 years, proud and prosperous Israel was utterly destroyed. It does not appear that modern man has anywhere near that long to go.

Ch. 7 begins visions of calamities. First, 3 visitations of increasing severity: a further warning in God's mercy. He did not bring the Assyrians all at once to destroy them, but gradually. Still Israel did not heed

7:1 —"He formed grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth. Then said I, O Lord God, forgive, I beseech Thee: by whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?"

Amos, the prophet of judgment, pleaded for mercy. This must be the attitude, the heartfelt desire, of all who proclaim God's judgments. Otherwise we are but fierce Jehus, with 'zeal for the Lord' only for destruction. We must, in faithfulness, point out what we believe to be wrong. But it must always be done in sympathy and compassion and the fellow-feeling of deeply-realized personal unworthiness.

This prophecy of the grasshoppers was fulfilled in 2 Kings 15:19-20, when Tiglath Pileser, king of Assyria, came against Israel about 740 BC. Menahem raised a tribute and bought them off. Israel now had 20 years to go. The second warning judgment followed—

7:4—"The Lord God called to contend by fire, and it devoured the great deep, and did eat up a part."

The king of Assyria came again about 730 BC, and carried away many captives—2 Kings 15:29. Amos, typical of the 'salt of the earth' class, pleaded for mercy for wicked Israel, and again final destruction was postponed. Israel now had 10 years to go. The specific cause of this 2nd visitation was that the kings of Israel and Syria had united to attack Judah with the purpose of destroying the House of David & setting up their own choice as king in Judah.

Isaiah promised Judah help from God, and gave the prophecy of the virgin with child, but king Ahaz chose rather to appeal to the Assyrian power, sending them all the treasures of the Temple, and causing them to come against Israel & Syria. To all outward appearances, these were just natural political events, but Amos shows us it was all in the hands of God, and fulfilling His purposes. So by the light of prophecy must we see and realize the hand of God today.

In the 3rd judicial vision—7: 7 Amos sees a plumbline, and is told—

7:8—"Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of My people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more."

This was to be the end — and so it was. The plumbline is a fitting symbol of the spirit of Amos' whole prophecy: the searching and undeviating perfect standard of righteousness: that by which all must at last be tried.

This 3rd and final judgment, from which there was no possibility of turning back, is recorded in 2 Kings 17. Typically, and in harmony with God's ways of retribution, its immediate cause was Israel's own treachery. Hoshea, the last king, after being supported in the kingdom by Assyria and covenanting to serve them, conspired with Egypt. The king of Assyria came; Samaria was besieged 3 years with great suffering and loss of life, as Amos had warned; and finally the kingdom was broken up and most of the people carried away to Assyria.

Summing up Israel's sad history, 2 Kings 17:7-22 gives a long catalogue of their persistent and continued disobedience, from the day of their coming out of Egypt, concluding (v. 23)—

"Until the Lord removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day."

They had chosen from the beginning to give God lip service, but to do just as they wanted, and cater to their own desires. And this was the inevitable result at last, as it always must be.

Ch. 8 opens with the 4th vision of judgment: the basket of summer fruit. Fruit is a fitting symbol here. The Scriptures say much about fruit: good fruit and bad fruit; selfish fruit for oneself; unselfish fruit for others. Israel was indeed at this time a basket of fruit: beautiful and rich-looking, but ripe to the harvest—already plucked and soon to be devoured. Their fruit was gathered, and it was evil fruit: by the fruit the tree is known. Hosea said at this same time, and it is God's great indictment of Israel after the flesh, by which Israel after the Spirit would do well to constantly examine itself—

"Israel is an *empty* vine: he bringeth forth fruit *unto himself*" (10:1).

This has always been the great weakness and tendency of the flesh, even supposedly enlightened flesh: to spend its energies and efforts on its own interests and desires, forgetting that its whole reason for existence, and hope for the future, is to serve God and not itself. Beyond life's necessities, we have no time for anything except God's work, if we desire to be faithful and accepted stewards of God's grace. Sadly it was the same in Paul's day, even among 'believers.' He says—

"I have no man likeminded [except Timothy] who will naturally care for your state, for all seek their own, not the things which are Christ's" (Phil. 2:20).

Speaking of the oppression of the powerful, and their cruel treatment of the poor, God says:

8:8—"Shall not the land tremble for this?"

