

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## The Typical Significance of Pentecost\*

*"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come . . . "* - Acts 2:1.

DURING the space of forty days following His resurrection our Lord Jesus showed Himself alive to His disciples by many infallible proofs, speaking with them of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. At length the time came for Him to take His last leave of them and ascend to the Father. Just before doing so He gave them final instructions. They were to return from Olivet to Jerusalem, there to remain until they had received the Promise of the Father. "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:49.) Instead of perplexing themselves with questions as to when the Kingdom was to be restored to Israel, they were to expect an outpouring of the Holy Spirit which would fit them for the ministry--that ministry in which angels would fain engage --of carrying the Gospel to the ends of the earth. "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." -- Acts 1:8.

They had not long to wait. When ten days had passed; as soon as the day of Pentecost had fully come, the promise of the Father was fulfilled. - Acts 1:1-12; John 15:26; John 14:17, 26; Acts 2:1.

## Israel's Seven Feasts

The Feast of Pentecost was one of the seven "feasts" or "appointed seasons" or "holy convocations" of Israel, *all* of which occurred in the first seven months of their ecclesiastical year. (Lev. 23:4, margin.) First came the Feast of Passover, on Nisan 14. Next came the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which lasted seven days. On the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Nisan 16, the Feast of Omer, or presentation to Jehovah of the Sheaf of Firstfruits, took place. Fifty days thereafter came Pentecost, the very word "pentecost" meaning fifty. The

remaining three festivals were all appointed for the seventh month, and were, respectively, those of Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles.

### **The Feast of Passover**

Not only are the details of the ceremonies observed at these seven holy convocations full of meaning, but the order in which they took place is significant, revealing the order of sequence in which the various stages of God's great plan of redemption were to unfold themselves.

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\* For many of the thoughts and suggestions presented in this article, we gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to David Baron. His able work, "Types, Psalms and Prophecies," has been at our elbow throughout its preparation.

Readers of this Journal are well aware that the Passover Lamb was a type of our Lord Jesus. Indeed it is only a few weeks ago that, in our "Memorial" celebration, we were reminded of this by the Apostle: "Christ [Jesus] our Passover [Lamb] is sacrificed for us." - 1 Cor. 5:7.

### **The Feast of Unleavened Bread**

We see, too, how this first feast stands related to the second as cause to effect, for if the paschal lamb sets forth the anointed Jesus as our Passover Lamb slain for us, *in* order to bring us pardon, peace, and new life, the feast of unleavened bread was designed to prefigure the holiness of that new life. From the moment the paschal lamb was slain, the Jew had to put away all leaven (type of sin) from his dwelling, and we read: "Whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel." (Exod. 12:15.) So it is in the spiritual reality which the type prefigures. It is Jesus the Lamb of God who takes away our sins and brings us pardon and reconciliation; but associated with this truth is another: "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19); or, as the Apostle, with the Old Testament type in mind, expresses it, "Christ [Jesus] our Passover [Lamb] is sacrificed for us, therefore [or, "so that"] we should keep the feast"; -- the feast, namely, of unleavened bread, the bread of sincerity and truth.

### **The Sheaf of First-fruits**

**In** the feast of Omer, or the presentation of the first sheaf of ripe barley to God, there is no doubt Israel was taught to acknowledge God's power and bountifulness, and thus by a representative "firstfruits" to consecrate to Him the whole harvest. All the Jewish festivals were in connection with the natural seasons of the year; with the harvests which God gave unto His people; with the outward blessings with which He surrounded them. But here too the earthly and visible is the symbol of greater and deeper spiritual realities. There is another harvest field for the first ripe fruit of which the Lord of the harvest (Jehovah Himself) had long been waiting; a harvest of which Christ Jesus was the firstfruits. "Now is Christ [Jesus] risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept." (1 Cor. 15:20.) It was on the third day after the Lamb of God was slain (after the corn of wheat which was not content to abide alone, but fell into the ground and died, that it might produce much fruit, John 12:24), that He arose again, and stood forth *as* the Branch of Jehovah for beauty and glory, and as the fruit of the earth for excellency and for comeliness to His redeemed people. (Isa. 4:2, margin.) In Him we see a glorious new federal

Head of our race, coming forth out of the earth, a Sheaf waved from the earth unto God. Furthermore, when after His resurrection He ascended to His Father and our Father, to His God and our God (John 20:17), it was not only to be accepted for us (Lev. 23:11); to appear in the presence of God for us (Heb. 9:24); but also as the pledge and earnest of the harvest to follow-of the resurrection to life eternal of the whole family of the redeemed of earth.

### **The Feast of Pentecost**

But before this great harvest of earth's redeemed ones should be reaped, another "firstfruits" was to be presented. Thus St. James writes: "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." (James 1:18.) In the glorious vision, St. John identifies these "firstfruits" as "an hundred forty and four thousand" standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, "having His [the Lamb's] Father's Name written in their foreheads." "These," writes St. John (Rev. 14:4), "were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."

To this gracious feature of our Father's plans and purposes the Feast of Pentecost pointed.

"And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete; even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meal-offering unto Jehovah. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave-loaves of two-tenths part of an ephah; they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven, for firstfruits unto Jehovah." -- Lev. 23:15-18. A. R. V.

In the light of the two New Testament Scriptures just quoted (James 1:18 and Rev. 14:4) this second "firstfruits" is seen to be full of typical and prophetic significance. The preparation and presentation of the loaves are doubtless emblematic of the Church and set forth that part of God's Plan which has been in process during this Gospel Age, and which is now, we believe, about to be consummated. The true Corn of Wheat having fallen into the ground and died, it brought forth much fruit, and the result, as set forth in this type is bread-two loaves which are waved and presented to Jehovah-for not only is our Lord Jesus the true meal-offering in whom the Father ever finds delight, and who exhibited in the earth the habits and ways of heaven, but His people, His Ecclesia, also are constituted a new meal-offering unto God, that in them, too, traits of heavenly character might be found; and that so, the earth, sown with seed from the harvest field of spiritual Israel, might produce an abundant crop, to our Lord's and the Father's glory.

### **"To Him that Overcometh"**

Two or three significant points in connection with this "new meal-offering" as a figure of the Church, call for our reverent notice. First, in contrast to the Omer, or Sheaf of Firstfruits, presented on the 16th of Nisan, the "Bikkurim" (as this second firstfruit is called) consisted of *two* loaves.

Of the *duplicate character* of the emblems two explanations are worthy of special notice. One is that suggested by Brother Russell, as follows: "The two loaves . . . represented the two classes of the consecrated-the overcoming 'little flock,' and the 'great company' of the consecrated servants of God who do not make the 'high calling' theirs by overcoming the world as they might and

should do." (Watch Tower Reprints, pages R1289, R2271, R5191.) The other explanation, presented by David Baron, is that which interprets the type as intended to set forth the two formerly irreconcilable elements -- Jew and Gentile -- made one in Christ.

Both of these explanations appeal to us as having merit. It would be interesting to learn if the author of either was acquainted with the writings of the other or whether their respective conclusions were reached without each having the benefit of an exchange and consideration of each other's views. As to this we have no information. However, while we may not know with certainty just why the loaves were two in number, we may profit from the lessons to be found in both of the interpretations suggested. Certain it is that we need Brother Russell's reminder that in the "little flock," to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom, only overcomers will be found, and if we frequently pause to meditate on this exhortation, it will stimulate and energize us to "gird up the loins of our mind," to "run with patience the race set before us," to give diligence to "make our calling and election sure." - Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; Luke 12:32; 1 Pet. 1:13; Heb. 12:1; 2 Pet. 1:10.

