

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. XXXI. July, 1948 No. 7

Annual Report of the Institute

ANOTHER YEAR finds us rejoicing not in what we have done, but in the great things the Lord has done for us. Though some thousands of tracts have been distributed, as well as numerous copies of "The Divine Plan of the Ages," "Our Lord's Return," "What Say the Scriptures about Hell," special issues of "The Herald of Christ's Kingdom," etc., yet these make a small showing as compared with the invisible strengthening of many saints "in the inner man," we trust. It is our hope, as it seems to be the hope of the brethren in every place, that the report of that greater work will soon be made before the great white throne and the innumerable company assembled there. Who can anticipate the joy of that occasion when all frailties will have been left behind; the things that should not have been done, all wiped out; compensation provided for all the things that should have been done but were not; and all the praise gladly given by every creature to Him to whom all glory belongs.

The directors of the Institute and editors of the "Herald," endeavoring to put first things first, have sought always to inspire all not only to live the truth, taking up their cross *daily* and following the Master, but to witness faithfully for him now by word of mouth and the printed page as we have opportunity, seeing in these present privileges a means of demonstrating a zeal necessary for those who would be trusted with the "greater works" in that day when all shall be taught to know Him. In the Lord's providence limitations of time and finance have precluded the doing of any "great and marvelous works," from the human standpoint. May we not see in this one more of the many, evidences of the Lord's watchcare over us, giving an opportunity to demonstrate zeal in "that which is least," and at the same time sparing us the danger of being so engrossed in the telling of the message that we overlook the privilege and necessity of living it.

Founded not as a church organization with creedal and other bondages, but merely as a voluntary association of believers for mutual encouragement, comfort, spiritual upbuilding and edification, a continual guarding of "the freedom wherewith Christ makes free" has been necessary, remembering the carnality that entangled some of the early Church, disrupting the fellowship Jesus came to establish. He is a wily foe indeed who can use our God-given blessings to draw us

from the prize. Our appreciation of the privilege of distributing various writings of Brother Russell's is not lessened by the realization that even these splendid works can be used by that Adversary to lead one into becoming a follower of a man, to a degree. Following faithfully, however, obviates all difficulty; for one of his frequently reiterated warnings was, in effect, "Believe nothing that I write or say except as you can prove it for yourself by the Scriptures." Obedience to that instruction, makes every one a "Bible Student" not only in name but also in fact.

THE MINISTRY OF THE HERALD

Our correspondence reveals that as in former years, the "Herald of Christ's Kingdom" has ministered to the spiritual interests of the brethren. Many of our brethren have faithfully endeavored to share these blessings with others by supplying us with lists of addresses to which free trial, three months' subscriptions could be sent. The result has been a slight growth in our list of readers. We should be glad if the coming twelve months could see still more done in this line, new lists supplied the office and old names repeated where there is a possibility of sufficient growth so that the individuals would be glad for the assistance the monthly visit of a spiritually-minded messenger could give.

The "extra-copy" list was established in order that our readers might have copies to hand to their friends for the purpose of interesting them in "The Herald." Having exhausted all their "prospects," many have had us continue them on this extra copy list so that they can hand the extra copy monthly to some one who is appreciative but unable to subscribe for himself. Others tell us of copies that are read by as many as a half dozen brethren. This is satisfactory with us, but there is the disadvantage that those who would like to have a permanent file of the magazine for the rereading of those articles that have been most helpful to them cannot do so. We urge all such to request that we place them, on our free list. Those who are able, keep funds in our care for the purpose of ministering by this and other means to those to whom the Lord has not entrusted so much of this world's goods.

