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The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

"Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." - Acts 2:24.

WHAT a glorious theme is this! "The Lord is risen indeed!" The electric thrill which galvanized the sorrow-numbed spirit of those early disciples even yet does reach to us. What a marvelous truth!

"Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes;
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives for ever with His saints to reign;
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!"

And well may we rejoice, for is not this truth the basis of all our hopes? What saith the Scriptures? "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." "For if we believe that Jesus died and arose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." "If the spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His spirit that dwelleth in you." "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Ye are yet in your sins. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." - Rom. 10:9; 1 Thess. 4:14; 1 Pet. 1:3, 4; Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:14, 17, 20.

OLD TESTAMENT SHADOWS

As we meditate upon this wonderful subject we find many aspects which merit and will richly repay our closer study. We might consider first the Old Testament prophecies and like the wondering Emmaus travelers of long ago listen as the Stranger "beginning at Moses, and all the Prophets, expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." He began as we can hardly doubt, with the first promise: the seed of the woman, who should bruise the serpent's head. And then there were the types: the brazen serpent, the paschal lamb and the many sacrificial offerings. So also the typical persons: Joseph, who, from the lowest humiliation of the pit and the dungeon, passed to the right hand of the throne; David, who suffered so much and so long from the persecutions of Saul -- these, with many more. And when the august Interpreter reached the Prophets, the fifty third chapter of Isaiah was the central prophecy which He expounded. Around this would be grouped the great prophetic Psalms, then Daniel, and further the Book of the Prophet Jonah; while Zechariah would prove rich in prophetic glimpses. How clearly would He explain the real significance of the sheaf of the first-fruits of the harvest being offered that very day by the priest in the temple. (Lev. 23:10, 11.) These disciples had assumed that Jesus of Nazareth could not be the Christ *because* he had suffered these things; the Lord shows them from all Scriptures that He could not be the Christ *unless* He had suffered these things. Well may our own hearts "burn within us" as we refresh our memories concerning the things "written aforetime for our learning" -- "The sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

THE RESURRECTION DAY EVENTS

There are blessings for us also in the consideration of the historical facts of the resurrection-in the events of that great day and the following thirty-nine to the Ascension. The various manifestations which the Savior made of Himself to His disciples, as recorded by the Evangelists and Paul, may be arranged and enumerated as follows:

1. To the women returning from the sepulchre. (Matthew)
2. To Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre. (John and Mark)
3. To Peter, perhaps early in the afternoon. (Luke and Paul)
4. To the two disciples going to Emmaus, toward evening. (Luke and Mark)
5. To the Apostles (except Thomas) assembled at evening. (Mark, Luke, John, and Paul)

These five appearances all took place at or near Jerusalem, upon the first day of the week, the same day on which the Lord arose.

6. To the Apostles, Thomas being present, eight days afterward at Jerusalem. (John)
7. To seven of the Apostles on the shore of the Lake of Tiberias. (John)
8. To the eleven Apostles and to five hundred other brethren, on a mountain in Galilee. (Matthew and Paul)
9. To James, probably at Jerusalem. (Paul)
10. To the eleven at Jerusalem, immediately before the ascension. (Luke in Acts, and Paul) Then followed the ascension.

Who can describe the joy of those early disciples as the amazing truth dawned on their sorrow-stricken hearts? All the previous wretched day, they had sat with increasingly heavy hearts in the upper room, doors locked for fear of the Jews. Stunned by the shocking death of their beloved Master, they must have heard without, with great agony of mind, the singing and laughter of the multitudes who thronged the streets rejoicing in the great Feast day. How little perhaps did they recall the words of Jesus of but a few hours before: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful." As yet there was no meaning for them in the Master's additional words, "but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." (John 16:20.) Filled as they had been with other quite different expectations, the shock of such a shameful death, coming in such a way upon their Master, was so sudden and stunning, that the power even of remembering what He had said about Himself beforehand was for the season paralyzed. It was night in the disciples' hearts. Their love was crucified, their glory dishonored, their hope destroyed, their life was waste and desolate. They wept and lamented. Scattered without hope, united again without hope, one thing alone occupied their thoughts and sight and words, and that was His grave.

SPIRITUAL LESSONS

It is impossible to realize the emotions of the little band of Apostles and disciples when the Lord stood in their midst once more, after He had arisen. They saw before them Him whom they had revered as the Messiah while clothed in human weakness, now raised to an unimaginable glory which at once confirmed and rendered sublime their former faith. They saw Him victorious over the grave, and clothed with the attributes of the eternal world. From despair they passed at once to triumphant confidence; from incapacity to believe that the Messiah could have suffered as He had done, to the most fervent and exulting faith in Him as the Messiah, on account of these very sufferings. In a moment, the whole sweep of the truth respecting Him, hitherto only half realized, had become a radiant fact, even to their senses. The hesitating and imperfect belief in His heavenly dignity and power to fulfill all He had promised, here and hereafter, which had slowly rooted itself in their hearts while He still lived, had seemed, after all, from the recent catastrophe, a fond and beautiful delusion. But now He had appeared among them, triumphant even over death, and instead of utter despondency their hearts were flooded with the purest and holiest joy.

There are lessons to be learned also from the various incidents recorded. By -one tender word Mary is changed from the depths of grief to transports of joy. Cannot

the Master do the same even today? **He** bids His angel direct a special message (Mark 16:7) to Peter with his double burden of grief. Is He unmindful then of our sorrows? In **His** treatment of Thomas, see how the Lord keeps in view over every word! Thomas had said: "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails" -- Christ answers: "Behold My' hands!" Thomas had said: "Except I put my finger into the print of the nails" -- Christ answers: "Reach hither thy finger!" Thomas had said: "Except I thrust my hand into His side" -- Christ answers: "Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side!" Thomas had said: "I will not believe" -- Christ answers: "Be not faithless, but believing!" Not merely believe, but *be believing*. To be believing is with **true** Christians their proper *condition of life*; they live not upon single glances of faith, but faith in Jesus Christ is the abiding motive sentiment of their whole life. Longsuffering was shown to Thomas in order that in him the Master might manifest all kindness and gentleness, for a pattern to all weak and simple, souls.

One thinks of the sublime way in which Christ by a thrice-repeated question restores again the humbled Peter. "Lovest thou Me more than these (thy brethren, My other disciples, do)?" -- a

gentle yet distinct enough reminder of that former saying: "Though all men should be offended, I never will"; a delicate yet searching probe, pressed kindly but firmly home in the depths of Peter's heart; a skilful method of testing and exhibiting the truth of Peter's repentance, without the painful humiliation of having the terrible denials of his Master dwelt upon, either by Jesus in the way of charge, or by himself in the way of confession. The prayers, the warnings, the look of love, the angel's message, the private interview, and now this conversation by the lake-side—these all told Peter of the thoughtfulness, the care, the kindness, the pitying sympathy, the forgiving love, of which he had been the object. Thus had he been treated by Jesus; let him go and deal with others as Christ had dealt with him. We may well ponder the lessons hid for us in Peter's experience, for we all like him have said, "Lord, we will die for Thee." Praise God for the same understanding Jesus today.

We may reflect also on the three ways by which the Master, clothed each time in a different form, was recognized. To Mary, *a word* was sufficient; to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, an *act* brought recognition; while to the seven at the Sea of Galilee, it required a **miracle**. May we not discern in these three distinctive ways a lesson in spiritual discernment? Is it not true that in an early stage of discipleship it is the wonder-working power of Christ by which we know Him as Lord? Further progress in the "way familiarizes us with His acts, His supervision of our daily life through which we come to recognize His abiding presence. But we long for that closeness of relationship which discerns His loving presence by the faintest of signs, the merest of whispers. That "principle within, of jealous, godly fear"; that conscience "quick as the apple of an eye"; the soul so "well instructed" that "the least omission pains." Yea, we would recognize Him always *by one word*.