### **In Christ There is Neither Jew nor Gentile**

The other interpretation, too, is not without its valuable lessons, expounding, as it does, the truth so long kept hidden. For this secret of God, which could not have been known apart from revelation, namely that the Gentiles should be, partakers of the same promise in Christ, with the Jews-made "fellow-heirs and of the same body" -was not made known in other ages and generations unto the sons of men, as in the New Testament it is revealed unto His holy Apostles and Prophets by the -Spirit. (Eph. 3:5, 6) As a matter of fact, until Christ broke down the middle wall of partition, and consecrated a new and living way for both Jew and Gentile through the veil of His rent flesh, no Gentile, even if he was circumcised, and became a proselyte, and surpassed the most pious in Israel in piety and learning, was ever received on terms of absolute equality, and regarded as altogether one with the congregation of Israel. For two thousand years the knowledge of God and the ordinances of true religion were confined exclusively to the land of Israel. The nations of the earth, with few exceptions, having rejected the opportunities which had been granted to them, were left to reap the consequences of their own apostasy, and given over to a reprobate mind. (Rom. 1:18-32.) God's mercies in the meantime were richly lavished on the Jews; they were the chosen depositories of these mercies-the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, all pertained to them. -- Amos 3:2; Rom. 9:4.

But with the present dispensation, the "spirit dispensation" as the Gospel Age is rightly called, a new order of things commenced. In Christ, that is to say, in the Christ Company, the anointed company of consecrated believers in Jesus, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but all are one body. As the Apostle elsewhere declares: "He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; . . . and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father." - Eph. 2:14-18.

As the two Pentecostal loaves combined to 'make up one offering and were waved as *one* in the presence of God, so the believing Jew and the believing Gentile, washed in the same precious blood, sanctified and indwelt by the same spirit which teaches both alike to cry, "Abba, Father,"

and presented by the one great High Priest, are made equally acceptable, and are consecrated as one offering to the service of God.

Writing on the same truth in connection with the exposition of Rom. 11:15, 16, Brother Russell has himself observed: "Oh, the rich depths of -God's wisdom and knowledge! How useless for us to try to discover His dealings except as He is pleased to reveal His plans to us. His doings are all mysteries to us except as we are enlightened by His Spirit. Who knew this gracious plan, so much beyond human conception? Who helped the Lord to arrange such a plan, think you? This is not human wisdom. God only could be its author. A Jew would never have planned to graft in Gentiles to share the chief blessings of the promise. A Gentile never would have arranged the original stock and branches Jewish and himself a favored graft. No, the plan is clearly of God ... to Him be the glory forever." - Watch Tower Reprints, page R5533.

## **"They shall be Baked with Leaven"**

The second peculiarity we wish to notice in connection with the presentation of the loaves at Pentecost is that expressed in the words, "They shall be baked with leaven." This is remarkable, especially in the light of the express injunction given to Israel to exclude leaven from their sacrifices (Exod. 34:25), but it only supplies us with another instance of the minuteness with which these types are regulated, because of their rich symbolical significance.

Leaven, as we have already observed, signifies sin, or corruption. From every sacrifice, therefore, which set forth the perfect servant of Jehovah, the true Lamb of God, leaven was rigidly excluded. Thus with the Omer, or Sheaf offered on the 16th of Nisan, which represented Christ Jesus in resurrection, the true firstfruits and meal-offering, there was no leaven, for nothing even suggesting of corruption could be associated with the only sinless One, in whom was no guile, or deceit. But it is otherwise with His people. "The Church is indeed "elect through -sanctification of the spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." We are, as consecrated believers, possessed of a new life, are now washed and sanctified and justified in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our -God, and are "clean every whit" in His sight. Yet well aware are we that "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," and the more we seek by His grace to follow Him wholly, and in the power of His spirit to keep our hearts pure and our hands clean; the more conscious we become of our daily need of cleansing. - 1 Pet. 1:2; 1 Cor. 6:11; John 13:10; 1 John 1:8.

For the same reason, also there is no sin-offering, connected with the Sheaf which prefigured our Lord Jesus (Nisan 16); but with the two loaves there is the express command that apart from the other accompanying offerings there should be one he-goat for a sin-offering, (Lev. 23:19, 20) which again teaches us that the Church, though called and qualified by the power of the Holy Spirit to serve, does, nevertheless, need at every moment .of its service, the protection of the "precious blood," even of that one sacrifice in which the virtue and efficacy of all the offerings here enumerated, were combined, and under the shelter of which, the Church, presented as the new meal-offering in the earth, abides. In the one sacrifice of the Cross, the Savior provided for His Church a fragrance and acceptableness, which it could never find in its own leavened self.

"That which is typified by the Feast of Pentecost, looked at from one aspect, is spread over the whole of this Gospel Age, though a striking fulfillment took place at the inauguration of the Christian dispensation fifty days after our Lord's resurrection, when the Pentecostal season for that year "was fully come." But perhaps that which is specially set forth by the actual presentation and wing of the loaves is yet to be fulfilled at the close of this dispensation, when all the firstfruits from among men being gathered, and the number of the elect being completed, Christ Jesus shall present to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:26, 27); but even then it will be so, not because He found her so, or because of her absolute purity while on earth, but because, having first bought her with His own precious blood, He sanctified and cleansed her with the washing of water by the Word, and made her perfect in the beauty and comeliness which He did put upon her. - Eph. 5:26; Isa. 61:3.

## **"The After-fruits"**

There is another feature of this "Feast of Pentecost" too important to escape mention even in so brief a space as remains to us. It is this: Just as the Omer presented on the morrow after the Passover, setting forth Christ Jesus as "the firstfruits of them that slept," was a pledge and earnest of the two loaves presented on Pentecost, which prefigured the Church in its elective character as the firstfruits from among men, so also the second firstfruits are themselves a prophecy and pledge of the fuller harvest yet to be gathered in the coming Age, of which in the Scriptures, all God 's holy Prophets have spoken since the world began. (Acts 3:19.) The blessing which came to the world- at the first advent of our dear Redeemer, wonderful though it was, has thus far been only partial in degree and extent.

Indeed, unbelieving men sometimes taunt us with the little that the Gospel has accomplished, and maintain that Christianity has been a failure, and truly if, as is supposed by some, God had purposed the conversion of the world during this Gospel Age, it must be admitted that His plans have thus far been frustrated. For when we -contemplate the condition of the world after more than nineteen centuries of Gospel witnessing, what do we see? How far are we from seeing a believing world! Consider how small a proportion of the human race are even professedly believers in Jesus. And of these who mentally assent to the truth as it is in Jesus, how few are governed by it!