HE THAT WATERETH SHALL HIMSELF BE WATERED

To a large extent our monthly magazine does a work similar to that of the evangelist of the Apostles' days; and, on a smaller scale, to that of the pilgrim service. While for neither, perfection can be claimed, all associated with these services rejoice that by their very weakness the Lord is the better able to manifest his strength. Beneficial results in these or any other lines, must therefore be credited largely to the brethren who are faithful in the use of their privilege, the discharge of their duty, of remembering the laborers in their prayers. It is still appropriate to pray for more laborers in the field, and more wisdom for those who serve. The greater hunger on the part of the friends for deeper spiritual instruction, is in part matched by a greater appreciation by the public, especially for the pamphlets handed them. This form of service gives the brethren a means of spiritual exercise, and thus the assurance of at least that much of the Lord's blessing on it.

It was part of the activity of the year just closing that planned a campaign for the advertising of *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, though it is only in the latest issue of the "Herald" that it has been announced. It is our hope that the next Annual Report will be able to tell of good results attained, for a similar method used by individuals has introduced the truth into a goodly number of homes. However, whatever the Lord permits will be welcomed by us.

Again we would urge upon the friends the acceptance of Pilgrim service even where there can be fellowship with only one or two, and where local conditions make it impossible to provide for the

brother's entertainment. In several instances where the interest was thought to be too slight to warrant regular meetings, the visit of a Pilgrim has resulted in meetings being instituted. However, if nothing more is accomplished than to give the blessing of a little fellowship to one who is hungry for it, these traveling brethren will be well rewarded.

The benefits from the visit of Brother J. T. Read to England, which started in our previous fiscal year and extended into this, were such that an invitation was extended for another visit, which will shortly be under way, the Lord willing, and which we are confident will amply repay for the sacrifice the sparing of our brother to England means to the friends in the States.

Miles traveled	103,450
Meetings held	750
Total attendance	19,776

The volumes, "Daniel the Beloved of Jehovah," and "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," are probably now in the hands of most of our readers, and as our correspondence shows, still bringing blessings through rereadings, as the following quotation indicates: "I have just finished the Second Volume of Revelation, and how much blessing the Lord has bestowed in giving us an understanding of the conditions around us. I had read the volumes twice, and the light in them seemed to be so much brighter this time, for which I praise and thank the Lord." Some are finding in the Revelation and Daniel volumes a means of service to those who are inquiring the way to truth, recommending and distributing them, to these inquiring ones.

The conditions that lead us to believe the last quarter-mark of the race course must soon be reached by the last of the runners, have also brought us into closer contact with many of our brethren in distant lands, as their physical needs have increased. The brethren of this land, knowing of our acquaintance with the requirements of these brethren who have less of the physical necessities, have placed funds in our hands and requested- that they be used to help the suffering brethren of Europe. This it has been a great pleasure to do. For those brethren who have clothing to send, we again suggest that we shall be glad to give such information as we have regarding the most needy ones to whom to send the various items, but that it will be best to send them from their own post offices where such service is available. Also these offices will give all information regarding the requirements as to size and weight of packages.

Humanly speaking, there are two misfortunes in connection with our correspondence with the brethren in Europe: that their letters must probably suffer somewhat through translation, and that our space will not permit sharing all of them with our readers. The Lord's overruling however has made these brethren a great blessing to us as well as to our slightly less needy brethren of Great Britain. Between the lines the letters tell much more of victory than of suffering; all speak of hope, none of despair. Few of the letters receive the reply we wish might be sent. All the friends, we trust, realize our limitations and rejoice with us that we do have the privilege of some, though meager, fellowship by this means.

Number of letters received	4,460
Number of, letters sent out	5,975

Different needs require different forms of service. In the Lord's providence this has been provided in all lands. For our small share in any field of his service we rejoice, and rejoice also and pray for all others being used of him, trusting that the coming year will be one of great blessing and usefulness for all so engaged.