"DEATH CANNOT KEEP HIS PREY"

The Apostle Peter reveals still another truth directly connected with the physical fact of the resurrection. In our text he declares that God raised up His Son because it was not possible that He should be holden of death. Various views are held as to the reason for this impossibility, several of which will be briefly considered that the correct view may be more obvious by contrast.

Those who hold the Incarnation theory teach that our Lord's human body, which was born of Mary, was merely a clothing, a covering for the spiritual body. Consequently our Lord during His earthly life was still a spirit being, exactly as before, but used the flesh born of Mary as a veil or medium of communication with mankind. The theory assumes that our Lord's weariness was not real, but feigned, and that His death was merely an appearance of death. They argue that Jesus being God, was from everlasting to everlasting, and could not die; that the apparent agony and cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and the dying was merely to make an impression upon the minds of those who heard and saw.

This theory being violently opposed to the Truth on the subject as presented in the Word of God, we must reject it instantly and look for another reason for the Apostle Peter's statement.

There are those who hold that the great pity and love of God were constrained to exercise divine power in the resurrection because of the dreadful sufferings of Jesus in the flesh. And who shall deny the bitterness of the cup He drank? A mere reading of the account at this distant date sickens our hearts. What then must have been the feelings of the heavenly host as they beheld that spectacle of perfect submission? -- watching as wretched men bound His hands fast to a low pillar and bared His breast and back; watching as the soldiers approached and with whips plaited with thongs, -iron-tipped, strike, heaping lash upon lash, upon that quivering submissive body;

watching as they went through the whole heartless ceremony of a mock -coronation, a mock investiture, a mock homage. Around the brows of Jesus, in wanton mimicry of the emperor's laurel, they twisted a green wreath of thorny leaves; in His tied and trembling hands they placed a reed for sceptre; from His torn and bleeding shoulders they stripped the robe which must now have been all soaked with blood and flung on Him an old scarlet war-cloak; watching as they bowed the knee and hailed Him as king until tiring of the mock homage they snatched the reed out of His hand, and smote with it the crown of thorns, and drove it down upon His pierced and bleeding brow, and spat upon Him, and smote Him with their hands; watching as they led Him to Calvary to the most terrible, the most dreaded and shameful punishment of antiquity-for the cruelty of heathenism had been called in by the corrupt and sunken priesthood. Death by crucifixion seems to include all that pain and death can have of horrible and ghastly dizziness, cramp, thirst, starvation, sleeplessness, mortification of untended wounds-all intensified just up to the point at which they can be endured at all, but all stopping just short of the point which would give to the sufferer the relief of unconsciousness. The cross used at Calvary consisted of a strong post, which was carried beforehand to the place of execution, and of two cross-pieces, borne to the spot by the victim, and afterward nailed to the upright so that they slanted forward, and let the sufferer lean on his stretched-out hands and thus relieve the pressure of His body downward. A stout, rough, wooden pin, in the middle of the upright post, supplied a seat of fitting agony, for the weight of the body would otherwise have torn it from the cross. The unnatural position made every movement painful; the lacerated veins and crushed tendons throbbed with incessant anguish; the wounds, inflamed by exposure, gradually gangrened; the arteries -- especially of the head and stomach -- became swollen and oppressed with surcharged blood; and while each variety of misery went on gradually increasing, there was added to them the intolerable pang of a burning and raging thirst.

But enough! -- we have drawn the picture -in all its naked horror. Does it answer our query? Was it because of His terrible sufferings that death could not hold its victim and released the Son of God? Righteous as it may seem for God to *reward* His .Son with a resurrection to life *because* of His terrible ordeal, yet we believe this is still not the explanation of Peter's words.

But yet another voice. Barnes in his notes in comment on the words, "It was not possible," says: "This does not refer to *any natural* impossibility, or to any inherent *efficacy* or power in the *body of Jesus* itself; but simply means ,that in the *circumstances of the case such an. event could not be.* [Italics, his.] Why it could not be, Peter proceeds at once to show. It could not be consistently with the promises of the Scriptures. Jesus was the Prince of life (Acts 3:15), and had life in Himself (John 1:4; 5:26), and had power to lay down His life, and to take it again (John 10:18); and it was indispensable that He should rise. He came, also, that through death He might destroy Him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil (Heb. 2:14); and as it was His purpose to gain this victory, He could not be defeated in it by being confined to the grave."

We cite these words as illustrative of the general mixture of truth and error held by many in the consideration of the resurrection of Jesus. For while we agree to the necessity for His rising again to accomplish all for which He died, we must disagree with the thought that it was because He already possessed life-inherent or immortality. Neither can we understand Jesus' words (John 10:18), as meaning that He could have any power whatever during the interim of death. They refer simply to our Lord's authority or commission to declare that though He would lay down His life, He would receive it again. Authority to so declare, He had received from the Father. No, we must look further for the true explanation for death's helplessness in our Master's case.

The answer lies solely and simply in the consideration of God's Justice. The same Justice which had operated for four thousand years against Adam and his race because of transgression was

now operative on behalf of Jesus for His deliverance from death, into which He had voluntarily gone as man's redemption price. The divine law promised life to whosoever would keep it. This Jesus had done perfectly, and irrespective of His sufferings or lack of them, Justice would have raised Him from the dead. The marvelous obedience of Jesus was; *rewarded* by His exaltation to divine honors, but His resurrection from the dead was based entirely on His perfect keeping of the Law. The slightest deviation from its strict requirements would have resulted in His everlasting death. Our Master realized this fully and in Gethsemane's dark travail battled "with strong crying" for that full assurance of His acceptableness with the Father; which assurance He received through the ministering angel.

Comforted and strengthened for the final ordeal He went forth to the crucial 'test of His faithfulness. How much hung in the balance! If during the terrible experiences He now underwent, one word of rest, resentment, or of anger *or* of self-will had asserted itself, all would have been lost. If *in* obedience to the cruel taunt, "If Thou be the Christ, come down from the cross," He had done so, the darkness that draped the heavens at that hour, would have been typical of that still deeper darkness that would have settled on our prospects forever. They may cry, "Come down," but the myriads of souls that would have been lost had He done so, rose before Him and cried, "No." A universe paused, silence reigned in heaven, no music was in the spheres, every harp was stilled, every voice hushed; but amid all the sympathy that was felt by all the holy, not one would have bidden Him to descend. Then, at that hour was the crisis of this world. Despair and hope were in the balance. Jesus cried, "It is finished," and henceforth hope was victor.

"Lifted up was He to die,
'It is finished,' was His cry.
Now in heaven exalted high,
Hallelujah! What a Savior!"

Obedient to the end, *in* the sight of God's Justice, He died with the right to life. He could not be holden of death, and so the mighty power of God restored Him again to the living; but in addition, He was highly exalted because of His obedience to His covenant by sacrifice. Now clothed with the divine nature, He still possesses that right to human life; that right which constitutes man's ransom price which eventually will be made efficacious to all the willing of mankind and result in the "restoration" of all things. For God "hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." - Acts 17:31.

"He *is* gone-toward their goal
World and Church must onward roll;
He is gone -- but we once more
Shall behold Him as before,
In the heaven of heavens the same
As on earth He went and came.
In the many mansions there
Place for us He will prepare:
In that world, unseen, unknown,
He and we will yet be one."

- *W. J. Siekman.*

Thine, not Mine

Thy work, not mine, O Christ,
Speaks gladness to my heart!
It tells me all is done
It bids all fear depart!
I rest in Thee, whose work alone
Doth gloriously for sin atone.
Thy wounds, not mine, O Christ,
Can heal the bruised soul!
Thy stripes, not mine, contain
The balm that makes me whole.
I rest in Thee, whose work alone
Doth gloriously for sin atone.
Thy death, not mine, O Christ,
Has paid the ransom due!
Ten thousand deaths like mine
Would all have been too few.
I rest in Thee, whose work alone
Doth gloriously for sin atone.