But a better acquaintance with our Father's Word reveals the fact that the conversion of the world in the present Age was not expected of the Church. Indeed the very fact that the world has not yet been converted, far from confirming the unbeliever's view that God's plans have failed, is merely a convincing proof to the consecrated child of God that God has not even attempted the world's conversion yet. The Scriptures declare that all God's purposes shall be accomplished, that His Word shall not return unto Him void, but shall prosper in the thing whereunto He sends it. (Isa. 55:11.) And as we look into the Scriptures and then around us at the condition of the world in which we live, we see that the Gospel has accomplished just that which God said it would accomplish in this Age now closing. First, a remnant according to the election of grace was to be saved out of Israel. (Isa. 10:22; Rom. 9:27; Rom. 11:5.) And the Gentiles, we read, God hath visited, to take out of them a people for His Name. (Acts 15:14.) These two, reconciled in one body unto God, through the Cross of Christ, were to unitedly form His Ecclesia, His Church, the Bride or Body of Christ, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. And as the Scriptures foretold, so it is; Israel as a nation still rejects Christ, but have there- not been thousands who received Him and became sons of God thereby? The other nations of the earth, the Gentiles, still, for the most part sit in darkness, and under the shadow of death, but wherever the Gospel has been preached as a witness, some have heard the call, and have joined the company of *taken out* ones, "called out" ones, as the very word "ecclesia" means.

But an election is an end in itself; it is rather a means and preparation for some vastly larger accomplishment. And the very fact that the Church is spoken of as a kind of "*firstfruits*" implies "*after fruits*." The Gospel of the Kingdom must first be preached as a **witness** unto all nations, for the gathering in of the first ripe ears, to constitute a glorious firstfruits, and then:

"After this I will return, And I will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen. And I will build again the ruins thereof, And I will set it up; That the residue of men may seek after the Lord, And all the Gentiles upon whom My Name is called, saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from the beginning of the world." - Acts 15:16-18.

## Comforters of the Brethren

*"And Joses, who by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas, . . . having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the Apostles' feet." - Acts 4:36, 37*

IN THE diversified ministry that God has ordained shall be His way of developing His Church in knowledge and grace, the ministry of the less conspicuous servants must by no means be underestimated. "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform." When all the "sowers and reapers together come," and the Lord gives to every one the reward of faithful service, will there be any surprise to find that among the most highly rewarded, will be many who have not been most prominent here, and that these will be acclaimed greatest over there? Do the Scriptures not tell us that it will be even so? Heaven will reverse many of our calculations, and change many of our present estimates. There we shall find "last that shall be first, and first that shall be last." In the "light which no man can approach unto" much that has been highly esteemed among men will there be seen to fall far short of the divine standards, while the acts of genuine virtue, and examples of outstanding faithfulness in little things, many times unnoticed, and like Mary's intuitive impulse to break her box of precious ointment, often criticized and condemned, will, in that unspeakable light and glory, receive Heaven's unstinted praise.

True indeed are the words: "In the warfare of the Church militant, it may be that the greatest work has not been done so much by the 'generals' out in front, as by the 'privates' who fought where no man saw, and fell where no man took time to notice, yet whose names are highest on the Honor Roll of God." Is it any wonder then that Jesus wrote into His rules of principle and unity pertaining to His Church, "He that receiveth you [even the most insignificant] receiveth Me," and contrariwise, "He that despiseth you, despiseth Me."

There are times when we experience something akin to regret as we read the very brief biography of certain Bible characters. No doubt all that is really necessary has been recorded; nevertheless we cannot but feel a strong desire to know something more about these fascinating personalities. Barnabas is one of these. The little we are told about him, and particularly the name his appreciative associates gave him, inspires in our hearts a love for him and a desire to know more about him. What joy there will be in heaven "When in His throne we meet"!

### Two Barnabas Characteristics Needed

The two texts we are considering now, reveal two beautiful traits in the character of Joses, surnamed Barnabas. Both of these characteristics have been displayed by men and women throughout the long period of the Church's development, and they are still to be found among us today; thank God! What a calamity it would be if this were not so. How some well nigh disheartened souls would miss the comforting, helping hand of a Barnabas if none were left with us still. And when the smoke of the battle has cleared away, and the victors and the fallen may all be known, brother, sister, will some one who struggled by your side, and to whom God gave you the inestimable privilege of being a true Barnabas, be heard crying out in this lament,

"Had I but heard,  
One breath of applause, one cheering word  
'One cry of 'Courage' amid the strife  
So weighted for me with death or life,  
How it would have nerved my soul to strain  
Through the whirl of the coming surge again."



Such a helpful character was our beloved Barnabas. A son of consolation and encouragement he surely was. "A friend in need" we are told "is a friend indeed," and such was the special helpfulness of this loving, sympathetic brother. He was full of faith in his brethren. When others doubted and stood back, or discounted a brother, Barnabas stood by him still. He knew the marks of true character, just as unselfish loving hearts usually do know them; therefore that which would cause others to let circumstantial evidences form the basis for distrust or impatience, the Barnabas spirit interprets after the heart rule rather, than by outward appearances. The Barnabas spirit thus becomes the living interpretation of Paul's profound statement-love "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." And Paul himself had seen this exemplified in the loving confidence and helpfulness of Barnabas.

Because he was so disposed to have confidence in his brethren, what a son of comfort he was to Paul in a time of special need. Who can estimate what it meant to Paul when he came back from Damascus a "prisoner of Jesus Christ", despised now by the Sanhedrin, and distrusted by the brethren at Jerusalem, to then have a man like Barnabas put a brotherly hand on his shoulder, and say, "Brother Saul, I have faith in you; be of good courage, God will yet use you mightily." What a "word in season" such an understanding assurance of confidence would be at that time. What if there had been no such "son of consolation" to greet and stand by Saul in such an hour? But he was there, a ready, though comparatively obscure brother, while James and others drew hack in a questioning aloofness.

With the few meager references we have to this delightful character, we may with safety imagine him saying to Mark, who had deserted him on a previous journey, "In spite of your failure on that last tour, I still have confidence in you Mark, and I believe that with another chance you will vindicate my faith in you. Come, let us go forth into the wide field of service, bring comfort to the brethren, and spread abroad the good news." As we have learned to know him through what we have already seen of his spirit, he would not be acting true to his inherent nature if he had turned from one so much in need of him as Mark was at that time. Some one has said, "A true friend is one who knows all about you, and loves you just the same." No question about that statement's truthfulness, for such a true Friend is Jesus, who, notwithstanding the fact that He knows more about most of us than we would want any one else to know, yet "He sticketh closer than a brother." Such was the spirit of Barnabas, and we today, as well as Mark in his day, owe a debt of gratitude to the brother who stood by like a true friend. Had it not been for the helping hand held out at this crisis point, John Mark, who proved himself a Worthy helper later, and gave the Church the earliest biography of the life of his Master, might have become utterly discouraged, and so would have **been** lost to the Church.

### **Barnabas the Cheerful Giver**

Another characteristic of this man to which we may draw attention, is the whole-hearted manner in which he served the Lord *and the* brethren. As our text shows us, Barnabas was a land owner, apparently a man of means. And it was he perhaps who started that wave of free-will offerings which swept through the assemblies in Pentecostal days. He brought his offering and laid it at the Apostles' feet, and the result was that others caught the contagious spirit of his generous, enthusiastic example, and likewise poured out of their means for the spread of the glad tidings of great joy. Thus we see him as a man aflame with unselfish devotion to his Lord. His whole being

seems to have become, permeated with an overflowing gratitude to God for the light he enjoyed, and with an overflowing love for all the children of God. Freely he had received, and as freely he desired to give to others. His biography is brief, but in a few words we are given material out of which we may construct a portrait of his character which is both attractive and full of contagious, inspiring influences. To ponder on these two Barnabas -characteristics, his genuine spirit of helpfulness, and his whole-souled consecration, must surely stir every receptive heart with a burning desire to emulate him in both these qualities of character. Certain it is that the Church never needed the - Barnabas influence actively at work within her ranks more than she needs it today. Let us then observe the character, methods, and spirit of Josep, surnamed Barnabas, "a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith."

