

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## Things Coming to Pass

*"When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh, at hand "- Luke 21:31*

NOT THE least in importance among the "signs of the times," those evidences of the proximity of the long looked for Kingdom of God, is the tremendous increase in intellectual achievements of these latter days. How often has the prophecy of Daniel 12:4 been quoted by students of the Bible as far back as a century ago to substantiate the belief that the world-wide increase in knowledge and invention which so particularly distinguishes the age in which we live, are but the initial stages in the preparation of humanity for the yet more wonderful blessings ("the feast of fat things" Isa. 25:6) which will flow out to all under the beneficent reign of the King of kings during the Millennium. But to the present generation the very abundance of these blessings has rendered them commonplace, and the reverent Christian alone realizes their vast significance and true portent of "things to come." Few men realize the astonishing changes that have come to pass during the past century. We quote some paragraphs in point from Achorn's *European Civilization and Politics Since 1815*:

'For the ordinary man, the main facts of human toil and enjoyment did not change appreciably from the days of Cheops, the pyramid-builder, to those of Washington. Indeed since the days when Rome was at the height of her glory there has been in many ways a distinct retrogression; and since the Middle Ages, only a slight recovery. The food had changed little-it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the typical peasant lived by bread alone; the clothing less (except in style), for wool remained the staple cloth; and methods of production and distribution least of all. The technique of industry and of agriculture had remained almost stationary. The hand loom had existed for generations without any fundamental improvement. Most plows, a bough tipped with iron, were essentially the same as those used by the pastoral peoples who first began to till the soil. The same may be said of the harrow, hoe, rake, sickle, fork, spade, and flail, and of the principles of cultivation. The only sources of light were the candle and the open-flame whale oil lamp, without any chimney. The printing-press was the hand-operated device invented during the Renaissance. The only means of locomotion-animal power, the oar, and the sail-had been known to the ancestors of Homer; and news was disseminated by these selfsame slow, uncertain methods. Try to imagine the modern world without the railroad, the steamship, and the telegraph-to say nothing of the airplane, the telephone, and the radio! Then, a generation before the storm of 1789 disrupted the Old Regime, a burst of inventive attainment in England gave rise to a

revolution in culture beside which the transformations wrought by the political revolution in France pale into insignificance -- a revolution that ushered in a new world and, coupled with the nineteenth century developments in science, was to affect mankind more profoundly than any previously recorded in history. Not only was the economic and consequently the social structure remade, so that the private, every-day life of every individual was affected, but the repercussions on politics and thought were equally far-reaching."

## Unprecedented Increase in Knowledge

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, in fact, most of the outstanding inventions that characterize our present civilization were unknown and undreamt of by the vast majority of men. Since that time the pages of history have borne witness to an unprecedented and ever accelerating increase in human knowledge and inventions. Especially from the turn of the twentieth century and - more particularly since the World War, a span within the lives of men living today, there has' been witnessed an astonishing array of intellectual attainments. So vast, in fact, has been this advance in science and learning, and so ramified and specialized, that knowledge has grown faster than popular education, and no man, however learned and characterized by breadth of interest, can even fully appreciate, much less master, the achievements in all the different fields, while- the ordinary man has, no conception of the present state of knowledge. And this scientific specialization is rapidly developing a caste of intellectuals who alone are able to roam the fields of advanced knowledge, although popularized works are published that the average man may keep up better with the onward march of civilization. It is hopeless to even briefly enumerate some *of* the advances in the various fields of learning. Each has been tremendous. Medicine and surgery, chemistry, biology, psychology, geology, physiology, mathematics, physics, and astronomy have forged ahead by leaps and bounds which, while redounding t. the blessing of man, have far outstripped the ability of the majority to keep pace intellectually, though the average man today has more education than the scholar of the Middle Ages. We live in a day of electrons, X-rays, quanta, radioactivity, hormones, vitamins, chromosomes and genes, with innumerable other mysteries in the offing. The horizon seems unlimited both in the macrocosmic and the microscopic world. With his enormous telescopes man has discerned a vastness which makes him all but shrink into insignificance. The sun with a diameter of 110 times that of the earth, is found to be a comparatively minor star rushing through space with its attendant plants, one of 100 billion stars which compose our galaxy hose boundaries are the Milky Way, that wonderful belt if stars visible to the naked eye, and whose diameter is estimated to be more than 160,000 light years -- a light year being the number of miles light travels in a year, moving at the speed of 186,000 miles, per second. And beyond its borders astronomers have not only discovered the galaxies similar to our galactic system or sidereal universe, but have located or isolated what seem to be actual clouds of galaxies. Observers have already begun to conceive not only of a galaxy of galaxies but of a galaxy of galaxies of galaxies, and there seems to be no logical reason for stopping at this point. Man stands amazed before the revelations of the vastness of the heavens and can well repeat with the Psalmist: "The heavens declare the glory of God."

## World by Wisdom Knows not God

At the opposite extreme from the magnitude revealed by she astrophysical measurements of sections of the cos cosmos, the new physics has set the minuteness and complex ty of the atom and its constituent electrons. This represents the core of the striking progress of electromechanics in the twentieth century. Physicists have sho n that the supposed basic and integral atom (the consituent of the molecule-the chemical subdivision of matter) is actually a highly composite and intricate physical system, almost as complex as the solar system itself. Far from being inert, matter is now known to be built up .f minute units of a smallness that staggers the human imagination and which revolve at tremendous speeds approaching the velocity of light, and which are manifest--d by the phenomena of electricity, X-rays, radioacti ity, etc.

It is remarkable that thus, in these closing scenes *of* the 6,000 years permission of evil, the learned of this world have come to an *impasse* in the study of the large and the small. Man's accomplishments have been great in many ways but he has failed to find in them the happiness sought for and has failed to find by his intellectual pursuits the Cause of all things. The world by

wisdom knows not God and will not seek for the wisdom that cometh from above. And though He has not left Himself without witness, "for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Deity; so that they are without excuse," yet man will not learn, and his very advance in human knowledge but mocks his attempt to find the happiness he longs for. Even now this is being realized. We quote from Barnes' *History of Western Civilization*:

"The twentieth century has witnessed a decisive alteration in our attitude towards the doctrine of progress. In the nineteenth century the theory of progress was very generally accepted by the great majority of advanced minds. The emotional optimism that produced the theories of progress characteristic of the late seventeenth century and the eighteenth was taken over by nineteenth century thinkers and given seeming vindication through the theory of evolution. The doctrine of progress appeared to be founded upon a basic law of nature. Only the more optimistic thinkers of the twentieth century have been able to subscribe unqualifiedly to any such dogmatic conception of inevitable progress. Vast and unprecedented progress can be demonstrated in science and technology. Of the vast material progress since 1850 there can be no doubt whatsoever. But this material advance does not mean human progress unless man shows himself capable of controlling material gains in the interest of social well-being. The World War taught us a shocking lesson in this respect. Stupendous advances in science and technology were then used to expedite a type of group insanity and mass slaughter that came dangerously near being the suicide of Western civilization. A decade later the deep and prolonged economic depression demonstrated that unparalleled capacity to produce goods does not necessarily mean general prosperity or mass welfare. Democratic government and majority rule also seem recently not to be able to produce political rulers competent to cope with the ever-increasing complexity of human' problems. It is quite possible, therefore, that these very scientific and technological advances which seem to some the best proof of progress may prove the major cause of the downfall of civilization as a whole."