- *Horatius Bonar.*

All the Israel of God

An Examination of the Anglo-Israel Theory

THERE ARE those who would confine the term Israel to the ten tribes which revolted from Rehoboam, thus separating these ten from Judah and Benjamin, the two tribes who supported him. According to this theory the *ten tribes* have been "lost," but have in recent times been "found" in the English-speaking peoples of earth. National patriotism no doubt accounts for *much* of this effort to *give* the Anglo-Saxons a special place in divine favor. It is pointed out that the spread of British influence during the past century and a half being so remarkable, constitutes *a* proof that in this prosperity and in the spread of colonial possessions, Great Britain has indeed "run over the wall" according to prophecy. But it should be remembered that Spain "ran over the wall" three centuries ago, ruling much of North America, all of Central and South America, and many isles of the sea, while her language still dominates a territory almost or quite as extensive as that in which English is now the prevailing tongue. Did Spanish prosperity thus prove them to be Israel? If not, why should Anglo-Saxon prosperity be recognized as a foundation for such an assumption?

It must be admitted that the phrase, "ten lost tribes," cannot be found in the Bible. Neither is the term, "lost Israel," nor any analogous expression, found in the Scriptures. The expression, "lost sheep of the house of Israel," twice used by our Lord (Matt. 10:6; 15:24), has no reference to lost *tribes*, but to individuals *who* had wandered from the Lord and were lost in the wilderness of sin and darkness.

As all Bible students may know, there was a split in the twelve tribes for four hundred years--ten tribes separating from the king's tribe, Judah, on the ground of kingly oppression.

It was natural enough that at the time of the revolt of the ten tribes the name Israel should be held by the majority, while Rehoboam's kingdom was naturally known as Judah, the name of his tribe, which constituted the majority of his supporters -- the tribe of Benjamin being very insignificant in numbers. This distinction continued for several centuries--until the captivity in Babylon. The ten tribes were captured first, and their people scattered throughout Babylonia; the two tribes were captured later, and were similarly scattered in Babylon! From that time the pride and rivalry between the *two* divisions of Israel grew less and less. Common adversity made them feel their kinship again, and the name Israel became, as at first, the common name for "*the whole* house of Israel."

OLD TESTAMENT'S PROOF OF THIS FACT'

If in the Old Testament writings which recount the return from the Babylonian captivity we find the returning ones no longer recognizing themselves as two nations (Judah and Israel); but, on the contrary, find the whole people spoken of as one, and called "Israel," "the twelve tribes of Israel," etc., it is proof positive that the two sticks (representing the divided people - Ezek. 37:16, 20) had become reunited in Babylon before the return from that captivity. Indeed, the proclamation of King Cyrus releasing the captivity proves that at that time the petty jealousies between the two divisions had subsided, and that the two parts had again become one nation with the common name Israel; for the proclamation ignored Judah entirely, and was to *all the people* of the Lord God of *Israel*. And people of various tribes did return to Palestine, although the tribe of Judah appears to have been specially loyal to the city and land; probably because to that tribe belonged

the kingly promise, and because the "scepter" of influence, by divine intention, was to remain with that tribe until "Shiloh" should come. Besides, the ten tribes had gone into captivity more than one hundred years earlier, and their children had become more settled and rooted in the various parts of Media and Babylon than the tribe of Judah, a few of whose youth, who had seen the city of Jerusalem and the temple, lived long enough to return. However, it is evident that the vast majority of the various tribes, including Judah and Benjamin, although reverent toward God and His worship, did not return to reside in Palestine.

Even before the captivity a fellowship had sprung up between the people of the two divisions, so that when Josiah, king of Judah, instituted reforms, repaired the temple and made the great Passover celebration, the remnant of the ten tribes joined in the work of repairing, by contributing money, etc., and joined in the feast of Passover at Jerusalem. (See 2 Chron. 24:9, 10; 25:18.) And at a still earlier date the piously inclined of the ten tribes left their king and allied themselves with the tribe of Judah, and were known as "Jews." - 2 Chron. 15:9.

The record of the return from captivity is given by Ezra and Nehemiah; and if the breach were not already healed it would show itself in their accounts. But as Cyrus set free "*all the people* of the God of Israel," so the records show that Ezra and Nehemiah and the people regarded themselves as *Israel*. Let each one prove this for himself, by turning to and noting their use of the terms "children of Israel," "people of Israel," "tribes of Israel," "all Israel," and the offering of sacrifices for all Israel, according to the twelve tribes, in the following passages: - Ezra 2:2, 59, 70; 3:1, 11; 4:3; 6:16, 17, 7:7, 11, 13, 28; 8:25, 35; 10:5, 10. Nehemiah 1:6; 2:10; 7:7, 61, 73; 9:1, 2; 10:33, 39; 11:3, 20; 12:47; 13:3; 18.

NEW TESTAMENT PROOFS THAT ISRAEL EMBRACES ALL TRIBES

The term, "lost sheep of the house of Israel," twice used by our Lord (Matt. 10:6; 15:24), most positively contradicts the theory that the ten tribes were lost in the days of His first advent; and also contradicts the thought that the term "Israel" *now* belongs to the *ten tribes* only. Read the passages cited, and note that the "lost sheep" were *individuals-not* tribes, and that Israel was not *lost*, because Christ had come to the only Israel whom He recognized, and, with His disciples for three and a half years, He went through "the cities of *Israel*" seeking therein "the -lost '*sheep* of the house of Israel." - Matt. 10:23.

That the term "Jew" had come to be synonymous with the term "Israel" is proved by the fact that these terms are repeatedly used interchangeably. For instance, Pilate wrote for the cross--"Jesus, the King of the *Jews*"; while the soldiers and others mocked, saying, Let Christ, "the King of *Israel*," come down from the cross. - See Matt. 27:42; Mark 15:32. Nathaniel was an "*Israelite* indeed," and his testimony to our Lord was, "Thou art the King of *Israel*." (John 1:47-49.) The people never thought about a king of Judah, but rather, when the Lord rode on the ass as King in fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah, the people strewed the way with palm branches, etc., shouting, "Blessed is the King of *Israel*." (John 12:13.) Neither were the disciples thinking of Judah as a kingdom; for they asked the Lord, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to *Israel*?" And talking over the matter on the way to Emmaus they said, "sorrowfully and disappointedly: "We trusted that it had been He which Should have redeemed Israel." (Luke 24:21; Acts 1:6.) Is it reasonable to think that these all erred in their choice of language and said Israel but meant Judah? No! but it is proof that they recognized no "lost" tribes, but a reunited Israel-part "dispersed among the Gentiles," but coming to Jerusalem occasionally to keep the national festivals, and part at home in the land of Israel, in the cities of Israel, also trodden under foot by the Gentiles.

The angel, when directing Joseph to return from Egypt with Mary and the infant Jesus, said, "Go into the land of Israel." And the Apostle-Matthew says, "He arose, and . . . came into the 'land of Israel.'" (Matt. 2:20, 21.) Were the angel and the apostle mistaken? What would they answer present-day teachers who would say to them, "You were mistaken, the *land* of Israel was then Great Britain and Ireland, and the -savages of those islands were the true Israelites, and they had the only genuine king of Israel represented in 'King Fergus' or some of his posterity, and today represented by the present reigning monarch of England?"

John the Baptist, when introducing Christ, declared that His ministry was to Israel. (John 1:31.) The -same Apostle who records the Baptist's words respecting the identity of those to whom Jesus came, later identifies them as Jews, saying, "Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt Thou rear it up in three days?" - See John 2:20.

Our Lord, when commending the faith of the Gentile centurion, said, "I have not found 'so great faith-no riot in *Israel*.'" And, addressing Nicodemus, He called him "a ruler in *Israel*." Was our Lord mistaken also? Had He missed the place by not going to the British Isles? Shall we not rather conclude that those who overlook these plain statements of the Scriptures are the mistaken ones, and their theory utterly unsound?