### **Pilgrim Barnabas**

Through that diversified ministry which God ordained, an awakening had taken place in Antioch (Acts 11) not through any activity of the Church at Jerusalem, but evidently through the zeal of some who had fled there as a result of the persecutions started about the time Stephen was martyred. News of this awakening reached the brethren' in Jerusalem in due time, and resulted in the decision to send Barnabas down to see firsthand what developments really were taking place in Antioch. And may we not safely assume that some little groups along the length of miles between Jerusalem and Antioch were visited by Pilgrim Brother Barnabas. From what we have already seen of the character of this man, we can be sure he would be eager to see just as many along the way as possible, because his heart overflowed with desire to do all the good possible to as many as possible. Let us note the methods, message, and general deportment of this ambassador of Christ.

"The original motive in sending Barnabas to Antioch . . . was that he might see and judge of the true condition of things, and give some report as to whether the new converts were worthy in their lives and characters to be recognized as fellow-heirs with the saints. Barnabas, when he had come, took note of 'the grace of God,' manifested amongst the believers at Antioch -- it must have been manifested not only in their faith in the Lord as their Redeemer and Master, but also in their conduct as disciples or followers of Jesus. It is written, 'He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure,' and we may suppose that Barnabas quickly discerned the **cleansing and sanctifying** power of the truth amongst these believers at Antioch, and thus realized that the cause, instead of being hindered by such accessions, would be honored. We read that he was glad; and we may assume, although it is not stated, that he promptly made a report to the brethren at Jerusalem, and that they were glad also. A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, is always made glad by evidences of God's grace operating in himself and in others. It is one evidence of the possession of the Holy Spirit, and that in good measure, when we rejoice in all good things 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just,' whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.' - Phil. 4:8. . . .

"Barnabas at once overflowed toward the Antioch brethren, and in the same comforting and helpful manner as at Jerusalem he **exhorted** them all. The Greek word here is from the same root as his name, and signifies comfort, stimulation, assistance. No doubt he saw various things needing to be corrected; but instead of beginning **with fault-finding, instead of lacerating their feelings and chiding** them, he began, properly, by acknowledgement of what he saw in them as a cause for rejoicing. His comforting message was to the effect **that they should cleave unto the Lord**, with purpose of heart. The word 'cleave' here in the Greek signifies to glue, to adhere. He wished

the dear brethren, new in the truth, to see to it that their hearts were firmly united unto the Lord, that their minds were fully made up, that their consecration to Him was complete. This was the matter of first importance. Later on he might show them kindly, gently, certain weaknesses of the flesh to which they were addicted; or their hearts being more firmly united to the Lord they might very speedily see these inconsistencies of themselves, without a word being said. The point we would impress is that it was not a restraining of the flesh, nor a perfecting of it, that was sought, but a **much deeper work of** grace than this; a purity of heart, of intention, a heart-adhesion to the Lord. We today cannot do better than follow this same course in our endeavors to do good unto others as we have opportunity. The brethren needed strengthening rather than tearing. They needed building up in the most holy faith and love. They needed encouraging in heart-adhesion to the Lord, and that criticisms of the flesh come in afterward gradually and very carefully and kindly. There were three elements cooperating which made Barnabas so suitable a person for this service [pilgrim service], and the same three elements in any of us today will surely make us able ministers of the truth. Those elements are stated here; viz., 'He was a good man [moral, upright, reverential] full of the Holy Spirit [he had not received the grace of God in vain; it was in him a living power, the new mind guiding and controlling in all of his affairs] and of faith.' However good a man may be, and however much of the Lord's character and spirit he may have, faith is essential. 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.' Let us strive to have all of these qualifications in our ministry, that we may be true sons of consolation, helpful in the Lord's service, and to His people wherever we may be. No wonder we read that as a result of his labors at Antioch 'much people were added unto the Lord.'" - Watch Tower Reprints, pp. R2997, 8.\*

### **By My Spirit Saith the Lord**

Pilgrim Brother Barnabas left "the sweet fragrance of the altar behind." Surely the brethren at Antioch would acknowledge the propriety of the name given him by the Jerusalem saints. And who can doubt that throughout the territory covered by this loving brother, so intent on having brethren **cleave to the Lord**, and on being of the greatest possible comfort to others, would be everywhere hailed as a treasured "son of consolation." Only eternity can reveal how many hearts were mellowed, how many combative spirits rebuked and led into "a more excellent way," by the example of such a love-filled and clear-visioned man as Barnabas. Who need wonder about what spirit pervaded the little gatherings when this ambassador passed on to others waiting for his words of uniting and living power. Brother would not be set against brother over relatively unimportant matters. "Heart adhesion to the Lord" would be so beautifully exemplified in his own life, that we may well believe that as he went on his way he left behind many who longed more than for anything else, just to be like Barnabas, a comforter of the brethren, an example "in word, **in conversation**, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." What servant of Christ would not covet a right to such a portrait of character, and such a record of results in ministry as that merited by Barnabas, "who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. **For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit** and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord." In the Book of Remembrance being written before the Lord, is such a record being written up concerning our ministry? Will our record by and by be read by us with as complete satisfaction, and without regret or shame, as that of Josés, "son of *comfort*"? - *Contributed*.

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\*We suggest a rereading of the entire article entitled, "The Disciples were First Called Christians at Antioch."

## Acceptable Sacrifices

### *Part II*

*"Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." - Eph. 5:25.*

IN the uncertainty which obscures every old and sacred locality, we may see and accept with profound gratitude an indication that a watchful Providence has interposed to save the Lord's people from idolatry. Among these sacred localities are the burying places of God's faithful ones of ancient time—that of Abraham, "father of the faithful"; that of Joseph, whose rejection by his brethren foreshadowed our Lord's rejection at His first coming; of Moses, type of the real Lawgiver; of Joshua, whose triumph in leading Israel into the promised land foretold the greater deliverance and triumph; of David, type of our great Shepherd-King. These burying places have been so obscured by time that centuries of searching have failed to find them. Neither has archeology located anything associated with the life and passion of our Savior—things on which a profane worship would surely seize. There are places in Palestine where it is known our Lord was "wont to go," as for instance, He frequently discoursed on Solomon's Porch; He resorted to the Mount of Olives, to the Garden of Gethsemane, hallowed by many moments of sacred communion with his Father, and the scene of His great agony; and the most sacred of all places, Golgotha, where His blood was shed. The general locality of many of these is known, but nothing definite as to the exact spot, where the idolator could attach his worship. True devotion can stand only under the open sky and say, "There my Master ascended and there shall my affections be set."