That mankind will be unable to utilize present blessings to establish a just order is known to all Bible students who look for the new heavens and earth promised wherein dwelleth righteousness. Despite his increased intelligence in these days, man will be unable to cope with the rising tide of discontent, and will learn the lesson that material possessions without inward transformation cannot satisfy. Man must first be led up the "highway of holiness" to mental, moral, and physical perfection under the tutelage of the Millennial Kingdom rulers, Christ and the Church, ' and then, when perfected and dwelling in a perfect earth, intellectual pursuits will be one of the blessings enjoyed by those who will have "the right to eternal life.

## **"WORD 'JEHOVAH' DROPPED FOR 'LORD'**

The following from the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, of January 1, 1939, indicating the intention to eliminate the word "Jehovah" in future editions of the American Standard Bible, and confirmatory of the article, "One Lord and His Name One," in our January issue, we believe will be read with interest:

"The word 'Lord' will be substituted for 'Jehovah' in - future editions of the American Standard Bible wherever the Hebrew name for the deity appears, Dean Luther 'A. Weigle of the Yale', Divinity School announced tonight.

"Dr. Weigle, chairman of a committee of eight scholars and Bible experts who have been working on a revision, of the Bible, said the change was being made because Jehovah is not a functioning religious term.'

"'People don't use it; they don't think of praying to Jehovah,' said the Yale dean. 'Furthermore, Jehovah is an artificial construction, the Revision Committee decided. Jehovah is made up of the four letters JHVH, which was the Hebrew name for God, and using the vowels that was the Hebrew for Lord.'

"Dr. Weigle said that in deciding to substitute the word 'Lord' the Revision Committee was returning to ancient tradition. That word was used in Bibles for, three centuries, he said, and it was not until 1901 that the American Standard Bible first used 'Jehovah.'" -- Contributed

## History, Organization, and Doctrine of Associated Bible Students

*[At the request of the Census Bureau of the U. S. Dept. of Commerce for the "history, doctrine, organization and work" of Associated Bible Students, an article, taken largely from Brother Russell's writings, was prepared. Believing it will be of interest to our readers we are publishing it below.]*

### History

THE history of Associated Bible Students Classes begins in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, during the period 1870 to 1875, when a little company of truth seekers began to discover in their study of the Divine Word more of the lengths and breadths, the heights and depths, of the love of God; that God's oath bound covenant to Abraham that in his seed *all* the families of the earth shall be blessed must surely be fulfilled, although millions have gone into their graves without receiving that blessing. They observed the Apostle Paul's teaching (Gal. 3:8, 16, 27, 29) that primarily that Seed of blessing is Christ, but that those also who have been baptized into Christ in the spirit and become truly Christ's have become heirs of that promise, that they might become associated with Christ as kings and priests in ruling and blessing all the families of the earth (2 Tim. 2:12); and they saw further that in order to receive that blessing *all must come forth* from their graves and be brought to a clear knowledge of the truth and to a full opportunity to gain everlasting life. (John 5:28, 29, R. V.; 1 Tim. 2:3, 6.) This they saw to be the restitution work foretold in Acts 3:21. Although seeing that the Church was called to joint-heirship with the Lord in the Millennial Kingdom, prior to that time they had failed to see clearly the great distinction between the reward of the Church *now* on trial, and the reward of the faithful of the world after *their* trial at the close of the Millennial Age -- that the reward of the former is to be the glory- of the spiritual, divine nature, while that of the latter is to the glory of restitution -- restoration to the perfection of human nature once enjoyed in Eden by their progenitor Adam. The years which followed were years of continued growth in grace and knowledge respecting the various features of the divine plan of salvation.

Charles Taze Russell, a young business man of Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, became the outstanding leader in this movement, as some of the other early leaders began to deny, the doctrine that the death of Christ was the ransom price for Adam and all his race, a doctrine which Mr. Russell always maintained as the only sure, rock foundation for Christian faith. His first published pamphlet was "The Object and Manner of Our Lord's Return" (50,000 copies), written to show that the object of our Lord's return is not to destroy, but to bless, all the families of the earth, and that His coming would be thief-like, not in the flesh but as a spirit being, invisible to man (John 14:19), and that the gathering of His Church and the separation of the "wheat" from the "tares" would progress in the end of this Age without the world being aware of it. In 1876 Mr. Russell closed out his Philadelphia business and thereafter devoted his time and his small fortune to traveling, preaching, and writing. In July 1879, appeared the first issue of his magazine, "Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence," which he continued to publish, monthly until December 1891, semi-monthly thereafter, until his death. In 1881 he published "Food for Thinking Christians" and "Tabernacle Teachings" (1,400,000 copies). These were followed by six volumes originally issued under the title "Millennial Dawn," later renamed, as a series, "Studies in the Scriptures," as follows: Vol. I, "The Divine Plan of the Ages," 1886 (nearly 5 million copies issued, in 20 languages, during the author's lifetime); Vol. II, "The Time is at Hand," 1889 (more than one and a half million copies); Vol. III, "Thy Kingdom Come," 1890 (more than one and a half million copies); Vol. IV, "The Battle of Armageddon," 1897 (over 460,000 copies); Vol V, "The At-One-Ment between 'God and Man," 1899 (over 440,000 copies); Vol. VI, "The

New Creation," 1903 (over 420,000 copies); also the booklets "Tabernacle Shadows," (one million copies), and "What Say the Scriptures about Hell?" (three million copies), and numerous tracts. The movement grew until at the time of his death in October, 1916, he was pastor, of more than 1,200 congregations in various parts of the world. His writings were translated into more than 35 different languages, and his weekly sermons, handled by a newspaper syndicate, were published at one time in more than 2,000 newspapers, with a- combined circulation of 15 million copies. He organized and conducted a lecture bureau which employed many traveling lecturers on Bible subjects. This brief statement of the activities' of Pastor C. T. Russell is a necessary background to a proper tracing of the history of Associated Bible Students Classes of today.

Mr. Russell used, in his public work, the corporate name *International Bible Students Association*, which name was often applied to the Classes of Bible students. Earlier the name *Associated Bible Students* was also used by such Classes. After the death of Mr. Russell, the corporate organization continued for several years to use the name *International Bible Students Association*, while those Classes which have drawn away from the corporate organization have quite generally assumed the name *Associated Bible Students*, and in some instances, *Berean Bible Students*. The corporate organization has departed in many respects from the understanding of doctrines as presented in "Studies in the Scriptures," and has ceased to distribute Mr. Russell's writings, which has led to the loss of many of its former supporters, while Associated Bible Students Classes as a whole still adhere quite closely to the views presented in his writings.

### **Organization**

The organization of Associated Bible Students is congregational in character, that is, they adhere to that form of church government in which each congregation acts as independent, self-governing body, while maintaining fellowship with other like congregations. It was the infringement of this principle after Mr. Russell's death which first led to the withdrawal of support of the corporate organization by these congregations. Their ministers are termed elders, but assume no ecclesiastical titles. They maintain no membership rolls, but recognize as brethren in Christ all who profess converse on through faith in Christ's ransom sacrifice, and full consecration to God in response to His invitation as in Romans 12:1, 2, and who (give evidence thereof by their course in life.

