

## THE NECESSITY OF WORKS

The beliefs of those who put exclusive emphasis on faith without works are drawn principally from the writings of the apostle Paul. Therefore anything Paul has to say regarding the necessity of works will be particularly significant. It is in his epistle to the Romans where Paul appears to make the strongest argument for faith alone against works. He says (Romans 4:2-6)—

*“If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory: but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.”*

And perhaps even more strongly in Romans 11:6—

*“If by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work.”*

Taking these passages alone and going no farther, as many unfortunately do, surely we would seem fully justified in concluding, as Luther did, that faith is everything—that works are not only unnecessary but actually contrary to faith.

But—would we be getting the whole truth of the matter? Or would we be just running off with only a twisted half-picture? In chap. 2 of this same epistle, vs.6-7, we find this—

*“God will render to every man according TO HIS DEEDS (RV: works). To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality (God will render) eternal life.”*

We must make this also fit into our picture. Again, Romans 8:13—

*“If ye (speaking to baptized, ‘saved’ believers) live after the flesh, ye shall die. But if ye through the Spirit do MORTIFY THE DEEDS OF THE BODY, ye shall live.”*

Here again we have the clear issues of life and death depending on our works and conduct. And we note the once ‘saved’ can be lost. Much of the responsibility for the sad state of the religious world today rests with the pernicious doctrine that “Christ has done everything necessary,” and that man is such a miserable, hopeless creature that all he can do is close his eyes and throw himself in his corruption on the mercy of God.

All God’s beautiful, and wise, and detailed instructions whereby man CAN, and must—through the power of God—gradually transform himself to holiness, are quite generally ignored by the churches of the world, because men have been taught that faith alone will save, and once saved they can never be lost.

The stern Word of God, if they would but study it with reverent fear, would rudely awaken them from these baseless dreams of wholesale and effortless salvation. Does not Paul himself say—

*“WORK out your salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12).*

Jesus declared plainly—

*“The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father ... then shall he reward every man ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS” (Matt. 16:27).*

Three times in the Revelation (last book of the Bible), Jesus says—

*“Every man shall be judged according as his WORKS shall be” (Rev.2;20;22).*

Peter adds a solemn word of warning right on this point (1 Peter 1:17)—

*“If ye call on the Father, Who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s WORK, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.”*

And James says—

*“Faith without works is DEAD” (James 2:26).*

Surely it is very clear from many scriptures that there must be works, fruits, results—to obtain the glorious salvation of God. —Bro. G.V.Growcott

# 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 The Berean Christadelphians since 1923.

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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

## Ecclesial News

**AUSTIN**, Texas. The Sunday meeting times are as follows:

10 AM - Sunday School

11 AM – Memorial

Wednesday night classes are shared with members of the Lampasas Ecclesia who live in the Austin area, and it's on a rotation that goes Braune - Brown - Connolly - Freeburg - Phillips. Start time is 7:45 PM.

Loving greetings to all in the Household of Faith:

The Austin Ecclesia prays that this note finds everyone in fine physical and spiritual health. We have just returned from the Hye Fraternal Gathering recently, and were all spiritually uplifted by the fellowship, comments, exhortations, and lectures! It was a blessing to have the time set aside to focus on the things of the Truth, and to attain spiritual tools that will help us in our daily walk.

Before Hye, we were delighted to receive several guests at our Sunday assembly: Bro. Fred and Sis. Ruth Higham of the Detroit Ecclesia; Bro. Jim and Sis. Terri Rankin and Bro. John and Sis. Mary Phillips of the Holliday Ecclesia; Bro. Steve and Sis. Sharon Osborne of the Dedham Ecclesia; and Bro. Mark and Sis. Naomi Braune and family of the Lampasas Ecclesia. Bro. Fred favored us with the word of exhortation.

Several ecclesia members had the honor of visitors in their home both before and after Hye: Bro. Jim and Sis. Kay hosted the Highams and Phillips families; Sis. Sarah Brown and Sis. Julie Osborne hosted the Osbornes, and Sis. Shiloh Brown hosted Bro. Sid and Sis. Christine Jones and family. It's a joy to spend time with our brothers and sisters on a one-to-one basis to get to know them better, and to extend the fellowship from the gatherings a bit further.

We held the Annual May Hye Quarterly Study Weekend on the first weekend in May, in conjunction with the San Angelo Ecclesia; our topic was "Servitude". Accordingly, we appreciated everyone's attendance and help putting the weekend together, and look forward to hosting this event in future years, if the Lord tarries. We had many attendees from the Texas ecclesias; out-of-state guests included Bro. Scott and Sis. Lara Ricks and family of the Northeast North Carolina Ecclesia and Sis. Annetta Jones of the Richard Ecclesia.

We occasionally receive visitors throughout the year. Recent (and relatively frequent) guests have included Bro. Mark and Sis. Naomi Braune and family of the Lampasas Ecclesia and Bro. Gary and Sis. Brenda Smith of the San Angelo Ecclesia.

In order to foster efficient inter-ecclesial communications, Bro. Seth Brown has been designated the Secretary for the Austin Ecclesia. Official correspondence may be directed as follows:

Via email: [austinbereans@gmail.com](mailto:austinbereans@gmail.com)

Via post: 3300 Killingsworth Lane, #201; Pflugerville, TX 78660

On a final (but extremely important) note, we are pleased to officially announce that **Kristine (Kristi) Smith**, wife of our Bro. Lee Smith, put on the saving name of Jesus Christ through baptism on April 12, 2008. We have all known Sis. Kristi for

depart: and it shall be cut off, and fall; and that suspended upon it shall be cut down: for Yahweh hath spoken." This cutting off the Nail, and his departure, occurred in the nailing of Jesus to the cross, and his subsequent assumption. The apocalypse symbolizes in "the Lamb slain" this cutting off, and in the tribulation or trial then "about to come upon the whole habitable," the cutting down of that suspended by faith upon the Nail.

The Eliakim who hath the key of the house of David informs all of the Philadelphian class of saints, that he opens and shuts, and none can hinder. He reminds them that an open door had been set before them. He had sent Paul to Ephesus, where he continued, "disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of the Deity," for two whole years; "so that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks" — Acts 19:8-10. Hence, the Philadelphians, being inhabitants of Asia, had heard it among the rest.

During all that time he opened his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel. The result was that they came to the understanding of "the word" and confessed "the name," which, owing to the "little strength" they still retained when the apocalypse was written, they had "kept" and "not denied."

They had learned "the things of the Kingdom" or "the word;" and "the things of the Name." That kingdom was the subject-matter of "the word," styled by Isaiah "the law and the testimony;" and which is the rule of speaking for all who walk in the light. They knew that it was the Kingdom of David to be set up by the Deity of the heavens in the land of Israel; that it was to consist of the twelve tribes grafted into their own Olive Tree upon their acknowledgment of Jesus as King of Israel; and that, although they were by nature aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, the "Strait Gate" and "Narrow Way" had been "set before them as an open door, which no one could shut." Peter had opened the door or gate which gave admission into "the way" which leads to the Kingdom. He had opened it to the Jew on Pentecost, and to the nations at the house of Cornelius; not, indeed, by his own power, but by His which descended upon him in baptism of spirit, even by the power of Him "who openeth and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens."

"The keys of the kingdom of the heavens" having been thus apostolically employed, the Philadelphians were all alive to the Spirit's allusion to the key of the house of David in his possession.

Arranged from the writings of Bro. Thomas by Bro. Bob Widding

Deity when incarnated, is therefore fitly represented by “a nail fastened in a sure place.” Of this nail, the Spirit in Zechariah said, that it should come out of Judah — ch. 10:4. The “sure place” in which it is to be fastened, Ezra designates as “Yahweh Elohim’s holy place,” in which he and the remnant of the captivity returned from Babylon, were then sojourning; that is, in Jerusalem. This accords with the true import of oman, mahkom neamahn, which signifies an established habitation. This is the “sure place” in which the Nail is to be fastened — in Jerusalem then a peaceable, quiet, and established habitation — Isa. 32:18; 33:20.

The Spirit-Man is also to be for “a Throne of Glory.” A throne is an elevated seat with a canopy and hangings which cover it. Hence, the Eliakim in the passage before us, is styled metaphorically kissai, from the root kahasah “to cover.” “He shall be for a Cover of Glory for the house of his Father;” for “He shall bear the glory, and sit and rule upon his throne” — Zech. 6:13; he shall be “a wall of fire round about, and the Glory in the midst of Jerusalem” — ch. 2:5. As the glory sat enthroned between the Cherubim in the times of the law, so it shall be seated upon the Eliakim and his brethren in the apocalyptic Aion of a thousand years.

Isaiah saw this throne of glory in a vision, in the year that king Uzziah died. He tells us that it was an exalted throne, and that the King, Yahweh Tz’vaoth, was sitting upon it. Around it stood the Seraphim, who proclaimed superlative holiness, and announced that the whole earth was full of his glory — ch. 6:1-5. This vision has been reproduced in Rev. 4, of which we shall treat more at large when we arrive at that chapter in our exposition.

Isaiah tells us in regard to “the Nail,” that all the glory of the house of the Eliakim’s father shall be suspended upon him; and appositely informs us, that this glory consists of what in the Common Version is termed, “the offspring and the issue.” These are in the original hatzeatzaim we-hatzphioth; literally, earth-products and shoots; in other words, those who, “sown in dishonor,” are “raised in glory.” They are styled also “all vessels of the small;” that is, “the poor of this world rich in faith, who are heirs of the kingdom,” and termed “the small” in Rev. 11:18, in relation to “the great” — the small, being compared to wash-troughs; and the latter, to the vessels made of skins to hold wine, and other choice fluids.

