

What Does That Mean?

“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” (Heb 6:18)

How can it be “impossible for God to lie” when Jesus told us in Mark 10:27 *“For with God all things are possible.”*

This verse is similar to Titus 1:2 where talking about eternal life we are told *“... which God, **that cannot lie**, promised before the world began.”* On the surface this may create a question about God’s omnipotence, and appears to limit His ability to speak; but the omnipotence of God cannot be considered in a vacuum. It is impossible to consider omnipotence in abstract, apart from the revealed character of God.

The above verses do not contradict His omnipotence, but argues the perfection of His nature and character. God’s identity is holiness. You or I may tend to lie if we think there is something to be gained or something in it for us. However, unlike us, God would have no reason to lie, no inclination to lie, no regard for deception, and no attraction to gaining any advantage through deceptive means.

Furthermore, a lying god is no God at all, but a fake. One that could not be looked up to, one that we could not trust, and would not be deserving of our love and respect, let alone our worship. What God has revealed about Himself is that He has such love for truth; such holiness of character, that He “could not” speak falsely.

In Proverbs chapter 6 the teacher enumerates seven qualities that God hates and is detestable to Him. These are contrary to his nature, will, and law. It is interesting to note that two of the seven deal with lying: *“A lying tongue”* and *“A false witness that speaketh lies.”* Is it any wonder then that Paul would exhort: *“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour.....”* (Eph 4:25)

The fact that God cannot lie, that it is His nature always to speak the truth and that no circumstances can ever occur in which He will depart from it is the foundation of our hope of salvation. When God speaks, truth always comes forth from His mouth. Let us endeavor to reflect God’s character in the way we speak. To deliberately mislead, destroys our credibility and renders us impure by God’s holy standards. Before we stand at the judgment seat of Christ where we will be forced to answer to His high standards, let us stand before the court of our own consciences and judge ourselves. Are we able to render a “not guilty” verdict within our own hearts? Have we truly crucified the old man of the flesh and developed godly characters? God “cannot lie” and we must not lie. *“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.”* (Col 3:9)

Bro. Jim Sommerville

THE BEREAN CHRISTADELPHIAN ECCLESIAL NEWS

A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial welfare, with the object of providing Ecclesial news, exhortations, articles and information of fraternal interest to the Brotherhood. Defending the original, foundation principles upon which the Truth was uncovered from darkness and upon which the Christadelphian movement was developed. Opposed to the dogmas of papal and protestant christendom. Upholding the Truth as Bereans since 1923.

Vol. X No. 1 (XCV)

JANUARY, 2007

Please send Ecclesial communications to:

Bro. Fred J. Higham, 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, Mich. 48035 U.S.A.
Phone: (586) 790-2156 Fax: (586) 349-6304 e-mail: fhigham@gmail.com
Web Site: www.BereanEcclesialNews.com

ECCLESIAL NEWS	Hengoed, Canton
EXHORTATION	Without Excuse 6
EXHORTATION	The Pure Gold of Tried Faith..... 15
SIGNS	Middle East Updates – The Baker Report..... 23
STUDY	Examine Yourselves 27
STUDY	Reading The Scriptures..... 29
THOUGHTS:.....	Hymn 45 33
	The Christadelphian Dog.....33
Analecta Apocalypicae (9)34
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN 36

God Willing, The Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial News will be published monthly as an avenue of providing information of Ecclesial interest to the Brotherhood. Ecclesial news and correspondence, Fraternal Gathering notices, special activities and upbuilding exhortations are encouraged. This is an effort to upbuild and prepare us in heart and mind for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Berean Christadelphian Ecclesias

AUSTRALIA

BRISBANE, QLD, Bro. Ted Mingham, 8/2 Denison Ct, Capalaba, Qsld 4157

CANADA

EDMONTON, ALTA, Bro. Steve Armstrong, Box 16, site 440 RR#4, Stony Plain, T7Z 1X4

KINDERSLEY, SASK, Sis. Grace Punter, 24 Rutley Cr, N0E 1Y0

LETHBRIDGE, ALTA, Bro. Michael Bennett, 377 Laval Blv., T1K 3W7

RED DEER, ALTA, Bro. David Blacker, RR. #4, T4N 5E4

RICHARD, SASK, Bro. Terry Readman, RR# 1, N. Battleford, Sask, S9A 2X3

STURGEON FALLS, ONT, Bro. Gilles Robineau, 5 Third St, P2B 3E6

VANCOUVER, BC, Sis. Kaye Yuen, 4639 Caulfield Dr, V7W 1E9

VERNON, BC, Bro. James Fuhr, 8945 Peters Rd, V1H 1K1

KENYA

KAMUKUWYA, Bro. William Kilui, PO Box 27, Kamukuywa, 50216

KIMILILI, Bro. Rogers Musebe, c/o Kamusinde Secondary School, PO Box 267, 50204

KIMUKUNGI, Bro. Arphaxad Wekati, PO Box 552

KITALE, Bro. Pinon Wekati, (in care of), Kitale Nursing Home, PO Box 1825

KITUI, Bro. David Njoka, PO Box 1, Kitui

MAYANJA, Bro. John W. Simiyu, PO Box 2, Mayanja, Bungoma

MTONDIA, Bro. Fred Omoto, PO Box 1177, Kilifi

NAIROBI, Sis. Mary Agnes Kariuki, PO Box 1582, Kikuyu 00902

NAKALIRA, Bro. Shawn Tyler, PO Box 909, Webuye 50205

ODIADO, Bro. Humphreys O. Budedu, PO Box 142, Bumala

NIGERIA

OWERRI, Bro. Sylvester Ebere, 191 Tetlow Road

UNITED KINGDOM

HENGOED, Bro. Phillip Hughes, 25 Heol-Y-Gelli Fforchneol Parc, Godreaman, Aberdare, Mid-Glam CF44 6LN

SURREY, Sis. Rachel Johnatty-Theaker, 26 Woodfield Lane, Ashtead, KT21 2BE

WEST WALES, UK Bro. Andrew Ford, Caerwen, Broad Oak, Carmarthenshire, Wales, SA32-8QJ

UNITED STATES

AUSTIN, TX, Bro. Jim Phillips, 12707 Dove Drive, Buda, TX 78610

BOSTON, MA, Bro. Jim Sommerville, 34 Birch Hill Rd, Northboro, 01532

CANTON, OH, Bro. Beryl Snyder, 4095 Prosway SW, Massillon, 44646

CHESAPEAKE, VA, Bro. Dale Lee, 321 Woodbridge Drive, 23322

DETROIT, MI, Bro. Fred Higham, 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, 48035

DENVER, CO, Bro. Dave Sargent, 4555 Red Forest Rd, Monument, 80132

GOLDTHWAITE, TX Bro. Vernon Hurst, 6082 FM 1047, 76844;

HARPER, TX, Bro. Alfred Edwards, 675 KC 442, 78631

HOLLADAY, TN Bro. Warren Rankin, 699 White Tail Rd, 38341

HOUSTON, TX, Bro. Michael Kramer, 12118 Cloudt Road, Needville, TX 77461

LAMPASAS, TX Bro. Lee Freeburg, 200 Gabriel Forest, Georgetown, TX 78628

LAS CRUCES, NM, Bro. Michael Morrell, 200 Cervantes Village E15A 88001

LITTLE ROCK, AR, Bro. Bob Widding, PO Box 7272, 72217-7272

LYNNWOOD, WA, Sis. Gloria Russell, PO Box 123, Lynnwood, WA 98046

MARLOW, OK, Bro. Bob Wolfe, Rt. 2, Box 226, Marlow, 73055

NEWTON, NC, Bro. Mike Murphy, 347 S. College Ave, 28658

PALESTINE, TX, Sis. Mickie Lucas, Route 7, Box 7240, 75801

PORTLAND, OR, Bro. David Burnett, 25321 NE 72nd Ave, Battle Ground WA, 98604

RICHARDSON, TX, Bro. Roy Johnson, 1305 Magnolia, 75086

SAN ANGELO, TX, Bro. Gary Smith, PO Box 447, Blackwell, 79506

TEMPLE, TX, Bro. John Wolfe, 707 Brazos Drive, Temple, TX 76504

WORCESTER, MA Sis. Jessie Prentice, 339 Greenwood St. #55, Worcester, MA 01607

Please advise us of changes or corrections to the above information.

We thus learn that the Nicolaitanes taught an errant doctrine of a family of immortal gods, and a race of anti-gods, all in competition for the souls of mankind. Revelation tells us that the Ephesian Ecclesia had successfully resisted this heresy.

Are these historians correct in their assessment of Gnostic-Nicolaitane beliefs? If not, it would be a strange coincidence indeed that these particular heresies grew into *precisely* what the Church teaches today. Paul taught that the mystery of iniquity was already working in Apostolic times. It only took a few more years, and a major change in the Roman political system, for this iniquity to give birth to the Church.