As the by-laws of our association provide that the membership shall be of those who are "in full harmony with the purpose, spirit, and policy of the Institute," we make this report that you may know whether you have been successful in electing to directorship those who are of the same spirit. The directors close this year with a prayer that the coming one may see in still greater measure the blessing of the Lord, manifested perhaps not in numbers, but surely in continued and if possible still greater growth spiritually, and this they pray not for those of our association alone. To that end, dear brethren, while giving diligence to make our calling and election sure, let us not forget to do with our might what our hands find to do, lifting up the hands that hang down and strengthening the feeble knees, being faithful in that which is least that we may be counted worthy of the greater service of the glorious Kingdom.

Treasurer's Report
Balance Sheet
April 30, 1948

Assets

Cash -- On hand and in bank		\$13,757.96
Accounts Receivable		136.43
Inventory of Books, etc.		
Pocket Edition-Divine Plan	\$393.68	
Revelation Exposition-Vol. I	421.00	
Daniel Exposition	448.00	
Hell Booklet,		
Our Lord's Return Booklet,		
Tabernacle Shadows, etc	<u>273.80</u>	
Total Inventory		1,536.48
Miscellaneous Securities. (Net)		1.00
Annuities Receivable		9,165.30
Property at 177 Prospect Place, Brooklyn,		<u>12,000.00</u>
Total Assets		\$36,597.17
Less: Liabilities		<u>none .</u>
Net Worth (as per statement below)		\$36,597.17

Statement of Income and Expense and Analysis of Net Worth
May 1, 1947 to April 30, 1948

Income

Contributions-General Purpose		\$ 7,081.43
Legacies		none
"Herald" Subscriptions		1,444.69
Gain on Sale of Books, etc		152.27
Rental Income		<u>540.00</u>
Total Income		\$ 9,218.39

Expenses

Pilgrim Expense	\$2,524.58	
Printing and mailing "Herald"	2,275.87	
Allowances to Office Staff	1,170.00	
Allowance to "Herald" Contributor	360.00	
Allowances to Pilgrims	none	
Free Literature	537.73	
Maintenance of property, including		
taxes, coal, gas, electricity,		
insurance and repairs	872.72	
Comfort Committee Expense	723.96	
Office Expense	<u>393.08</u>	
Total Expense		<u>8,857.94</u>
Net Income for fiscal year		\$ 360.45
Net Worth, May 1, 1947		<u>36,236.72</u>
Net Worth, April 30, 1948		<u>\$36,597.17</u>
(as per Balance Sheet above)		

Inventory and Sales of Books

	Inventory	Sales
Pocket Edition, Divine Plan	1,064	97
Revelation Exposition, Volume I	842	20
Daniel Exposition	896	44
Hell Pamphlet	1,439	45
Our Lord's Return Pamphlet	1,447	41

Statement of Auditors

The books of account of the Pastoral Bible Institute were examined by us covering the fiscal period from May 1, 1947 to April 30, 1948, and in our opinion and to the best of our knowledge and belief they show the correct picture of operations and that the foregoing financial statements are in agreement with the said books of account.

Thomas P. Tillema
Frederick A. Lange
Louis Newman

Report of Annual Meeting

Those members of the Institute who were able to do so assembled in the afternoon of June 5 for the election of directors, as provided by the charter of the Pastoral Bible Institute. Absent members were represented by their proxies. Following the custom of years, the chair man of the Board, Brother J. C. Jordan, opened the meeting with a season of devotion. The reports of the year's activities were then heard. The Auditors were then asked to act as tellers for the election. During the counting of the ballots and proxies by the tellers a message of love for the brethren in Great Britain was entrusted to Brother J. T. Read. (This included the Scripture from the Song of Solomon (4:16) :. "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.") Some discussion of the means and methods of enlarging and making more effective our, services followed.

The Chairman of tellers having announced that Brothers B. F. Hollister, H. E. Hollister, J. C. Jordan, J. T. Read, P. L. Read, W. J. Siekman, and P. E. Thomson, had been elected to serve as directors for the coming year; it was voted to entrust the ballots and proxies to the secretary for safekeeping for six months after which time they are to be destroyed.