This appears to be clearly a reference to the great earthquake that Amos mentions at the beginning, & strengthens the probability that it was a Divine visitation to warn Israel and confirm Amos' words.

8:9—"I will cause the sun to go down at noon."

As Amos prophesied, to all appearances they were enjoying high noon: strong and prosperous, with much of their day before them. Everything seems stable and secure. Amos' words seemed impossible of fulfilment, but within that generation, all was gone.

8:11 — "I will send a famine, not of bread and water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the Lord, and shall not find it."

And truly they did, when it was too late. This time will come at last for us all. We remember the parable of the foolish virgins. Today we have the Word in our hands, with plenty of opportunity to *study* it that we may be 'wise unto salvation': not just a ritual 20 minutes a day, and then back as fast as we can to present, passing things. How true for us are the words of the Psalmist we often sing?—

"O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation *all the day*" (Psa. 119:97).

It is only those of such a heart who will stand approved at the last day. Today is the day of opportunity: tomorrow may be too late.

In ch.9 the thunderings of judgment reach their peak in words of terrible bitterness and severity: there are no stronger in all Scripture. Then at the end, the glorious promise of final restoration and peace.

9:1 — "I saw the Lord standing upon the altar."

This is a very striking figure. The altar is the place of worship and mercy and acceptance. But now God Himself stands upon it in wrath to slay them and drive them away.

"And He said, Smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake."

Judgment begins at the House of God: the whole corrupt religious edifice. We cannot help but see here a veiled reference to the nation's smiting of Christ: the culmination of their sins. He is the lintel of the Door, as faithful Jews and Gentiles are the 2 Side-posts.

None shall escape the day of judgment, wherever they may flee—

9:4—"I will set Mine eye upon them for evil and not for good."

"Behold the goodness *and the severity of God*"—Rom. 11:22: infinite, inconceivable goodness, the boundless treasures of eternity, to those who cast aside everything else and seek Him with all their heart and strength—implacable severity, the deepest of sorrows, to those who are self-willed and disobedient.

As we read these terrible first 8 vs. of ch.9, they may to our fleshly minds seem dreadfully cruel. But they are of God's mercy: warnings to impress Israel and us with the tragic folly of fighting against omnipotent goodness, and ignoring God's holy commands.

9:7—"Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto Me?"

Israel's great delusion was that they were something special in themselves; and this is the commonest delusion among Christadelphians, too. Somehow we assume that just because we happen to have been called, we are all set, and we can please ourselves as to what we do with our lives: that we can live comfortably and amuse ourselves with goods God has entrusted to us *for His use*—just like the rest of the perishing world—and still coast into eternal salvation, just because we have memorized the First Principles of the Gospel of God.

If Israel's delusion seems foolish to us, what can be said of this delusion! God demands the whole life: the whole heart and strength and devotion. There is never a hint in Scripture that He will be satisfied with less. If the words of Scripture mean anything at all, then He demands a daily, a *continuous* 'living sacrifice,' a living service, an agonizing for perfection, a hungering and thirsting for righteousness. Is it too much to ask? Do we expect eternal life at bargain basement prices? What do we have *in ourselves*, that millions in the world do not have, and more? God's salvation is only for those who *never feel they have done enough for Him*: who are always striving to do more.

If the terrible calamities foretold by Amos for God's Own chosen and beloved people teach us anything, they should teach us this. Israel had a special place in God's purpose—for *His use and service*. So do we. We should never cease day and night to give thanks that for some reason known only to God we have been called from the world's darkness and ignorance. But it is not because we are arbitrarily favoured. It is, like Israel, for *use and service* in His purpose.

If we, like Israel, fail to rise to these great responsibilities for which we have been called, our judgment will be the same as theirs. We are 'not our own'—1 Cor. 6: 19. We are not free just to amuse ourselves and do as we will. We are slaves of a glorious Master for a glorious purpose. We must glorify God in our spirit and in our body—1 Cor. 6:20, and in *everything* we do in our whole lives.

The change to the final message of blessing begins in v. 8. Then a very striking statement follows—

9:9—"I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, as corn is sifted in a sieve: yet shall not the least grain fall to the earth. All the sinners of My people shall die."