The Nicolaitane doctrine of the *Pleroma*, *Aeons*, and *Demiurge*, ultimately developed into the error of Trinitarianism – the so-called “god-family” notion — and a supernatural Devil and Demons. The “recalling of souls” back to the Creator became the error of immortal soulism and heaven-going.

The common denominator to these apostate concepts is that such are both truth perverting and salvation destroying. All change the Truth of Yahweh, which is the only thing that sets men and women free, into a salvation-nullifying lie. Moreover, we need not limit the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes to this. The Roman Catholic Church, and her harlot daughters all promulgate a host of other heretical, truth destructive doctrines: the Preterist Apocalypse, the Futurist Apocalypse, Theistic Evolution, Church-Kingdomism, Infant Baptism, and the list goes on. It is no wonder that the very name “Nicolaitane” means, in the Greek, *the destruction of the people*.

An Exhortation for Today

The Christadelphian Ecclesia at Ephesus was certainly not exempt from the onslaught of grievous wolves and the consequent doctrinal decay that would result if gone unchallenged. Notwithstanding, the brethren resisted this evil. On the other hand, the brethren of the Pergamos congregation had not. The Nicolaitanes found a home there, and received the Lord’s condemnation for not disfellowshipping them (Apoc. 2:6; cf. vs. 15, 16).

No ecclesia is immune from the actions of false brethren. When such behavior ensues, we can, as the Ephesian brethren, resist evil, or we can acquiesce. The former begets life; the latter brings death. Let us, therefore, always “contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

—Bro. Bob Widding

installment, we propose to expand upon that which is known of their corruption of the Truth.

The View of Early Historians

In his *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History, Ancient and Modern*, Ecclesiastical Historian John Laurence Von Mosheim (c.1755) states that second century writers such as *Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus*, and others, declared that the Nicolaitanes taught the same doctrines as the Gnostics, concerning two principles of things, the *Aeons*, and the world's origin (*Book 1*, pp 52-56, 90).

Who Were The Gnostics?

The Gnostics were so-called christians of various sects, and all having diverse beliefs. However, they *all* held to one first principle. It concerned God, the world and man. Based upon information provided by these ecclesiastical writers, Mr. Mosheim records that all Gnostics believed in the existence from eternity of a God, full of goodness and wisdom, who is the purest light and is diffused throughout boundless space. They gave this "space" the Greek appellation of *Pleroma*.

In the process of time, this God, who dwelt alone, commenced producing offspring, or a god-family, all of who existed in the *Pleroma*.

This divine progeny was both unchangeable and eternal. To this notion, the Gnostics gave the name of *Aeon*—a term that signifies an eternal nature.

Beyond this *Pleroma*, existed a celestial race who had gotten out of the *Pleroma*, and who had an arrogance and greed for rule. The chief of these bore the name *Demiurge*. He claimed an unquestionable right to the empire of that new world which was constructed by him, wholly excluding the Supreme Deity, and requiring divine honors from mankind for himself and his associates.

Of mankind, the Gnostics taught that such were compounded of an earthly body joined with a soul, plucked somehow from the Deity. This God's primary effort was to rescue these souls from sin and its effects. On the other hand, the *Demiurge* and his associates, eager to retain their power, resist the divine purpose of God in recalling these souls back to himself — to the *Pleroma*, freed from the body.

Sowing Seeds of Apostasy

Ecclesial News

HENGOED, Wales, Breaking of Bread – 10.45am; Sunday School – 12.45pm; Lecture – 2.30pm; Bible Class and Elpis Israel Class – held alternately in the homes of the Bre. and Sis. in South and West Wales. Youth Evening – held every 2 weeks on Friday at the Aberdare Country Park at 6.30pm.

Beloved Brethren and Sisters in the bonds of the Abrahamic Covenant,

Once again we are able, in the mercy of our Heavenly Father, to contact the Brethren and Sisters around the ecclesial world. This time however our ecclesial news is a mixture of sorrow and joy. On Sunday 02 July we welcomed Alexey Matveev to the Hengoed Ecclesia. He had moved in the previous week to the United Kingdom from Estonia and we were pleased to be able to have his company in the meeting. He had been staying at the home of Bro. Steve and Sis. Elizabeth Male until he obtained employment and a place of his own. We had all built up a great deal of affection for him, and our only worry was his mother (Natalia) who was on her own in Estonia.

A short while ago we obtained some very disturbing information indicating that Alexey had been "baptised" into the United Church of God in April 2005. The brethren and Sisters of Hengoed were devastated by the news and encountered a host of emotional feelings. From further information obtained it appears that this may not have been the only occurrence where this type of thing has happened. The Brethren and Sisters have been left feeling greatly deceived and emotionally drained. They have therefore withdrawn fellowship from Alexey. Furthermore, as Alexey was the translator in the interview for fellowship with himself and Natalia, we are unable to place any confidence in the outcome of that interview. We therefore no longer regard Natalia as being in fellowship with the Bereans Christadelphians.

On a brighter note, on Sunday 17 September we were also pleased to welcome Sis. Julie Armstrong into fellowship once again. Sis. Julie was a member of the Hengoed Ecclesia some years ago and we are pleased to have her company again. It is true that Sis. Julie's removal from Canada to the UK caused us a great deal of concern, and her health was also a cause for concern. We did however have a profitable interview with her and established a basis of agreement with our fellowship, and have since been very much enjoying her company in the ecclesia.

During the weekend that Sis. Julie came back into fellowship we were also blessed in having a Study Weekend based on Psalms 24 to 29. Present on that occasion was Bro. Bob Bent of the Lampasas Texas ecclesia. We enjoyed having the company of Bro. Bob again who also provided one of talks during the weekend. Once again we were refreshed by contemplating the sweet Psalmist of Israel. His words of praise uplifted our spirits; his fervent trust in Yahweh strengthened our hands; and his deep and enduring love for the Creator and His Truth was an inspiration to our weary minds in the great battle of Faith. Times such as these are priceless and help us to clearly see that the pleasures of the world are empty, and it's joys short lived. Our minds go back to the Psalms amidst our prevailing sadness, and look forward to the Return of the Greater than David, who will wipe away all tears and assuage all sorrows.

With love in Elpis Israel and on behalf of the Brethren and Sisters of the Hengoed Ecclesia, Bro. Phillip Hughes

CANTON, Ohio – Sunday School, Sunday 10:00 AM; Breaking of Bread, Sunday 11:00 AM; Bible Class Tuesday 7:00 PM; at Mayfield Senior Center, Bro. Beryl Snyder, 4095 Prosway S. W. , Massillon, Ohio, 44646

“Peace be to the brethren and love with faith.” (Ephesians 6:23)

Another year finds us still in the attitude of Luke 12:36 “And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.” So far we are still looking for the Master’s return. The signs of his coming increase as time rolls on, but as yet, the sound of his call is yet unheard. Are we growing weary of the wait? Shall we say “My Lord delayeth his coming” and chase after the pleasers of this world? The world is constantly pressuring us, trying to get our interest, attention, and love. Shall we give in to the pleasures of sin for a season and lose all that is long-established for those who love God? We pray not! It will help if we keep in mind the words of Paul who wrote, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Since our last report we have had the pleasant association of Bro. Jim and Sis. Terri Rankin, Sis. Kay Stinchcomb, Sis. Sharon Osborne, Sis. Jo Ann Osborne, and a second visit by our Bro. Jim Rankin. We thank our Bro. Jim Ranking for ministering to our spiritual needs by word of exhortation. It is a great comfort to us to be able to visit with those of like precious faith and discuss the things pertaining to the Hope of Israel. Our annual Sunday School picnic was held at the end of August. We were able to enjoy the company of our visitors. Over the years we have watch the children grow in the “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” to the time when they take on the saving name. These occasions have been a great source of pleasure to us.

We know the time is soon at hand when we shall hear the Master’s call. It is our burning desire that we all may be know the happiness expressed in Zephaniah 3:17 “The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.”

Bro. Beryl Snyder,
Recording Brother

**THY VIEW; “O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me” (v. 1).
OUR MOTIVES READ, OUR THOUGHTS EXPLORED, “Thou knowest my down sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off” (v. 2).**

OUR HEARTS REVEALED TO THEE, THE LORD, “Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways” (v.3).

**AWAKE, ASLEEP, WHERE NONE INTRUDE, OR MIDST THE THronging MULTITUDE, IN EVERY LAND, ON EVERY SEA, “Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me” (v. 10).
WE ARE SURROUNDED STILL BY THEE. This should give us great comfort. Even when we are by ourselves, as some of us are so often, we are not alone, for He is always with us.**

SEARCH US O GOD, AND KNOW EACH HEART; WITH EVERY IDOL BID US PART; HELP US TO KEEP THY HOLY WAYS, AND LIVE TO UTTER FORTH THY PRAISE. “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (vs. 23-24).