APOSTOLIC TESTIMONY RESPECTING ISRAEL

The Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, addressed himself to the Jews, saying, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth,, a -man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves know: Him . . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. - . Therefore, *let all, the house of Israel* know that God bath made that same Jesus, whom *ye [men of Israel]* have crucified,, both Lord and Christ." - Acts 2:22, 23, 36.

John was with Peter at the healing of the impotent man, a few days after the above discourse, and therefore joined in the statement "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this?" Later when they were arrested and agreed in the testimony of Peter recorded in Acts 4:8, 10: "Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people and elders of Israel, . . . be it known unto you all and to *all the people of Israel*," etc. Evidently these Apostles knew nothing about any "lost ten tribes" nor of any other people than the Jews entitled to the name Israel. Verse 27 of this same chapter clearly identifies the Jews as Israel. It reads, "For of a truth, against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together." This was a prophecy made by Isaiah, and said by Peter to have had its fulfillment in the crucifixion of Jesus.

In his address to "all the senate of the children of Israel," Gamaliel, a leading doctor of the law, a man noted among the people for his learning, showed that if Israel were lost he did not know of it, for he said to all the assembled senate, not, Ye men of Judah, but, "Ye men of Israel," etc. - Acts 5:21, 35.

The Apostle Paul, one of the learned men of his time, and one of the most exact and logical men of any dray, did not recognize any tribes as "lost," and surely thought quite to the contrary, as is proved by the following statements of his respecting Israel:

He went to Antioch in Pisidia-among the Gentiles-and had no trouble in finding the "dispersed" Israelites, "the twelve tribes scattered abroad," and their synagogue; and getting opportunity to speak to the people, he said, "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience: The God of *this*

people Israel chose our fathers; . . . God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus, when John had first preached before His coming the baptism of repentance to 'all the people of Israel.' (Acts 13:16, 17, 23, 24.) In verses 43, 45 and 50 these same "men of Israel" are called by the common name by which all Israelites are known today, namely, Jews.

When Paul pleaded his cause before King Agrippa, he said, "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, . . . especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews." When therefore he said, "Our *twelve tribes* instantly serving God, day and night, hope to come" to the promises which God made to our fathers, it proves conclusively that neither the Jewish scholar and lawyer, Paul, nor the well informed Roman governor, had any knowledge of the ten tribes being separated from the *two* tribes; nor did they know that the ten tribes were "lost"; nor did they in any manner recognize the then *heathen savages of the British Isles* as any part of the twelve tribes; for of the latter he expressly says, that they were *serving God* and *hoping in the promise* made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (Acts 26:2, 3, 7.) The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to those same "twelve tribes instantly serving God" and hoping; especially such as were Israelites indeed and had accepted Christ: it is applicable therefore also to all those who from among the Gentiles have-been-grafted into the promises of God to Abraham, by union with Christ, the true, faithful

"Seed." Similarly, the Epistle of James was addressed to the "*twelve* tribes scattered abroad." - James 1:1, 2. In his Epistle to the Romans the Apostle Paul has much to say about Israel having rejected Christ and thus having brought blindness upon themselves, unquestionably referring to the rejection and crucifixion of Christ by the Jews, "all Israel." He points out that so it was foretold by the Prophets, and thus shows that the Prophets are in accord with this fulfillment; and that they, when speaking of Israel, have no reference to our savage forefathers who, when found by "Saint Patrick" and "Saint Augustine," were totally devoid of knowledge of Jehovah, and of Moses and the law, and of David, and of Solomon, and of the Prophets, and of all expectation of a Messiah. Such total ignorance and forgetfulness are not supposable in any people, even in a longer period; much less in Israelites who never lose their respect *for* Abraham and circumcision, nor for Moses and the law even when they become "Free-thinkers."

The Apostle then proceeds to show that it is the *same Israel* that *was blinded* because of rejecting Christ that is to be saved from that blindness at the second coming of Christ. (Compare Rom. 9:27, 31-33; 10-1-3; 11:2, 7, 15, 24-28.) Is, is supposable that if there were another Israel recognized by the Holy Spirit and the Apostle, they would have been ignored in the comprehensive statement of the entire plan of God from first to last, given in this wonderful and logical Epistle to the Romans? It is not supposable!

Furthermore, the Israelite according to the flesh who would lay claim to anything under God's covenant with Abraham must indicate his adherence to that covenant by observing the ordinance of circumcision. If, therefore, it could be proved that the Anglo-Saxon people have any Israelitish blood in their veins (and we deny that this has been proved), we may know that from the time they failed to perform the Israelitish ordinance of circumcision, that long they have been *cut off* from *all* share in the promises made to Israel. The law on this subject is found in Genesis 17:1.4 and is very explicit. It says, "The uncircumcised man child . . . shall be *cut off* from his people; *he hath broken My covenant.*"

So then, if it could be proved that the Anglo-Saxons are descendents of Abraham (which we deny), it would avail nothing for them; for, having been uncircumcised for two thousand years, or as far back as their history extends, *the covenant of God would be broken*, so far as they are

concerned, and they could inherit nothing under it. Neglect of circumcision by an Israelite constituted him an alien, a foreigner to the covenant of promise -- a Gentile.

Our conclusion, therefore, respecting the blessing upon the Anglo-Saxon people is that, whoever their father: may have been, they have no hope for any divine favor blessing as Israelites according to the flesh; for such they are not. Their blessing has: resulted from the fact that some of them became members of the Body of Chris -the higher, the spiritual Israel; and that a larger num her have been blessed through the influence of these, and become members of "the household of faith"; and that ii general the light of the Gospel, and the spirit of liberty which it always induces, has been shed abroad abundantly upon that people-bringing with it great responsibilities, as well as great blessings.

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The Letter to the Colossians

"Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness." - --Col. 3:12-14, A. R. V.

IT IS not possible to determine whether the Apostle's "therefore", referred only to his statement, "Christ is all and in all," or also to the earlier one, "and have put on the new man," but it is probable it was his intention that "therefore" should connect the passage with both these statements, since that construction parallels the one considered in our last study. In review of this we epitomize: the new nature was made ours in the moment of consecration, therefore, the, Apostle says, clothe it in suitable garments. And since Christ is all in all, those who are in Him must surely be aware of that fact and should draw about themselves His beautiful garments. For the members of that Body this will result in a unity genuine and permanent. Appropriately, it is social qualities Paul considers in the verses being discussed; by no means implying, however, that this is all there is to the Christian life.

The fact that we are "God's elect, holy and beloved," is stated as additional grounds for the course of conduct outlined. ("As choice ones of God" is the translation Prof. Young gives. Instead of the word "holy" Goodspeed and the Centenary New Testament have "consecrated.") The changed relation to God must inevitably result in a. changed relation to fellowman, and this will be most noticeable in one's association with those who have consecrated themselves on the basis of the "ransom for all" - all others of "equally precious faith." (2 Pet. 1:1; 1 Tim. 2:6.) The Christian life is not mere glad emotion, self-congratulation, but additionally there is the joy of service to others, not omitting such a small detail as the turning to them of a face lit with His joy and His love. In this "Be imitators of God, as beloved children," imitators of the One who pours out His blessings on the thankful and the unthankful. - Eph. 5:1; Luke 6:35.

In a double sense they now are not their own; in accepting the ransom they have agreed to it as their purchase price; and in consecration they have given their all into His possession. (1 Con 6:19, 20; 7:22, 23.) It was "while we were yet sinners" that Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8; 1 Tim. 1:15) the very pinnacle of all God's favors; let us not then withhold our small favors from any one else merely because we see something in him which is not to our liking. The largest of our bounties, by comparison with God's bounties to us, sinners sold into the bondage of sin, will be small indeed. As we recognize what God has been to us, let us be to others, and especially to those nearest to us whether in home or in church, for there we are most apt to forget to be Godlike. Familiarity breeds at least carelessness. They need us and our kindness as we need them and their graces. Fortunately in every one there can still be discovered some traces of the original likeness to God; and a genuine *love for His character* will gladly brush aside any number of "veils," that we may admire these traces of Godlikeness in our brethren. The fulness of this joy cannot be known by those in whom there is a hindrance to the shining forth of God's character because of their finding joy in looking for faults in their brethren rather than in disclosing the beauties of God-given, holiness. Every faint glimmer of His character made visible will be another star to guide us in our charted course. The closer one comes to a star, the brighter it shines. The beauties to be discovered in our brethren will never be known by us if we are cutting ourselves off from their fellowship, nor even if while having fellowship we are in any particular holding ourselves aloof from them. Our Father has not arranged that ours shall be *art* unsocial

life. For one of us to plan such an existence, instead of resulting in a manifestation of the graces Paul here outlines, can hardly do otherwise than develop supreme selfishness.