This is another very interesting and important principle of truth for which we are indebted to Amos. In all the long history of Israel's dispersion and suffering, there is nothing haphazard or by chance. There are no mistakes. *Not one true grain is ever lost.*

There is great comfort in this revelation. It gives us the true picture of God's operations among the nations. What may appear to be blanket and indiscriminate pouring out of judgment on a group just as a group, is revealed rather as a very carefully controlled and supervised operation of God's omniscience. Not one true grain, not one potential saint, is ever lost:

"Are not 5 sparrows sold for 2 farthings? Yet not one of them falleth without my Father."

It is hard for our dull minds to comprehend these marvellous Divine things, but they are recorded for our comfort and our learning. We *must* dwell upon them till our cramped and sluggish perceptions are refined. We are but

a speck in time and space, and God encompasses all time and space. And yet He invites us, for just the tiny, token price of a few brief years of service—which love, if it *is* love, will be eager and anxious to render—to share eternally His divine nature.

9:11—"In that day will I raise up the Tabernacle of David that is fallen."

What day? This is a new thought. The context hasn't mentioned any day. Clearly it is 'that Day' of which Peter says—

"God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets" (Acts 3:21).

In all his heavy burden of judgment, this is Amos' first and only mention of it, but his proclamation of it is one of the most striking and oft-quoted. It would not be fitting, nor complete, nor would it serve the purpose for which the prophecy was given, to close without reference to the final consummation to which the Divine plans tend.

Every one of the 16 prophetic books ends this way except Jonah and Nahum, who speak of God's judgment on the Assyrian—typical and antitypical: so they cover the consummation with equal comfort from a different perspective.

9:12—"That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the Gentiles, which are called by My Name."

Here again, as so often in the Messianic prophecies, is a reference to the inclusion of all mankind in the purpose. In the great controversy over requiring the Gentiles to keep the Law of Moses, James in Acts 15 quotes this passage from Amos in reference to the inclusion of the Gentiles in the Divine plan, and having quoted it, he emphasizes its lesson—

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

This is the God in Whom we trust, and there is great comfort in finding one portion of Scripture quoted as divine 800 years later in another portion of Scripture. There is no doubt as to how the inspired apostles viewed the inspired Word. To these men, who were guided by God's Spirit, the Scriptures were in truth God's infallible Word, & so they are and will always be to those who know God in truth.

Amos speaks—vs. 13-14 of the removal of the Adamic curse, and the abundant fruitfulness of the land in the Kingdom of God. And he finally closes—v. 15 with the assurance that this last gathering of Israel will be *for ever*, and they shall never be moved again. Here is the great consummation of the Divine plan of the ages: all the earth at rest & filled with the knowledge and glory of God.

These last few verses give beauty and meaning and purpose and hope to what would otherwise be just a sad catalogue of wickedness, judgment and suffering. Truly, as Paul says, the Creation was made subject to vanity *in hope*—Rom. 8:20. And at last, after all the 'groaning and travailing together in pain,' will come the deliverance of the final eternal glorious liberty of the true Sons of God.

Let us then press forward in hope, remembering these key thoughts that Amos contributes to the great prophetic pattern—

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

"Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?"

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, except He reveal His secrets to His servants the prophets."

"Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel!"

"Seek the Lord—and live!"

"Seek Him that made the Seven Stars and Orion."

"Hate the evil, and love the good."

"Let justice roll as waters, & righteousness as a mighty stream."

"I will sift the House of Israel as corn is sifted in a sieve: yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth."

"In that Day will I raise up the Tabernacle of David that is fallen."

"I will plant them in their own land, & they shall no more be plucked up."

—G.V.G.

Current Events Fulfilling Prophecy

ON TO CAIRO: ARABS IN DISARRAY. For first time in 30years, Israel able to negotiate directly with an Arab state. And for first time, an Arab nation has publicly recognized Israel, its right to exist, & its need for security.

Sadat has eliminated, for the present, the US plan for a comprehensive peace between Israel & all its Arab foes. Returning from Jerusalem, Sadat swiftly expelled PLO leaders from Egypt, & shut down the PLO Radio in Egypt.

Politically, economically & militarily, Egypt can't take another war. That is why Sadat made his unprecedented overtures: 30 yrs. on a war footing has bled Egypt white. Signs of deterioration are on every hand: schools, hospitals, urban services alarmingly run down; buildings & streets crumbling & in disrepair.

Foreign debt of \$12 billion equals annual gross national product. War costs are over \$4 billion a year.

Similarly, Israelis pay up to half their incomes to meet heavy defence spending. Tho Israel has frontiers with 4 Arab nations, only way in or out is by air or sea. In border towns, civilians have to be on guard at all times.