### **Doctrine**

The Apostle Paul declares that "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17, R. V.) The Divine Word being sufficient to perfect the man of god, the true spirit of Associated Bible Students' teaching is not to build up another sect by adding tests outside the full and complete acceptance of the Word itself and conformance of the life to its teachings, that thus they may be one with all who are truly the Lord's. They have therefore formulated no creed to be accepted as a condition of fellowship, their position being that expressed in "Studies in the Scriptures," Vol. VI, page 241:

"The real need of the Church of Christ is *still more liberty* -- until each individual member shall stand free and independent of all human bonds, creeds, confessions, etc. With each individual Christian standing fast in the liberty wherewith he was made free by the Lord (Gal. 5:1; John 8:32), and each individual Christian united in loyalty to the Lord and to His Word, very quickly the original unity which the Scriptures inculcated would be discerned, and all true children of God, all members of the New Creation, would find themselves drawn to each other member similarly free, and bound each to the other by the cords of love far more strongly than are men

bound in earthly systems and societies. 'The love of Christ constraineth us' (holds us together -- Young's Concordance) - 2 Cor. 5:14."

One other passage from the pen of Mr. Russell on this:

". . . the wisdom that cometh from above. . . entreats and exhorts for unity only in the Lord and along the line of questions positively settled by the Lord in the Scriptures -- which generously leaves with each full liberty to act and to judge on all questions not positively settled by the Scriptures. We urge that all of the Lord's dear flock copy the wisdom of the Apostle in this matter." - *Watch Tower*.

Perhaps the best concise summary of what Associated Bible Students understand the Holy Scriptures to teach is that which from 1895 was published in every issue of the Watch Tower and is now printed in every issue of the two larger magazines published by Associated Bible Students, under the heading

### **To Us the Scriptures Clearly Teach**

"That the Church is 'the Temple of the Living God' -- peculiarly 'His workmanship'; that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel Age -- ever since Christ became the world's Redeemer and the Chief Corner Stone of His Temple, through which, when finished, God's blessing shall come 'to all people,' and they find access to Him. - 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; Eph. 2:20-22; Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:29.

"That meantime the chiseling, shaping, and polishing of consecrated believers in Christ's Atonement for sin, progresses; and when the last of these 'living stones,' 'Elect and precious,' shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the First Resurrection; and the Temple shall be filled with His glory, and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium. -- Rev. 15:5-8.

"That the Basis of Hope, for the Church and the World, lies in the fact that 'Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for *every man*,' 'a Ransom for all,' and will be 'the true Light which lighteth *every man that cometh into the world*,' 'in due time.' -- Heb. 2:9; John 1:9; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6.

"That the Hope of the Church is that she may be like her Lord, 'see Him as He is,' be 'partaker of the Divine nature,' and share His glory as His joint-heir. -- 1 John 3:2; John 17:24; Rom. 8:17; 2 Pet. 1:4.

"That the present mission of the Church is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God's witness to the world; and to prepare to be kings and priests in the next Age. -- Eph. 4:12; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:6; 20:6.

"That the hope for the World lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to *all* by Christ's Millennial Kingdom-the Restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and His glorified Church-when all the willfully wicked will be *destroyed*. -- Acts 3:19-23; Isa. 35."

Those desiring to obtain a more full understanding of the beliefs of Associated Bible Students are referred to the six volumes of "Studies in the Scriptures," and particularly to Vol. I, "The Divine Plan of the Ages," now published by Pastoral Bible Institute, 177 Prospect Place, Brooklyn, N. Y., and Dawn Publishers, Inc., 136 Fulton Street, Brooklyn, N. Y. Foreign connections are Bible Students' Committee, 24 Darwin Road, Welling,



## The Father of the Faithful

*"Walk before Me, and be thou perfect." - Gen. 17:1.*

BETWEEN the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of Genesis there is a long *period of* silence, during which Abram, as the true Christian today, doubtless knew daily communion with his God. After his seeking fruitfulness by the way of the flesh, he was for thirteen years blessed with none of the unusual manifestations that had on special occasions marked his life. Meanwhile the hoped for arrival of the true seed was deferred. This perhaps was meant in part as a chastisement upon Abram for having turned to his own devices in seeking a seed; and, in part in order that not only Sarai but he himself might be so stricken in years that when the true seed did *come*, it would be recognized by Abram and by all others as truly the gift of God. If Abram had erred, it was not in desiring a seed, but in seeking it in his own way. He was not without faith, but the thirteen years' wait indicated that God saw in him a possibility of greater faith.

It is as true today as in Abram's experience that the special -manifestations of God's providence in the Christian life are not the rule, but bright surprises. They come as spring follows the long wait of winter with the thrill of its awakening joys. The periods of silence often are mistakenly interpreted by the Christian as God's displeasure, forgetting that "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." Rather, in every unpleasant experience one should find reason to listen intently for the voice from heaven saying: "This is the way, walk ye in it." "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect."

Such an exhortation might not be understood in the early days of one's seeking after God, especially since the voice we listen for is not a literal one. Abram was ninety and nine when he heard it. Gradually, gently, tenderly, God had led him to that moment. Before the voice could be heard from heaven, Abram must be brought to the point where he could bow in humble worship and complete submissiveness in the presence of his God; the error of self-dependence must be discovered, and the faith that can say, "When I am weak, then am I strong," must be developed.

### **"Grow in Grace and in Knowledge"**

The voice that spoke from heaven proclaimed itself "the Almighty God"-almighty as an avenger, but also almighty as a benefactor -- all sufficient to fulfill all He saw fit to promise, and all-wise in planning. Realizing the One in whose presence we stand, could any mortal, perfect *or* imperfect, fail to fall upon his face truly ashamed of the best he might have to offer, truly grateful for the condescension of the One who has humbled Himself to "behold the things that are in heaven and that are in earth."

The two parts of the exhortation given by the heavenly voice, "walk before Me," and, "be thou perfect," cannot be separated. While the *only* possible means of attaining perfection is in walking before God, it is equally impossible that any should walk before Him except those *who* are either actually or reckonedly perfect. "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity." The Hebrew word that is in this passage translated "perfect" would more exactly be rendered "sincere" or "unmixed." How beautifully inspiration has reiterated thus a lesson that is ever needed by all the Lord's people-a lesson of separation from the things and ambitions of the earth, and *to* the things that are above. They *who* will "lay up treasure in heaven, must also remember to "lay not up treasure on earth," whether those treasures be of the usual order, or anything else that can be classed as "friendship with this world." While rejoicing beyond expression to have the privilege of standing in the righteousness of Christ's absolute purity, no

true child of God can be satisfied to stand still even in so glorious a state. His ambition must always be to walk before God, progressing both in the knowledge of God and in likeness to Him. Not one step of this progress can be made in the strength of self or of human leaders; nor can the ultimate goal be hoped for except in the strength of the One who announced Himself to Abram as "the Almighty God. Seven times this Almighty One in His discourse with Abram reiterates, "I will." With what assurance Abram must have gone forth to carry out the Almighty's command!

"Perfection' [as used in the New Testament -- a much stronger thought than that of the Old Testament "sincere" or "unmixed"] is often *supposed* to denote sinlessness of moral character, which at the best is only a negative conception, and fails to bring out the positive force of this mighty word. Surely perfection means more than sinlessness. And if this be admitted, and the further admission be made that it contains the thought of moral completeness, then it becomes yet more absurd for any mortal to assert it of himself. The very assertion shows the lack of any such thing, and reveals but slender knowledge of the spiritual life and of the nature of sin. **Absolute sinlessness** is surely impossible for *us so* long as we have not perfect knowledge; for as our light is growing constantly, so are we constantly discovering evil in this as which once we allowed without compunction: and if those who assert their sinlessness live but a few years longer, and continue to grow, they will be compelled to admit, if they are true to themselves, that there was evil in things which they now deem to be harmless. But whether they admit it or not, their shortcomings are not less sinful, in the sight of the holy God, although undetected by their own fallible judgment. And as to **moral completeness**, it is enough to compare the best man whom we ever knew with the perfect beauty of the Son of God, to feel how monstrous such an assumption is. Surely the language of the Apostle Paul better becomes our lips, as he cries, 'Not as though I had already attained, or we e already perfect; but I follow after.'