### **Purposes of God Hidden from the World**

Contrast, as well as our limited knowledge will permit, the human and the spirit natures of the One whom "mighty angels bowed before"; compare the exalted position and glory from which the Logos had come, with the humble dwelling place and position among men of the man Christ Jesus, who came to earth to be despised and rejected of men. Visit now for a moment the tabernacle—behold the indescribable beauties of its two golden chambers, and meditate on Him who prayed that He might be glorified with the glory that He had with the Father before the world began. Then step outside—see the unsightly exterior and think on Him who came unto His own who received Him not, because to them He had no beauty nor comeliness that they should desire Him! And let us remember that hidden beneath this unsightliness are pictures of the purposes of God.

The tabernacle had four coverings: first and outermost was the covering of seals' skins; second, rams' skins dyed red; third, goats' hair; and fourth and innermost, the curtain of white linen.

"It has been a matter of surprise to some that the glory and beauty of the tabernacle—its golden walls, its golden and beautifully engraved furniture, and its veils of curious work—were so completely covered and hidden from view of the people; even the sunlight from without being excluded its only light being the lamp in the holy and the Shekinah Glory in the most holy. But this is perfectly in keeping with the lessons we have received from its services. As God covered the type and hid its beauty under curtains and rough, unsightly skins, so the glories and beauties of, spiritual things are seen only by those who enter the consecrated condition—the 'Royal Priesthood.' These enter a hidden but glorious state which the world and all outside fail to

appreciate. Their glorious hopes- and also their standing as new creatures are hidden from their fellow men."

As it was only by becoming the man Christ Jesus that He could bring about atonement, so only by becoming a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" could He become the "merciful and faithful High Priest." Joshua must pass through the Red Sea and all the wilderness experiences with the children of Israel before he could become their leader in the triumphal entry into the promised land. The Greater than Joshua must participate in all the sufferings of the footstep followers if He would "bring many sons to glory." (Heb. 2:10.) In the economy of God's great Plan, without doubt these typical ones, too, learned obedience by the things which they suffered; they, too, were prepared for their ultimate perfection through sufferings. They were faithful until death, as by faith they saw the promised Deliverer and were glad; but now, not only the types and prophecies, but also the realities are ours. We know that He **hath borne** our griefs and carried our sorrows; and that the chastisement of our peace **was** upon Him. We all like sheep had gone astray, but the Lord **laid** upon Him the iniquity of us all.

### **"Made in the Likeness of Men"**

The unsightly covering of the tabernacle referred to above was of the skin of a marine animal. Taken from the sea it thus speaks to us of One who would leave His own element and come to earth. But beneath the "seal skins" (R: V.) hidden from every eye were rams' skins dyed **red**. How easy it is now to read the story in this concealed covering; but Abel came from his sacrifice perhaps wondering at its acceptableness. No doubt Abraham spent many hours pondering on the strange commission that sent him to Mount Moriah, and on the lamb that was substituted there. Abraham knew nothing of the tabernacle or its pictures or that it was to grow into a marvelous temple that tradition says was erected on this very spot. The symbols of this temple carrying us beyond this time of imperfection needed no longer the rams' skins dyed red, nor the covering of goats' hair that during all the years of the wilderness journey lay concealed under the rams' skins.

The curtain of goats' hair was not exposed even to the priests; for the one on which they looked was of white linen. It was the white and the gold alone that the priests beheld. But covering this curtain of goats' hair were the rams' skins dyed red, thus declaring that it is only by the application of His blood that imperfect ones such as those represented by the goat, could have a place in that tabernacle picture. To all within that tabernacle naught was to be seen above except the pure white, seeming to say, "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh," but after the spirit; to all without, there was but the unsightliness that fitly represented the appearance to them of the One whom they rejected. It was not the death of the animal whose skin formed this outer covering that was intended to convey the lesson, however; for of all the many sacrifices performed in this story of the tabernacle year after year, not one animal from the sea was presented on the altar. It would seem, therefore, merely to represent One who would leave His original estate, His Father's house.

### **Significance of Rams' Skins Dyed Red**

If we were to depend upon the tabernacle picture to teach us of the mystery of sin atonement, in these curtains we would see portrayed unmistakably that the merit lies not in Jesus' having left heaven, but in the one sacrifice, pictured in the one covering dyed red. When we turn to the literal statements of the inspired writers, no doubtful method of interpretation need be used to see that

salvation for all mankind is in the shed blood of the Lamb, and in it alone. "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." "None can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him, for the redemption of their soul is precious. [Web. "Yawkawr," valuable]." The reason, as every child of Adam should know, is that "there is none righteous, no not one." The most conscientious effort to attain a life of holiness will not constitute one a savior. For this reason, it would seem, the linen curtain and the covering of goats' hair were not dyed red; but note that they were under the covering of the one that was. Thus, the tabernacle seems to tell us of those who secure a place in that picture not because of merit within themselves, 'but because of their acceptance of the covering provided through the merit of the One who "poured out His soul unto death," "a ransom for all."

Realizing that a teaching of a type can be held with assurance only if the lesson to which the type seeing to point is set forth in the plain statements of God's Word, we turn with interest to our Bibles to see if there are such Scriptures teaching that some provision has been made for members of the human race, giving them a standing whereby they may be represented in so holy a structure as the tabernacle. While we find that "as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive," the sacred Word seems to be strangely silent as to any plea having been made as yet in heaven for Adam or his race. Instead, we do find statements that very pointedly pass by the general family and single out -a special class. It is of this class the Apostle John is speaking when he says, "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1.) Again, the writer to the Hebrews says, "Who being the brightness of His [the Father's] glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. 1:3.) "But now in Christ Jesus **ye** that once were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. 2:13.) And again: "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. 9:24.) "Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world." (Gal. 1:4.) So distinct is this class from the world in general in the divine purpose as regards the application of the ransom price that the Apostle can speak as though, for the time being, Jesus died for the Church alone, saying, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." (Eph. 5:25.) Again: "For **ye** are bought with a price." (1 Cor. 6:20.) But noting this fact must by no means be allowed to becloud the plain teaching of the Scriptures that He and He alone gave Himself a ransom for all. This giving of Himself was spoken of as a work already completed 1,900 years ago, and it was divine inspiration that spoke thus. Nothing ever has been nor ever, can be added to that ransom price for it was a "corresponding price." "In the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ there is an infinite fulness, which meets every necessity of man."

While recognizing then that He has as yet appeared in heaven only on our behalf, we rejoice "in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until 'now. And not only so, but

ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit." (Rom. 8:21-23, R. V.) "Ye know that **ye** were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last **times for you.**" (1 Pet. 1:19, 20.) The marginal reading of 1 Peter 2:9 makes the passage "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people," thus distinguishing us from the great mass of mankind as yet unpurchased, though the full price is already provided. Evidently, "Christ bath **loved us**, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." (Eph. 5:2.) "His own self bare **our** sins in His own body on the tree." (1 Pet. 2:24.) "By

the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Heb. 10:10.) "He hath been **made sin for us.**" - 2 Cor. 5:21.

### **A Priesthood to Offer up Sacrifices**

It would be impossible to suppose that the Scriptures could so consistently pass by the world without mention in connection with the present benefits of Jesus' sacrifice without intending to teach some point by the omission. We would therefore with deep reverence for the precious Word of God turn to it for the reason. Our first suggestion is found in the assurance of Romans 12:1, that the Church may present an acceptable sacrifice. It is no less an authority than the Lord Himself that invites us to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him. (Matt. 16:24.) And with still clearer import, the Apostle Paul says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1.) And by inspiration Peter reiterates the thought, "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual [Sinaitic Ms. omits] sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 2:5.) Plainly, though we were once of those who were without God and without hope in the world, our privilege is stated by the Apostle Paul, saying, "The grace is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 15:15, 16.) It is unbelievable that our loving heavenly Father could invite us to bring a sacrifice which He has said is acceptable and then upon receiving it, find there is no place for it in His Plan.