The Christadelphian Dog

“The Christadelphian dog,” an animal that attends all the meetings, whether public or private, and knows all the places of resort, and all the brethren: behaves well, curling himself demurely under chairs or tables at the proper times, and saluting friends with a wag of his tail. He trotted before us on the homeward journeys with becoming gravity. He would be an example to some dogs with two legs.

Bro. Robert Roberts—1897

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

NORTH CAROLINA–VIRGINIA STUDY WEEKEND.....May 25–27, 2007

Bro. Dale Lee, 1-757-547-5816, dleecpa2@mindspring.com.

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING.....June 8–10, 2007

Bro. Jerry Connolly, 12609 Dessau #404, Austin, TX 78754 USA 1-512-251-5101

RICHARD FRATERNAL GATHERING.....June 29 – July 2, 2007

Bro. Terry Readman, RR# 1, N. Battleford, Sask, S9A 2X3, Canada

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING.....July 23–29, 2007

Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1, Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, USA. 1-325-985-3868

Study Class Topic: 2Thess. and Titus; Bible Readings; Discuss. Zech. 8-12

NORTHEAST FRATERNAL GATHERING - DETROIT.....Oct 5–7, 2007

Bro. Fred Higham, 1-586-790-2156, fhigham@gmail.com

Analecta Apocalypticae (9)

The Nicolaitanes: Gnostics Introduce Corruption into the Early Ecclesia

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” – Jesus

In our last installment Brother Roberts made mention of the Nicolaitanes — “a class extra in addition to the corrupters of the truth in general.” Our Brother suggested that these men were corrupters of morality as well. In this

affairs, we turn aside daily in reading, prayer and meditation, we overcome; but if on the contrary, we are carried before the stream, and leave God behind, we are overcome, and will awake sooner or later to a sense of our great folly.

If we do our duty in this matter, we shall be assisted. This is matter of promise. If we are attentive to God, He will be attentive to us. “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.” The converse is true. Neglect God and He will allow you to fall. There have been many illustrations of this in history. One of them is mentioned in the chapter read this morning.—(Rom. 1:28.) “Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, *God gave them over to a reprobate mind.*” All nations were related, in the first instance, to the fountain of divine knowledge through Noah, but they slighted God, honouring themselves each other, and their own affairs, like the multitudes of our own day, and God departed from them, and gave them over to the reprobateness of mind which is manifest in all the sculptures of antiquity and the state of man universally. The Jews were favoured as no nation ever was. Jehovah says, “as a girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto Me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the Lord, that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory, *but they would not hear.*” What was the consequence? “*Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit upon David’s throne, and the priests and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with drunkenness (that is mental confusion; the result of the wine of His wrath). And I will dash one against another, even the father and the sons together, saith the Lord; I will not pity nor spare nor have mercy, but destroy them.*”—(Jer. 13:13.)

—Bro. Robert Roberts—1874

HYMN 45

This hymn comes from Psalm 139.

**WHERE CAN WE HIDE OR WHITHER FLY, LORD, TO ESCAPE THY
PIERCING EYE? “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I
flee from thy presence?” (v. 7).**

**WITH THEE THERE IS NOT DAY AND NIGHT, BUT DARKNESS
SHINETH AS THE LIGHT. “Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but
the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike
to thee” (v. 12).**

WHERE’ER WE GO, WHATE’ER PURSUE, OUR WAYS ARE OPEN TO

Without Excuse

“For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world His eternal power and deity (divinity) have been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse”—Romans 1:19-20

Thus Paul declares that all around us there is evidence of God for those who desire to see. There is “no excuse” for ignoring God's existence and authority. Paul says again—

“And He made from one every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and boundaries of their habitation, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel after Him and find Him.

“Yet He is not far from each one of us, for ‘In Him we live and move and are” (Acts 17:26-28)

And David says (Psa. 19:1)—

“The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night uttereth knowledge.”

This clear foundation of His reality and powers is laid by God in the sight of all men. What men next require are concrete facts concerning God's purpose with man and His desires concerning man—what He wants man to know and what He wants man to do.

* * *

Religion cannot be built on feeling—that is, permanent, worthwhile religion to grow in and live by. It must have facts—realities—certainties.

This is the purpose for which the Bible is given. It is a textbook of God's arrangements and requirements, and tells how man can fit himself for and into God's great plan for the future of the earth and mankind.

First of all, we would like to strongly emphasize the fact that the New Testament alone is not a sufficient revelation for salvation. This is only the last quarter of God's message to man and cannot be understood without the background of the Old Testament.

There are about 1,000 references to the Old Testament in the New. The New is built upon, and presupposes a knowledge of the Old. Jesus said to some—

“Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures” (Matt 22:29).

He was referring to the Old Testament which was the only “Scriptures” then in existence. Again he said—

“O fools, and slow of heart to believe ALL that the prophets have spoken” (Luke 24:25).

And again (John 5:47)—

“If ye believe not Moses writings, how shall ye believe my words?”

* * *

Another elementary point is that the Bible is a big study. We shall never get much satisfaction from it unless we are prepared to devote considerable time and effort to it.

If we do, we shall find that it slowly becomes more and more interesting and satisfying and will gradually transfer our interest from the passing things of the present to the great eternal realities of the past and future.

This is its purpose, and the whole purpose of our life. This present life is for probation and study and preparation for a future life of incomparably greater value and importance. God asks us to invest this present brief life in a glorious, endless future.

We must learn what we are, and what our needs are, and what has been done for us by the love of God. The love of God is manifested in the wonderful provision He has made in relation to the earth. As Paul says—

“God left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14:17).

The earth, even in its present condition, is a glorious habitation. It contains in abundance everything needed for the temporal happiness and wellbeing of man. All these things manifest God’s love for man and His desire that man should reciprocate that love and draw near to Him.

But the earth, sadly enough, is not the place of happiness and plenty and love and peace that it could and should be. That, too, doubtless, has impressed all serious thinkers strongly in these recent troubled years.

It is intended to be, and it will be, for the testimony is—

“As truly as I live, all the earth SHALL be filled with the glory of the Lord” (Num. 14:21).

“And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.”

But if ye heed not her gentle entreaties—if ye persist in putting her off, that ye may attend to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life, hoping dimly and indefinitely that some day all will be well—hear ye your own doom declared beforehand by the same gentle voice: “Because I have called and ye refused: I have stretched out My hand and no man regarded. But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of My reproof I also will laugh at your calamity. I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon Me and I will not answer. They shall seek Me early but shall not find Me. For that they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would none of My counsel; they despised all My reproof Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices”

God has declared, “I am a great King” (Mal. 1:14). He demands on this ground to be honoured, and to have the first place in the heart, and the best of all we have to offer. All the ceremonial appointments of the law were intended to teach this lesson. No one was allowed to approach the sanctuary except those appointed, and those only in the appointed way, on pain of death. No offering was accepted with a blemish, or hurt, or imperfection. All uncleanness required purgation by sacrifice. Holiness and majesty were continually impressed on Israel as appertaining to Him in the highest degree. The lesson in its individual application is unmistakable. Jesus brings it home in the words “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy strength and all thy mind.” His own demand is “My son, give me thine heart.” He demands the highest place in all our affairs, which is His reasonable place. Let us render the service He requires. His word is in our houses. Don’t let us insult Him by giving our feeblest moments to the reading of it. Don’t let us wait till all our energies are worn out, and our faculties impaired in attending upon the affairs of the natural man. Don’t let us sit down to the Bible when nature is exhausted, and sleep hovers on the eyelids. Let us give the best time of the day. It is a matter of contrivance. There are difficulties, but difficulties can be overcome. Where there is a will, there is a way. Besides, who knows but our difficulties are God’s tests. He may want to prove us—to see and let us see whether we will honour Him or not. It is no new thing for God to leave a man that he may see all that is in his heart. Therefore, our increasing business—our growing affairs—may be a part of the machinery by which our probation is accomplished. If we resist the clamours of the flesh—if, notwithstanding the pressure of worldly

The reading of the Bible and the appreciation of it will re-act productively one upon the other. Read the word and you will appreciate it; appreciate it and you will desire it, and seek the comfort that is to be found in reading it. And thus, as in every vital process, there will be a dual action which will preserve life.