Such is to be the glory that is permanently to cluster around the Eliakim. But before that glorious consummation is developed, the Spirit declared that “the Nail fastened in an established place shall

many years, and are overjoyed that she has joined us in our walk Zionward, providing strength to our spiritual ranks. Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another (Proverbs 27:17).

With love from, and on behalf of the Austin Ecclesia  
Bro. Seth Brown

**RICHARD**, Saskatchewan, Sunday School 10:00 am; Memorial 11:20 am; Young People’s Class every 2nd Sunday 3:00 pm; Wednesday night class 8:00 pm; Bro. David Humphreys, 122 Spinks Drive, Saskatoon, SK, S7H 4G7, Canada

Since our last report, published in the April 2007 magazine, we have much news to share. We were delighted to have a number of visitors: Sis. Grace Punter from Kindersley, SK, Bro. Steve and Sis. Gwen Armstrong, Bro. Norman and Sis. Tina Blacker, Bro. Ben and Sis. Jen Darter, Sis. Rachel (Luard) Dul, Sis. June Jones, Bro. Noel and Sis. Brenda McChesney all from the Edmonton Ecclesia, Bro. Lynn Osborne from the Denver Ecclesia, and Bro. James and Sis. Jeanne Fuhr from the Vernon Ecclesia.

On March 25, 2007 Sis. Cora Rafuse began her rest. Sis. Cora was a dear friend and we were saddened by losing her. Funeral service was held in North Battleford, led by Bro. Dan Jackson. Sis. Cora now lies next to her husband, Bro. Ralph, awaiting our Saviour’s return in the Richard Cemetery.

From June 29 to July 2, 2007 we were able to hold the 2007 Richard Fraternal Gathering. We were pleased with the attendance and the fellowship we shared with all of you that were able to make the trip. We would like to thank the many volunteers that helped with the gathering.

On October 3, 2007, after a good confession of his faith, we were able to witness the baptism of **Clark Rafuse**. Bro. Clark is now a member of the Richard Ecclesia and we are glad to have him as a brother and friend. Bro. Clark is son of the late Bro. Ralph and late Sis. Cora Rafuse.

During the afternoon of December 16, 2007 we held our annual Sunday School program. The Richard Sunday School students gave presentations on what they learned over the 2007 year. The students also sang songs and performed in biblical plays which brought the stories to life.

On January 26, 2008 and on March 22, 2008 we held “Friends and Family” evenings. Each evening consisted of our members inviting guests to join us for supper and then listen to a presentation on the Berean Christadelphians. The presentation explained who we are, the basics of our beliefs and the future hope. We had good attendance with approximately 15 visitors for each evening.

Bro. Darren Truelove is currently not in fellowship due to having married out of the faith. This fellowship status change took effect on February 11, 2008. We all hope and pray for his soon return to the fold.

On February 16 & 17, 2008 we held a Youth Study. The study presented talks by many different brethren. The talks were focused on helping the youth deal with the pressures of worldly influence.

On May 28, 2008 Sis. Sarah Sadler began her rest. Sis. Sarah was one month short of her 101st birthday. She continued in strong faith and eagerly looked

forward to every opportunity to attend memorial meeting. The funeral service was held in North Battleford and was led by Bro. Sid Jones.

On July 21, 2008 we were pleased to be able to witness the baptism of **Noel McChesney**. Bro. Noel gave a good confession of his faith in Edmonton, AB and then travelled to Richard, SK for baptism. On the following Sunday the Edmonton Ecclesia extended the right hand of fellowship to Bro. Noel. We are pleased to have Noel as a brother and were glad to share this special time with him and with the Edmonton Ecclesia.

As we look forward, we have started planning for the 2009 Richard Fraternal Gathering to be held, Lord willing, on July 3-6, 2009 at the Richard Community Hall. We hope to see as many of you as possible, if our Lord remains away.

As we see the developments of the political world around us coming in line with Yahweh's great plan, we are comforted knowing his prophecy is there for us as a guide. It is encouraging to witness and hear of the many baptisms throughout the fellowship. We can be confident that our Master's return is near.

On behalf of the Richard Ecclesia,  
Bro. David Humphreys

#### **Las Cruces, New Mexico - News from our Ecclesia.**

We are sorry to announce that we have withdrawn fellowship from Brother Tony Torres and from Sister Lupe Ogaz of Las Cruces for long repeated absence from attending meeting or Bible Classes and lack of communication. We very much hope that eventually they will return to fellowship.

We meet each Sunday at 200 Cervantes Vlg. E15A, Las Cruces, NM 88001. Our Sunday School is at 9:30 AM and Meeting at 10:45 AM. Our Bible Class on Thursday Nights at the same location at 7:00 PM.

We continue to send out the Key Bible Lessons to students around the world. There are currently around 1,500 students who receive the weekly lessons and about 200 new students signing up each month.

We had a nice visit a few months ago from sister Annetta Jones of the Richard Ecclesia, brother Beryl and Sister Becky Snyder from the Canton Ecclesia, and Brother Wayne Jr. Wolfe of the Lampasas Ecclesia. We surely enjoy visits from brethren and sisters.

Love in the Truth,  
Brother Michael Morrell

## **FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES**

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

**CANTON FRATERNAL GATHERING..... Oct 11—12, 2008**

Bro. Don Miller, 6695 Carriage Lane, North Canton, OH 44721 1-330-494-7717

**GOLDTHWAITE STUDY WEEKEND..... Nov 28—30, 2008**

Bro. Curtis Hurst, 250 CR 517, Mullin, TX 76864, USA. 1-325-985-3868

kingdom of David which Divine Power will set up when the time arrives to deliver the remnant of the captivity.

The Ail-yakim, or Eliakim, typified, then, is "Messiah the Prince," in whom all is to be accomplished that was typically spoken of Eliakim. Shebna's robe, girdle, and government, are all to be transferred to the Christ; who will be both scribe and treasurer when Divine Power, or Ail, shall set up, yakim (or Eliakimize) the tabernacle of David which has fallen down, "and set it up as in the days of old" — Acts 15:16; Amos 9:11. Then will he be "a Father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah."

Isaiah remarks, that the Eliakim should wear his key upon his shoulder, as a mark of office, of his power to open and shut with authority; thereby indicating that he is the Grand Master and Chief of the House of David. Callimachus says, that Ceres carried a key upon her shoulder; a custom that appears very strange to us; but the ancients had large keys in the form of a sickle, and which from their weight and shape, could not otherwise be carried conveniently.

For the key of the house of David, then, to rest upon the Eliakim's shoulder, is equivalent to the government of that house, or of Israel, resting there. This is evident from the prophet's allusion to "the shoulder" in ch. 9:6. In this place, speaking of the "Son to be given" to the house of David, who should be called Ail-Givbor, the Mighty Power, Avi-Ad, Father of Futurity, Sar-Shahlom, Prince of Peace, the Spirit says, "the government shall be upon his shoulder." This can mean nothing else than that the government then on the shoulder of Ahaz the reigning prince of Judah, should at some future time rest upon the shoulder of a Divine Son of David's house, named Immanuel or "God with us," as typified by one of the prophet's family: and this idea is symbolically expressed by the apocalyptic phrase, "I have the Key of the David, opening and no one shutteth, and shutting and no one openeth." "The key of the David" is an elliptical phrase. The words to be supplied are indicated by Isaiah: according to him, "house of," in the sense of kingdom of, should intervene between "key of the" and the name "David." Thus, the Spirit-Man who was dead and is living as the Holy One and the True God, in speaking to the Star-Angel in Philadelphia, and through them to all the ecclesias, declares that he is the Eliakim; and that the government of the kingdom of David is with him; and that holding the keys, he will "set it up as in the days of old."

But furthermore, the Spirit-Man being the Ail-yakim, is also "the Nail" and the "Throne of Glory." "The words of the wise are as fastened nails given from one shepherd." The word of the only wise

## Analecta Apocalypticae (28) The Key of the House of David

The Holy and True one is the possessor of the Key of David. He holds this, and the Keys of Hades and of Death; and the Key of the Abyss — ch. 1:18; 20:1. A key is symbolical of power to open and shut; hence, the Anointed One saith in this writing, that he openeth and shutteth, and no one can prevent him.

The key is styled “of the David,” because there is a something connected with David to be opened and shut. This something is revealed in the prophets. There it is styled “the Key of the House of David;” that is, of his kingdom — Isa. 22:22. In this chapter, two states of the Kingdom of David are prefigured by the names of two of Hezekiah’s Officers — Shebna and Eliakim. The former, derived from shavah, “to lead captive,” represents the kingdom in a dispersed and ruined condition; and the latter from AIL, God, and yahkim, “shall set up,” indicates the restoration of the kingdom by Divine Power. Hence, Ail-yahkim, or Eliakim, is a typical name for the restoration power, which is Deity in David’s Son, or the Christ. Of this Eliakim, the Spirit in Isaiah saith to Shebna, Hezekiah’s treasurer, “I will call him, and clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the Key of the House of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a nail in an established habitation: and he shall be for a Throne of Glory for the house of his father. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of the house of his father, the earth-products and the shoots, all vessels of the small from vessels of the wash-troughs, even to all vessels of the skins.”