THE CHRISTIAN'S WARDROBE

A heart of compassion" is the Revised Version's rendering of the first item of the Christian's apparel. At the start, the brother's faults are recognized, but with compassion. *In* the ears of the moderns, who have substituted formal modesty for the genuine, this translation has a more pleasant sound than the King James' literal rendering, "bowels of mercies." With the Greeks, bowels were a symbol of violent passions, but with the Hebrews, a symbol of tender emotions. When without interpretation a phrase is meaningless to modern Gentile ears, the translations which are really interpretations are preferable. On the other hand the Diaglott more literal rendering of the opening phrase "be clothed" is preferable, for even our prosaic minds can understand and profit by its symbolism. The following helpful lesson is drawn from it by Adam Clarke: "Though I know that to *put on*, or to be *clothed with* are figurative expressions, and mean to assume such and such characters, and qualities; yet there may be a higher meaning here [than the obvious application]. The Apostle would have them to *feel* the *slightest touch* of another's misery; and, as their clothes are put over their body, so their tenderest feeling should be always within the reach of the miserable. Let your feelings be at hand; and feel and commiserate as soon as touched."

LEARNING COMPASSION BY SUFFERING

Opportunities to exercise this quality of pity are as extensive as our contacts mental and physical, for every individual is deserving of it in some measure, though that fact may not always be apparent. It is fitting that the Apostle's series should begin with a quality so much in demand. Inattention, lack of perception, and pre-occupation with self rob us perhaps of most of the privileges of its exercise. The fierce heat of selfishness dries up its flow, until that which should be, a torrent comparable to the flow of God's love becomes but a rivulet, or perhaps a dry and parched gravel bed. In God's providence sorrows are permitted in the heart with which He deals that it may know the refreshment of the outgoing stream of love, expressing itself in compassion to all others who suffer. India yearly has lost its thousands by starvation, and we scarcely give passing notice; but when calamities touch our shores, we display in great headlines our sympathy for this corner of the groaning creation. Let the love that "seeketh not her own" take possession of a heart, and the face of every stranger, however remote his life is from ours, calls forth this divine attribute of compassion.

Custom, if not guarded against, will entirely rob us of this sense, for people in general accept the reign of sin and death as a natural condition for the human family and view its devastations, in those beyond their circle, with indifference. Consequently there must be a conscious process of clothing ourselves in tender compassions. And that garb will do much to win the confidence of those we would help with either physical or spiritual comfort. Its lack will result in our ministrations to the needy being repulsive, because given as one would throw a bone to a dog. It is not ingratitude alone that rejects favors. Make others' sorrows *our own* and that will teach us the tact that dispenses blessings with gentle hands.

KINDNESS

Where there is no apparent occasion for "pity," there is still need for kindness. (Chrestotes translates it "gentleness.") Its need is universal. Some by nature radiate kindness as sunshine; but

most of us must acquire at least the habit of making it perpetual. Keep our mirrors always toward the sun and they will always glow with a light the world can look upon only with veiled faces. After his season in the mount with God, Moses had to put a veil over his face, so brightly it shone with the glory of that few moments' contact. They that *dwell* in that presence where there is fullness of joy must radiate that joy upon others, reflecting His "tender mercies overall His works," "the just and the unjust." (Psa. 25:6; 33:3; 145:9; Job 34:19; Matt. 5:45; Acts 10:34, 35; 15:19; Rom. 2:11; 10:12; Gal. 2:6; Eph. 4:32; 6:9.) "If thine enemy hunger, feed him," is a more profitable injunction for us than for our enemy-if the motive is kindness. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." - Matt. 5:7, 44; Prov. 25:21, 22.

HUMILITY

From here onward the graces are those evident under oppositions. "Humility" heads the list of these graces because it is an essential safeguard if we would honestly represent God among the Gentiles. (1 Pet. 2:12.) Nothing so quickly demonstrates its lack as slights and insults. The wounded one, if not humble, will be so pre-occupied with his own hurts that the kindness he should be showing to his enemies will be entirely neglected. One who is not humble will not "do good to them that hate him," unless he thinks that course will increase his own reputation. (Matt. 5:44.) This is the false humility of Colossians 2:18.

There is in this word no intimation of ignorance of one's own abilities; but for the Christian it indicates that he knows "there is none righteous," and that whatever he possesses he has received from God (Rom. 3:10; 1 Cor. 4:7), that that in which others boast, rightly appraised, is "their shame" (Phil. 3:19) and that all the proud must eventually be brought low. (Luke 14:9; Psa. 18:27; Isa. 14:11, 12; Isa. 23:9.) From the highest hill to which pride can ascend it is still some 93,000,000 miles to the sun. Instead of a recital of our accomplishments and virtues, our cry must be, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

MEEKNESS, LONG-SUFFERING

The next two qualities mentioned, "meekness and long-suffering," are so closely associated it is well to consider them together. One has distinguished them by saying that long-suffering is not soon angry and meekness not at all. We would rather say that either is capable of righteous indignation, and neither guilty of fleshly anger. "According to the most thorough investigators, meekness is the temper which accepts 'God's dealings,' or evil inflicted by men as His instruments, without resistance, while the latter is the long holding out of the mind . . . [without giving way to a temptation to unbecoming] action, or passion, especially the latter. The opposite of meekness is rudeness or harshness; the opposite of long-suffering, swift resentment or revenge. . . . The meek man puts himself below the offender; the long-suffering man does not," necessarily. In other words, the Christian in his duels with the world and the Adversary, does not permit the enemy to choose the weapons.

FORBEARING, FORGIVING

There is a close affiliation between meekness and forbearance, and between long-suffering and forgiveness. Forbearance will not operate consistently without the assistance of meekness, nor can long-suffering be persisted in unless it has its source in forgiveness, which cleanses the heart of all enmity and irritation. Thus the Apostle gives an outline of the true Christian in his social life-"all rooted in pity, and full of soft compassion"; quick to see, to feel, and to comfort in sorrow; manifesting kindness to all who come within its reach; because of lowliness of mind and

calmness under provocation, showing neither resentment nor revenge, but patient under wrongs, never requiting wrong for wrong, and always ready to forgive; for to forgive is as natural to the compassionate heart as that the sun's rays should melt the glacier.

Even after centuries of preaching the standard of these verses by a few daring souls, that kind of a character has not yet become the ideal of the so called Christian world; instead, he who attains it is to them "a poor, spineless creature." In the day of battle he would be condemned as a traitor to his country. Loving one's enemies must for the fleshly mind be reserved until after the battle. It takes courage to build, or attempt to build, such a character in the midst of a generation that can accept none of its qualities without some nullifying modification. Heroic firmness, disregard for popular esteem, confession of our weakness, and unfaltering faith in His strength and willingness to supply it, are necessary if passions are to be subdued and forgiveness flow freely from the heart. But, "Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

A MOTIVATING PATTERN

Great attainments require lofty motives. The highest attainments require the loftiest of motives. "We are to forgive *as* Christ has forgiven us; and that 'as' may be applied either as meaning 'in like manner.' or as meaning 'because.'" There are Greek words having each of these meanings, but since the Apostle used the one having both meanings, both can be accepted as his thought here. Christlike perfection is our ideal, the goal for which we strive; His example our inspiration. In the parallel passage in Ephesians (Eph. 4:32) our Heavenly Father is cited as our example. The Apostle uses there the same Greek word for "as": "*in the same degree*" and "*because*" "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you," forgive each other. A heart truly appreciative of the pardon offered it, will be a softened heart, eager and joyful in its forgiveness of others. But unless that spirit is present before the pardon is asked, it will be so grudgingly given as to leave the culprit with no feeling of love on our part, but much of our condemnation of him.