But there is a view of the matter outside of the word and outside of man, because there is a God outside the word and outside of man. The word is the only form in which the name and honour of God have a visible place among men at the present time. His temple is in the dust, His nation scattered, His kingdom destroyed. His word remains, and He hath magnified it above all his name. It is in the hands of the nations. It is the principal and most numerous multiplied book in the world. It is everywhere His representative. The Bible in the house is God in the house. The Bible in a man's life is God in a man's life. Where people place the Bible, they place God. The place it demands is the heart—the throne. With nothing less will God be satisfied. Do you neglect it? you neglect God. Do you allow the affairs of house, or business, or friends to ride over it, to displace it from the first position, to put it in the corner, to keep it hidden, neglected, disregarded? Then is God cast behind your back, and great is your danger. A voice of thunder would not be too loud to rouse you from your folly. You say you have no time to read. The plea is absolutely inadmissible. You take time to eat and drink, and this is the most important kind of eating and drinking. You will have to take time to be ill some of these days. Death will rap at the door, and he won't ask you if you have time to attend to him. Christ will stand in the earth one of these days, and what about your family, your house, your business then? You will want to turn to wisdom in a hurry, but wisdom will fly far from you. You will want to seek God with your whole heart, but He will not be found of you. So has God arranged things, that He will cause every one to find the fruit of his ways. "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets . . . How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge. Turn you at My reproof. Behold I will pour out my Spirit upon you. I will make known My words unto you . . . Blessed are they that keep My ways. Hear instruction and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors. For whoso findeth Me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against Me, wrongeth his own soul. All they that hate Me, love death."

"And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isa. 32:17).

But at present man's energies are dissipated in hate and cruelty and selfishness and desire for power and dominion over his fellowman.

What is wrong? Clearly there is something wrong with man. We know within ourselves there is something wrong with man. If we are thoughtful, we shall have noticed within ourselves natural impulses which, on a larger scale, we can perceive are the cause of all man's trouble and sorrow.

Pride, envy, selfishness, greed, inconsiderateness, impatience, irritability—all these, to some degree, we perceive naturally working within ourselves. We are injured, and immediately anger wells up, and we desire to retaliate and destroy. These things, developed to their logical conclusion, are the causes of murder and war.

Now these things we find within ourselves. We do not put them there. We discover them there, rooted in our natures. Often we sincerely regret the reactions they lead us to. We show by this that we recognize their undesirability.

We realize that kindness and patience and unselfishness would make a much happier world. But we find that these things do not come naturally. They are contrary to our natural impulses. So our own experience corresponds exactly with what Paul says—

"I find then a law that, when I would do good, evil is present with me" (Rom. 7:21).

* * *

What is the point in all this? The point is to show that man in his natural state is NOT good; he does not by nature act in the way that is best either for himself or for mankind in general. And if he is reflective his own intelligence and observation will tell him this. But it cannot tell him why he is like this, or what the solution is.

Here is where the Bible comes in. It is a message from God to man telling him all he needs to know about himself. It reveals man's history, tells why he is like he is, and the provision God has made in regard to him.

God did not create man evil. But for the development of character it was necessary that man be acquainted with both evil and good and that he learn to overcome the one and develop within himself the other.

Paul puts it very beautifully—

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God.

“For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it in hope, because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together until now.”

If we do not see the whole picture, the travailing of creation in pain and sorrow is a puzzling and disturbing thing. But when we realize that God is working out a purpose and that He subjected it to these conditions in hope, we begin to perceive its necessity and wisdom. Paul says (Rm. 5:3)—

“We rejoice in our sufferings: knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given us.”

“While we were yet helpless, Christ died for the ungodly.”

And again (Heb. 12:7-11)—

“It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons...He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. For the moment, all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant: later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

This is the principle and purpose that lies behind the overall picture of things as we see them. God is training His sons in holiness, and creation as we see it is laid out in reference to this purpose.

Holiness and character and love cannot be created by a mere act of power. Therein lies their value in the sight of God. They must be developed by freewill desire toward God on the part of creatures endowed with independent volition.

God has subjected the creation to travail for a glorious purpose that cannot be otherwise accomplished.

* * *

What is the practical bearing of all this? We are trying to lead up to what course man must follow in order to please God and promote his own happiness.

constant, patient and reverential, a daily feeding on the manna from heaven. The systematic and painful efforts of mere scholarship—the spasmodic attempts of what is generally understood by the term “study”—may be to the real work of upbuilding in the word, what the chemist’s analysis of flour is to the process of nutrition—clever but useless. Such a mode of treating the word of God will leave a man unacquainted with nearly all the riches it contains. A daily, habitual, thankful, reverential, prayerful and orderly converse with the holy oracles will uncover to the mind irresistible, almost inexpressible, evidences of their truth, and a fund of significance that will remain utterly unknown to the careless, irregular, spasmodic, or merely scholarly reader.

But to accomplish and continue in this mode of intercourse, requires a species of motive to which the mere scholar is a stranger. A man must fear God and realise his own insignificance and dependence He must feel hungry before he will desire to feed on the word in this unremitting manner. He must be noncontent with himself and things as they are. His affections must be operative on heavenly and not on earthly, things. He must in fact, have made considerable attainments in the kind of spiritual education which is implied in saintship. The gospel, as seed to the soil, must have germinated and sprung before it can bring forth this excellent fruit of the Spirit — this continual delight in the statutes, commandments and word of the living God — the yearning thirst for communion expressed by David, when he said, “My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.” What does this mean but that a man must not only know that there is a God, but must love Him and be filled with admiration of His infallible and eternal excellencies; that he must not only know that he himself is a mortal, but must have such a living sense of the fact as to be in a constant temper of modesty and extreme reverence towards God, trembling at His word; that he must not only be aware that there has been a Christ in the world, but realise that there is a Christ now, and that we, having yielded ourselves to his purchase, are no longer our own, but his who lived and died for us? Only this rich indwelling of the word of Christ will enable a man to perseveringly discern the excellence of the word of God, and the absolute insignificance of all present things, though they be very importunate of our attention and striking in their impressions upon the senses. Only such will be found, day and night, giving the word of God that place in the economy of life which it ought to have.

There can therefore, be no mistake about the terms of friendship and ultimate acceptance. Mere sentiment is idleness; unwarranted self-complacency is delusion.

“The words that I have spoken, the same shall judge you in the last day” (John 12:48).

“If a man love me he will keep my words” (John 14: 23).

Let us measure ourselves by this standard! We have believed the Glad Tidings of the Kingdom of God and Eternal Life, and have been baptised into the name, of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That is the first act of obedience—the first act of consecration, but what a work remains to be accomplished!

“All things whatsoever I have commanded” (Matt. 28: 20).

That is the measure of our duty.... Have we filled, it?

Brethren, Let us devoutly study the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His apostles, and be careful to obey them all in our lives, for upon that depends our ultimate salvation.

If we do so, we shall be patterns of excellence—beautiful characters—noble men and women—glorifying the name of our Father in Heaven...

Let us, beloved brethren, work while it is called today. Let us labour in love, and patience, and at the close of our lives, may the measure of our service be full; and may we all obtain an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Bro. Robert Roberts—1861

Reading Of The Scriptures

There is an unexplored depth of reality in the saying. “Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning.” All consent to the saying as a true one, but only a few go far enough in the process of “learning” from what has been written. Even these will never get to the end of the process while in the flesh. They will always be discovering some new force in exhortations they have been familiar with from infancy. Our progress in this respect, however, will depend entirely on our compliance with the divine exhortation to seek wisdom as for hid treasure. In many respects, the wisdom of God that is communicated in His word is hidden. It is accessible only to those who dig, and this digging to be serviceable must be a continuous process. It must not be done in fits and starts. It must be

There is no true permanent happiness or satisfaction outside of peace and communion with God.

Until man is at peace with God he cannot experience the happiness that God has planned for him. And this depends upon a knowledge of what God has done and revealed, and a conformity to it.

Incomparably the most important and outstanding act of God on behalf of man was the giving of His Own Son to suffer and die for man’s sake. What was the purpose of this and what did it accomplish?

First of all, it provided a basis upon which God could extend His love and mercy toward man without compromising His holiness and justice.

It is primarily a manifestation of love—the highest and greatest manifestation of love possible. It is an advance on the part of God, seeking to stir up man's love and devotion.

Secondly, it is to provide an example and incentive for man to follow the way that is pleasing to God, demonstrating the type of life and devotion that God desires, and the benefits and divine approval and affection that result—

“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”

And Jesus said (John 8:29)—

“I do always those things that please the Father.”

This is the key to happiness and satisfaction: knowing what God desires us to do, and—to the best of our ability—complying with it.

A third purpose of the sacrifice of Christ was to demonstrate the evilness and sinfulness and destructiveness of sin. Sin is disobedience to God's loving wise and just instructions to His children for their good and His glory and pleasure.

Sin destroys all happiness and pleasure on the part of both man and God. It destroys the communion between them, and alienates man from God. It is the root of all misery. We must be strongly impressed with this fact, and resolutely determined to avoid it at all cost. We must set ourselves to learn what God desires and to follow it.

This will not be motivated by fear, but by the enlightened conviction of the extreme repulsiveness of sin, and by the transforming love of God and overpowering desire to be near to and allied with Him who is the epitome of all that is desirable and good.