This is a very interesting typical prophecy. We presume, that no one will be so obtuse as to suppose that the things written were fulfilled in Eliakim the son of the Hilk-Yah. Very little is left on record concerning him in the Bible. From this we learn, that while Shebna was Secretary of State and Treasurer, Eliakim was over the King’s Household in Hezekiah’s reign, and at the time of the destruction of the Assyrian host by a blast from Divine Power, and the consequent deliverance of Jerusalem and Judah from the oppressor. His name, the peculiar circumstances of the time, and his position in David’s kingdom, all combined to make him a very fit person for a Messianic representative. Shebna was officially identified with the law which was to vanish away; while Eliakim was officially identified with the

## Yahweh’s Appointed Times

*“In the last day, that Great Day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him COME UNTO ME, and drink.”* John 7:37

### LEVITICUS 23: THE MOSAIC YEARLY CYCLE

This chapter speaks of the yearly feasts, or rather ‘appointed times’ of the Mosaic Law. The Jewish months were lunar. The years were solar, as ours. Each month started with a new moon. The cycle of the moon is just a little over 29 days, so the months alternated 29 and 30 days, with two 30-day months coming together whenever the fraction over 29 accumulated to a day.

The year normally had 12 months or new moons, which is 354 or 355 days: 10 or 11 days short of the solar year, so an extra month was added about every 3 years (actually 7 times in 19 years) to keep the year in harmony with the seasons.

At the present time, the month Abib or Nisan, scripturally the 1st month, begins with the first new moon after the spring equinox (the date that night and day are equal: March 20 or 21). This year (1978), Abib began with the new moon on April 8.

If there is a new moon after the 12th month *before* the spring equinox, then the 13th month is added to the year, so that Abib, the first month of the next year, does not start before the equinox.

By some method like this, the year was kept in balance with the seasons in Bible times, but the exact method is not known.

By God’s command at the time of the Exodus (Ex. 12:2) the year was to begin with the month Abib—roughly corresponding with April. So obviously it had been different before that. Jews today begin the year with the 7th Biblical month: approximately October. This custom goes far back into history, and this was probably the beginning of the year before it was changed to the Passover month. It may seem strange to us to begin a year as winter is approaching, but for an agricultural people in that area, it was very logical. It was another natural dividing line—the autumn equinox, and it was the end and beginning of the agricultural year. All harvests were completed by September: plowing and planting for the coming year began in October. In 1978, the modern Jewish New Year begins with the new moon on October 2.

\* \* \*

The Mosaic memorial periods are all based upon the number seven. Seven is completeness: not just completeness as such, but completeness in God—completeness of holiness and rest and absorption into God. Seven is the basic cycle: 8 is a new beginning. ‘Scientists’ have many theories to explain the widespread use of the 7-day week, as it has no relation to any astronomical phenomena, like the month and year. The obvious and true explanation, of course, escapes them.

The basic memorial day was the 7th—the Sabbath—when God rested from His completed Creation work, and saw that all was good. Consequently, we find this chapter begins (v. 3) with the Sabbath law: the primary ‘holy convocation’—that is ‘*sacred assembly*’: a gathering and uniting for holiness and worship.

Beside the weekly Sabbath, there were 7 yearly ‘holy convocations’—

1. The *first* day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread: Abib 15.
2. The *last* day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread: Abib 21.
3. The one-day Feast of Weeks: Pentecost—50 days after the Passover.
4. The Feast of Trumpets: first day of the 7th month.
5. The Day of Atonement: tenth day of the 7th month.
6. The *first* day of the Feast of Tabernacles: 15th day of the 7th month.
7. The day *after* the end of the Feast of Tabernacles: *the great culminating day of the yearly cycle*: 22nd of 7th month.

On none of these days could ‘servile’ work (relating to daily occupations) be done. On one of them—the Day of Atonement—as on the weekly Sabbath, no work of any kind (even preparing meals) was permitted.

The yearly ‘feasts’ or ‘appointed times’ had several purposes, all directed to Israel’s spiritual well-being and fellowship with God. These ordinances organized their lives into an active and profitable pattern centered in and pointing ever toward God. They gave Israel—

*Religious and devotional activity: organized worship and praise;*

*Repeated, regular remembrance of God’s goodness and deliverance;*

*Wholesome, God-centered pleasure and rest and change;*

*Instruction in divine things and human duties;*

*National unity and cohesiveness and purpose and meaning;*

*Types and shadows of the Eternal Divine Purpose of Redemption, and*

*Fellowship and communion and friendship with God in holiness.*

God made us for His pleasure; and for us to forget or ignore Him cannot yield this pleasure. If we had made the race we should object to be left out of account by it. Even as parents we are displeased if our children forget us or act contrary to our will. It depends upon ourselves as to whether the command will make us miserable. If we heartily comply it will not, but if we arrange only to render a partial obedience it will. To endeavour to serve God and self is naturally a very irritating exercise. Let us take the reasonable view, and we shall soon experience, more or less, the Psalmist’s mind. He had no desire to run away from God—“Oh, my God be not far from me” (38:22). “Oh! how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day” (119:97). “How precious also are thy thoughts unto me” (139:17). God is no tyrant, that we should flee from Him. He is our best Friend—abundant and marvellous in kindness. Every good thing that we enjoy is of His bestowing, and it is to Him that we have to look for an endless and joyous existence. Shall we grudge to give Him glory?

What! Question the teaching of Paul! May we be preserved from the men who would be guilty of such consummate folly. To question the verity of Paul is to insult Christ. Has not Christ introduced the apostle to us in words which guarantee his absolute reliability? Listen. “He is a chosen vessel unto me.” And again, “I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.” There is a growing tendency to lower Paul’s authority and to challenge his unerring testimony. Let us fortify ourselves against this sin by refreshing our minds from time to time with the apostle’s own references to himself. Paul informs us that he was set for the defence of the gospel (Phil. 1:17), and that he was an apostle by direct appointment of Jesus Christ and God (Gal. 1:1); that he was such in “faith and verity” (1 Tim. 2:7); that the signs of his apostleship lay in “signs and wonders and mighty deeds” (2 Cor. 12:12), such as the blinding of Elymas (Acts 13:9–11), the raising of the dead (Acts 20:9–10), and the imparting of spiritual gifts (Rom. 1:11); that what he officially spoke and wrote was to be regarded as the word and commandment of the Lord (1 Cor. 14:37; 1 Thes. 4:2, 15; 2:13); that his teaching was to be held fast (2 Thes. 2:15; 2 Tim. 1:13), and the men withdrawn from who would not submit to it (2 Thes. 3:6, 14); that the Spirit was present with him to guide his tongue and pen (1 Cor. 2:13), making his letters weighty and powerful, and his presence a terror to the disobedient (2 Cor. 13:2, 3; 2 Cor. 10:8–11); that his authority extended to the ability to hand men over to the adversary (1 Tim. 1:20), and to otherwise use the rod (1 Cor. 4:21). Let us not whittle away this true testimony. Let us rather enswathe ourselves with it, that we may be proof against the faithless insinuations which are current in our day. If we do this we shall please Christ, and rejoice Paul himself in a day that is fast approaching. Bro. A.T. Jannaway—1892

Father, and the Father in me. The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works"; "I do always those things that please him"; "He that seeth me seeth him that sent me." Let us contemplate (in view of this) "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." How beautiful is the sight! how enlightening, assuring, comforting, inspiring! Christ, the manifestation of the Father, appearing not to terrify, but to cheer; not to avenge, but to forgive; not to please himself, but to labour and suffer for our sakes; not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. With Christ before us, shall we deny or dread God?

Science, like many other useful branches of learning, is very secondary in relation to Bible knowledge. The one is not essential to salvation, the other is. To encourage the discussion of scientific questions in ecclesial meetings is very unwise. It will surely lead to vain and unprofitable disputations. There are sufficient Bible truths to elucidate and enforce, without running after science. The greatest service we can render to our generation in this day of darkness, is to open-up and keep alive the deep and inexhaustible treasures of God's word. Those who have the ability to do this are too few, and their spare moments likewise too few to allow themselves to be absorbed in unimportant work, especially in the scientific fumbblings of the present age. How little did Paul trouble himself about science? The same may be said of Dr. Thomas. What has science done in upbuilding or consolidating any man, or company of men in the truth? It is significant that God should have saved His children the toil of scientific research by giving them direct information regarding the greatest scientific questions—to wit: the subject of God, the earth's origin and destiny, the nature of man, &c. God seems in this to have had a merciful regard for the long-houred avocations and humble education of His children. It is also significant that although God endowed Solomon with superhuman information which enabled him to discourse upon trees, birds, beasts and fishes (1 Kings 4:29–34), yet he has not handed down to us the information that Solomon penned. It appears to say that not now, but by and bye is the time for the children of God to concern themselves with these things. The Kingdom will afford ample scope and opportunity for revelling in this knowledge.

The business of our life should be to glorify God—"Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31; 6:20). It matters not whether our enterprise be ecclesial, commercial, or social, this is to be the guiding motive. Are we obedient? That we shall fail oftentimes is natural and is expected, but do we regard it as our duty, and is it our endeavour to obey? The flesh insinuates that the command is too hard, and that it is calculated to make our lives a misery. Away with the suggestion. It is not true. The command, first, is reasonable. We are not creatures of our own creating.

As mentioned, 7 was the basic pattern and theme—

The 7th-day Sabbath.

The 7th month the culmination and most sacred.

The 7th year a Sabbath for the land itself.

7 x 7 years to each Jubilee: a complete new beginning again—*all bondage ended; all debts cancelled; all heritages restored.*

2 x 7 days to the Passover, on Abib 14.

7 x 7 days to Pentecost.

7 days each for the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Tabernacles, and—

7 yearly days of holy convocation

\* \* \*

Verse 2: '*the feasts* (set times) *of Yahweh.*' There are 2 different words used in this chapter for 'feast.' Neither means 'feast' or has anything to do with eating. Where plural (as here), it is *mo'ad*, meaning 'set time, appointed season,' and it is so translated elsewhere (Gen. 1:14; 17:21; 18:14). It is applied to the Day of Atonement, a day of mourning and fasting.