The Apostle is not startling us with his originality, but reiterating the principle laid down by our Master: "Love one another as I have loved you." (John 14:34; Luke 6:36.) If the cords of love bind us to Him they will securely bind us to each other; and instead of calling forth our condemnation, the imperfections that show up in our brethren will draw us that much more to them in sympathetic, compassionate, forgiving love. "Even as the Lord forgave us, so also do ye"; then pray, "Forgive us as we forgive." - Mark 11:25; Matt. 6:15; 18:35; Acts 5:31; James 2:13.

THE COSTUME COMPLETED

"Above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfectness," but this time, not above all in the sense of greater importance, but merely of position, as the girdle is over all the other garments to brace and confine all in a safe and consistent unity. It is a silken sash, of most expensive fabric, woven in the loom of God's providences, so soft it would seem to have no binding power; but how well we have learned that it alone can be used as a girdle to keep these other qualities in control. Various other girdles have been tried-doctrines, works, organization, etc. - but all have been proved utter failures. Love alone is the perfect girdle for the binding of the "perfectnesses that make up the rest of the costume. - John 13:34; Rom. 13:8; Col. 2:2; Eph. 4:3.

"Pity" without love is but (the cold compassion of superiority; kindness, that others may marvel at my generosity, but mockery; humility and meekness without love serve well as the hypocrite's garment of light; while "long-suffering" and "forbearance" with out love is merely -an armed truce waiting for revenge; "forgiveness" without it, a lip service. *Could* such a one pray, "Forgive as I forgive"? It is true all these may be had in some fashion without love; but with love as "the

girdle of perfectness" all these divine qualities will be given permanence, and assurance of the privilege of being a blessing to others both in this life and in the life to come. The clothes of the children of Israel were protected from wear and decay during their wilderness journey, but for the antitypical Israelite there is a better arrangement. The longer their garments are worn the more beautiful they become, for into each of them is daily transfused more of the divine quality of love that binds.

"We may recall the other applications of the same figure which occur in the parallel Epistle to the Ephesians, where Paul sketches for us in a few rapid touches the armed Christian soldier. The two pictures may profitably be set side by side. - Here he dresses the Christian; soul in the robes of peace, bidding him put on pity and meekness, and above all, the silken girdle of love.

'In peace, there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility;
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,'

then 'put on the whole armor of God' [for our warfare against the world's spirit, the flesh, and Satan] the leathern girdle of truth, the shining breastplate of righteousness, and above all, the shield of faith and so stand a flashing pillar of steel. Are the two pictures inconsistent? Must we doff the robes of peace -to don the armor, or put off the armor to resume the robes of peace? Not so; both must be worn together, for neither is found in its completeness without the other. Beneath the armor must be the fine linen, clean and white-and at one and the same time, our souls may be clad in all pity, mercifulness and love, and in all the sparkling panoply of courage and strength for battle.

"But both the armor and the dress of peace presuppose that we have listened to Christ's pleading counsel to buy of Him, 'white raiment that we may be clothed, and that the shame of our nakedness do not appear.' The garment for the soul, which is to hide its deformities and to replace our own filthy rags, is woven in no earthly looms, and no efforts of ours will bring us into possession of it. We must be content to owe it wholly to Christ's gift, or else we shall have to go without it altogether. The first step in the Christian life is by simple faith to receive from Him the forgiveness of all our sins, and that new nature which He alone can impart, and which we can neither create nor win, but must simply accept. Then, after that, come the field [of battle] and the time for efforts put forth in His strength, to array our souls in His likeness, and day by day to put on the beautiful garments which He bestows. It is a life-long work thus to strip ourselves of the rags of our old vices, and to gird on the robe of ... [Christian virtues]. Lofty encouragements, tender motives, solemn warnings, all point to this as our continual task. We should set ourselves to it in His strength, if so be that being clothed, we may not be found naked and then, when we lay aside the garment of flesh and the armor needed for the battle, we shall hear His voice welcoming us to the land of peace, and shall walk with Him in victor's robes, glistening 'so as no fuller on earth could white them.'"

- P. E. Thomson.

The Father of the Faithful

"God did tempt Abraham." "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac. Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." - Gen. 22:1; Heb. 11:17, 19.

ABRAHAM sojourned in the Philistines' land many days." In the meantime Isaac was passing through the natural stages of growth, from boyhood to manhood, and was the object of Abraham's tender love. No one can tell the joy he had in the beloved child of his old age -- "Thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest."

Wisely and tenderly Abraham had been prepared by his Almighty Friend for the approaching trial -- the supreme trial of his life. God had searched Abraham's heart with regard to his secret agreement with Sarah, and again in commanding him to send Hagar and Ishmael from his home. In obedience to this, Abraham had laid aside the last weight. He is now in a position to be put to a most severe test from the hand of God. This was an honored position--the most honored in which any man can be placed--that of being tried by the hand of God Himself. There are different kinds of trials--some from the hand of Satan; some from surrounding circumstances; but the highest are those that come direct from the hand of God, when He puts us in the furnace to test the reality of our faith.

God confers a special honor upon us when He thus tries our hearts. We do not read that God tempted Lot. Sodom tempted Lot. He was never sufficiently near to God, never living in a sufficiently high elevation to be tried by the hand of Jehovah. There was too much between his heart and God, and it would not require the furnace to make that manifest. On the contrary, Sodom held no temptation for Abraham. Note Abraham's conversation with the King, and of how separate he was from all that was of Sodom. (Chapter 14.) He would not take so much as "a thread even to a shoelatchet." There was *definiteness*, and there was *separateness*. Satan tempts us to bring out the evil in our hearts; God tempts or tries us that He may bring out the good. The fiery trials through which we pass burn away the dross of our nature, the ingredients which hinder our development. Then there is another work produced: qualities that are lying dormant are brought into exercise. Sorrow and trial produce a work of grace in the heart which nothing else can do.

PURPOSE OF OUR TESTING

And God so tests His people. "The heart must be probed to the very bottom, in order that no element of hypocrisy or false profession may be allowed to lodge there." "My son, give me thine heart." And to prove the sincerity of our response to His command, He lays His hand on something precious to our hearts. "We sometimes seem to forget that what God takes, He takes in fire: that nothing less than the discipline of pain can ever disintegrate the clinging dross of our natures; and that the only way to the resurrection life and the ascension mount is the way of the garden, the cross, and the grave. Nothing will dare to inflict so much pain--as the love which desires the richest and sweetest life of the object of its affection." "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth; and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."

Thus God said to Abraham, "Take now Thy son, thine only son Isaac, *whom thou lovest*, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering, upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." This was a searching test--one that came very close to Abraham's heart. "Truth in the inward parts" is what God desires and requires. Truth on the lips and truth in the

intellect is not all that God looks for, and He uses extreme measures to prove the attitude of our hearts toward Him. It was to the extreme He went in proving His love for us -even to the giving of His only begotten Son for us when we were dead in trespasses and sins, and we should be willing to give the dearest treasure of our hearts in proof of our love for Him.