* * *

Man, in his natural state, lies in sin. To a large extent, ignorant sin—he

does not know that his natural way of life is displeasing to God

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

“All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever . . . Love not the world, neither the things in the world” (I John 2:15-18).

Unaided, we do not and cannot know what is sin and what is the will of God. Uninstructed, we constantly offend and grieve Him, because our natural course is to follow the way of the flesh and the world (Rom. 8:13)—

“If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

This is why He has caused the Bible to be written for our instruction. It must be our daily study, if we truly desire to be pleasing to Him. A few thoughts from the pen of David (writing, of course, under the influence of the Spirit) will illustrate the necessary course that love for God and desire to know Him and please Him will follow—

“Blessed are they that keep the Lord's testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart. Thou hast commanded us to keep Thy precepts diligently . . .

“O, that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes! . . .

“With my whole heart I have sought Thee. O, let me not wander from Thy commandments . . . Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against Thee.

“Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law . . . I will delight myself in Thy commandments, which I have loved . . .

“The earth, O Lord, is full of Thy mercy: teach me Thy statutes . . . Thou art good, and doest good.

“Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding that I may learn Thy commandments. I will never forget Thy precepts, for with them Thou hast quickened me.

“O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day. How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

“Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage forever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart. Great peace have they which love Thy law.”

How very few of us act in this spirit!

Are we not apt to worry ourselves about the affairs of this life? Are we not apt to make them the chief concern of our thoughts and the supreme object of our efforts, instead of throwing our heart and soul into the Christian life, and cherishing the love of Christ, the love of the brethren, and the desire for the spread and triumph of the Truth, as the passions of our souls?

Are we not apt to lose sight of the blessed assurance of our Master, and to make our secular business the chief concern of existence, when they ought to be altogether secondary and subordinate?

Brethren, let us take heed lest *“the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and it becomes unfruitful.”*

Let us not be weary in well doing. Many have run well for a time and have at last made shipwreck. Let us take warning. Let us give diligent attention to the precious Word of God, which is able to build us up in our most holy faith. This is a most important exhortation, for if a man neglects the reading of the Scriptures, or if he only attend to it in an occasional manner, his spiritual life will fade and his mind will be gradually but certainly leavened with the deceptive principles around him.

In regard to our own personal condition; we know whether we are warm in our hearts toward Christ, His Truth and His brethren, or no; for—*“where the treasure is, there will the heart be also”*: There cannot therefore be any mistake. Are we doubtful? Have we qualms of conscience?

“God is greater than our heart.”

He WILL disapprove what it condemns.

Are we pleased with ourselves, and looking forward with confidence to the coming of our Lord and Master? Only one thing can justify that confidence—the consciousness of a holy, Christ-like life—the answer of a good conscience toward God.

“Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom, but he that doeth the will of my Father that is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21).

“He that keepeth my commandments, he it is that loveth me” (John 14:21).

“Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you” (John 15:14).

Christ and His precious promises as much as we do this world and its concerns?

It is to be feared that if these questions were very truthfully answered, most of us would be found lamentably shortcoming.

Most of us can understand, argue, and perhaps preach about the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. Most of us can give a reason for the blessed Hope of Life that is within us; but it is to be feared that in too many instances we carry our faith more in our heads than in our hearts—having our understanding enlightened but our affections little softened by that gracious love of Christ which passeth all understanding.

It is perhaps but too true of most of us that while we may know sound doctrine, we fail in the practical part of Christianity, being but superficially acquainted with the precepts as affecting our everyday behaviour; and still more backward in obeying them when we do know them.

In a word, the good seed may have been sown in our hearts, and yet the fruit may be of tardy growth on account of the abundance and vigour of those other plants which find but too ready a vegetation in its soil. It is to be feared that we allow ourselves to be influenced by the strangely secular spirit of the age, and our Christianity to be diluted with prevailing worldliness.

Let us fear! For neither the worldly minded nor the lukewarm shall inherit the Kingdom of God!

Let us guard against faint-heartedness. Let us strive to make our Christianity honest, straightforward, and unblushing. We are apt to be overridden by the external circumstances of the time. Let it be otherwise! Let our characters be known in our circles; let our light shine in the surrounding darkness; and so may we glorify our Father in Heaven and receive His approval at last.

With regard to the affairs of this life, hear the words of our beloved Master:

“Take no thought for tomorrow, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for all these things the Gentiles seek), for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things; but seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:31-33).

These passages, which are all taken from Psalm 119, show the necessary frame of mind in relation to God's revelations—a wholehearted and fulltime devotion and absorption—and the importance of these revealed truths, not only as essential instruction in the way of life, but as the great and consuming interest of life and substance of pleasure and meditation. The entire Psalm is very instructive in this respect.

A daily, consistent study of the whole Bible is the ONLY way to acquire the saving and guiding and mind-transforming knowledge that brings peace.

There is a booklet, called “The Bible Companion,” by which the Bible can be read through in one year—once through the Old Testament and twice through the New, because the latter is more detailed and concentrated.

We would strongly urge any who desire to know God to follow this plan of reading faithfully, prayerfully, and consistently.

Much of the reading will be difficult. Much will, to begin with, be incomprehensible and therefore perhaps somewhat dry. This is to be expected in relation to a matter of such transcendent importance. Nothing worthwhile comes easily, and there is nothing more worthwhile than this.

Get a Bible with good, big print and read it daily, meditating upon it, praying for the enlightenment and understanding, and putting into practice the part you understand. This latter is essential, for God is not to be mocked. We must approach God's Word with a sincere and humble intention to learn and DO. Jesus said (John 7:17)—

“If any man will DO His will, he shall know the doctrine.”

Read it with an open mind and without preconceived ideas, for much of what passes for religion and doctrine has no foundation in Scripture but is the invention of man.

On the other hand, do not jump too quickly to conclusions without comparing Scripture with Scripture. The Bible is a consistent whole when properly understood and many passages clarify other passages.

Prayer is principally a matter of thanksgiving to God and seeking His guidance as to what we should do. What we should do is plainly told us in the Bible. Praying to God for guidance or for some benefit, without doing everything we can to find out for ourselves from the source of information He has lovingly given us, would not ring true and consistent in His eyes.

There are some very plain instructions in the Bible as to what to do. If

we ignore these, or do not trouble to find out about them, our prayers have no chance of recognition.

Belief of the true Gospel of salvation—the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ—and baptism into these things, are outstanding among the first things that must be attended to in order to stand in God's favor and receive His recognition and blessing.

You may say, “It does not seem fair to pray for help when I can do nothing myself.” In a sense this is true, although actually we can never do anything of ourselves. It is God that “*works in us to do His will,*” and gives us the power to overcome, that the glory may be all to God.

Our part is to put ourselves into that humble and teachable and truth-desiring and receptive condition that will enable God to work through and in us—to put aside our own desires and cast ourselves upon Him.

Our natural condition is perishing. We are, with the rest of the world, in the grip of sin, and of ourselves it is impossible to get out of this condition, regardless of our efforts, because our greatest efforts at best would be insufficient to entitle us to immortality. At best we are still sinners.

Our best efforts fall far short of perfection, and according to God's eternal and necessary and righteous laws, perfection alone could not entitle us to endless life. Sin and death are inseparable.

But God has, in His love, made a provision of His own freewill for us to escape from sin and its inevitable consequence, death. He has provided Jesus Christ as the Mercy-seat where we can approach God and be forgiven, on the basis of our belief in God and love of Him, and our repudiation of our own sinful natures and taking upon ourselves the sin-covering Name and identity of Christ.

We die as individuals and are reborn as a part of Christ and share with him the fruits of his victory over sin.

As a token of the genuineness of our belief and love, He requires us to devote ourselves to the obedience of His all-wise commandments, which are simply His loving instructions regarding the course to follow for our own happiness and well being.

We cannot earn life. It is entirely a free gift on the basis of love, but we must act in consistency with the love and belief we profess. We must show, by striving to obey Him in all things, that that love is the ruling power in our lives.

mess on this level. Ultimately, we know they will. The Tarshish power says to the King of the North, "art thou come to take a spoil," indicating that the Tarshish power is in the land. But apart from a brief use of American soldiers to arm the Patriot anti-missile equipment in Gulf War I, the US has so far steadfastly refused this.

But on a positive side, the report was hailed in Syria, where it is viewed as a validation of Syrian involvement in both Iraq and Lebanon. Calling for Syrian assistance in forming peace, has given the Syrians a platform from which they can continue their policy of disruption in Lebanon, hoping to eventually uproot the Maronite Christians who share in governing the nation.