When 'feast' is singular (as v.6), the original is *chag*, literally, 'a pilgrimage to a sanctuary.' It occurs over 70 times and, with rare exceptions, always applies to the 3 yearly occasions Israel must assemble before the Lord: Passover, Pentecost, and Feast of Tabernacles.

These 3 great pilgrimages or *chags* were in the 1st, 3rd and 7th months. All (except the Passover day itself, which commemorated the Egyptian deliverance) were based on and related to the agricultural year—the sowing and the harvest: the seed dying and rising again to 100-fold fuller life. It was a wholesome agricultural life, as in the Millennium.

This chapter does not go into the details of the sacrifices offered on these occasions: that is all given in Num. 28 & 29. There were 3 kinds of animal sacrifices, offered in this order—

CLEANSING: Sin offerings: partaken of by priest, Forgiveness, reconciliation.

DEDICATION: Whole burnt offerings; completely consumed on the altar: total dedication to, & absorption into, God. And—

FELLOWSHIP Peace offerings: partaken of by offerer himself (as well as priest). Communion and fellowship with God.

Besides these *animal* sacrifices, there were the—

Meal offerings: of cereal, though called ‘Meat’ in AV: recognizing God’s provision in all things, & sanctifying all one’s possessions to God’s use, and—

Drink offerings: of wine: rejoicing and thanksgiving.

Verse 4: begins to enumerate the yearly ordinances—

Verse 5: the Passover, on Abib 14. This introduced, and ran into—

Verses 6-8: The 7-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, Abib 15-21. The 1st & last days were the first 2 of the 7 ‘holy convocations’ of the year when no work could be done. The unleavened bread (from the Passover meal) was the feature that bound the Passover to this Feast.

Verses 9-14 describe the offering of the wave-sheaf of Firstfruits. This was barley, for that was the grain that ripened first. The grain-sowing began, as mentioned, in October, and the grain harvest was from about mid-April to mid-June, beginning with barley and ending with wheat.

This sheaf was just as it came from the field: the very first springing of the new year’s harvest. It was offered on the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread—the 16th of Abib—the day following the holy convocation Sabbath of the 15th, which began the feast.

This Abib 16 was the day Christ rose: having died as the Passover Lamb on the 14th, and having lain in the tomb and rested on the sabbath of the 15th. In the crucifixion year, this holy convocation sabbath was also the weekly Sabbath, as was fitting for the type. Christ was thus the Passover Lamb that died, and the Firstfruit Sheaf that sprang forth to new life 2 days later—on the 3rd day.

The Passover-Unleavened Bread ordinance appears to apply more particularly to Christ; as the Pentecost does to the Firstfruit Redeemed of this age; and the great final Feast of Tabernacles does to the harvest of the Millennium.

Verse 14 instructs that none of the produce of the new year could be partaken of until the Firstfruit Sheaf had been offered to God. All waited upon *that* to open the way to the partaking of God’s blessing. We are reminded that the 7-Sealed Scroll of the Eternal Divine Purpose could not be unfolded for the ultimate blessing of mankind until the Slain Lamb appeared who was worthy (Rev. 5:2-6). Paul, referring to this way-opening and sanctifying Sheaf (Rom. 11:16), says that if the Firstfruit be holy, then the ‘whole lump’ or body of the harvest is holy and acceptable.

*heart is an abomination to the Lord.”—(Prov. 16:5) “For evil men understand not judgment; but they that seek the Lord understand all things.”—(Prov. 28:5) —Bro. Robert Roberts— 1874*

## Grow to Divine Knowledge And Strength

“GROW” (2 Pet. 3:18), “Abound” (Phil. 1:9), “Increase” (1 Thes. 4:10), “go on” (Heb. 6:1), “add to” (2 Pet. 1:4–8), are terms which express our duty in regard to divine knowledge and strength. We are not to be content with being babes, but are to pass on to youth and manhood (Heb. 5:12; 1 Cor. 3:1–2; Ephes. 4:13–14; 1 John 2:12–14). Like good seed in good soil we are to take root, grow and bear fruit (Mark 4). There cannot be a stationary condition in the truth: we must either develop or waste. Babes cannot continue babes even if they would; neither can the seed when sown remain seed. It is a question either of going on to maturity or of pining and perishing. Knowing how matters stand, let us adopt those measures which will ensure growth. We are told what they are—“I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up” (Acts 20:28); “Long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation” (1 Pet. 2:3, R.V.); “Watch daily at Wisdom’s gates, and wait at the posts of her door” (Prov. 8:34). Let neglectors of Bible reading, and wilful absentees from the edifying Bible meetings of the brethren, consider these exhortations and reform. There are many incentives to faithfulness. The advantages of a well-stored and established mind are incalculable, even apart from the salvation which it brings in the end. It enables us to strengthen others by opening up to them the Word. It enables us to deal promptly and efficiently with questions and situations as they arise. It gives us boldness and assurance in the things of God, and exempts us from the dreadful curse of uncertainty and doubt.

How Christ towered above the ordinary run of mortals! He was a miracle, and as such an enigma to the natural man. His authority, wisdom, power, goodness, and holiness, were more than human. Never man spake like Christ; never man worked such astounding deeds as he; never man fearlessly laid down the challenge, “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” Christ was truly divine. Some said that he was an impostor, but others pertinently retorted by saying, “How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?” Thus stood Christ a mystery in the midst of his contemporaries. But what a glorious explanation of himself had Christ for such as would receive his teaching. To such what an overwhelming evidence was he of the existence and estimable character of the invisible God. Let us hear Christ—“I am the Son of God”; “the Father sent me”; “I am not alone”; “I am in the

the time when he will be delivered from the bondage of the corruption, and rise to equality with those glorious beings, the angels of his power, who “*excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word—His ministers that do His pleasure.*”—( Psalm 103:20 ). In the spirit-nature, conformity with the will of God will be as instinctive and easy to him as failings are with him now. He yearns for this nature, and strives to walk in accordance with its dictates now. His life in its overt acts is ordered in harmony with its precepts. This, in fact, is the great difference between him and those who are purely carnal: the latter have no aspirations Godwards, but are content with what they “know naturally as brute beasts;” the other pants after God, as the hart panteth for the water brooks, and strives to obey His commandments *while yet* in a state of humiliation before Him, because of the cleaving of his soul to the dust. He joins fervently in Paul’s exclamation, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death. I thank God (who shall deliver me) through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind, I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin.” That is, mentally, we seek after what God requires; but physically, we are subject to those conditions and necessities whose existence are due to sin.

There is much in all these things that to the merely mathematical mind will appear paradoxical. No man can comprehend them who is destitute of a living sense of a living God, for this is the leading factor in the whole problem. Because the natural man is destitute of this (“*for the carnal mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*”— Rom. 8:7) therefore it comes to be true that “*The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.*” But let a man fear God, which is *the beginning* of wisdom, and let him reverently, diligently and prayerfully read His word, and he will be able to understand these (at first sight difficult, but really) comforting and glorious things, for it is written: “*My son, if thou wilt receive my words and hide my commandments with thee, so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.*”—(Prov. 2:1–5) “*The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in his mercy.*”—(Psalm 147:11) “*All the words of His mouth are in righteousness. There is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth and right to them that find knowledge.*”—(Prov. 8:8, 9) “*Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them, but the transgressors shall fall therein.*”—(Hosea 14:3) “*Everyone that is proud in*

Verses 15-22 give the ordinance of the Feast of Weeks (Ex. 34:22), or Feast of Harvest (Ex. 23:16), or Day of Firstfruits (Num. 28:26): later called Pentecost because it was 50 days from the Passover.

This was also a Firstfruits. As Christ is the Firstfruit of all to God, so the Redeemed of the present age are the Firstfruits unto him from mankind. The term is applied to both in the NT, and *this* ordinance seems to specially apply to, and be fulfilled in, the brethren of Christ.

Israel were (v. 15) to count 7 full weeks from the day they offered the Firstfruit Sheaf, then (v. 16) the next day was this Feast of Weeks. As in the crucifixion year, Abib 16 (the day Christ rose and the Sheaf was offered) was a Sunday, or first day of the week, so would *this* Pentecost day be, 50 days later: *another* new beginning. On this day the Spirit was poured out on the Apostles, and they went forth to call out the Firstfruits unto God from all mankind.

On this day (v. 17) they were to offer 2 *loaves* which were baked from the new *wheat* harvest (Ex. 34:22). We note here 2 things—

First, there were *two* loaves: Jew and Gentile: the 2 folds; the 2 olive branches and 2 candlesticks: the 2 sideposts of the Christ-Doorway, of which he is the crowning and connecting lintel. And—

Second, they were *leavened*. Now the Law was very strict about prohibiting leaven in anything to do with the sacrifices (Lev. 2:11). Leaven is ‘malice and wickedness’ (1 Cor.5:8)—sin—and it made any offering it was connected with an abomination.

This ordinance, and one other place concerning the law of the Peace offering (Lev. 7:13), are unique in requiring leaven in the offerings to God. Clearly God is not condoning or countenancing sin. That is ruled out by every reasonable consideration, and the whole bulk of the word.

But this has some reference to sin; some cognizance of imperfection. ‘*There is no man that sinneth not.*’ If perfect sinlessness were required, none could be saved. These loaves were (v. 17) ‘*out of your habitation*’: that is, the ordinary daily bread, just as it was. Surely we have a merciful indication here that—without for a moment belittling the seriousness of sin and the necessity of its complete removal—God accepts us as we are constituted in our present imperfect state and imperfect service, IF—and *only if*—we are completely dedicated (offered) to Him, and striving constantly to obey Him.