PLO is in no mood to soften its hatred of Israel: refuses to recognize Israel's right to exist as a nation. PLO leaders have no power to control factions. Radical PLO groups are able to flout central control because they are financed by Iraq & Libya, who oppose any peace settlement with Israel. (USN 12:5)

* * *

Another dramatic, bold proposal by Sadat: invited Arabs, Israel, US & Russia to peace talks in Cairo next week. Israel quickly accepted. His call has plunged Arab world into even greater disarray. Sudan, Morocco, Oman & Somalia support him. Jordan, Tunisia & Saudi Arabia lean toward him. But Algeria, Libya, Iraq, Syria & PLO violently oppose his moves for peace with Israel.

Saudi Arabia has little choice but to support him. If he were overthrown, he would undoubtedly be replaced by a more radical leader, which would increase the power of the Arab radicals, & open the door to Russia.

US trying to deal itself back into the action; but for the moment it's definitely on the sidelines. In one weekend at Jerusalem, Sadat has accomplished what years of haggling thru intermediaries did not achieve. Even Israel's most hard-lining factions say time has come to reappraise their basic stands. "We're faced with a new political situation," admitted the leader of the hawkish National Religious Party, "and we'll have to be ready for compromise."

Many West Bankers are uncomfortable with the PLO. They desperately want Israel's occupation to end; but they are a mercantile society, & they want continued trade with Israel. They worry that PLO means to set up a trouble-making, pro-Russian enclave in the West Bank, tho they pay lip-service to the PLO.

All of Israel is vastly more hopeful than it was 2 weeks ago: 90% believe the Sadat visit has improved peace prospects. Whole country exuberant. (Nwk 12:5)

* * *

Returning home, Sadat got a tumultuous hero's welcome. No one in Washington foresaw, much less suggested, Sadat's spectacular gesture. It caught Carter Administration utterly by surprise. (Tm 12:5)

* * *

Unprecedented, face-to-face, Israel-Arabs negotiations due to get underway in Cairo in mid-December. Goal is over-all peace treaty between Israel & Arabs, but a separate Israel-Egypt agreement is most likely outcome. Israel accepted immediately. US equivocated a few days, then agreed. UN will be represented. But only 1 Arab nation, Egypt itself, will be there. All other Arab neighbours of Israel, & PLO, & Russia, rejected the invitation, & attacked Egypt's peace moves.

It's a painful dilemma for Carter, short-circuiting his policy of collaborating with Russia on a comprehensive Arab-Israel peace. Sadat & Begin seized the initiative from US to deprive Arab radicals & Russia of veto power. Sadat is determined on peace with Israel, with or without other Arabs. Most observers believe result will be a separate Israel-Egypt peace. (USN 12:12)

* * *

US rethinking its Mideast policy of insistence on 'comprehensive' settlement & opposition to separate Israel-Egypt peace. If a separate peace takes Egypt out of the military equation, a general war in Mideast would be impossible.

Sadat says, "To reach a settlement, there will be certain guarantees given to each party. The US is the main factor in these guarantees." On danger of 'isolation' of Egypt, he said, "With Sudan, we're 60 million people, 2/3 of the Arab world. Those who try to isolate Egypt will be hitting their heads against a wall."

Of Russia, Sadat says, "Radio Moscow is declaring every day that my visit to Israel was surrender, & a sell-out of the Arab cause. They are vicious, vicious."

Jordan's Hussein says, "We are tired of others deciding our fate without consulting us. We practically committed military suicide in the June, 1967 war, because of our upbringing & belief in Arab oneness. We must avoid this." (Nwk 12:12)

* * *

Goodbye, Arab solidarity. Euphoria reigned in Cairo, & optimism buoyed Jerusalem. But in other Mideast capitals & Washington & Moscow, there were worries & frowns. Arab solidarity is in tatters. Last week the anti-Sadat forces gathered in Tripoli at the behest of Libya's Gadafi. Sadat seemed unaffected by the steady tirade of abuse from the radical Arabs.

The rejectionist Arabs can denounce Sadat all they want, but it's they—not Sadat—who face hard political choices. Egypt, with a population of nearly 40 million, is by far the most populous Arab state, & has largest army in Mideast. Another Arab war against Israel would be impossible without Egypt.