Turkey also reported that they viewed Baker's report as a fair and accurate assessment of the problems in Iraq. Turkey's position on these things comes as a surprise, and a significant change from a fairly consistent 200 year history. There is no doubt that Turkey is in the Northern Camp, the Togarma of Ezekiel 38. But political events of the past appeared to indicate that this was a nation Russia would take by force in her march towards Israel. Turkey being unable to solidify its position in the European Union, even having its inclusion suspended now (Dec. 2006) and the growing militant Moslem movement may sway Turkey firmly into the Northern (Gogian) camp even before Russia descends.

Bro. Jim Phillips

Examine Yourselves, Whether Ye Be In The Faith

It is important to pause and consider whether these past twelve months have been a period of Christian activity and holiness, or a time of worldliness and indifference.

Let us never forget that Jesus, our Lord and Master, has sent this message to the Ecclesias:

“I will give to every one of you according to your works” (Rev. 2:23).

He has issued the inexorable decree, (Matt. 24:30): *“The unprofitable servant shall be cast out.”*

Are we fully alive to this? Are we adding yearly to our stock of good works, of profitable service?

We cannot, it is true, do all that we could wish - We cannot altogether get at that blissful perfection, which, in our hearts, we may desire to attain; but do we give ourselves as much ordinary concern to be profitable servants of Christ as we do to be prosperous and respected in worldly matters? Are we equally good Christians as we are good tradesmen and men of business? Are we as much interested in the future as we are in the present? Do we love

southern Sunni States. Egypt with Sheba and Dedan will find themselves quite hostile to Iraq, Iran, and Syria.

#5, 7 & 11—Create a support group for Iraq, made up of all her neighbors including Iran, Syria, and led by the United Nations Secretary General. Teheran, Iran is to be given a preeminent role.

The US has refused to allow Iran and Syria to the bargaining table, due to their continued efforts to destabilize Iraq during Gulf War II. Iran supports the Shi'ite majority in Iraq, and sees the destruction of the Sunnis in Iran as inevitable. This recommendation is actually in strong conflict with recommendation #3.

#10—Place the Iranian proliferation of Nuclear Weapons under the scrutiny of the United Nations Security Council.

Of course, the failure of the United Nations in this regard, is what directly led to the current war. Israel has already pledged that if the US will not take out the Iranian Nuclear Plants, that Israel can and will. No doubt Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's statement this week that "The Zionist regime will be wiped out soon the same way the Soviet Union was, and humanity will achieve freedom" has further incited unrest in Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert implied on a German Television Network, that Israel may consider a first strike nuclear attack against Iran. He has spent most every waking hour since then, denying that is what he meant, but without doubt the Israeli's are unnerved at the thought of an Iranian Nuclear Bomb. No doubt the conference to debate whether or not the holocaust ever occurred, which is denied by Iran, has not helped relations. Ahmadinejad's statements probably have not set all that well with Russia, either.

As regards Israel, the report recommends:

#12—The continued call for the establishment of a Palestinian State—Madrid style (which called for Jerusalem as the Arab capital.)

It is notable that when this was promised by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak (who never would have survived the next confidence vote had this gone through) Yassar Arafat rejected it.

#17—The right of return for displaced Palestinians.

This is a demand that the land of the Arabs taken in the 1948 war, is to be returned to the Arab families. In 1948 the Arabs ordered other Arabs living in Palestine to evacuate till Israel was "driven into the sea." Following the war, the Arabs kept the displaced Palestinians in refugee camps, rather than permitting them to return to Palestine or settling them in other Arab states. The purpose was a bartering tool for the Arabs, pointing to the "displaced" Arabs because of the state of Israel.

#16—The return of the Golan Heights to Syria in return for US guarantees of security.

Israel has always been willing to trade land for anything that would place US troops in Israel, guaranteeing Israel's security. But the US remembers what this was like for Britain before 1948, and has no desire to become embroiled in this

This is what God desires, and this gives Him great satisfaction and pleasure—

"There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

—are the words of Jesus. This is a glorious and inspiring truth. This is something we can give God—the pleasure and joy of obedient sonship. For this, all the creation was made.

If we are sincerely striving to know and do His will and promote His glory and pleasure, we have the great satisfaction of knowing that we are doing something for Him. We are making our lives worthwhile and useful in the most satisfying pursuit to which it is possible to devote ourselves.

In the words of Paul, we become *"laborers together with God"* in the great plan of the ages which is to fill the earth with His glory.

Do not feel that you can do nothing for God and therefore hesitate to keep asking Him to do things for you. But there are many things we can give God which are of great value to Him—thanksgiving and recognition of His loving provision, praise and glory, a humble heart sincerely seeking to do His will, a love for Him that carefully avoids those things that grieve Him, an appreciative reverence and devotion to His holy Word which He has caused to be written for our guidance to life.

The only way to find God, and through God to find peace, is by the study of His Word. It will not come by strivings with ourselves, no matter how agonized and sincere they are. We must get the facts, and get ourselves in line with them—

"It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps aright"

But God says—*"This is the way, walk ye in it."*

It consists of specific facts and specific commands: "Do this—do not do that." It cannot come by wishful thinking, any more than we could learn to play the piano by merely wishing. Jesus says—

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

The closer we get to Jesus, and actually learn of him—who he is, what he has done, what he will do in the future, and what we must do in order to be allowed to draw near him and share his love and friendship—the fuller and richer and more satisfying our life becomes.

It is all real, solid facts, like learning the laws of mathematics or the

facts of history, although on an incomparably higher plane. Do not grope in the dark. Use the light that has been lovingly provided for your feet.

The Bible throws a light back 6000 years, and forward into eternity. It lifts us out of the murky restrictions of the immediate present and gives us a clear view of a glorious plan unfolding through the centuries. It gives our life a purpose and meaning and connection with eternity and divinity. —Bro. G. V. Growcott

The Pure Gold of Tried Faith

Our studies this week will culminate in part with a consideration of that glorious prophecy of the Rainbowed Angel. It is a prophecy in which we see the mighty messenger stand where the colossus of Nebuchadnezzar's image once stood. It is a vision of glory, a vision of victory, a vision of conquering. It is a vision, however, to some of us that may seem at times to be a far distant prospect.

This morning, as I don't have the opportunity to speak to you often, I'd like to address two vulnerable sections of our community, which I feel need at times the word of exhortation more than others. The first group that I would particularly like to address my remarks are those who feel for a number of reasons, whether it's depression, which can often be masked by a friendly smile, or those who are undergoing a great trial in their life through family problems or circumstances, or those who are weighed down by the weight of a sin or a problem in their life, which they have had a great deal of problem overcoming, who feel at times that though they would altogether agree with the sentiment in my opening remarks with regard to that vision in Apocalypse 10, feel that though it is absolutely true, and believe it will come to pass, that they cannot see themselves participating in it. To you particularly I speak this morning. To use the words of Paul, I've come to preach the cross of Christ. To you particularly I speak, and to those who have just started that journey toward the Kingdom of God through the waters of baptism—those younger Brethren and Sisters, I have a few remarks to you also.

Paul said, in Romans 7, (Quoting from the English Standard Version) —*"I do not understand my own actions, for I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate... For I have the desire to do what is right but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not the good I want, but the evil that I do not want is what I keep on doing."*

Is that the experience of some of us this morning? The passage is the confession of a man who is deeply conscious of his appalling weakness in

Northern invaders of Israel. The US is the leading army in the Southern Alliance of nations which is set to defend Israel at the time of the end. It is impossible that these nations can be aligned as the return of Christ approaches. So the dominance of the US in Iraq, along with those Iraqi leaders which support the US staying in Iraq must fail.

In Jerusalem, the "city of the Great King," Baker was referred to as not having learned anything in 12 years. The Jerusalem Post has editorialized that his report is a repeating of the failed policies of 1991, which the Israeli's attribute as responsible for the current mess.

In Saudi Arabia, the report was followed by promises of financial support for the Sunni minority in Iraq. The war in Iraq is a civil war, where Shi'ite Moslems, the majority power, now have the opportunity to avenge years of oppression at the hands of the Sunnis, led by Saddam Hussein. The US is slowing the civil war some, but if they leave, the Sunnis will be in trouble. The Saudis, fellow Sunnis, are making it clear that they will step in to support the Sunnis, if these recommendations are implemented.

The committee of ten men, led by Baker did not have a single military man in the mix. But as soon as the report was issued, General Tommie Franks, American leader of the Iraq invasion, condemned the report calling it a plan for failure, and stating clearly that if the US brings its troops home, then the terror of Iraq will follow to the American shores.

This is probably true. As American and British voters wish to vote themselves out of the war in the Middle East, (not unlike World War II) God will not permit it. And if it takes another 911/Pearl Harbour type event to keep the US intimately protecting Israel's interests, then that is what we can expect to see. But regardless, the divine call has gone forth for Tarshish and her young lions to protect Israel. They will not be allowed to shrink from the stage, regardless of the desire of the voters in any of the countries.