This Pentecost ordinance was the only occasion in the yearly feasts where a Peace offering was required (v. 19). We have just noted that apart from the Pentecost ordinance, the ordinance of the Peace, or Fellowship-

with-God, offering was the only occasion in the Law where leaven was required, or even permitted. Both come together here.

Pentecost was the 3rd of the 7 yearly days of holy convocation, in which no servile work could be done (v. 21). All activity must be for God.

Verse 22 adds another feature without which the service and worship of the day would have been a mockery: *goodness to others*, provision for the needy, love of neighbor, service to mankind. No man liveth to himself (Rom. 14:7). Professed love of and service to God that does not inseparably involve love of neighbor is sterile and dead. None can be saved who does not give his life to the welfare of others.

Verses 23-25 give the law of the Feast of Trumpets: 4th of the 7 days of holy convocation. Passover and Unleavened Bread were in the first month; Pentecost in the 3rd (3 is resurrection). In the Law, the pattern of cleansing was often 1-3-7 (Num. 19:12; 31:19).

We are now beginning the 7th month, and 4 of the 7 holy convocation days occur in this one month alone, including the most solemn one of all: the Day of Atonement.

The year is coming to a climax. From Passover to Pentecost was the range of the grain harvest: mid-April to mid-June. There is nothing in the 4th, 5th and 6th months. But now we come to late September and early October, when all harvests—fruit, wine and oil—are in.

All months, and all feasts, were introduced by the blowing of trumpets (Num. 10:10), but the 1st day of the 7th month was the *especial* yearly occasion of trumpet-blowing. Trumpets are proclamations, calls to attention, to assembly and to battle, calls of warning, of instruction.

This 7th month trumpet announces the beginning of the end. The 7th Trumpet of the Revelation speaks of the ‘finishing of the Mystery of God, as spoken by His servants the prophets’ (Rev. 10:7). Pre-eminently, the trumpet-voice is the calling to the resurrection—

*“The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised”* (1 Cor. 15:52).

There were special Temple sacrifices on this day (Num. 29:1-6), but it was not a national assembly to Jerusalem: rather an alerting of the land to the beginning of the solemn, climactic 7th month—and especially of the approach of the great and dreadful Day of Atonement. Dreadful, that is, if approached without the deepest reverence and solemnity and humility. Atonement Day was 5th of the 7 holy convocations.

Verses 26-32 give the instructions for that day—10th of the 7th month—when all normal activity was completely suspended for 24 hours throughout

from heaven shall “change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” While they continue in the flesh, they can say with Paul, “*That which I do I allow not; what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*” This has always been a puzzle to the carnal class, but is intelligible enough to those who “*delight in the law of the Lord after the inward man.*” Many illustrations of its meaning might be given. Let one or two suffice. Perfect fellowship with God (and it is after a perfect fellowship that the new man aspires) requires a continual memory and a continual love and adoration of Him—a continual sense of His greatness and holiness—a continual praise, though unexpressed. To forget God is sin; to see Him always before us at our right hand is the example set for us by the Spirit in David and his son. But behold this natural sinner with which we as yet are clogged: his thoughts get easily filled with other things; he gets exhausted in physical energy, and in a state of mental blank towards God; nay, worse, through this weakness, he perhaps forgets his duty to a neighbour, and fails to sustain the part of an obedient son. The commandments concerning submission to evil, or concerning the doing of good, may be forgotten by him. He may think selfish thoughts or contemplate a selfish purpose, or fail in the management of his affairs, as a disinterested and faithful steward of the manifold grace of God. Concerning anger also, from the same weakness he may often fail. These things which he does, he allows not. He hates them, and himself as the performer. The things that he would do—the continual communion with God, the continual serenity, and purity, and love and obedience, the continual blessing and comforting of others—he does not. His attainments are feeble, and blemished by continual imperfection; and in consequence, he knows by experience what are the unutterable groanings Godwards, through the interceding Spirit in Christ, to which Paul alludes in Rom. 8:26.

At the same time, he takes the comfort that Paul administers to himself: “*If, then, I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but SIN THAT DWELLETH IN ME. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing.*” We will not be held accountable for the non-performance of the impossible. It is not that He may punish us, but that He may make His kindness the more obvious, that weakness is the inheritance of the children of God in the first stage. Sin dwelling in them is the cause of their short-comings. The new mental man created by the truth (where he *is* created and is kept alive by the continual nourishment of the word)—repudiates and grieves for the short-comings. He consents heartily unto the law of all God’s requirements that it is good. It is not he that is guilty of the things he grieves for. If things were as he ardently desires, he would serve God day and night continually, without fault. It is a grief and a burden that he has not yet apprehended that for which he has been apprehended of God. He is looking and longing with all his heart for

in the flesh physically, and, therefore, carried about with him the spiritual burden of the old man, whom, though held in subjection, he found to be an ever-present obstacle to the full flights marked out by the new mental man created in him in Jesus Christ. He could, therefore, declare all the things set forth in the concluding half of the chapter, without creating any difficulty as to his acceptable walk and conversation. Those who have soared the highest, spiritually, will understand this the best. Spiritual-mindedness only feels the burden of the natural man. The natural man, pure and simple, has no sense of burden in a spiritual direction; he is content with his attainments because he knows nothing beyond them: like a rustic dauber on canvass, well pleased with his own productions and those of his fellow-daubers, which would fill with anguish the soul of a true artist. Paul had become spiritually-minded, but this was an engraftment from without. It was super-imposed on the natural Paul by the education of the truth and (in his case) the direct instruction of the Spirit. It was *a new man* united with the old or natural man. There was thus a duality created, of which every man similarly subject to the Spirit is conscious; not a separable duality, but still a felt one, so far as mental operations are concerned. It is necessary to have this duality in view, in order to appreciate Paul's remarks in question. The duality is very visible in his remarks. Of the one he says, "In me (that is, *in my flesh* ) dwelleth no good thing;" implying that in the other me—that is, the new "me," the mental "me" created by the Spirit through the word—there was some goodness, viz., a capacity to "delight in the law of God *after the inward man.*"—(verse 22) Again, "*I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind.*" This is what he said to the Galatians: "*The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*"—(Gal. 5:17) The implantation of the mind of the Spirit by the word, does not extirpate the natural man with his affections and lusts; it imposes but a check, a control, a power to restrain and crucify, and bring into subjection. But this power does not obtain complete ascendancy: as long as the body continues physically the mortal, sinful thing it is, the natural man acts as an obstruction to the operations of the new man of the Spirit, causing the person thus dually-constituted to feel and speak as Paul, being conscious, like him, of inability to accomplish what he "would," and a necessary submission to things he "would not." Of the natural man, which (though in subjection) continues till we are glorified, he can say, "*I am carnal, sold under sin.*" This we inherit: sin personified is the owner of the human race, because through disobedience at the beginning, it obtained possession of the whole, and, therefore, of the saints, such as they are as natural men, and continues in possession till they are redeemed from the power of the grave. The release begins with the mind and ends with the body. The latter continues "*dead because of sin*" (Rom. 8:10), till he for whom we look

the whole land, and every Israelite must 'afflict his soul' on pain of death (v. 29). Three times in these verses is this affliction of the soul strictly commanded. And 3 times they are charged to do absolutely *no work*.

What did this 'afflicting the soul' consist of? Clearly it involved *external* aspects, for whoever did not comply was to be put to death (v. 29). It would certainly involve abstinence from food, and from all fleshly pleasures and enjoyments. This day became known as 'the Fast' (Acts 27:9). This was the one great day of the year to bring sin to remembrance: for a man to 'examine himself': to labor mightily for self-purification and to seek the cleansing and mercy of God.

Fasting of itself was not specifically prescribed, nor would it *of itself* have been acceptable (Isa. 58:5). In not prescribing specific rituals of affliction, the attention would be directed to the inner aspects—the realities: inward examination and repentance and humility and rededication of the heart, soul, strength and mind to God.

This was the day when even the normal priestly ministrations at the Tabernacle stopped (Lev. 16:17), and the holy precincts were silent and empty while the High Priest alone went about his solemn, once-a-year task of making reconciliation for the nation: entering—on this dread day only—the inner sanctuary of the Most Holy, beyond the Veil, where the glory of God rested between the Cherubim, above the golden Ark.

This day of all days called for a humble and contrite spirit: no levity, no lightness, no manifestation of rejoicing, no self-pleasing, no going thoughtlessly about one's ordinary activities and pleasures. The entire nation in affliction and mourning, conscious of the great burden and disease of sin and fleshliness and self-will—

*"Whosoever shall not be afflicted SHALL BE CUT OFF FROM AMONG HIS PEOPLE."* (Lev. 23:29)

There is a historic counterpart to this great day. Indeed, this would be the final national climax to which this day in type pointed in all its ages of observance. Did Israel have any idea of what the High Priest's ministrations on this memorable day foreshadowed?—

*"They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn . . . a great mourning . . . and the land shall mourn, every family apart"* (Zech. 12:10).

So this somber day was passed: 24 hours '*from even to even*' (v. 32).

But once every 50 years, as darkness fell and this day of affliction and mourning ended, there was a striking and unusual event, all the more striking by its contrast with the hushed mourning of the day.

Suddenly, just as the day ended—beginning at Jerusalem and picked up in ever-widening circles until the echoes rang throughout the whole land—the *joyful trumpets of the Jubilee began to sound*. The day of affliction and mourning was over, and the day of freedom and release and a completely new beginning had begun—another wonderful type.

The rest of the chapter (vs. 33-42) speaks of the Feast of Tabernacles: the 7 days from the 15th to the 21st of the 7th month.