'What, then, is the true force and significance of his word in that stirring command which lies before us here, 'Walk before Me, and be thou perfect? A comparison of the various passages where it [the word "perfect"] occurs establishes its meaning beyond a doubt, and compels us to think into it the conception of 'whole-heartedness.' It denotes the entire surrender of the being; and may be fairly expressed in the well-known words of the sweet and gifted songstress of modern days:

"True-hearted, whole-hearted, faithful and loyal,  
King of our lives, *by Thy grace will we be.*'

"This quality of whole-hearted devotion has ever been dear to God. It was this that He considered in Job, and loved in David. It is in favor of This that His eyes run to and fro to show Himself strong. (2 Chron. 16:9.) It is for this that He pleads with Abraham; and it was because He met with it to so large an extent in his character and obedience that He entered into eternal covenant bond with him and his."

Jesus is giving a similar thought in His suggestion (Matt. 6:22), "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" -- if thy spiritual vision be devoted to but one purpose, your whole conduct of life cannot fail but be a "walking in the light." One cannot "serve two masters." The eye that is not fixed on Jesus will be vainly wandering in every place seeking satisfaction and finding disappointment in the "deceitful desires" of the flesh. Even the most playful of foxes, the most innocent seeming of earthly desires, can draw our gaze from His beloved face. The one who has not cultivated the habit of feeling Him near not only in prayer and worship but in work and in rest, has much to learn both of the joys and the necessities of the Christian life. But should his wait be as long as Abram's before he learns that the way of the flesh is not best, the lesson will be well worth the suffering and the experiences passed through. It is impossible that the fleshly mind

can ever understand the wisdom of resigning human plans that God's purposes may be accomplished; but while self is active, God must wait.

Abram had now been invited to walk before God not because the way had become easy or because Abram had become strong, but because his weakness had been demonstrated and a faith developed that was ready to lay hold upon God's provision of grace. He who had laid the foundation of the earth, He who had sprinkled the stars through illimitable space -- if Abram would only walk before Him, seeking perfection in His presence--stood ready to reveal to him "the exceeding greatness of His power." How these words thrill the hearts of those who know the greater hope of the greater Age! The God who had said to Abram, "I will be thy shield, and thy **exceeding** great reward," has inspired "**exceeding** great and precious promises, that by these we might be made partakers [not merely of perfection, but] of the divine nature." These "exceeding great [literally, greatest] and precious promises" are for those who with the Psalmist have said, "My soul, wait thou **only** upon God; for ma expectation is from Him. He **only** is my rock and my salvation: He is my defense; I shall not be moved." - Psa. 62:5, 6.

### **Only the Circumcised Partake of the Promise**

Abram (the name means "high father") had at Haran received the promise, "I will make of thee a great nation"; and at Bethel the greatness began to be revealed in the promise, "Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth"; and again at Mamre still higher were his hopes raised by the assurance, "Tell the stars: so shall thy seed be." Now, assurance is made doubly sure as he is given the rite of circumcision and his name is changed to Abraham, "the father of a multitude." The faith that has through the years been tested by that name, "high father," is at last to 'be rewarded, butt is also to be further tested by being asked to believe a still greater promise: "The father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee." In this covenant both Abraham and his seed have a part; form order that they might be in covenant relationship with their God and might maintain that relationship, circumcision was enjoined; and of circumcision it is said, "It shall be a token of the covenant betwixt Me and you." The warning is also given that "the uncircumcised man child . . . shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken Ma covenant." Only those who maintain this rite are to be counted in with Israel and only thus can they be partakers of the promise here reiterated. Not until the new creature hopes were introduced was there any possibility of acceptance with the Lord except circumcision of the flesh be practiced.

Today it is by circumcision of the heart, a filling with "the Holy Spirit of promise, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption," that our still more precious privilege is maintained. Now "neither circumcision avaieth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature in Christ Jesus." Thus the seed as the stars of heaven is being developed. "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." Paul reasons: that the natural seed rests under the curse (Gal. 3:10), since none is able to keep the perfect law nevertheless, "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

## **True Circumcision Maintained only by "Walking Before God"**

The circumcision of the flesh is, according to Romans 4:11, "a seal of the righteousness of faith." "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness," and circumcision was the seal which God set upon him in token of that righteousness. For the present-day believer the seal is circumcision of the heart. All in Christ Jesus are symbolically sealed, as we read (Col. 2:10-13): "And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power; in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses." Even fleshly Israel must have this true circumcision of the heart in order to be Israelites indeed. Manifestly, true circumcision of the heart can be maintained only by a careful walk in the presence of God. "We must seek to realize constantly the presence of God, becoming instantly aware when the fleeciest cloud draws its veil for a moment over His face, and asking whether the cause may, not lie in some scarcely noticed sin. We must cultivate the habit of feeling Him near, as the Friend from whom we would never be separated, in work, in prayer, in recreation, in repose. We must guard against the restlessness and impetuosity, the excessive eagerness and impatience, which drown the accents of His still, small voice. We must abjure all expedients He does not inspire, all actions He does not promote. We must often turn from the friend, the poem, the landscape, or the task, to look up into His face with a smile of loving recognition. We must constantly have the watches which we carry next to our hearts synchronized by His eternal movements. All this must be. And yet we shall not live forced or unnatural lives. None so blithe or light-hearted as we. All the circles of our daily life will move on in unbroken order and beauty; just as each shining moon circles around its planet, because the planet obeys the law of gravitation to the sun. Would you walk before God? Then let there be nothing in heart or life which you would not open to the inspection of His holy and pitiful eye."

In striving for a life of such high devotion, all they who look to self for victory must tremble. Only in the realization that the One with whom we deal is indeed the "Almighty God," can there be the walk of assurance. With Him who sitteth upon the circle of the earth and to whom its inhabitants are mere grasshoppers; who can count the starry hosts by number, calling them all by name; who by the greatness of His might holdeth them in place -- with Him we have an Advocate to whom has been given "all power in heaven and in earth." He who is on our part is the One who of old laid the foundations of the earth, the work of whose hands are the very heavens. He who fainteth not nor can grow weary, ever liveth to make intercession for us.

## **Cutting off from Self-originated Effort Rewarded by Divine Almightyness**

During many years Abram, the "high father," had the trust that in Ishmael his seed should be called, counting on the workings of the flesh to fulfill the heavenly promise; but the flesh must be cut off, and all its ambitions. "And if any will dare venture forth on the path of separation, cutting themselves aloof from all creature aid, and from all self-originated effort; content to walk alone with God, with no help from any but Him -such will find that all the resources' of the Divine Almightyness will be placed at their disposal, and that the resources of Omnipotence must be exhausted ere their cause can fail for want of help. O children of God, why do we run to and fro for the help of man, when the power of God is within reach of the perfect heart? But this condition of circumcision, a complete cutting off, must be fulfilled ere that mighty power can be put in operation on our behalf." Then, and then only, may we be "strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power."