Everywhere in Egypt, the people speak openly & warmly about Sadat's quest for peace. The mission is popular, & he knows it. The Egyptian Ambassador to the Arab League said, "Other Arabs will gradually free themselves from dogma. What Sadat has done is irreversible." (Tm 12:12).

* * *

US no longer kingpin in Mideast negotiations: Sadat has taken over that role. Egyptian officials emphasize, however, it will require military, economic & political guarantees by US to underwrite any settlement that emerges.

Sadat took breath-taking series of moves: On Dec. 5 he broke diplomatic relations with the 5 radical Arab states that participated in the anti-Sadat meeting in Tripoli: Syria, Iraq, Libya, Algeria & S. Yemen.

On Dec. 6 he warned the frontline Arab states he was determined to pursue peace talks with Israel 'thru to the end' on his own if they refused to join.

On Dec. 7 he closed all consulates & cultural centres outside Cairo of Russia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary & E. Germany, as a 'lesson' for opposing him.

He said, "Begin & I have agreed on 2 crucial points: no more wars, but settling differences around the table; and discussion of specific ways of maintaining both sides' security so as to ensure a lasting peace." (USN 12:19).

* * *

Is Sadat out of control, or is he acting fast & boldly to take charge of events? His trip to Jerusalem may have shattered Arab unity, but there is no mistaking the enthusiasm of his own people. He has never been more popular: 85% of the people, & more importantly the military leaders, back him.

It is an open secret that while the Cairo Conference is on, covert high-level talks between Israel & Egypt will be taking place elsewhere.

Crucial to Sadat is continued support of Saudi Arabia. Latter's Deputy Foreign Minister says, "We did not support Jerusalem trip, but we do support Egypt."

Sadat's defection, his Jerusalem visit, & his Cairo Conference have robbed Arabs of any pretence of being a military threat to Israel. Without Egypt actively manning the southern front, a new Mideast war would inevitably lead the Arabs to another disastrous defeat. A poll just taken shows Americans believe overwhelmingly (77%) that US must continue to support Israel. (Tm 12:19)

* * *

Momentous conference opening this week in Cairo could alter the old blood feud between Arabs & Israel beyond recognition. Sadat seems speeding past point of no return: toward a separate peace with Israel that could leave Arab world in tatters, or possibly a comprehensive settlement.

Once again Sadat relied on shock treatment to maintain his astonishing momentum: breaking relations with hard-line Arab states, including Syria, ordering Russians & E. Europe Reds out of Egypt, attacking his Arab critics as 'ignorant dwarfs,' & dismissing PLO as 'a bunch of bunglers.' A friend says, "He's not going to play any more by the old rules of Arab nationalism. Egypt is reasserting itself as the great power of the Arab world." (Nwk 12:19)

SADAT seems, as mentioned, to have gone beyond the point of no return. He seems convinced that continued confrontation & war footing & hobbling subservience to Arab hate mongers means catastrophe for Egypt—and his people are with him. He still pays lip-service to 'complete Israeli withdrawal' & a 'Palestine State' & an 'overall settlement,' but his extreme words & actions against the Arab states that oppose him seem to be a deliberate forcing of as large a breach as possible, to free his hand in dealing with Israel. He is driving the others toward Russia, even as he is locking himself into a commitment to the West.

The picture the Scriptures give of when Russia strikes is an Israel in apparent peace, security & prosperity; Egypt, Jordan (Edom & Moab), & Saudi Arabia (Sheba & Dedan) with the King of the South; & Libya, Ethiopia & Persia with the King of the North. Syria, as the original geographic King of the North, & Iraq as the original Assyria, must also be with Gog.

How marvellously it is generally falling into place!—tho some pieces are yet missing. An active partnership with Egypt could make Israel both secure & prosperous. And one assassin bullet could change the present West-leaning, rigid, one-man dictatorship of Persia into a mighty, rich, massively-armed Russian satellite; just as a sudden coup changed Libya from a docile Western tool into a fanatical anti-Western troublemaker & terror-financer.

FALL OF PORTUGAL GOVT. opens door to chaos. Even before Communists & conservatives combined to bring down Soares' minority Socialist govt., country was teetering on brink of bankruptcy. (USN 12:19).

* * *

Soares, who helped guide Portugal away from Communist takeover 2 yrs. ago, fell by 159 votes to 100. His fall will postpone vital decisions needed to snap Portugal out of worst economic slump in decades. Trade deficit at lethal rate of \$ 1.3 billion a yr.; inflation rate over 28%; unemployment 16%. (Nwk 12:19).