‘Tabernacles’ should really be translated ‘Booths,’ for it is an entirely different word from the ‘Tabernacle’ of God, which is *Mishkan* or ‘dwelling place.’ The word here is *succoth*, meaning ‘hut or booth,’ a rough, simple, temporary shelter—usually of tree branches, from a word meaning ‘to entwine.’

This Feast was primarily to remind them of the 40 years in the wilderness (v. 43). It was thus a memorial of both the *deliverance* from bondage, and the *afflictions* of the journey. It was also called the Feast of Ingathering (Ex. 23:16), and as such it was the joyful thanksgiving for the bounties and blessings of God throughout the year. It was the great Rest, after all the year’s labors, when all the harvests were in.

The first day of this 7-day ordinance was the 6th holy convocation.

And this feast was the 3rd and last of those in which all Israel must assemble at God’s Tabernacle. They were there required to build simple little booths (v. 40) of tree branches, and live in them for the week of the feast: high and low, rich and poor together (v. 42). In their harvest joy they were reminded that we have here no continuing city, and should not set our interest on present things. In the later corruptions of the nation, the faithful Rechabites carried forward this memorial in their lives, dwelling simply in temporary dwellings (Jer. 35:7).

They were to take palm-branches, and willow-branches (v. 40). Palms throughout Scripture represent joy and victory: willows represent oppression and sorrow—illustrating both aspects of the memorial. God’s loving purpose with mankind of redemption and glory manifests throughout these twin aspects of joy through sorrow, peace through suffering, rest through labor, and exaltation through humility: that no flesh should glory.

As the Passover is Christ, and Pentecost is the Redeemed from the present, so the Feast of Tabernacle is the great millennial harvest of the earth. Each in its turn is a harvest: the Firstfruit Sheaf, the First fruit Loaves, and the total Ingathering.

The sacrifices of this week (Num. 29) were much more than at any other of the memorial periods: 70 bullocks, 14 rams, 98 lambs. But the bullocks

eternal fellowship. The distinct, thrilling, striking recognition of this fact is brought about by precisely the experience through which God has put that part of the human race, of whom He intends to make future use. The law convinces them all as transgressors: every mouth is shut. There is no room for glorying. Salvation has come of the pure goodness of God, in harmony with His own wisdom. God is exalted, and we are abased to the position of humble recipients of His favour, in Christ, in whom our sins have been condemned. As an indispensable preliminary to this result, it was necessary that the natural man should be put under the law, “that sin (in him) might appear sin, and that by the commandment it might become (what it is) exceeding sinful.”

“For we know,” continues Paul (verse 14) “that the law is spiritual:” it is the dictate of the Spirit’s authority and the embodiment of the Spirit’s wisdom, imposed upon the natural man, who as the Spirit’s work and property, is bound to be subject: “*but I (Paul) am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not, and what I would, that do I not; but what I hate that do I. If, then, I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then, a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*”— (verses 14–24).

These are the words that constitute the difficulty which some experience in the understanding of the 7th chapter of Romans. They think it inconceivable that Paul, the obedient and exemplary saint, who could say, “*Be ye followers of me;*” “*Walk as ye have us for an example,*” could describe himself in words which appear to imply an abandoned character. Their difficulty arises from a superficial view of the case. The difficulty disappears when we follow Paul in the full depth of his argument. He is dealing with the roots and the foundations of the subject. He is showing what the law is in itself, and what human nature is in itself. The former he proves to be holy and spiritual; and though the occasion of sin to those placed under it, the cause of this he shows to lie in them and not in it. He makes use of himself to illustrate the point; for he could speak experimentally as one in whom the law had wrought its full work of causing him to know himself. And although standing in the liberty of the gospel, and serving and delighting in the law of God after the inward man, he was still

to become convicted in many transgressions. For this reason it is that Paul was able to say, “As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; FOR it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not IN ALL THINGS which are written in the book of the law to do them.”—( Gal. 3:10 .)

Sport has been made of the fact that God gave a law that men were not able to keep. Son-of-Belial like, the questioner has dared the presumptuous question, Why should He do such a thing? It would be a sufficient answer to ask, “Hath not the potter power over the clay,” to work it on any principle he chooses? It is easy to argue with apparent force against the principle in question. It is easy to ask, What would be thought of the man that should appoint his fellow a task impossible for him to accomplish, and then punish him for not performing it? It is easy to quote Pharaoh ordering bricks without supplying the material; but all this is nothing to the point. You cannot argue from such a transaction between man and man, to what it is between God and man. First, man has no power over, or right of property in his fellow, whereas man is the workmanship and the property of God; and He may do with man what man may not do with man; for who shall say to Him, What doest Thou? But the next thought is of even more consequence. Between man and man such a transaction, without any object beyond itself, would be tyrannical; whereas on the part of God, as an element in a process by which great good is to be worked out, it is the form of wisdom and kindness. One man cutting off another man’s leg with intention to maim, is a monster: with intent to save life from a dangerous malady, he is a benefactor. This illustrates the difference between the two, and demonstrates the shallowness of all arguments from man to God as to the working of this principle.

God gave a rigorous and burdensome law, that men might at last come to know how sinful they are, and how powerless to work out for themselves eternal good. Here it may be asked, Why did He allow man to get into such a state? Why didn’t He so watch and hedge the beginnings of things that man might have continued very good, and earned the divine favour by his unflinching compliance with the divine will? The answer is: that God might be exalted in salvation being a thing of His own favour. Again it may be asked, Why is it so very important that God should be exalted? Why not develop eternal society upon the principle so much applauded in the world, of self-reliance, independence, self-respect, &c. Here we touch the root and marrow of the whole subject. The recognition of God as the highest and the best and the benefactor—direct, tender and cordial—is necessary for the pleasure of God and the well-being of man, and is demanded by the eternal reason of things as the first law. God is eternal and sovereign: man a helpless dependent upon His power, wisdom and goodness. The recognition of this fact is the essential basis of intercourse between God and man, let alone

(the principal sacrifice) *diminish* day by day to a perfect unity and completeness of 7 on the last day. Here, as bro. Roberts points out, is a winding down of sacrifice; an approaching the end of the need of sacrifice: an approaching the time when all shall have been brought into perfect subjection to God, and God shall be all in all.

This was the Feast of *Ingathering*. It was a thankful celebration of God’s blessing in the harvest, and all centered round the harvest. But once in every 7 years there was no harvest to celebrate. Once in 7 years they neither sowed *nor* reaped, and what grew of itself was for the poor.

During the feast that year, the procedure was different. It was the Sabbatical year. That year, the Law of Moses was to be read and explained to the nation as it was assembled for this week (Lev. 25:4).

The whole preceding year had been a year of rest from daily labor. Ideally, it was a year of learning and meditation and study of the Word. How fitting, then, at this final great week-long assembly *that* year, the time should be given to proclamation and discussion of the Law of God that makes wise unto salvation!

Israel being what they were, it is to be doubted if this ideal occupation of the sabbatical year ever materialized to any appreciable degree or length of time, but how wonderful it *could* have been! What wonderful opportunities they had! What a wise and ideal set-up! But how few, in any generation or dispensation, have had the wisdom to use their God-given (and God-owned) leisure time profitably or scripturally! What needless tragedy the judgment seat will reveal!

\* \* \*

The yearly ordinances were now over: the 7 days in booths ended. Only one last event remained—the final day of holy convocation: the day following the Feast of Tabernacles: the 8th day of new beginning:

V.34: “*The feast of Tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord.*”

V.36: “*Seven days ye shall offer an offering . . . On the EIGHTH day shall be an holy convocation . . . It is a solemn assembly . . .*”

The original word here for ‘assembly’ is different. It only occurs a few times, usually applied to this particular day. Note that the margin has ‘day of restraint.’ Rather it means ‘day of closing’: a closing ceremony. It is *atzereth*, from *atzar*, ‘to close, to restrain, to shut up.’

This was the final day of the cycle: the day over and beyond the 3 yearly feasts. They were no longer in the booths, representing the wilderness

journey. The sacrifices for the Feast of Tabernacles had come to a climax with the gradual reduction of the bullocks to 7.

In the symmetrical pattern of the 3 yearly feasts at the national center of worship, this final great day balances out the Passover day by which the pattern began—

First the one-day Passover, immediately followed, 1 day

by the 7-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. 7 days

The second, middle yearly assembly was just one day—

Pentecost, in the 3rd month. 1 day

The third yearly assembly was the 7-day Feast of Tabernacles, 7 days immediately followed by this special, separate 8th day. 1 day

In John 7 is a record of the last Feast of Tabernacles that was kept before Moses' Law was nailed to the cross and for ever done away. V. 37—

*“In the last day, the Great Day of the Feast, Jesus stood up and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him COME UNTO ME and drink.”*

A call to leave the passing-away shadows, and come to the great reality. We can picture what a commotion this would cause.

This ‘Great Day’ was the culminating 8th day that closed the Mosaic yearly cycle: the *Atzereth*, the ‘closing ceremony.’ Little did Israel realize the significance of THAT DAY. *The Mosaic cycle, after 1500 revolutions, had run its course for the last time.*

As the next cycle began, with the Passover of the next year, the true Passover Lamb himself fulfilled in one-time reality the age-old and oft-repeated shadowy type, and the shadows forever vanished away.

The Jews carried on robot-like with the dead rituals for another 37 years, until reality was forced upon them by the terrible events of AD 70.

And there will truly be *memorial* Passover and *memorial* Feast of Tabernacles in the Kingdom of God (Eze. 45:21-25), but under the new Abrahamic covenant, not the old Mosaic—

*“NOT according to the covenant, saith the Lord, that I made with their fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt”* (Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8:8).