THE POWER OF FAITH

As the Apostle explains (Heb. 11:17-19), Abraham was asked to offer up not only his only begotten son but the seed of promise through whom all the families of the earth should be blessed -- Isaac the child of promise -- the one in whom Abraham's hopes had centered these many years! Surely this was a test of faith, but Abraham's faith was equal to it. One thought filled his mind: "God is able." He "accounted that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." Wonderful faith! Victorious faith! Surely God was the living and abiding support of Abraham's heart or he could never have been prepared to yield unhesitating obedience to such a command. Only the soul that has found all its springs in God can give up all creature streams. Only in proportion to our experimental acquaintance with God can we give up the creature. Only as our faith lays hold on the invisible can we give up the visible. We will hold on to our Isaac until we have found our all in God. And God is ready to be our all when He asks us to give up our all. Had He not said to Abraham, "I am thy shield and 'thy exceeding great reward'"? (Chapter 15:1.) And has He not said to us, "I am thy inheritance"?

When God gave Abraham the promise of a seed as the stars of heaven, Abraham "believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness." And now when his faith was tested, it was found to be of the enduring nature -- "though it be tried by fire." He knew God had promised; and he knew God had said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called"; therefore he "counted that God was able."

PROMPTNESS IN OBEDIENCE

.It would seem that it was in a vision of the night, that God came to Abraham, for the following verse states that "Abraham rose up early in the morning." On a previous occasion when God had made him a promise, Abraham said, "Lord God how shall I know?" But now his faith had developed, and there is no asking how or why, but a prompt obedience. Abraham did- not wait to discuss the matter with Sarah-nothing in the context implying that he conferred with any one. As says the Psalmist: "I made haste and delayed not to keep Thy commandments.' We have an example also in the Apostle Paul: "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." The moment we confer with flesh and blood, the human element enters in, and our dependence is not wholly upon God. We cannot go forth with the same strength and stability as we could when going in the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God alone as our guide.

In Abraham's case there might have been excuse for him to procrastinate-to give Sarah and Isaac another day together, and time for preparation for the journey. But no, that was not Abraham's attitude toward God's command. This promptness was his safeguard. "He rose up early" and was on his way. It is doubtful if he confided his secret to a soul -- even to Sarah. No, God was his refuge and strength.

He had the power of action conferred by God and the command to action given by God, and his devotedness was of a most definite character.

"It was not mere resignation but active obedience that was required of Abraham. His was not the passive resignation of the man out of whose reach death or disaster has swept his dearest treasures, and who is helped to resignation by the consciousness that no murmuring can bring them back-his was the far more difficult active resignation, which has still in possession all that it prizes, but is called by a higher Voice than that of self-pleasing to sacrifice them all."

"Abraham rose up early in the morning." He took two young men with him, and Isaac, and wood for the burnt-offering and went unto the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham could see "the place afar off." And he said to the young men, "Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." Here we see that Abraham's devotedness was connected with the spirit of worship. "I and the lad will go yonder and *worship*. The servant who is really devoted to the Lord will not keep his eyes so much on his service as on his Master, and this will produce the spirit of worship. "The servant should ever be combined with the worshiper, and the works of our hands performed with the ardent breathings of our spirits. This would effectually preserve us from that merely mechanical service into which we are so prone to drop; doing things for doings' sake, and being more occupied with our work than wile our Master. All must flow from simple faith in God and obedience to His Word."

Abraham was not the only actor in this trying season. Though Isaac had grown to maturity, to manhood, it seems his father had not disclosed to him the purpose of the journey. Evidently he knew nothing more than that they were going to worship and too make an offering. "So they went," as the narrative twice over says, "both of them together." "Nowhere does the completeness of the mastery Abraham had gained over his natural feelings appear- more strikingly than in the calmness with which he answer; Isaac's question." As they approach the place of sacrifice, Isaac said: "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is a lamb for a burnt offering?" That was one of those moments when only the strongest heart can bear up calmly, and when only the humblest and most loyal faith could say: "My son, the Lord will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering."

Can we wonder that Abraham shrank from disclosing the facts to Isaac? We shrink from the thought of losing our loved ones when some dread disease takes hold of them, and we would not disclose to them that their days are numbered. But Abraham, had even a keener test. We have the comfort of doing everything in our power to relieve the suffering and prolong life; but with Abraham there was the anguish of inflicting the blow, of taking life! Isaac's last sight would be the uplifted knife; his last thought, his father's act of violence!

THE PRICE OF HEIRSHIP

"With what feelings must Isaac have seen the agony of his father's face as he turned to bind him, and as he learned that he must prepare not 'to sacrifice but to be sacrificed. Here then was the end of those great hopes on which his youth had been fed. What could such contradiction mean? Was he to submit even to his father in such a matter? Such ideas seem to have found short entertainment in the mind of Isaac. Trained by long experience to trust this father, he obeys without complaint or murmur. Still it cannot cease to be a matter of admiration and astonishment that a young man should 'have been able on so brief a notice through so shocking a way, and with so startling a reversal -of his expectations, to forego all right to choose for himself, and yield himself implicitly to what he believed to be God's will. By a faith so resolute Isaac became indeed the heir of Abraham. At that supreme moment he gave himself over to God, he put himself at God's disposal; if his death was to be helpful in fulfilling God's purpose, he was willing to die. It was God's will that- must be done, not his. He had familiarized himself with the thought that he belonged to God; that he was on earth for God's purposes, not for his own; so that now when he

was suddenly summoned to lay him-self formally and finally -on God's altar, he did not hesitate to do so." The gentle submission of Isaac laid upon the altar beautifully pictures Christ's obedience unto death. His restoration to life, as from the dead, "after having been three days dead in hi., father's purpose," suggests the resurrection of our Lord. Isaac was spared actual death, but Christ drank the bitter cup to the dregs.

"Only by losing our life do we begin to live. Only by yielding ourselves truly and unreservedly to God's purpose, do we enter -the true life. The giving up of self, the abandonment of an isolated life, the bringing of ourselves into connection with God, is true consecration. If we desire that God fulfill in us, and through us, His own conception of what our life. should be, -the only means of attaining this desire is to- put -ourselves into God's hands, unflinchingly to do what we believe to be His will, irrespective of present darkness and pain and privation. He who thus bids an honest farewell to earth, and lets himself be bound and laid upon God's altar," is conscious that in renouncing himself he has won the approval of God and become His heir.

NOT OUR GETHSEMANE BUT OUR WILL

"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten." (Heb. 11:17.) It is the walk of faith only that enables one to begin, continue, and end his works in God. This was the supreme act of Abraham's life. He here exhibited the highest limit of human devotedness and the heartiest submission to the divine will under the most heart-rending circumstances. And is not this just what God wants us to learn? The sacrifice God seeks is the devotion of the living soul, the delight of a human heart. He takes pleasure not in our Gethsemane, but in our will. God wanted Abraham to yield his son truly to Him; to arrive at the consciousness that Isaac more truly belonged to God than to him, his father. It was the spirit of sacrifice, not the blood of Isaac, that God desired. Only by being absolutely in God's hands can we reach the heart condition before God, designed for us.

There was not a time in Abraham's life when God was so much glorified as in that scene on Mount Moriah. It is one thing to rest in God's blessings, as Abraham doubtless did in Isaac, but it is quite another thing to rest in God. It is one thing to love the Truth, and another to love God. Sometimes we take our eyes off the Giver in beholding and rejoicing in the gift. It is one thing to trust God when we have the channel of blessing before our eyes, but quite another thing 'to trust Him when the channel is removed. Abraham showed he could trust God not only when he had Isaac, the seed, but also when he was a victim on the altar. His faith rested in God. He did not account that Isaac "was able." Isaac could do nothing without God; but God was able without Isaac.