Ishmael could not be the heir, perhaps both because he was born a slave -- and "the slave abideth not in the house for ever"-and because he was not the direct gift of God, but the result of Abram's turning to earthly counsel. "And, God said, Sarah thy wife [barren and now long beyond the age of hope] shall bear thee [a hopeless old man of ninety-nine years] a son **indeed.**" Not the flesh, but faith was to bring forth "a son indeed," the ancestor not of wild Bedouin tribes, but of Israelites indeed. Our abortive efforts, even though they be "great and mighty works" done in His Name, will not bring the reward of His smile. There must be works, but works of faith; and with what difficulty the deceitful heart is kept from substituting the works of the flesh and claiming full allegiance to Jehovah and to our heavenly Bridegroom in their performance.

It is the name of Jehovah that is our assurance -- the name composed in Hebrew of all five of the vowels, "i e o u a," and a, twice repeated aspirate, "h." These vowels are the self-existing ones of language, and with what confidence we who have known the benefits of the first outbreathing of His Spirit, as represented perhaps in the first of the aspirates, can look forward with confidence to the second-the pouring out of His spirit upon all flesh. Not less than this can be hoped for by those whose faith like Abram's is in the Self-existing One. It was by the addition of an "h" to Abram's name that he became Abraham, the father of a multitude. Thus again it seems God was ratifying to him His promise. Similarly, to Sarai's name an "h" was added. Thus she whose name had formerly meant "my princess -- a princess of the **one** man -- now through a slight change in her name had become "a princess" -- the princess of the multitudes promised to Abraham, for through her should come the Messiah, the Prince, even the Prince of the kings of the earth. Thus perhaps God would add another to the many reminders that not the agent but His Spirit operating through the agent will bring in the promised blessings.

### **"Lest Ye Fall by the Same Example"**

Fruitful faith will always bring forth a new character, the never-failing result of His Spirit within. Like the disciples before Pentecost, in the days before the indwelling of the Spirit, we knew Him, but only as a fleshly being. Henceforth our knowledge is no more so limited, if like Peter on the mount, but with spiritual vision, we have seen the Lord transfigured in the glory of His Kingdom. Only theoretically can we know anything of that Kingdom until the vision has become a reality in our hearts. And even after standing with Peter and John on the Mount of Transfiguration and beholding with them the glory of the Living Word, and after witnessing all the testifying of the Law and the Prophets concerning Him, there can be a turning back to the ways of the flesh, a denial of our Lord.

Of "Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel" we read that "they saw the God of Israel; and there was tinder His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the very heaven for clearness;" and that to the whole nation of Israel "the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount." (Exod. 24:9, 10, 17.) And yet within a few days the disgraceful scene around their golden calf was enacted. The nation that God had delivered from Pharaoh was in the clutches of Satan. They had fallen under the mild test of being asked to "wait on the Lord" only a matter of forty days.

To this end, all must be tested. For each there must be the test of His death and His resurrection, a test as to whether these have become or shall become realities in ourselves -- death with Him and resurrection with Him. If not willing to follow Him to the cross, we cannot hope to live and reign with Him. All this can be made immutably ours, but only through the power of His Spirit strengthening, guiding, and transforming us. The flesh that was covenanted to death, as represented in the rite of circumcision, must remain in death. If He who was put to death in the flesh and made alive in the spirit, is to be the Captain of our salvation, the Author and the

Finisher of, our faith, our weak and faltering footsteps must not be impeded by acknowledging and acquiescing in any of the claims of the flesh.

### **"Mortify the Deeds of the Body"**

Spiritual circumcision, like its type, is an actual thing—an enduring mark within us, becoming the seal of the Spirit when divine providence has pressed it down to permanency. Essential to it is the giving up of all fleshly confidence, "counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ," considering all that the flesh can accomplish as but mere refuse, desiring above all things the fellowship of Christ's suffering that there may be the supreme manifestation of His power in our lives, that we may faithfully walk in the spirit, even "as He walked. To the one who lacks faith such a circumcision would threaten the loss of all that the flesh treasures. Faith triumphant rejoices to be "circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh." By the spirit we mortify the deeds of the body, suffering with Him the loss of all things, "bearing about in our body the marks of the Lord Jesus," in order that we may enter into the joys of the Lord in His due time, anticipating them in a measure even now.

However perfectly self-mortification may be done, it is not righteousness; but may be an evidence of the genuineness of our proclaimed desire for righteousness. Some have spoken of it as the seal of righteousness, similar to the Apostle Paul's designation of the natural circumcision as a "seal of the righteousness of the faith which Abraham had, yet being uncircumcised." One is not circumcised to receive the promise, but because he has accepted the promise. God had said to Abraham, "I will multiply"; and adds, "therefore thou shalt circumcise." Obedience to God's expressed will for us -- the cutting off of all earthly hopes -- comes as a result of and is an evidence of the acceptance of His promise. The one who is not obedient has evidently not accepted God's assurance of grace, however firmly he may be convinced in his own mind that he has conformed himself to the covenant. "Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are His" (1 Cor. 6:20); and again in Colossians 3:3, 5, we read, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God; mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth." It is not, however, perfection of the flesh that is being discussed, but a desire for it, which should be in every heart. However, the thing attainable, and required at this time, is mortification.

All newly-born creatures according to the Law were counted as unclean (in their blood) for seven days; therefore none could be accepted of God until the eighth day. God called for the rite of circumcision to be performed on the eighth day, and not later, thus indicating not only His encouraging of self-mortification but also His desire for promptness in coming to Him for self-denial and cross-bearing.

It is the same man of faith who promptly obeys the command that he and all his household shall be circumcised who greets the reiterated promise of a seed with laughter. Abraham's laughter might be interpreted either as a doubting of Jehovah's promise, or as one of rejoicing that at last the hope of years was to be fulfilled. Since the Apostle assures us that his faith wavered not (Rom. 4:19-21), the latter interpretation would seem to be the more reasonable. Would that our greater hope might result in at least an equal joy for each one who seeks to attain a place among the children of the faithful. There can be no doubt that Abraham's joy and faith must be a true picture of the character finally developed in each of those who "as Isaac was, are the children of promise," and who make this election sure.



Abraham's laughter soon gives place to prayer; and every worthy son, desiring good to all, will find as his a longing similar in spirit to Abraham's: "O that Ishmael might live before Thee." All, while earnestly endeavoring to prepare themselves for the great privilege of ministering the covenant that will tell the good tidings to all who are willing to hear in the Age to come, will demonstrate their eagerness for that privilege by not allowing to pass unused the smallest opportunity of witnessing to the love and mercy of our God. Their care will not be so much as to whom they minister, as that they may be found doing "with their might what their hands find to do," "doing good unto all men as they have opportunity, especially unto the household of faith."

## **Lest Ye be Partakers of Her Sins**

"Rome, while a deceiver in most matters, has been very open and frank in this claim [to be the sole interpreter of the Scriptures]. No one of the Lord's people need be deceived by her in this. It should be kept in mind, however, that it is quite possible for one to judge and condemn the followers of Rome in this particular, and yet partake, unconsciously perhaps, of the very evils he is condemning, and to which he is in bondage. She is called, 'the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth,' and it is said that by her 'sorceries were all nations deceived,' and that she caused all that dwelt upon the earth to 'worship him [the Papal beast], whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb.' It is possible for the Lord's people to be deceived for a time and to receive and adopt some of Rome's unscriptural principles and practices and to follow them, and yet reject the full fruitage and development of them, as exhibited in the highest degree in Rome; indeed, the features of Romanism in this particular are very often found in the guise of Protestantism. 'There is heard sometimes the voice of the woman who calls herself a prophetess, whether her name be Jezebel or not.' In modified forms these teachings, these claims of Rome, may be endorsed unconsciously by the Lord's people. Wherever the teaching of a church, of a religious organization, or of men (except it be the twelve Apostles) is in any measure maintained-as authoritative (although it be over a body of Christians who claim to have no creed but the Bible, and to be guided by it), even here the voice of the woman is heard, even though the woman's name be certainly not Jezebel.