Since it is acceptable something will surely be done with it. In the context immediately following the last citation from Peter, the faith that takes Jesus as our Head is given as the keynote of this mystery of our having been made acceptable in the Beloved. Oh! how wonderful the outcome must -be to be "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved"! - Eph. 1:6.

Let no one suppose that the Apostles are giving the thought that the Church, of herself, is a sacrifice for the cancellation of the penalty against the sinner. That her sacrifice is acceptable, we have found there is no reason to doubt; but it must be just as evident that she is not acceptable because of any inherent merit. Unequivocally it is stated that the "one sacrifice for sins which Jesus offered, foreshadowed by the Passover lamb, is continuously or eternally efficacious in His great purpose "to put away sins by the sacrifice of Himself." (Heb 10:10-12; 9:26; 1 Pet. 3:18.) Any sacrifices acceptable since the offering of that fully corresponding price, which is sufficient for the cancellation of the debt which Father Adam incurred by his sin, and sufficient also to meet all the indebtedness his children have inherited from him, must be for some other purpose than the securing of that corresponding price.

Two important difficulties are yet to be considered in connection with the study of this subject: First, conceding that our sacrifices are acceptable, what have we to present? and second, to what end has the great judge agreed to accept our sacrifices? Regarding the first question, acknowledging our undone condition, we recognize that in justification there lies the secret of our acceptableness; yet it is not justification that is presented to the Lord, but our bodies (Rom. 12:1), which are justified: The beautiful symbol the Master uses, the taking up our cross to follow Him even to our Calvary, we have already noticed in Matthew 16:24. But to sacrifice a body is to lay down its life. What life have we to lay down? The answer is found in connection with that of the next question, and forever allays all fears that our "acceptable sacrifice" might rob our beloved

Lord of some of His glory. Instead, we find that only by acknowledging our acceptableness can we appropriately praise His glorious grace. This question must be left for consideration in a later issue.

"O, how can words with equal warmth  
The gratitude declare  
That glows within my inmost heart?  
But Thou canst read it there.

"Through all eternity, to Thee  
A grateful song I'll raise.  
And my eternal joy shall be  
To herald wide Thy praise."

## The History of the Church

### No. 4

#### The Persecution of the Church

UP TO the tenth year of Nero's reign, A. D. 64, the power of the Roman Empire had meant something of protection to the "Galileans"; especially had the Apostle Paul reason to thank that ruling arm which reached out to protect him in several instances when his safety was threatened in provincial trouble. The boy, Nero, as has been noted previously, had been brought up under the care and tutelage of the philosopher Seneca, called from exile for the purpose. For some five years after his succession to the throne the careful rearing of the philosopher made itself felt, and Nero ruled humbly and well, gaining esteem and popularity. Then the wealth and power of his position began to have its effect and the evil of the suppressed nature (began to assert itself, until in 62, when Seneca retired from his post, Nero was already reaping the resultant distrust of his people. Now came disaster after disaster; in 63 an earthquake destroyed Pompeii, an earthquake whose destruction was still in evidence in spite of earnest rebuilding, when the erupting volcano, Vesuvius, took its horror-marked place upon the pages of devastating history. "Surely," said the worshipful Pagans, "our gods are most angry."

On the night of July 18, 64, fire broke out in Rome. For nine days the flames licked the frantic city. Nero was not free from suspicion. All the authorities since Tacitus, who declares the origin uncertain, claim it was started by Nero, 'but his guilt has never been proved. At enormous cost the city was beautifully and safely rebuilt and the magnificent palace of Nero, "the golden house, was erected. But the dissatisfaction of the people was increasing and the selfish, cruel, depraved Emperor looked about for a scape-goat to direct attention from his own unpopularity-ah, yes, the Christians! Who better than they to place before the Romans as the offenders of the gods! Already they were despised. *They* were said to hate mankind, and had been heard to speak of a devastating conflagration, earth-wide. Yes, upon the Christians should fall the blame for the catastrophe.



## **Persecution under Nero**

And so Nero made a great holiday, for nothing pleased the Romans more. He gave elaborate chariot races and, more exciting still, killed in great numbers the helpless Christians, thinking up many ingenious ways of making their dying agonies more interesting. Some were clothed with the skins of wild beasts and placed where the dogs could tear them to pieces. Others were attired in pitchy shirts, then hung upon crosses and set on fire to illuminate the garden walks at twilight. The Bible is strangely silent on the Neronian persecution; neither can we find there any answer to the question of just what death came to Paul and to Peter. It has been suggested as a reasonable answer to this that it was perhaps deemed wiser that no compromising matter be found in the Christian manuscripts, no direct accusation of this persecuting government.

The life of Nero ends in a way that rivals the close of some fiction. History reveals him crouched in a room of the freedman's villa some four miles from Rome, to which he has fled. He hears the beat -of the horses' hoofs as the soldiers near his hiding place. He points a dagger to his own throat with a trembling hand, the will behind it lacking the courage to strike. Then Epaphroditus, secretary of Nero and former master of the philosopher slave, Epictetus, who has loyally accompanied his Emperor to exile, reaches forth his hand and drives the dagger home. Thus perished Nero, last of the Caesars, looked upon with horror by the early Christians as the fulfillment of that Antichrist whose seat would be the seven hills of Rome, whose coming was to fill the saints with dread.

By the end of the first century the Christians were very numerous and the Romans no longer confounded them with Judaism, a tolerated religion, as they had done. At first, regarded as just another sect of detestable Jews, they were reasonably safe from any interference, for Rome, although her twelve tables of law forbade foreign beliefs within her own borders, practised as expedient a toleration of the many religious beliefs and customs which worshiped side by side in the famed city. But after the reign of Hadrian and the savage massacre by the false Messiah, Barcochba, they were viewed in the light of a new and very detestable cult and became a forbidden religion in a city that tolerated practically all others.

## **Testified on Racks of Torture**

A Jewish school established at Tiberius used its pen to send abroad misrepresentations of the Christian faith and helped on the general persecution of the Church. Terribly misunderstood, this best and holiest of all religions, teaching respect for and obedience to those in authority and sending up its very prayers in their behalf, aroused the bitterest of animosity. Christian slaves and apostates had testified on racks of torture and at execution that horrid crimes were committed in their secret gatherings. Even some of the fairer-minded provincial officers, such as Pliny, considered this a sure way of finding out 'the truth, and it can be seen how the necessary customs of the Christians might seem to lend support to such falsehood: forced to meet in lonely places under the cover of darkness and in excavations under Rome, using secret signs and passwords in the fear of being molested, this "illegal" religion was easily open to the suspicion of jealousy and hatred.