* * *

Soares had intransigent opposition to the Left & Right, & a disastrous economic situation he had little power to rectify. He inherited a quadrupled price of Arab oil, a depressed economy in which ½ of food & most of machinery & raw materials were imported, an influx of 750,000 refugees from the lost African territories, & a 30% inflation rate. Of late even his personal popularity had slipped because of rising food costs, climbing inflation, unemployment, increased crime, and other problems. (Tm 12:19)

TWO yrs. ago Portugal was prominent in the headlines. She was losing her 500-yr.-old African Empire, revolution at home had toppled the long-established conservative dictatorship, & the Communists—the representing much less than 10% of the people—came within an inch of taking over the country: seizing businesses & communications, & for a while dominating the emerging & confused govt. They failed, but they retired to await their chance to strike again. In spite of over \$1 billion in US aid, & much from other West nations, Portugal's affairs seem to have further deteriorated. Soares' Party, tho a minority, was the largest single one. There seems to be no party or leader strong enough to take his place.

RUSSIA TAKING OVER WORLD SHIPPING. Undercutting rates 20-30%. US & others threaten harsh countermeasures. Kremlin unmoved: believes West lacks nerve or power to act. Soviet fleet was world's 26th largest 20 yrs. ago; now it's 6th. Russia handles 20-35% of all cargoes on major trade routes. 2400 vessels in service & rapidly building: 1980 target is 35% more capacity than '75. (USN 12:19)

* * *

Soviets gaining ever-increasing share of world shipping. On US routes alone, annual \$ value of Soviet-hauled trade has leaped from zero in '71 to nearly \$3 billion today. Current Tenth 5-Year Plan includes long-range programs for growth in tonnage & better technology, greater invasion of Western routes. (Tm 12:5)

IN diamonds, where it is a matter of controlling supply, Russia is a willing member of the world cartel that monopolizes the trade & keeps prices artificially high. In shipping, which is a matter of competing for existing trade, Russia slashed prices to bankrupt & destroy the competition, safely gambling that the West is too divided to retaliate. These are the advantages of dictatorship, & Russia is playing them all to the utmost advantage.

US NATIONAL DEBT reached \$700 billion in November—\$3220 for every man, woman & child in US. Expected to go up another \$100 billion within a yr.

WHAT wicked, selfish folly! Americans insist in living far beyond their means. loading future generations with hopeless debt so they can luxuriate in unearned self-indulgence. Interest costs are over \$50 billion a yr. And this is just the national debt: personal debt even larger.

LEFTISTS GAIN IN GREECE. Pro-West, NATO-favouring Premier Caramanlis [who called elections a yr. early hoping to gain more power to negotiate with Turkey] was re-elected, but lost 42 seats in Parliament. Big winner was Papandreou's Socialist Party, which gained 77 seats. Papandreou wants Greece out of NATO. Strong showing of Left means real headaches for Caramanlis. (USN 12:5)

* * *

After collapse of military junta, & his dramatic return from exile in Paris, Caramanlis won '74 elections by landslide. Last week, calling elections early, he was re-elected with greatly reduced majority. Papandreou's Socialists doubled their vote & became Greece's 2nd leading party. Papandreou is against NATO & the Common Market. He says, "The majority of Greeks want out of NATO, which is a coercion mechanism of the West." (Tm 12:5)

Christadelphian

One Hundred Years Ago

Magazine January, 1878

OF the war between Russia and Turkey, bro. Roberts says—

"Plevna [*in Bulgaria, where Turkey had made a stand*] has fallen, and with it a whole Turkish army are prisoners. The surrender is unconditional. Turkey has addressed an appeal to the Powers of Europe to mediate for peace, on the basis of their proposals which Turkey had rejected before the war."

The European Powers were now in no mood or position to intervene on Turkey's behalf.

"Indications are that the British Govt. has decided the time has arrived for England to interfere. It will thus be seen that affairs are approaching a very grave crisis. The *Liverpool Mercury* says:

"We seem to see the Turk, who first made his way into Europe on a wave of blood, disappearing—after 400 years of demoralizing occupation—from the soil he has cursed, and from among the people whom he has governed by massacre, in the terrible shock of some great Armageddon. For if one nation interferes, there is no reason why another should not, nor why all should not join in the fray."