"The infallible Word, the Scriptures, and these alone, are to constitute the test that must settle every matter for the 'free indeed' Christian. Any 'imposed creed actually takes away any appeal to Scripture, becoming itself the only permissible appeal. If there be error in the creed, it will have to be maintained as carefully as the truth in it. If there be defect in the creed, the Scriptures cannot be allowed even to supplement it. It [the Scriptures] is, in short, completely displaced from its rightful supremacy over men. The conscience is not allowed to be before God, and the most godly are just those who will be forced most into opposition against the human rule, thus substituted for the Divine.' . . .

"If we look back over history, from the great Reformation onward, we will discover that every revival of a study of God's Word, every earnest effort to evangelizing, every effort put forth to draw and unite true Christians in the bonds of 'brotherly love,' has, when persevered in, had the effect of breaking down the barriers of sectarianism and of liberating the people of God; but, alas, history and experience show that the imitation class, the tare element, is always found wherever there are true wheat, and out of such bold moves for Christian liberty and freedom, there almost invariably develops a new sect, which becomes dominated, by the same partisan spirit of bondage, resulting again in the taking away of personal liberties in Christ. These movements have originated generally outside of denominationalism. The most important movement of this kind since the great Reformation, has occurred in this present, the Laodicean period, but, like all the other movements of the past, it has ended in 'sectarianism; and, having accomplished its purpose, the usual testings and siftings have come. These tests are designed of the Lord, at least in one particular, to make manifest those who possess the Philadelphian spirit of brotherly love and loyalty to Christ and His Word." - *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, Vol. I.*

# **The History of the Church**

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**No. 11**

**John Wesley**

BECAUSE HE had turned from ritualism as a means of salvation to the simple, primitive, Pauline doctrine of faith, John Wesley, "spoken against under the new name of Methodism" (to use his own words), found church doors closed against him. Turning to the greensward of the open field he received there the insults and stones of rough mobs secretly instigated at times by the clergymen, sometimes by the town officials, whose very duty should have been to preserve order. For the privileged classes of England were shocked at this new religion, which in a moment's time could place even the town drunkard on a spiritual par with the most respected church-goes, and the ignorant, roughly clad miner on the level, it might be, of even the archbishop. If any of the members of the Established Church did surreptitiously glance back to the Apostle Paul and see there the old, old doctrine of faith in the blood of Christ alone, it was still too democratic, too much of a class-leveler to smack well on the theological lips: of staid, smugly satisfied and class-conscious religionists.

## **My Times are in Thy Hand**

"Clods and stones flew about me on every side," Wesley remarks in his journal, "but they neither touched nor disturbed me." The simple faith he placed in God's watch-care over the most minute affairs of his life rendered him utterly fearless in all danger. His personal health and safety seemed to concern him only that on them depended his service to others. Could he not then trust the One whose loving eye numbered even the hairs of his head, or more amazing still, marked the feathery fall of the tiny sparrow? So- when the sun shone too hotly on his head, threatening by the faintness stealing over him to cut his sermon short, he lifted up his heart to God and the clouds drifted over the face of it and remained. "Let any one who please call this chance," says Wesley, "I call it an answer to prayer." On another occasion, "The rain began almost as soon as I began to speak. I prayed that if God saw best, it might be stayed till I had delivered His Word. It was so, and then began again."

While Wesley believed that God could and did heal instantly at times in answer to prayer, he looked upon the observation of reasonable rules of health and the use of simple remedies as secondary means to bring to pass God's will. In a book of primitive remedies which he compiled and published, he wrote, "The love of God as it is the sovereign remedy for all miseries, so, in particular, it effectually prevents all bodily disorders the passions introduce, by keeping the passions themselves within due bounds. And by the unspeakable joy and perfect calm it gives the mind it becomes the most powerful of all means of health and long life."

If a physician were needed, he advised one who feared God, and along with the remedies one must exercise faith. His own life, spanning as it did nearly the eighteenth century, seems to verify his wisdom in this, for in history it is hard to find a parallel of such physical activity -- his writing alone would constitute a life work for the average man. A week's enforced rest because of a sprained ankle was spent "in prayer, reading, and conversation," also in writing a "Hebrew Grammar" and "Lessons for Children." On the following Sunday and twice during the week he preached at the Foundry, kneeling because he could not stand, "my heart being enlarged, and my mouth opened to declare the wonders of God's love" as he tells us in his daily journal. Every



moment of time seemed to be redeemed and used to the glory of Him he served. "What reason have I to praise God," he exclaims after a hindering illness, "that He does not take the word of his truth utterly out of my mouth!"

"How is this," he writes on his seventy-second birthday, "that I find just the same strength as I did thirty years ago? That my sight is considerably better now, and my nerves firmer, than they were then? That I have none of the infirmities of old age, and have lost several I had in my youth? The grand cause is the good pleasure of God, who doeth whatsoever pleaseth Him. The chief means are, first, my constantly arising at four, for about fifty years; second, my generally preaching at five in the morning-one of the most healthful exercises in the world; third, my never traveling less, by sea or land, than 4,500 miles in a year."

### **Let not Your Heart be Troubled or Afraid**

In the pages of his journal lies not alone the consecrated life work of the Reformer, but his loving heart, his holy thoughts as well. We follow him on through wind and rain and hail and deep drifts of snow in which at times he is forced to dismount and lead his horse on through. He must at any cost keep every appointment with the waiting souls ahead.. Not through any fear for health, or love of ease, on his part must they be hindered in their hearing of the blessed Word of God. Speaking of the rain on one such occasion, he writes: "It drove through our coats, great and small, boots and everything, and yet froze as it fell, even upon our eyebrows; so that we had scarce either strength or motion left-when we came to our inn at Stilton. Threatened on every hand with physical violence even to being drowned in the river, by violent mobs, he walked daily through the valley of death's shadow, fearing no evil. At one time an ox was driven in amongst his outdoor congregation; at another, wild-fire was thrown into the room, but he preached on, and his audience remained in spite of the smoke. During one of the worst disturbances raised against him he walked into the very thickest of the rabble and kindly took the hand of its captain. "He immediately said," Wesley relates, "'Sir, I will see you safe home. Sir, no man shall touch you. Gentlemen, stand off; give back, I will knock the first man down that touches him' . . . We then parted (at Mr. Hide's door) in much love." Again, when a mob filled the street in front of the house where he was staying, forcing its way in till the lower rooms were filled, Wesley, in spite of the fears of those with him for his safety, went down amongst them, asked for a chair, and from so weak a rostrum spoke to the angry gathering. "My heart was filled with love, my eyes with tears, and my mouth with arguments. They were amazed, they were ashamed, they were melted down, they devoured every word. What a turn was this. O how did God change the counsel of the old Ahitophel into foolishness; and bring all drunkards swearers, Sabbath-breakers, and mere sinners in the place to hear of his plenteous redemption." In a few hours, he declared the scene as changed, "We could walk now through every street of the town, and none molested or opened his mouth, unless to thank and bless us."