Fellow Romans were already incensed at the Christian refusal to take part in any public amusements or even to be present at the joyous celebrations in Pagan homes, and they were quite willing to believe that their austere and superior bearing was, after all, but a cloak to hide grosser,

darker deeds. The very language of the Lord's Supper, misconstrued by Pagan ears, seemed to give support to the dreadful calumny that human blood was drunk and human flesh consumed in their darkened gatherings. But under all the ignorance and prejudice of the people lay that hatred, evil must ever feel beside the beauty of holiness, and at each public calamity the cry would arise, "the Christians, the Christians to the lions"; thus would they appease their gods, and the most benevolent, the most inoffensive of Rome's citizens were torn to shreds to the shouts of the exultation of the populace; power had they to kill the body, but of these the Master had said, "Fear not." (Matt. 10:28.) They could not crush the dauntless spirit of the martyrs who met the furious hate of their persecutors undismayed, and who by their dying agonies handed the lighted torch of the Gospel down to the next and the succeeding generations, an unquenchable flame brighter and more compelling by the very witness of their devotion" I know thy works and tribulation and poverty (but thou art rich) . . . Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer . . . be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." -- So speaks the voice of one like unto the Son of Man from the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

### **"Through Ignorance Ye did It, as did also Your Rulers"**

The Emperors themselves had little chance to know the truth about the religion of the Christian and his daily life. They depended upon under-officials for all such information, and this was in general colored with the untruths of the time. Pliny, governor of Bithynia, had declared in his letter to Emperor Trajan concerning them that they were blameless as to their lives, and when they met before dawn, it was not, as had been said, to steal, to rob, to be immoral, but to sing hymns. However, with Christianity spreading everywhere as it was, he feared the temples would soon be deserted. How was he to treat this forbidden religion, he queried. Was any difference to be made between the young and the old, the weak and the strong? If they forswore their Christianity, should he be lenient? He has hitherto ordered all to execution, letting only some who had been accused anonymously go if they offered incense to the image of the Emperor and anathema to Christ. Trajan replied to this letter approvingly, and during this reign Ignatius was thrown to the lions.

### **The Apologists**

During this time of persecution and controversy there were those writers of letters in defense of the Christian faith known as the Apologists, the Greek word apologia, meaning a work written for resistance. The Greek Apologists were mostly defensive in spirit and showed a deep knowledge of Greek philosophy, while the Latin writers were aggressive in tone and through their defense ran the thought of universal conquest and world-without-end dominion. Brilliant examples of these letters were Tertullian's Apologeticus, written about 200 A. D., and Cyprian's Apology written in the middle of the third century. These attacked Pagan idolatry and vowed that Christians were loyal to their Emperors, that they obeyed all laws that did not conflict with their religion, and that Christianity had produced no thieves, assassins, or traitors. The fruit of a pure doctrine, they pointed out, must needs be that of a pure life. "We live," declared Tertullian, "a life 'free from reproach among you. You can see us every day."

The letters of the Apologists were, according to the custom of those times, addressed to an individual -- in these instances to the Emperor. Although the rulers probably never saw them, yet they served the intended purpose of informing all who had ears to hear of the reasonableness, beauty, and truth of the Christian teaching and the corresponding purity and excellence of the

lives of its followers; and they served the added purpose of stimulating a more earnest searching of the Scriptures by Christians in all walks of life, as the verbal controversy raged through those first three centuries, and indeed was not entirely over until the fifth.

For nearly a hundred years after the persecution under Trajan the trouble was only sporadic, though it never entirely ceased. Justyn Martyr died in Rome A. D. 168, and in the persecutions at Lyons and Vienne the bishop Pothinus, the lad Ponticus, the slave girl Blandina and others met death. After this there was rest for the Christians from A. D. 211-235, when it broke out again under Maximin and, after another pause, under Decius and Valeran; then came the Edict of Toleration lasting 40 years, broken by the furious persecution under Diocletian and 'his colleagues. Galerius issued an edict of toleration A. D. 311, and two years later the victorious Constantine put forth his decree which was but a forerunner of Christianity being made the religion of the State (in A. D. 323) when the civil observance of Sunday was ordered, the Pagan temples of the East were confiscated for churches, slaves were emancipated, and the clergy exempted from all military and official duties.

The Church now entered an epoch far more dangerous to her spiritual welfare than the period of persecution had been. Constantine still claimed the right to direct religion as he had in Paganism—he was still the Pontifex Maximus. Christianity had not conquered the Roman Empire, the Roman Empire had conquered Christianity! And thus was brought in the great evils of the following twelve centuries, namely, the moral corruption of the clergy, the growth of superstition, and the ignorance of the masses; the buying of office followed, and the angry disputes about various theological questions were rampant.

Three sons of Constantine continued their father's policy, and then Julian, nephew of Constantine, came to the throne. Raised as a Christian, he secretly favored Paganism, with a mixture of philosophy, and took many measures to weaken the recognized religion of the State. He believed that Christianity was to die out and that he had been placed as an instrument for the purpose. He was the author of a treatise in the defense of Paganism, now a lost document. He supported Pagan temples at public expense; he punished Christians for the slightest offense and overlooked any violence of Pagan against Christian; he encouraged strife and schism in the Church, and prohibited the Christian schools, making the classics the prevailing textbooks. But "Julian the Apostate," as he is known, reigned but twenty months, and the Christians, although the tradition was without foundation, believed his dying words to have been, "Thou, O Galilean, hast conquered." The passing of Julian marked the end of the last hostile ruler to the Church; surely and steadily now as we turn the revealing pages of history we shall witness the sad and astounding usurpation of authority by a powerful, visible Church; the persecuted becomes the persecutor; the oppressed, in the arrogance of all her worldly power, the *oppressor*.

- *Contributed.*

*Next of this series*

THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS

## **Meditations in 2 Timothy 1:1-12**

### **In Four Parts\* - Part 4**

IN addition to conquering death, and thereby shedding such light on our hope of life, the Apostle observes that our Lord also brought incorruptibility to light. "Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light." - 2 Timothy 1:10.

### **Immortality and Incorruptibility Distinguished**

In our Authorized Version the translators have given the word "immortality, but, as may be seen from the Diaglott, the correct translation is "incorruptibility." The meaning of the word is "incapable of decay." It is the same word used by St. Peter (1 Pet. 1:4), when speaking of the apparel becoming to sisters in the ecclesia, he recommends an adornment which he says is in the sight of God of great price-the adornment of a meek and quiet spirit. Such apparel, says he, is incorruptible ruptible (not immortal, but incorruptible). St. Paul uses the same word again in that celebrated passage, Rom. 2:7, frequently misunderstood to relate to the special hope of the Church, the hope of immortality, but which we have heretofore shown\*\* is a broad general statement having application to every member of Adam's race, Jew or Gentile. "To those who by patient -continuance in well doing seek for glory, honor, and incorruptibility, He will reward eternal life." When the Apostle wishes to refer to a life principle which is "incapable of death" he uses another word, a word found in only three places in the New Testament.

Here the thought of the Apostle seems to be that whether in the case of the Church enjoying immortality on the divine plane of being or in the case of the world enjoying life on the human plane, in either case they will 'be privileged to enjoy incorruptibility; they will have characters incapable of decay; their moral worth will be of such excellent quality as to be incapable of corruption.