The Baker report calls for an additional 20,000 troops to be sent into Iraq. This is less than the 35,000 wanted by presidential hopeful and Arizona senator John McCain, and 20,000 more than wanted by the military. The military regards adding that many troops to create unnecessary logistics problems.

Then the report calls for withdrawing of all troops by 2008. That part of the report will most likely be fulfilled, in harmony with Bible prophesy. The American voters voted against continuing the war, and Republican politicians know that they must be out of Iraq before the 2008 elections in November.

Of the relevant recommendations, from a prophetic standpoint are these

#3—Bringing in the "Organization of the Islamic Conference" (a Saudi sponsored organization) to decide Iraq's future.

This is a near impossibility, as the Saudi's will be looked upon as supporting the Sunni minority in Iraq, which would be true. As we already said, Saudi Arabia has already promised financial support for the Sunnis in the event that the US vacates Iraq. This hostility between the Sunnis and Shi'ites in Iraq will further heighten the tension between the northern Shi'ite states, and the

Jesus Christ, or the Mind of Christ, in us rejoices WITH the Truth, says Paul in 1 Corinthians 13—WITH the Truth, not apart from it, because the meaning of *Israel* is *with El—with EL, thou hast prevailed*.

The love of Jesus Christ in us, the Spirit of Christ, bears all things, believes all things. You who are faint-hearted, the Spirit of Christ in you can bear all things. That is true. It hopes all things. And my dear Brethren and Sisters, it can endure all things.

And when we come to that understanding, and with Jacob though we might be crippled by the experience through which we have to pass to gain a deep appreciation of these great truths. Though we at times have to be crippled that we might be healed, and we as Jacob had to do, struggle across the Jabbok again to face his great nemesis Esau—the nemesis we all have to face—sin in the flesh, of which Edom is the great type. That when we come to him as was the experience of Jacob, and we look him in the eye, we find a remarkable thing. It's recorded in Genesis chapter 33:10 – *“And Jacob said (to Esau), Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at thy hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou was pleased with me.”*

Esau didn't have a clue what he was saying. I wonder if we do, my dear Brethren and Sisters, this morning after these few words of exhortation. You see, it was God who changed that face from an enemy into a temporary friend. And God can take hold of our greatest fears and our greatest problems in life, and He can help us through the Spirit of Christ see El behind those sufferings and those problems. And we can look into the power of sin and at last see the face of God, which changes those problems that have so burdened us all our life, and know that the victory isn't ours—the victory is Jesus Christ in us, which my dear Brethren and Sisters, truly is the Hope of Glory.

Middle East Updates – The Baker Report

The Middle East waits as the US wrestles with what will be their new stance towards Iraq. A committee of ten citizens, led by former Secretary of State under the first President Bush, James Baker, have produced a list of 79 recommendations in regards to the war in Iraq. The report has been met with high praise by different groups in the US, for different reasons. But the situation is markedly different in the Middle East.

"As a whole, I reject the report, Iraqi president Jalal Talabani said, while he called the list "very dangerous to Iraq's sovereignty and constitution. Which of course, it is, and in fact has to be, according to the plan and purpose of God.

Iraq was the first King of the North, when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Israel in BC 604. It is fundamental to Bible prophesy that Iraq aligns itself with the

the face of the power of sin, who is disappointingly aware of his impotence in the face of his temptation.

With these words I want you to deeply consider, in just a few verses on, the contrast—*“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”*

And again, *“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Here is the same man speaking, and yet here he is speaking of the victory, of the conquering of that which had so oppressed him, that had so Bro.ught him down. And he proclaims to us, and includes us in that conquering, that it is through Christ Jesus, who loved us that we may gain the victory.

Either this is true, or the New Testament is lying to us. Either this is a present possibility, my dear Brethren and Sisters, or our presence here today is a waste of time. Now I'm persuaded that it IS true. And it is my wonderful opportunity to persuade you all that it IS a present reality for each and every one of us through love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

There are many ways in which we could go about doing that this morning through the epistles of Paul, of which we read this morning in Ephesians 3—one of the mightiest chapters we could read in regard to the love of God in Christ Jesus, manifested in our lives. But I want to do this by going very briefly to consider two incidences in the lives of the patriarchs, Abraham and Jacob, because I personally always believe that the Bible is written in such a way in regard to the stories of these men's lives, because it helps us remember better the principles than simply the doctrinal exposition of them, which Paul so eloquently does in the New Testament. There is of course a place for both. But so far as to illustrate this lesson it is a wonderful opportunity to look at Abraham and Jacob, of which of course because of time I can only do briefly this morning.

Firstly in regard to Abraham—I feel myself that in relationship to Apocalypse 10, there are two chapters in the Genesis record that are the equivalent of that particular chapter. These are Gen 14 and Gen 15. Genesis 14, you will remember, is the record of the invasion of the Land of Promise by the Mesopotamian kings, and Abraham going forth with selected men of his household, symbolic of the immortal saints—men who were taught by Abraham of the Hope of Israel, men who were to go forth to battle against those kings to save Lot, who is the symbol of natural Israel.

That is followed by Genesis 15, which very beautifully, I believe, depicts the Genesis record of the Rainbow Angel, in so far as it brings together the great principles of that 10th chapter of the Apocalypse with the fundamental principles that lie beneath the development of that Rainbow Angel that is set forth in Genesis 15 in regard to the life of Abraham.

The great principle of that chapter, the substance of that chapter is found in Gen 15:4-6 – *“Behold, the word of Yahweh came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: So shall thy seed be. And he believed Yahweh; and he (Yahweh) counted it for him for righteousness.”*

He believed. Now this belief, as has already been mentioned in our first address in regard to Ephesians this morning. This belief, or faith, is not a faith that is a belief in a general sense. It is a belief in a certain set of facts—those facts here of course involved the bringing forth from Sarah and from Abraham a seed when they were beyond the age of child bearing, which seed of course would ultimately lead to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The foundation of Abram’s faith was that he believed in the humanly impossible. He believed in something that was beyond the strength of man to perform. And that I suggest to you is the first element that is absolutely essential in the victory that overcometh. Without that, there is no foundation.

And you who are weary this morning, who are burdened with some problem in your life that you have not been able to overcome, I sincerely ask you to consider these simple foundation principles of the Gospel. They lay at the root of our problems, Brethren and Sisters. They lay at the root of overcoming depression and other things in our lives. Even though, in regard to depression, it may be a long haul of many years to be able to overcome it; nevertheless, it lays at that foundation of overcoming. It lays in the ability of drawing upon a power in your life that is beyond your own ingenuity, beyond your own abilities, and that rests altogether in Yahweh through His Son, who we remember this day. And it is through that power—the love of God and Christ—that we deeply appreciate in our lives, that can energize our faith and help us to do things, which normally we would never be able to have the strength to do. This I believe to be true, and I’d have you to believe it also.

We find in Genesis chapter 32 Jacob crossing the river Jabbok. We see a lonely man in the darkness—the sun having quickly set as it does in that part of the world. What do we see? We see a man of faith—a man of faith that feared. There’s nothing wrong with that. Men of faith, like Abraham, who

Just before Christ entered the Garden of Gethsemane, in chapter 17 of John, the Lord Jesus summed up the issues that were facing him. He prays, O, Holy Father, keep them (that’s you and I) in Thy Name. You see, it’s an interesting thing when you consider Genesis 32 and John 17 that there were two names that were the great subject of those chapters. One name is *Israel*, and in John 17 it’s the name *Yahweh*. And it’s to be kept in that Name.

And he prayed—he used that word *“Holy Father.”* It’s that holiness of God that became the great issue of the cross. The other issue is the righteousness of God that was to be declared. And so he says in John 17:25 – *“O righteous Father.”* He uses that term because it is the righteousness of God that was to be declared upon the cross.

What does he say that is to conclude this most important of all prayers recorded in the Bible. *“I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”*

That’s why he went through with the cross—that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me. Can we fathom that, my dear Brethren and Sisters, can we even for a moment fathom the love of God for His son? I can’t do that. I can’t do it. That’s beyond my ability. And yet, he prays that that love—the love that the Father had for the Son—Can you imagine the Father looking on while they crucified His Son? I often try to imagine that, and I have a great deal of difficulty trying to do that. You fathers who have had sons, there might be times in your life when your son is in a lot of trouble. Wouldn’t you do anything for him? I would.

The Father watched His son die a terrible death—for you and I—*“that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”* And Paul adds, *“the hope of glory”* in his epistles—the love of Christ in us, the hope of glory.

When this love is in us, it can empower us to do things, which as I have said, when in our normal strength we could never do.

Bro. Thomas takes hold of that phrase—the love of God, and he says it’s the Spirit of Christ. He calls the love of God the Spirit of Christ in his writings.