*That New Eternal Covenant has been confirmed by the blood of the true Passover Lamb.*

—G.V.Growcott

notions of sin were derived from the law; for if the law had not forbidden certain natural actions of the mind, he would have remained ignorant of sin in these directions, though fully exercised therein. As he says elsewhere (Rom. 3:20): *“By the law is the knowledge of sin.”* His argument is *“the law is spiritual; for it taught me what sin was.”* It made him aware of his tendency sin-wards. *“Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law, sin was dead.”* Here is a distinctly retrospective allusion—a reference to a *past experience* of Paul, which becomes more definite in the next three verses: *“For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.”* As a child of the circumcision, rejoicing in the inherited privileges of Abrahamic extraction, Paul, in his early years, was alive, looking up to God with confidence, and forward with hope in the promises made to the fathers. But when the commandment came to him, on his arrival at maturity, that is, when he came as an adult under the operation of the law—when his faculties awoke and his mind opened to the full perception of what the law required, he experienced the revulsion of feeling described in these verses. He found himself condemned by the law which was ordained to, and to which he looked for, life. But he puts not the blame on the law. It was the propensities native to himself that rebelled under the dictation of the law. The conclusion he draws from the premises is (verse 12), *“Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just and good.”* But he again recurs to the apparent paradox: *“Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid;”* and in the next sentence he gives us the philosophy of the law, so to speak—a philosophy which is foolishness to the natural man, but in which, nevertheless, it is possible to discover a surpassing beauty. He states that its object was *that “sin might appear sin, working death in him by that which was good; that sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.”*—(verse 13) Sin (the natural rebelliousness of the human heart against the authority of God) was latent without the law. A man without command to do that which was disagreeable, or abstain from that which was pleasant to his natural impulses, could not be manifest either to himself or others in his real disposition towards God. He would be a sinner undeveloped for want of opportunity; innocent of transgression because of the absence of law, but certainly not a righteous man whose characteristic is submission to God. The object of the law was to make this latent sinner manifest. *“The law entered that the offence might abound.”*—(Rom. 5:20) It was added because of transgression in this sense (Gal. 3:19), that every mouth might be stopped and all the world become guilty before God.—(Rom. 3:19) It was a complicated system of exactions by which weak human nature was certain

*ministration of death, written and engraven on stones, was glorious . . . how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.”*

But this argument about the law causing sin and bringing condemnation, suggests, on the face of it, that the law is a sinful thing. Paul accordingly anticipates and answers the objection. *“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law.”* Here we must pause a moment to consider the “I” of this and the succeeding eighteen verses. Who is it? It would not be necessary to ask this superfluous question were it not for a class of interpreters who find it necessary to say that this “I” is not Paul, but (to use their language of Ashdod) “an unregenerate man”—an ideal personation of wickedness introduced by Paul, to illustrate the workings of sin. A very rapid glance is sufficient to show the erroneousness of this gratuitous suggestion. The “I” of Paul’s discourse is one who is wretched on account of his shortcomings (5:24): this is not the condition of a man “dead in trespasses and sins.” Paul’s “I” thanks God at the prospect of deliverance through Christ ( 25 ): which the typical sinner of the new theory could not do. Paul’s “I” delights in the law of God after the inward man ( 22 ): this does not the so-called “unregenerate man.” Paul’s “I” also is one who “would do good” (21); who is conscious of a conflict between “the law of his mind” and “the law in his members;” who consents unto the law that it is good (16); who has the will to perform it (18), and who with the mind serves the law of God (25), in all which particulars the “I” differs totally from the man to whom his remarks are applied by the class in question. Most obviously the “I” is Paul himself, as the connection requires, and as is conclusively proved by the last sentence of the soliloquy: *“So then with the mind, I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.”* Nothing but the requirements of a wrong theory could have suggested the violence of taking away these words from Paul, and putting them into the mouth of a so-called “unregenerate man.”

But now comes the question how some of the statements are to be understood if Paul is the speaker. This will best be answered by a close following of the statements, in the consideration of which, we shall find that Paul speaks of himself at different stages of his life, whence we obtain one clue to a right understanding. In answer to the question whether the law, after all he had said, was not to be considered sinful, he says (as already quoted) *“God forbid! Nay, I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust (i.e. unlawful desire) except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet!”* His object is to prove that the law was a spiritual institution designed to make manifest the corruptness of human nature. Keeping this in view (which is stated in verse 14), it is easy to follow the argument. Paul’s

## The Parable of the Ten Virgins

This is a beautiful, fascinating Parable with its basis, a special wedding. Our Heavenly Father, being our Creator, knowing us so well, realized that mankind needed close relationships—man needed a helpmeet. So God made Adam a woman.

The Bible says that God took from Adam a rib, made a woman and brought her unto the man. Adam’s response was, *“This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”*

And soon after God instituted marriage, the uniting of two people, man and woman, in love and in oneness.

The marriage ceremony is one of the most beautiful and most joyful ceremonies, flowing with the emotions of love and happiness from all that are present. However, there is a little tinge of that feeling of loss from the parents and siblings on both sides of the isle. It is the giving away of a loved one. But that feeling soon gives way to that powerful feeling of love and happiness and a wish for a wonderful long and happy and successful life in Christ, with lots of children. We don’t forget weddings. Maybe it’s those strong, joyful emotions.

It is at a wedding that the Scriptures record a few small frames into Jesus’ personal life with his mother. I believe it is early on in Jesus’ ministry. It is the marriage in Cana of Galilee. It is especially important at weddings that nothing goes wrong. We want it to be trouble free. But at this wedding the attendants have run out of wine.

One of the benefits of going to a wedding is that there is usually a lot of food. I’m sure that at this wedding in the Middle East there would have been all kinds of bread, cheese, olives, figs, dates, raisins, and an assortment of meats and wine.

You remember the story. Mary, Jesus’ mother, comes with the servants and tells Jesus, *“They have no wine.”*

Mary tells the servants, *“Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.”* The pots are filled with water and the water turns to wine. It is not just ordinary wine; for the ruler or master of the feast tasted the wine and calls for the bridegroom and says, *“Thou hast kept the good wine until now.”*

The Scriptures say after this that Jesus, his mother, and his disciples go down to Capernaum. Capernaum would be the home base for his ministry.

Culturally, weddings are different throughout the world and times are different. But in Jesus’ day there was a period of time—a process before the two are actually married. Before the wedding, it was the custom to have a betrothal by marriage contract, an entering into covenant. And secondly, there was the festive ceremony by which the actual union of the parties was affirmed. This was the wedding. Between the betrothal and the wedding, years often intervened and sometimes problems arose. But with all going

well the time came to fulfill the covenant. When that time came and the final word was out, people began to move with excitement to get things ready.

Jesus' parable of the ten virgins gives us the spiritual condition of baptized responsible individuals of the household of faith. It is time for that great union—that marriage of the Bridegroom to that Bride that has been waiting.

Tradition was that the ten virgins were to meet the bridegroom on his way to possess his bride from her father's house. The virgins were to be waiting some distance down the road. The bridegroom's arrival was usually at night, requiring the use of lamps, and the hour that he was to come was unknown. If the waiting was long, the lamps were liable to go out unless they had brought a supply of oil besides what was in the lamp. If the lamps were to go out, that person was considered unfit to take a part in the wonderful ceremony. You just didn't come without that extra supply of oil.

Of these ten virgins that Jesus speaks of, five were wise and five were foolish. They all appear as legitimate wise virgins until their interview with the Bridegroom and he opens their eyes to their delusion. Five of these virgins were very foolish. They did not bring a sufficient supply of oil. But the wise took oil with their lamps.

To distinguish the wise from the foolish virgins in Jesus' parable, we have to understand what the light represented. The light is the understanding of the Truth and the love of it. It represents the knowledge of it, the discernment of the Truth, the comprehension of it.

There are those who light their lamps and go through life, but take no supply of oil. They are delighted with the Truth at first, but begin to take less and less interest. They read less and pay little attention to the readings. How many times have I said as a teacher or principal, "If you don't pay attention, you're going to fail the test."

The oil is the Word, and it combusts in the mind and sheds light. Jesus said, "*Let your light so shine among men.*"

Bro. Rene said, "We know what the oil is. It is the Spirit. We must be filled; not just enough to make a showing, but filled with it—filled with the knowledge of God—permeated with its divine characteristics, so that it shines forth from us in faithful labor, patience, wisdom, self-control, kindness, gentleness, purity, holiness and godliness."

To let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly is to keep oil in the vessel with the lamps. In quoting bro. Roberts, "As in the natural, so in the spiritual, combustion involves consumption." (And with today's gasoline prices, we do certainly understand combustion and consumption.) So a life of obedience and faith uses up that fuel in our minds and memories and must continually be fed with the Word, the Spirit Word.

We are not going to be obedient servants if we do not read and hear God's Word. We have to read and pray and go to meetings and talk the

called, they are "*in the grace of Christ.*"—(Gal. 1:6) The favour of being admitted to such a position is anterior to all "works." The works to come after will decide whether or no we are to continue in it, but in the first instance, the conferring of it is independent of our works. Here lies the solution of all apparent conflict in the writings of the apostles on the subject of grace and works. The opportunity of being saved is of faith that it might be by grace (Rom. 4:16), and it is of grace that it might be to the praise of God to whom praise only truly belongs; and not to man who is powerless and empty; that we might bring forth fruit unto God and not to ourselves.