Though he, relied upon God for all necessary protection there were times when he came out of such encounters not unscathed, ". . . a little before ten, God brought me safe to Wednesbury; having lost only a flap of my waistcoat, and a little skin from one of my hands." Farther on we read, "By how gentle degrees does God prepare us for his will! Two years ago a piece of brick grazed my shoulders. It was a year after that that the stone struck me between the eyes. Last month I received one blow, and this evening two; one before we came into the town, and one after we were gone out; but both were as nothing: for though one man struck me on the breast with all his might, and the other on the mouth with such a force that the blood gushed out immediately, I felt no pain from either of the blows, than if they had touched me with a straw." He felt the power of Christ resting on his life and, like Paul, it made him satisfied, for Christ's sake, with weakness, insults, trouble, persecution, and calamity.

He spoke of the people in Wales as being, "the most insensible, ill-behaved people I have ever seen . . . one ancient man cursed and swore almost incessantly and tried to throw a great stone, but was not allowed to do so." The ignorant and vicious colliers of Kingswood he declared "but one remove from the beasts that perish." Then the great evangelist, George Whitefield, Wesley's friend and contemporary, went there -- he of the Demosthenes -- like eloquence, whose voice Benjamin Franklin once measured in its carrying power and found that, standing on the edge of a crowd estimated by the area covered as about 30,000, he could yet' hear distinctly. No more did the town resound with cursing and blasphemy, nor was it filled with drunkenness,- uncleanness, bitterness, and wrath. "Peace and love are there," writes Wesley. Whitefield was, in the words of a biographer, "all thunder emotion. and tears." Wesley may have lacked much of the dramatic tones, the impressive gestures of Whitefield, but his voice, distinct and clear, carried to the outer fringes of the crowd and held his audience by its very power of conviction. "I never scream," he once said in a letter. "I never strain myself. I dare not."

### **Speaking the Truth in Love**

"My preaching," says Paul, "was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power." Such might be said of -John Wesley. His was the first voice to reach the lower classes since the days of the Franciscan friars, and "plain people needing but plain truth," he purposely set aside John Wesley the scholar, and became only the Christian; avoiding all philosophical speculations, all the labyrinths of intricate reasoning, all the non-essential theological disputations, he bared his own heart to the multitude and in doing so opened the flood-gates of other hearts.

"The effect of salvation upon John Wesley," it has been said, "set him on fire to preach the Gospel to all mankind," As we read in Jeremiah: "His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, . . . and I could not stay." Extracts from his own journal give unquestionable testimony that this was so. "I had had for some time a great desire to go and publish the love of God . if it were but for one day, in the Isles of Scilly," he writes, and go he did on the day set, in a fisher boat, fifteen leagues upon the main ocean, where the waves were rolling dangerously high. "The waves an awful distance keep, They cannot harm for God is there. This and other hymns Wesley and his companions sang comfortingly. The pilot thought it would be but good luck if they ever reached the land, "but he knew not of Him whom the wind and seas obey, Wesley later inscribed happily in his diary. Placey, ten miles north of Newcastle, was inhabited only by colliers, cruel, ignorant and wicked. "I felt great compassion for these poor creatures from the time I heard of them first, and the more because all men seemed to despair of them."

### **Tolerance**

One of the outstanding characteristics of the leader of Methodism as we examine his mind and heart through the medium of his own pen was his gentle tolerance of the personal views of his fellow Christians. "I will not quarrel with you about your opinion, only see that your heart is right towards God, that you know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, that you love your neighbor, and walk as your Master walked, and I desire no more. I am sick of opinions; am weary to bear them; my soul loathes this frothy food. Give me solid and substantial religion; give me a humble, gentle lover of God and man; a man full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy; a man laying himself out in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labor of love. Let my soul, be with these Christians wheresoever they are, and whatsoever opinion they are of."

As he was riding through a village called Sticklepath he was stopped by one who asked, "Is not thy name John Wesley?" Two or three more then came up and they asked him to pause there. "Before we had spoken many words, our souls took acquaintance with each other. I find they were called Quakers: but that hurt me not; seeing the love of God was in their hearts."

"I've no more right to object to a man for holding a different opinion from mine than I have to differ with a man because he wears a wig and I wear my own hair; but if he takes his wig off and shakes the powder in my eyes I shall consider it my duty- to get quit of him as soon as possible.

### **Methodism as It Was**

The weavers and miners of England hungered for a religion that would govern their daily lives and hallow every thought. Wesley offered them such a religion-a religion that made them one in Christ. When criticized for drawing them away from the fellowship of the Church, he answered, "Look east, west, north or south." Name what parish you please, is Christian fellowship there? . . . . What Christian connection is there between them? What watching over each other's souls? What a mere jest is it, then, to talk of destroying what never was." Now the humblest one of them was watched over and advised. He was lonely no longer. There was sympathy and love and fellowship with the members of his society, his class leader, and his pastor. Where before rough colliers had gathered evenings in the ale-houses in ribald song they now assembled in the schoolhouse and sang hymns and prayed. There- were watch nights and love-feasts and breaking of bread. The societies were subdivided into small groups or classes of twelve each for Scripture study. Those able to do so brought a contribution of a "penny a week" to the stewards, and from this the poor were fed when the need was great, as they had been in the days of Paul. These Methodist societies were the only religious bodies requiring no confession of belief. This opinion or that interpretation was not insisted upon. Each individual was permitted to think for himself but he must in turn extend the same courtesy to others. Wesley, however, expelled members for loose living; Christians under his firm but loving rule might not swear or beat their wives or seek company with the drunken. "True," says Wesley, "we are saved by faith. But those who are 'justified' must inevitably show their state of mind in their acts. Acts issue from an inner state. To suppose that a man can be all holiness within and do nothing to show it is nonsense the inner state becomes inevitably visible in 'works.'

Wesley had made song a great influence in his work, for he was deeply moved by holy thoughts set to music. He criticized and published the hymns written by his brother, Charles, which numbered some 6,500; some of minor importance. As a prolific writer of sacred songs his nearest equal was Dr. Watt, who fell quite behind. Some of the less important of Charles' hymns were merely rhymed tracts, many of them against Calvinism, which had fairly split the Methodists into two wings. Whitefield was a Calvinist and an ardent debater of the doctrine, but John Wesley refrained from argument,' much as he was opposed to the teaching. To do so he knew would cause only dissension among Christians and help not at all. His refusal to argue only incensed the Calvinists more, but the Reformer went gently on his way, calling not the righteous but sinners to repentance.

The mining districts of England are still strongly Methodist, and on the walls of many humble homes may still be seen the picture of a burning house with a small boy at an upper window. The transcendent doctrine of justification by faith, adding nothing of their own, struck deep into the souls of the roughly ignorant masses, "rough enough in outward appearance," declared John Wesley, "but their hearts were as melting wax. So eagerly did they come, these counterparts of

the common people who heard Jesus gladly, that Wesley was awakened one morning by a company of tanners who, fearing they might be late, had gathered early outside his house, "and were singing and praising God."

### **"God Buries His Workman, but Carries on His Work**

At Epworth at the age of eighty-one Wesley writes, "Today I entered on my eighty-second year, and found myself just as strong to labor, and as fit for any exercise of body and mind as I was forty years ago. I do not impute this to second causes, but to the Sovereign Lord of all."

At eighty-three and at eighty-five years we still find Wesley never tired either with writing, preaching, or traveling. "Such is the goodness of God." All his faculties remained, his hearing, smell, taste were not impaired. But on his eighty-sixth year he had suddenly grown old, strength, memory, senses had decayed. He speaks of it as a sudden change. "For above eighty-six years I found none of the infirmities of old age; my eyes did not wax dim, neither was my natural strength abated but last August I felt almost a sudden change. My eyes were so dim that no glasses would help me. My strength likewise quite forsook me and probably will not return in this world. But I feel no pain from head to foot; only it seems nature is exhausted; and, humanly speaking, will sink more and more, till, 'the weary springs of life stand still at last.'"