When we have the Spirit of Jesus Christ in us, that spirit is patient. The Spirit of Christ can empower us to be kind. The Spirit of Christ manifested in us does not get angry. The Spirit of Christ in us does not boast. The Spirit of Christ empowers us not to be arrogant. The Spirit of Jesus Christ in us helps us not to be rude. The Spirit of Jesus Christ in us does not insist on its own way. The Spirit, or the Mind, of Jesus Christ in us isn’t irritable. It doesn’t become resentful. It does not rejoice in wrong doing. The Spirit of

that God says, I want you to learn the name *Israel* all over again, because with El you will prevail, and without Him you've got no hope at all. Now the question is, my dear Brethren and Sisters, you may well say, Well, that's all very well; it's interesting; I have got to make it a practical application in my life. And I know that is true. The man who has power with God is the man who submits to the will of God.

And that takes us, as I say, into the Garden of Gethsemane, because you know that it's in that garden that we have two wills present in the one man, the man Christ Jesus. Yes, it is true that the will of God prevailed. But let us never, ever depreciate that battle. Because when you depreciate the battle, you destroy the victory of the fact that there was an almighty power in him to avoid the terrible sufferings of the cross. "*Father, if it be Thy will, let this cup pass from me.*"

And he knew of course, he did not in any way take away from the Father's ability to do whatever was His will to be done, and the glory of it—the wonder of it—is that he submitted to the will of his Father. And therein lies the victory.

The servant of Christ is the man truly who has power with God, because he submits to the will of God. Now the question is how can we be empowered to submit to the will of God?

There is a passage, which we will very quickly turn to, in 1 Cor 1, which I'd like you just to turn up. Paul says in verse 18 – "*For the preaching*" (That's why I used that word to start off with.) "*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*" Now that word *preaching* doesn't mean to proclaim. It's the Greek word *logos*, which Bro. Thomas tells us of course is the inward thought or reason which is made open or expressed. That's why of course we read about the *logos* made flesh in John chapter 1.

Here Paul is preaching about the *logos*—the intent of God that was made plain in the cross, which Paul says is the power of God. It is when we come to a deep appreciation of what God in His love has done for us, when we behold His naked Son upon that cross—that he died while we were yet enemies, that when we come to grips with the love of God, then we come to grips with the meaning of *Israel*. And we are empowered to live it in our lives. And where we haven't been able to overcome, we ARE able to overcome, yet not through our strength but through the love of God that dwelleth in us. That is the substance of Paul's epistles—all of them. That's the secret of ALL his epistles. And he just says the same thing, over and over and over again in some of the most beautiful expositions that we can ever read.

also incidentally at the beginning of that 15th chapter of Genesis was full of fear too.

Men of faith weigh out the problems of life. They don't doubt God's ability, but they doubt their own ability in dealing with those problems. And one of the things that Jacob had to learn through this incident was that God was going to of course and had previously promised him a great eternal possession. And for him to come into that possession by grace, he wasn't going to earn that position through his own abilities and strength—through relying on his own ingenuity. He had to gain that possession through God's grace and through God's power working in him. And for that reason, God took hold of that man's life, as He takes hold of each and every one of our lives. Make no mistake of that. And He passes us through circumstances, as He did Jacob, which make us focus our minds on the real issues of life—those things that may separate us from the love of God.

It is in this incident that we find him alone, and verse 24 of that chapter says that he wrestled with a man. Now we know that that man was an angel of God, but that's not what the record says. It says that he wrestled "a man," because God was going to, through this "man" sent to him from God, was going to show Jacob where his weakness really lay. That God limited his power in regard to the wrestling with the man of God to reveal to Jacob where his strength was to come from.

I suggest to you that this man here in this record, by way of type, was the Lord Jesus Christ. And that in our wrestlings, my dear Brethren and Sisters, through trying to come to grips with the problems of our life that separate us from the love of God that we find ourselves wrestling with the Lord Jesus Christ, that we come face to face with him—face to face with him through the trial of faith, so that He might show us where the true strength to overcome lies.

Now I've experienced that in my own life. That's why I speak confidently to you this morning. There have been times in my life when I have had great problems. I am not ashamed to say it. There have been times when I have been weighed down by the weight of sin in my own life. And I have felt the force of that wrestling. And I know that in that trial of faith, I also have come face to face with the Master. And that through that process of which we are going to consider through the experience of Jacob, He has taught me many things. And there have been times in which I have overcome, and times I haven't. And I know that's your experience as well. And that's why this record is so poignant, so wonderful.

Jacob wrestles with this man until the break of day. But it isn't until near the break of day that this man from God touches the hollow of his thigh to shrink the sinew, which affected the sciatic nerve and caused him incredible

pain and agony. He wrestled with him until all this strength from a natural point of view had all but gone, so that in the end there was only one thing that Jacob could do, and that was to pray to God. It says in verse 26 that the man of God says, *“Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he (Jacob) said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.”*

Let us not underestimate this man Jacob—what a man of faith! How many of us would have hung on all night like he did? We have got to diligently seek our God. It’s by constant continuance in well-doing, my dear Brethren and Sisters. We’ve got to keep at it and keep at it and keep at it until the break of day, until the dawn of the resurrection, until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. That’s what we’ve got to do.

It wasn’t until the break of day or near to it that the hollow of his thigh was touched, and he pleaded to be blessed. And what is that blessing? Young Brethren and Sisters, what is the blessing of the promises made to the fathers of old? If I should ask you that, I would get a variety of answers. I know I would—from experience, I know I would. But in this context for those here who are weary, I would suggest to you that the answer lies in Acts 3:26 – *“Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”*

The great lesson for you and I who at times are weary is the power of God that turns us from our iniquity. It TURNS US from our iniquity. That the power of God doesn’t solely rest in the promise of an eternal inheritance at the coming of Christ. It’s not just that, but the power of God is a present reality—the power of being able to be turned from our iniquity through the love of God deeply appreciated in our lives.

One of the secrets of this chapter is to understand how Jacob asked to be blessed. You know a man’s inner thoughts are not revealed by what he says. Is that true? Is that your experience that when people say things to you, you don’t really get an insight as to how they are thinking, but it’s how they say it. You know the Bible tells us how Jacob asked to be blessed.

Turn with me to Hosea 12 – we read in verse 3, *“He (Jacob) took his Brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God.”* The word for *strength* in the Hebrew there means his manhood, or his maturity. It was through this wrestling that that maturity of faith came to its zenith—that in his maturity he had power, that means to prevail, by persistence, by perseverance he had power with God. *“Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed.”* That is, he endured; he was victorious. He was ABLE to do something. He prevailed. How? *“...he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel,”* which is a reference to Genesis 35. That’s how he prevailed. Not by his natural strength and

abilities, Brethren and Sisters. That had been taken away through the grace of God.

You know, trials come into our lives and we sometimes think that it’s an amazing thing. We can’t help but say, Why is this happening to me? We know we shouldn’t say it, but we say it. Why is this happening? And it’s because God is taking something away from us—something that we may have been leaning on as a support. He knocks it out from under our feet. He takes it away, and He says, You lean on me. You learn of My strength, My power, and My love, and I will show you that you can do things that you thought you could never do before.

That’s what’s happening here. That’s what’s happening here with Jacob. That’s why he wept. That’s why he made supplication. And by reading this record we are entering a very holy sphere, aren’t we? We are entering the garden of the oil press—the Garden of Gethsemane. That was the characteristic of the Lord Jesus in his wrestlings, wasn’t it? Those three prayers in the garden, but you know we sometimes forget the most monumental prayer in the Bible that preceded his entering into that garden. That’s in John 17. If I’ve got time, I’m going to go to a couple of verses there to bring out the power that Christ drew on before he entered into that garden. That is, my dear Brothers and Sisters, how Jacob prevailed, by weeping and supplication.

We turn back to Gen 32:27 – The angel asks, *“What is thy name?”* And he said, Heel Catcher—Supplanter. That had summed up his life in many ways to this point. The man from God said, *“Thy name shall be called no more Heel Catcher, but Israel.”* Now you know that if we look in the margins of our Bible, we see that the name of *Israel* means *Prince of God*. Well, it means that by inference, but it really does not convey the full import of that name, and the secret of this morning’s address lies in the meaning of *Israel*.

The word *Israel* is made up of two Hebrew words. The first word is *sarah*, which means *to prevail, have power*, by inference, as a prince. And the other is a title of the Deity. It’s *El*, which we know of course means *strength, might, and power*. And the emphasis of this mighty word, which we say we believe in the hope of, lies in the first syllable of the Hebrew word *El*, that is the meaning *with El hast thou prevailed*—WITH EL HAST THOU PREVAILED, because you cannot prevail without Him. That’s the point.

You know some of us, the present speaker included, will take a lifetime in the Truth to really come to a deep appreciation of that truth. And we should, we should treasure when we look back over our lives in Christ on those times when we have been put to the test. Because it is at those times