"Serbia has already followed the course indicated by the *Mercury*, & has declared war on Turkey. Italy & Greece are on the point of doing the same, to get a slice of the dying man's territory. What England means to do we shall presently know. Meanwhile, the prospect thickens & grows more interesting for those who are watching the hand of God in His work among the nations.

The war spirit was in the air in Britain, as Russia pushed ever forward toward the Mideast, increasingly threatening Suez & India. The brethren felt sure it was the end, tho they realized a Jewish State must be set up. Bro. Roberts says, in reply to a newspaper article that cast scorn on proposals for a Jewish State in Palestine—

"It is an idea that must be carried into execution before the Russo-Gogian hosts can be smitten on the mountains of Israel & the glory of Yahweh established among the heathen. But we need not see its execution before the Lord's arrival in the earth. It may, under British protectorate, proceed concurrently with the judgment of the House of Christ in his presence."

* * *

One place's ecclesial news mentioned the readmission of a brother who had been withdrawn from for intemperance. Another place's news in the same issue, quite coincidentally, recorded the baptism of an individual to whom this brother had introduced the Truth.

Bro. Fred Shuttleworth's name is very frequent in the lists of lectures in many places. He was long a close & very active co-labourer with bro. Roberts. & had a study section in the magazine for many, many years. Mention of his name always saddens, for after bro. Roberts' death, he slipped into intemperance, finally having to be withdrawn from, & he died in sad circumstances. The weakness of the flesh is an ever-present danger. 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' We cannot judge, but we must learn from these tragedies. The only safe course for poor weak man is to get as close to God & His Word & His service as we possibly can, praying for His love & strength & care.

* * *

A 'Canon' Bowlby, of the Church of England, gave a lecture in Birmingham on the Christadelphians. Most of the Birmingham ecclesia attended. Bro. Roberts asked for permission to reply, but this was refused. He suggested a debate, but this was turned down. So he gave 2 special lectures in a major public building, to large audiences. The regular Sunday lectures were related to the Signs of the Times, & were drawing huge crowds.

Birmingham & some other ecclesias were devoting the last Sunday lecture period of the month to answering questions (submitted beforehand in writing). They had found that oral question nights were monopolized by a few, with the same questions over and over.

* * *

Bro. Banta, writing from Valley Spring, Texas, says—

"Bro. S. H. Oatman is labouring in Hunt & Hopkins counties with good results. Six have put on the Saving Name."

Among those listed are a bro. W. H. Magill, a bro. Coleman, & a sis. Maggie Wolfe.

Questions		PAIRS		22. Medes	31. Pharez	40. Eleazar	49. Gershom
1. Bel	8. Felix	15. Moab	23. Annas	23. Annas	32. Michal	41. Hophni	50. Phygellus
2. Dan	9. India	16. David	24. James	24. James	33. Haggai	42. Pharpar	51. Tryphena
3. Paul	10. Peter	17. Rezin	25. Zebah	25. Zebah	34. Jannes	43. Michael	52. Pelethites
4. Ebal	11. Peleg	18. Prisca	26. Orpah	26. Orpah	35. Joshua	44. Hannah	53. Alexander
5. Tyre	12. Adah	19. Eldad	27. Castor	27. Castor	36. Jupiter	45. Bigthan	54. Ahasuerus
6. Oreb	13. Jubal	20. Sheba	28. Bilhah	28. Bilhah	37. Aholah	46. Euodias	55. Hymeneus
7. Mary	14. Zimri	1. Stoics	29. Jachin	29. Jachin	38. Balaam	47. Bezaleel	56. Zerubbabel
			30. Zadok	30. Zadok	39. Shebna	48. Deborah	57. Adrammelech
John	Barak	Abana	Joktan	Aholiab	Phinehas	Mercurius	
Boaz	Zillah	Zilpah	Eliezer	Persians	Silvanus	Zechariah	
Zeeb	Zarah	Dedan	Martha	Andrew	Abiathar	Beersheba	
Ruth	Pekah	Esther	Gabriel	Ithamar	Caiaphas	Zalmunna	
Caleb	Cozbi	Teresh	Goliath	Jambres	Aholiab	Alexander	
Nebo	Rufus	Jeshua	Eliakim	Ammon	Peninnah	Tubal-cain	
Balak	Merab	Aquila	Drusilla	Ethiopia	Syntyché	Epicureans	

Sidon

Pollux

Medad

Gerizim

Sharezer

Tryphosa
Hermogenes

Cherethites

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