A week before he died he preached to a congregation of miners on the text, "One thing is needful." And then death came-came in the way he had hoped it would come, expressing as he had a wish early in life that his end as well as his days might be to God's glory. He was conscious to the last, as he spoke words of comfort and encouragement to weeping friends around his bed. He uttered words of trust and asked for prayers and hymns from time to time. Many years before he had stood at Susannah's bedside and watched his saintly mother die -- "Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God."

The marriage of John Wesley at the late age of forty-eight was a grave disappointment and source of much sorrow. His wife soon tired of the rough roads. She and her daughter did not take kindly to setting forth in violent storms from one of his appointments to another. "I took horse with my wife and daughter. The tiles were rattling from the houses on both sides; but they hurt us not." On a page of his journal we find this opinion: "I cannot understand how a Methodist preacher can answer it to God, to preach one sermon less, in a married state than in a single state. In this respect surely, 'it remaineth, that they *who* have wives be as though they had none.'" At his death there were three hundred itinerant ministers and local preachers, humble and unlettered, but often with much ability, on whom the Anglican clergy looked down. At first these lay preachers, though lodged and fed by members, were ragged because of no pay. Then they received fifteen dollars a quarter for books and clothes. Pelted by mobs and thrown into ponds, they wore high collars to protect their throats from stones, and carried in a bag their books and clothes. In addition to this they carried a spade in winter to dig themselves out, of the snow. Four years after Wesley's death the Methodists, numbering over one hundred thousand, took the step he had never wished to take, and became a separate church. He had always looked upon his classes as being supplementary to, or a holy movement within, the English Church. At no time had he thought to *secede*.

- *Contributed.*

*Next and final article*

"BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM"

## Distinguishing Marks

"What are the distinguishing marks of a ripe character?"

"One mark is *beauty*. Ripe fruit has its own perfect beauty. As the fruit ripens, the sun tints it with surpassing loveliness, and the color deepens until the beauty of the fruit is equal to the color of the blossom, and in some respects superior. There is in *ripe* Christians the beauty of realized sanctification, which the Word of God knows by the name of *the beauty of holiness*.

"Another mark of ripe fruit is *tenderness*. The young green fruit is hard and stone-like. The mature Christian is noted for tenderness of spirit.

"Another mark is *sweetness*. The unripe fruit is sour. As we grow in grace, we grow in love-sympathy and brotherly love. We shall, as we ripen in grace, have greater sweetness towards our fellow Christians. Bitter spirited Christians may know a great deal, but they are immature. Those who are quick to censure may be very acute in judgment, but they are as yet very immature in heart. We who are young beginners in grace think ourselves qualified to reform the whole Christian Church. We drag before us, and condemn straight away; but when our virtues become more mature, we trust we shall not be more tolerant of evil, but we shall be more tolerable of infirmity, more helpful for the people of God, and certainly less arrogant in our criticisms.

"Another and very sure mark of ripeness is the *loose hold of earth*. Ripe fruit easily parts from the stem. Let us then be careful that we do not hold too much to the things of the earth, and then we shall have all the less to draw and hold us when we are ready to hear the Master's '*Well done.*'

## Encouraging Messages

Dear Brethren:

Please renew my subscription to the "Herald" for the year 1939.

You may enclose just, the one copy, as the brethren I have been giving the extra copy to have gone to England. May God's blessing be upon the "Herald," and its comforting articles from time to time. I always read it three times to digest the spiritual food, and enjoy it more each time I read it.

Yours in His service.

H. R. -- Ont.

Dear Brethren:

Enclosed please send another year's subscription to the "Herald," with heart-felt appreciation of its monthly visits. How I love its deeply spiritual talks-a rare privilege in these days of testing. Events are coming to pass so strangely true that the Christian would stand aghast did he not know the Scriptures and the power of God. We cannot but be deeply concerned re the terribly persecuted Jews in Europe. Did we not know our God, we would be overwhelmed with fear and consternation in regard to them. He is so great, so holy, and yet perfect master of the situation. What rest this gives us! Dear brethren,, we are helpless He is all-powerful. How weak we feel; how strong and mighty is He. I cannot with ink and pen express the rest of humble, dependent trust in Him, "who worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will," and yet with deepest gratitude to Him, I testify to this sweet rest, knowing He is ruling all things, directing the hearts of the great ones of the earth to fulfill His will, even the wrath of man, and the rest will He restrain. Praise His name!

Earnest Christian love to all,

S. E. O. -- Tex.

Dear Friends:

Your letter inquiring about my subscription to the "Herald" having not been renewed, has been received, and much appreciated.

I am happy to say that nothing-the "Herald" has ever published have I found -out of harmony with the Truth. I -have loved it very much since my first sample copy many years ago, and still today I am glad of its loving teachings and admonitions which in the past have blessed me very much. I have not sent in my subscription for several months because of lack of funds, but I have hoped to renew it every month.

I certainly appreciate your remembrance of me as one of the subscribers, and I shall always feel loyal to it and the dear Pilgrims that you have sent to us in the years gone by. I can never tell you how very much I have appreciated the strength and help the "Herald" has been to me since I first began to read it and have been enabled to see- the spirit of the dear Master in its teachings.

I am going to try to send in my subscription price, before very long..

Christian love and God bless you,

Mrs. E. A. M. -- Okla.

Dear Friends:

Thank you so much for the "Herald" of January 1, 1938.

It is wonderful to read the "Lessons from the Flowers of the Field." Have not been so impressed and touched since the first time I read Brother Russell's books:... I am an invalid and have-not been to a meeting for **six** years.

God bless you all,

A. E. -- Ill.

## New Year Chicago Convention

Dear Brethren: Christian greetings!

We have made some brief notes from memory concerning the New Year Chicago Convention, as follows:

The convention covered three days, beginning Saturday at two o'clock, and including a watch-night service at the local Y. M. C. A., where refreshments were served. This service was particularly appreciated, giving an opportunity of ending the old year and starting the new year in fellowship with the Lord's people, and singing praises to His name, making melody in our hearts and with our lips, as well as offering an opportunity for testimony to the Lord's goodness and grace.

Permeating the entire convention was the manifest spirit of the Lord, of love for the brethren, in fellowship and service.

Directly above the speaker's stand a large motto was hung, approximately 4 feet by 12 feet with the words: *"The Lord hath done great things for us, we are glad."* Smaller mottoes were distributed on the walls around the hall, which added much to the atmosphere of a convention of the Lord's people. The hall itself was conducive to the uplifting effect of the convention, being large, airy, quiet, light, and comfortable, seating about 550.

The talks were all very encouraging and uplifting. Some were in the form of spiritual exhortations in righteousness, encouraging the friends to greater diligence to make their calling and election sure, to keep their hearts right before the Lord; while others were more profound, dealing with the doctrines of the covenants, sin-offering, etc.

The serving of temporal food by the Chicago brethren, once on Sunday and once on Monday, we are sure was much appreciated by all, and the Chicago friends were glad for this opportunity of service and did it as unto the Lord. Four hundred and forty-five were served at the Sunday meal.

The blessings of the convention will long remain a happy memory and we thank the Lord for every occasion of fellowship and communion with those of like precious faith.

Yours by His grace,  
I. C. F. -- Sec. Chicago Class.