### **"Tell It Out, Tell It Out"**

This light which Christ Jesus cast on life and incorruptibility was through the proclamation of the Gospel. If the good news were never told, we should not know it, and no matter how great the light which Christ Jesus might shed, it would not shine on us. We should remain in darkness. In another place, Rom. 10:14, 15, the Apostle asks the pointed question concerning the Gentiles "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach (we are paraphrasing now)how shall they preach effectively, except they be illuminated with the Holy Spirit, and be divinely commissioned, and sent?"

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\* In the preparation of these meditations we have not hesitated to consult available helps, and we desire to acknowledge special indebtedness to H. C. G. Moule from whose devotional commentary we have drawn liberally.

\*\* We venture to refer to "Half Hour Meditations on Romans," No. 20, published in the "Herald" for Oct. 1, 1931, and especially to the word study which appeared in the June 1, 1932 "Herald!" under the caption ' Athanasia and Aphtharsia Distinguished." More recently the subject has been helpfully treated in "Old Paths" - No. 56, July, 1936 issue of that publication.

So, in the passage in Timothy before us-after telling us that Christ Jesus abolished, death, he goes on to show that Christ brought life and incorruptibility to light **through the Gospel**, the Gospel, he continues, 2 Timothy 1:11, "whereunto I am appointed a preacher" (or, more literally, a herald), "and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles; for the which cause I also suffer these things nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." - 2 Timothy 1:12.

The Apostle has been encouraging his beloved "son" Timothy. He has called on him to live out his commission to labor and to suffer for the Lord. He has pointed him back to the eternal purpose of God and then onward to the life and incorruptibility brought to light by Christ Jesus **in** the Gospel. Now, for a moment, his thought returns upon himself, and Timothy is to have the privilege of "listening in" as it were, while the Apostle muses, meditates, on his own commission, and on his own firm reliance on the One who had commissioned him.

### **"Tell Me the Old, Old Story"**

The Gospel which brings out into the light, life and incorruptibility, is the very message to, which he was appointed, on that well-remembered day, so long ago, yet so indelibly written in his mind and heart, when the Lord met him in the Damascus way. Yes, in these last scenes of apparent hopeless defeat he is as sure as ever of that fact; he knows himself to be the King's own messenger, herald, apostle, teacher. True, the enemy has him in his grasp, but he has only to think upon his Lord, to feel all misgiving and despondency vanish. Nay, his very sufferings are an occasion for a triumphant reliance, for they are due altogether to the Gospel, to the proclamation of which he had been called, and to which he had devoted his life. And why is it that the Apostle need not -be ashamed of the Gospel? Because, he tells us (Rom. 1:16), it is the power of God unto salvation. To the Apostle's clear vision it is the mighty arm of God rescuing the world from ruin, and bringing in salvation. He sees mankind, as it were, at the bottom of an abyss, the Gospel as the power from above which raises out of it. No one need blush at being the instrument of such a force. Though, therefore, the Gospel might appear to many to be anything but fitted to the end in view, unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness (1 Cor. 1:23), still he could not be ashamed of it, for he knew it to be as a matter of fact not only powerful in itself, but also the instrument which had been selected, and which was being owned and blessed by the omnipotent God.

History down to the present day has shown the power of God's Word to be like a fire and like a hammer. that breaketh the rock in pieces. (Jer. 23:29.) Hearts of adamant have melted under its influence and the end is not yet by any means. For in that day, a day now near at hand, we believe, the sweet message of the everlasting Gospel (Rev. 14:6), will continue to prove its efficacy by displacing hearts of stone with hearts of flesh. (Ezek. 11:19.) Ultimately the whole earth shall be filled with His glory, and it shall be abundantly demonstrated that that which the world deems foolish in God is wiser than men's wisdom, and that ,which it deems feeble in God is mightier than men's might. - 1 Cor. 1:25, Weymouth.

## **"I know Whom I Have Believed"**

This Paul certainly did. Many of those with whom Paul had been closely associated had known Jesus according to the flesh. One of them, James, was the Lord's brother. But this knowledge is not that to which Paul here refers. He knew Jesus spiritually. Long before this he had consecrated everything that he might know Him and enjoy His wonderful companionship through life. His desire had been achieved. He knew Him-deeply and dearly indeed, as His Lord, his Life, his Way, his End. He knew Him as the perfect and absolutely satisfying Object of his worship and love. He knew Him as the Bearer of his sins, and the Conqueror of his death. He was filled all through with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. And so, what else could he do? He had trusted Him. He "had given himself over to Him, to be saved, ruled, kept, and guided; and he knew that his act of trust had been met by the all-faithful Lord. And since it was so, all was well.

St. Paul elaborates no fine-drawn theory as to his salvation. It lies in just this: He is able to guard my deposit -- that which I have committed unto Him, against that day, that unnamed day, when he will at length see his Guardian face to face.

## **The Secret of the Gospel's Power**

Such was the influence of Christ on the heart and life of Paul. But then he had lived amongst men who had personally known our Lord in the days of His flesh; some of whom had actually been related to Him. He had had a miraculous meeting with the resurrected Christ on the road to Damascus. We have had no such experiences. How may we today, nearly two thousand years later, secure for ourselves the same sweet influence of Christ in our lives as we move about in this modern world, and engage in its perplexing duties? The answer is, that Christ not only lived and died nearly two thousand years ago, but He was also raised from the dead, a spirit being, and the purpose of the Gospel, and in this lies the secret of its power, is not only to recount the story of the Savior's earthly life and death, wondrous though it be, but, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to put men in personal, touch with the risen Christ, to confront men everywhere, with their living Lord.

Yes, even the Gospel, glorious and powerful though it is, whether proclaimed by word of mouth or by the printed page, is but a means to an end. As we, sometimes sing:

"Break Thou the Bread of Life, Dear Lord, to me,  
As Thou didst break the loaves Beside the sea.  
Beyond the sacred page We seek Thee, Lord,  
Our spirit pants for Thee, Thou Living Word."

And again

"We would see Jesus-for the shadows lengthen  
Across this little landscape of our life;  
We would see, Jesus! our weak faith to strengthen  
For the last weariness, the final strife.

"We would see Jesus -- the great Rock Foundation  
Whereon our feet were set with sovereign grace;  
Not life, nor death, with all their agitation,  
Can thence remove us, if we see His face."

Reader, the One in whom Paul trusted was in every way worthy of his confidence, and- infinitely willing to be relied upon., Nor has- He changed. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He will take charge of your life, dear reader, if you will but let Him; -- He will take charge of the writer's. Not less certainly than He did the Apostle, He will bring off more than conqueror-both- reader and writer, if we will but repose implicit confidence in Him. May this happy experience and condition be ours for His Name's sake. Amen.

## **The Institute's Annual Meeting**

As announced in our March and April issues, the next annual meeting is due to be held on Saturday, June 5, 1937, at 2 p. m., in the offices of the Institute, 177 Prospect Place, Brooklyn, N. Y.

The annual meeting is primarily for the election of directors to serve for the following fiscal year, but also for the consideration of such other matters as may properly come before the friends at that time. While only members may participate, all-friends of the truth and lovers of our Lord Jesus are welcome to attend the meeting. In order that any unable to attend may, vote, proxy forms are being mailed to the last known address of members. Those voting by this means should fill in the proxy form and, after seeing that it is duly signed and witnessed, mail it to the Secretary of the Institute, 177 Prospect Place, Brooklyn, N. Y.

No additional names having been secured 'as a result of the notice in the April "Herald," the only nominees are the present directors.