(Verse 5): "*When we were in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.*" In the literal sense, Paul was still in the flesh when he wrote these words, as illustrated by such remarks as "*Though we walk in the flesh, we war not after the flesh*" (2 Cor. 10:3); "*As many as have not known my face in the flesh,*" &c. (Col. 2:1) But in his spiritual relations, he was no longer "*in the flesh.*" He did not stand on the flesh; his hopes were not founded on its achievements; his friendship towards God was not based on its merits, but on God's favour in Christ. It was his doctrine, that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God (Rom. 8:8), because "*all having sinned and come short of the glory of God*" (Rom. 3:23), they were condemned already, and could not justify themselves from past sins by their good deeds. Hence, Paul did not and could not rest in the flesh as a ground of confidence. He describes himself and those who were with him, as those who rejoiced in Christ Jesus, "*and had no confidence in the flesh.*"—(Phil. 3:3) But Paul once rested in the flesh, as is evident from this 5th verse: "*When we were in the flesh.*" As he says in Phil 3:4, "*If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee.*" Before Paul saw Christ near Damascus, he was resting on his achievements under the law; he was then, spiritually, "*in the flesh;*" and his statement in the verse before us is, that "*when he was in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the law did work in his members to bring forth fruit unto death.*" "*But now,*" says he, "*we are delivered from the law, THAT being dead wherein we were held* (that is, the bondage of the law which held them, ended in Christ, on whom it expended its whole curse), *that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.*" The law is styled "the letter" because of its being a matter of writing, whereas the liberty of the gospel was a matter of living message by the Spirit from the Father. To serve under the latter was a far more glorious thing than to stand in a written law, in sin-laden doubt. In this connection, we can understand Paul's language in 2 Cor. 3. "*Our sufficiency is of God, who hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. But if the*

related to the body of Christ? By being “*baptised into Jesus Christ*” (chap. 6:3), and so becoming members of his body.—(Eph. 5:30). What had the body of Christ to do with death? It was hung on Calvary till death invaded it. What had this to do with escaping the jurisdiction of the law? Christ was made under the law, subject to death like his brethren.—(Gal. 4:4 ; Heb. 2:9, 14–16). Therefore, when he died under the curse of the law, the jurisdiction of the law ceased; and when he rose again, he was “another” man in relation to what he had been before: a free man; by marriage with whom, we may obtain freedom also. Is this what Paul means by the illustration of a widow being married to a new husband? Yes. He says “*Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to ANOTHER.*” To whom? “*To him who is raised from the dead.*” Wouldn’t it have been sufficient to be married to the first Christ—Christ before crucifixion? Yes, if Renunciationism were the truth; for that teaches a free Christ before he became so by death and resurrection. But according to God’s wisdom, it would not have been sufficient, for he was not then free. Is it to the dead Christ we are married? No: “*To him who is raised from the dead,*” partaking whose death in baptism, we also partake of his purchased freedom from the law of sin and death. The imputation of being baptised into “a condemned Christ” is one of the slang vulgarisms of Renunciationism carrying weight only with the simple.

The object of this way of God is stated to be “*that we should bring forth fruit unto God.*” This is no chance saying or rhetorical finish to a sentence. It defines a principle and an object. It touches the very marrow of the plan of salvation. The object of that plan is that the glory of the goodness that will come by it may be directly and proximately and apparently due to Jehovah, and that the glory of the creature may be excluded. It is in one place expressed by Paul thus: “*that we should be to the praise of His glory*” and again “*to the praise of the glory of His grace .*” Had salvation been given as a reward of merit, there would have been something for the flesh to glory in: fruit brought forth in such a connection, would have been fruit unto ourselves; but “the law having entered that the offence might abound,” and all the world having thus become guilty and condemned, room is made for the abounding of grace or favour in our admission to forgiveness of sin for Christ’s sake, in whom the law has been vindicated and fulfilled. Fruit brought forth by those occupying this position of favour in Christ, is “*fruit unto God.*” They “*shew forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.*”—(1 Pet. 2:9) They are God’s husbandry (1 Cor. 3:9): God’s workmanship created (by Him) in Christ Jesus unto good works.—(Eph. 2:10) He has predestinated them unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ *to himself* , according to the good pleasure of His will *to the praise of the glory of His grace .*—(Eph. 1:5 , 6) To this position they are called *by the gospel .*—(2 Thess. 2:14) When

Truth to others and live the Truth. If we fail to supply our needs, our light could gradually go out, we will grow dimmer and dimmer.

In Jesus’ absence, or while the Bridegroom tarries all slumbered and slept. The called-out ones have lived their lives, fallen asleep in Jesus and are waiting the call. The parable then says, “*At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh.*”

This cry awakens those sleeping virgins. Both wise and foolish come forth. They come out of that long sleep. The graves are opened, the resurrection has occurred. In the case of Lazarus, Jesus simply cried with a loud voice, “*Lazarus, come forth.*”

In the parable of the ten virgins the Bridegroom is coming and with him probably the angels are proclaiming his arrival.

In Matt. 24:30-31 we read, “*And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*”

The angels were instrumental in Jesus’ resurrection and so will they be in raising those who have slept so long. Their graves opened and all arise and trim their lamps and proceed toward the Bridegroom.

Never before has anything like this happened. Their memories are returning; they review the ways of their probation—minds will be fixed upon the Truth and how their lives were lived.

The foolish have gone into the graves with empty vessels; the foolish will come forth with empty vessels.

According to the parable of our Lord, the poverty-stricken will throw themselves upon the sympathy of their spiritually-minded brothers and sisters. “*Give us of your oil.*” And they respond, “*Go rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.*”

I assume that this will be a real time of stress, with the foolish waiting their turn to receive their just rewards. The parable says, “*While they went out to buy, the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not.*”

This is a parable and particulars are not revealed. The general idea is plain. We are to always be ready.

Sunday, July 27, 2008, a small group of people, the called-out ones, are assembled under a tabernacle on the Perdenales River. Approximately 200 are gathered, and we wonder about them, what is their condition, spiritually? How many are well prepared with their oil, and are they doing their very best with the knowledge and with their abilities to please the LORD?

How many of us are fooling ourselves? How many are self-deceived and unprepared? Why might we be unprepared? Because the flesh is so deceitful and so clever at making us believe we are what we are not.

If our hearts are right with our Heavenly Father, and we have that true and undivided love for each other, we can be sure we will have that divine care and help and support and guidance.

Sometimes we just simply have to be like a little child and let unconditional love flow. We have to put away our adult inhibitions, put away the memories of the times that our feelings were hurt, harsh words were said, or there were differences of opinions. It is our choice.

Our subject has been marriage, and marriage is bound up and wrapped with love and trust and devotion. So it must be with the brothers and sisters of Christ. To go and meet the Bridegroom with open arms of love, we will need to be special.

There is a little story about unconditional love: a lady telling of some years ago, while working as a volunteer at a hospital. She said that she got to know a little girl named Liz, who was suffering from a rare and serious disease. Her only chance of recovery appeared to be a blood transfusion from her 5-year old brother, who had miraculously survived the same disease and had developed the antibodies needed to combat the illness. The doctor explained the situation to her little brother, and asked the little boy if he would be willing to give his blood to his sister. The lady said, "I saw him hesitate for only a moment before taking a deep breath and saying, 'Yes, I'll do it, if it will save her.'" As the transfusion progressed, he lay in bed next to his sister and smiled, as we all did, seeing the color returning to her cheeks. Then his face grew pale and his smile faded. He looked up at the doctor and asked with a trembling voice, "Will I start to die right away?" Being young, the little boy had misunderstood the doctor; he thought he was going to have to give his sister all his blood in order to save her.

Unconditional love—Oh, this is what it is all about—giving from your heart, giving everything we have down to our very life. We know the Truth; we just need to be stirred up. We need to serve our brothers and sisters and our Heavenly Father with all we have.

Regardless of how we feel about others' sincerity, or their love, or their actions, or however loveable or likeable they are, we must love them and care for them.

Matt 25:35-40 – *"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall*

*answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."*

Bro. Gary Smith

## The Seventh Chapter of Romans

THIS chapter forms part of a chain of reasoning, but may nevertheless be considered apart without disadvantage, if its relation to the chain is recognised. It presents an illustration of Peter's remark about the epistles of Paul: *"Wherein are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction."*—(2 Pet. 3:16). There are statements in it that are only intelligible on a just apprehension of human nature in all its relations. Those who grasp only some of these, are baffled by some of those statements. It requires spiritual-mindedness to see their truth or understand them. Carnal men do not know what carnal nature is: anomalous though it may appear, it requires spiritual discernment to be able to know and recognise "the flesh" in all its signification. A lion does not know itself a lion, though it be such; man only knows it. Even so a carnal man does not know what the carnal nature is, which can only be discerned by the Spirit and by those who are taught thereby. To carnal men, this spiritual discernment is only a thing to laugh at, but it is none the less a palpable reality, which enables those possessing it to understand Paul, and to endorse Paul's experience as their own. This seventh chapter of Romans is almost a touchstone by which a man's whereabouts in spiritual understanding may be ascertained. *"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."*

The seventh chapter of Romans is particularly addressed *"to them that know the law* (of Moses)" (verse 1): because the argument to be employed was to hang on an illustration derived from the law, and to relate to their position in reference to the law. The first fact laid down is, that the jurisdiction of the law over a man extended to the full term of his life. However long he might live, he could never reach an age when he would be free. *"The law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth."* Death put an end to this dominion, for no law could reach dead men. This is illustrated by the case of a husband to whom a wife was bound so long as he lived, but at whose death she was free to be married to another. Her husband died really, and she died legally, to the law holding them in union as man and wife; and the woman was at liberty to form a new connection. Paul applies both features of the illustration to the case in hand: *"Ye, my brethren, are become DEAD TO THE LAW."* How? *"By the body of Christ."* How came they to be