Not until the last moment did God intervene with those joyous words: "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for *now I know* that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me." It was the faith and submission -of - the father and the son that God saw with delight; and it was not until the point of consummation that God's provision was seen: "And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked and behold behind him a ram caught in the thicker, by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him for a burnt offering in the stead of his son." God's provision comes only on the mount of sacrifice-not at any point before this. We must go the whole way with faith. Often this may mean darkness and sorrow, but we must climb the hill where we are to abandon all that has joy and hope of an earthly nature. When the character has been fully tried, then relief comes. When we in spirit fully yield to God's will, quietly acquiesce, and submit to the loss or pain, we find rest and peace. God does not provide deliverance until we have reached the place of our extreme need. Another has said:

"Here Abraham's soul is led into a fresh discovery of God's character by the trial of his faith. When we are enabled to bear the testings of God's own hand, it is sure to lead us into some new experience with respect to His character, which makes us to know how valuable the testing is. If Abraham had not stretched out his hand to slay his son, he never would have known the rich and exquisite depths of that title which he here bestows upon God, namely, Jehovah-jireh,' [Jehovah will see (to it)]. It is only when we are really put to the test that we discover what God is. Without trial, we can be but theorists: and God would not have us such: He would have us entering into the living depths that are in Himself-the divine realities of personal communion with Him. With what different feelings and convictions must Abraham have retraced his steps from Moriah to Beer-sheba!-from the mount of the Lord to the well of the oath! What very different thoughts of God! What different thoughts of Isaac! Truly we may say, 'Happy is the man that endureth trial.' It is an honor put upon one by the Lord Himself, and the deep blessedness of the experience to which it leads cannot be easily estimated. It is when men are brought -- to use the words of the Psalmist -- 'to their wit's end,' that they discover what God is. Oh, for grace to endure trial, that God's workmanship may appear, and His name be glorified in us!"

Before they left the Mount the Lord spoke again to Abraham through His messenger. He had made promises to Abraham before, but this -time He swore, and because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, saying: "By Myself have I sworn, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee; and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in 'thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed because thou hast obeyed My voice."

Note the graciousness of the Lord in crediting to Abraham the full performance of the act-"Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son." "Abraham proved that he was prepared to have the scene entirely cleared of *all* but God; and, moreover, it was this same principle which both *constituted* and *proved* him a justified man. Faith can do without every one and everything but God. It has the full sense -of His sufficiency, and can therefore let go all beside. Hence Abraham could rightly estimate the words, '*By Myself* have I sworn.' Yes, this wondrous word, 'Myself,' was everything to the man of faith. . . . The word and oath of the living God should put an end to all the strivings and workings of the human will, and form the immovable anchor of the 'soul amid all the tossing and tumult of this stormy world.,"

In order to know God and to have inward, intimate communion with Him, all must be laid upon the divine altar with a renunciation without limits. We must be conscious, like Abraham, of doing all we can do in the fulfillment of God's holy will; of separating ourselves from every form of sin; of discharging with divine aid every known duty; -- of laying all our powers, possessions and gifts deliberately upon the altar. He who is truly set apart. -to God, prays always that he may not in the *smallest* thing, offend his Heavenly Father. In this state there is a natural basis for the exercise of faith. In such a state, all obstacles being removed, the soul naturally turns to God, and naturally relies upon Him. The Holy Spirit operates without obstruction; the promises are readily received, and the soul enters' into the rest of assured faith.

The soul that has entered, by the providence of God and the leadings of His Holy Spirit, into the realization of God's sufficiency, is wholly independent of things here. May we have this realization, for our peace and joy in God, and His glory in us.

- Contributed.

Encouraging Messages

Dear Brethren in Christ:

Greetings in the love and grace of God as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord. . . .

At this opportunity I desire to express my appreciation for the increasingly good articles appearing in the pages of the "Herald." They should be of much "practical" value to all who may be privileged to read them. It seems to me that during the past year all of the articles have breathed "a sweet fragrance of Christ," which indicates a growing maturity into that blessed "unity [oneness] of the Spirit" which is unquestionably the purpose "of our calling." Opinions concerning details amount to little, if unaccompanied by the Spirit of God-which is love. "God is One" may He give each of us to *realize* this glorious "truth." It is the paramount purpose in our "calling." This fact clearly appears in Ephesians 4:1-6 and in the 17th chapter of John. What wonderful love is here evidenced, in these wonderful prayers of Paul and of Paul's greater Lord. How wonderfully the prayer of our blessed Lord Jesus, as recorded in John 17, has been answered in the person of Saul, the "persecutor" of the Church, who is *now* Paul, the "prayer" *for* the Church.

Wishing you "all joy and peace in the Holy Spirit" in your service to Him during the ensuing year, I remain as ever,

Yours in His glad service, B. L. R. - Calif.

Our dear Brethren:

I will not take up much of your valuable time to read our letter, but just to say how we do enjoy this wonderful book, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." Well, it's beyond words to express the joy in the Lord that we have had while reading it. And we found the epochs or periods stepping in time with the "Studies in the Scriptures," especially the Second Volume. Then as we come on into the Laodicean period, we find just what had been happening all along-that Christ was being crowded out. This caught my heart with a climax. This was what I had said many times, and was the reason I came out of the churches-that Christ was outside the door, saying: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man will open the door, I will come in [yet]." Oh, what a wonderful Savior! Oh how we should love Him and trust and honor Him with praise and thanksgiving to God for such a Gift of mercy. . .

I got hold of one of your 1935 "Heralds," and that brought us together. . . . We are lending our literature, and of course you know we are telling it to all we get a chance to, and we see lots of folks. Thanks for all the literature, and the "Herald" to Mrs. S-. She is very thankful too. She is telling the story of the Kingdom to any who will listen from time to time. I hope to need more literature.

Your brother and sister in the blessed Hope,
Mr. and Mrs, A. H. M: Tenn.

Dear Brethren:

Mother and I jointly thank you for sending the January to May Heralds that completed the year 1943, and other special issues for our reading and studying, and also for the copies of "Liberty in Christ."

Our joy, our faith, and our gratitude to our Heavenly Father increases each day. How merciful and how great His lovingkindness to rescue *me*, especially, from despair, and possibly the path of the second death before it was, too late. "The smoking flax, He will not quench." And my broken and contrite heart remained the only ray of hope that I -dared exercise toward my Heavenly Father's mercy.

Oh, that I may prove faithful in doing His will. Of mine own self I can do nothing, but He is ever faithful, and so I keep my eyes on Him. Pray for me, that I may prove worthy in Him, and by Him.

Enclosed is a mite to be put into the work. Mother and pray for all the brethren of the "Herald."

Yours in Him,
Mrs. E. O. - Mass.

Annual Meeting of the Pastoral Bible Institute

Members of the Pastor Bible Institute are hereby reminded of the privilege which is theirs of nominating in the pages of this journal the brethren they wish to elect as directors for the fiscal year 194-1940. While the attention of new members is especially drawn to this matter, we desire to emphasize in the minds of old members also, not only the privilege, but also the responsibility which continued association with this ministry brings.

All should be aware of the fact that the affairs of this Institute are in the hands of seven brethren who are elected from the Institute's membership to serve for a period of one year or until their successors are elected. In accordance with the by-laws the next annual meeting is due to be held Saturday, June 3rd, 1941, at 2 p.m., in the parlors of the Institute, 177 Prospect Place, Brooklyn, N. Y.

The seven brothers whose term of service will expire next June are:

BLACKBURN, J. J.
READ J T
BOULTER, B.
READ, P. L.
JORDAN, J. C.
SIEKMAN, W. J.
THOMSON, P. E.

The brethren named above are pleased to report that a spirit of Christian love and harmony exists in their midst; and they have reason to believe that the Lord has seen fit to bless their association in this ministry. They realize, however, that those carrying on any work often fail to see opportunities for improvement and expansion apparent to others, not charged with such responsibility. For this reason changes in office not infrequently have beneficial effects. They desire above all things that the work of the Lord (for the furtherance of which this Institute was formed) be prosecuted with the greatest possible efficiency, and to this end are ready cheerfully to step aside for others whom the membership believe to be fitted for the work. They therefore urge upon all the members of our Institute that they make this a special occasion of prayer, and they also earnestly pray that our Father's will may be expressed in the vote of the members.

If after prayerful meditation any are led of the Lord to nominate brethren, and will forward the names and addresses of such brethren so as to reach this office on or before April 15, 1944, such names will be published in the May issue of the "Herald," that all members may have an opportunity of voting for them.