The meeting of the new board, which immediately followed, elected as officers: Brothers J. C. Jordan, Chairman; J. T. Read, Vice-chairman; P. L. Read, Treasurer; P. E. Thomson, Secretary. The Editorial Committee of hast year was reappointed Brothers H. E. Hollister, J. T. Read, P. L. Read, W. J. Siekman, and P. E. Thomson. Pilgrims appointed for full time service are: Brothers H. E. Hollister,, J. T. Read, and P. E. Thomson; part time: Brothers LaRoy Benedict, C. Czohara, J. Dawson, F. A. Essler, C. M. Glass, E. W. Hinz, B. F. Hollister, J. C. Jordan, W. Lankheim, C. Loucky, W. H. Peck, F. Petran, P. L. Read, W. C. Roberts, W. J. Siekman, T. G. Smith, T. Tillema, W. Urban, A. L. Vining, J. B. Webster, and J. Wyndelts.

Christian Liberty Based on Principle

WE MUST never forget that our authorization to meet as brethren is the Master's Word: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:20.) As this is our charter-right for meeting as the Lord's people, we must concede an equal right under it to all of God's people who may choose to meet in his name at any place and at any time. We should remember the Bible illustration of this principle: On one occasion the twelve disciples had returned from a preaching tour, and St. John said to Jesus, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us." (Luke 9:49, 50.) This one forbidden by John would correspond well with some now holding meetings other than those which we attend. What did Jesus say? "Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me." - Mark 9:38-40.

Here is a general principle which will serve to guide, to instruct God's people of today respecting his will in similar matters. We, of course, think our arrangements most pleasing to the Lord, or we would not have them so. If others think differently, the responsibility is with them and with the Lord. It is not for us to forbid them, but it is for the Lord to bless them or not to bless them, according to his wisdom in the management of his work.

Some one may suggest, Would not this thought, acted upon, break up the meetings of the Lord's people into *very* small classes? We reply that this must depend upon the brethren themselves. They have the right to meet in twos and threes or in larger numbers. If they can find it to their advantage to meet in larger groups, no doubt they will be glad to do so. This means a great deal of liberty in the Church within the lines of the word and spirit of Jesus' teaching, directly and through his Apostles.

Brethren meeting as a class should understand that in so doing they properly waive, or make void, some of their personal liberties and privileges. Individual preferences are to be more or less subjected to class preferences. Even the majority of the class should be considerate of the wishes of the minority, and if possible, should moderate the arrangements, so that all can be accommodated and pleased in respect to speakers, and in respect to place and character of meetings. No one should selfishly consider merely his own preferences and welfare. The spirit of cooperation, the Golden Rule, the spirit of love, should prevail. And as this is true, all those filled with the spirit of the Master and living close to him will find fellowship one with another in yielding personal preferences in the interest of the whole number.

CONSCIENCE TO BE RESPECTED

The only things that may not be yielded to the will of the majority are matters of *conscience*. No one is to do what he believes to be sin, injustice, wrong, even though all the remainder of the brethren think it right. And no one is to leave undone what his conscience dictates, even though so directed by all the remainder of the brethren of the class.

Conscience is always to be respected -- never to be throttled or violated. Nor is any one who stands faithful to his conscience to be disesteemed therefor by his brethren, even if their consciences view the matter differently. On the contrary, his courage in standing by his convictions is to be considered estimable.

On these principles liberty may be maintained in the Body of Christ; and we shall find blessing in proportion as those of one mind can fellowship with each other. Where fellowship is not maintained, the assembling is neither desirable nor in harmony with the divine arrangement. But where the brethren find it advantageous to meet in different classes, it will usually be found, we believe, that originally too great restraint of personal liberty was exercised, and that the majority were too careless of the sentiments of the brethren constituting the minority.

But even where it may be found necessary or desirable to have more than one gathering of the Lord's people in one city, it certainly still is true that they should have one heart and one mind, and be of one brotherhood under the Anointed Head. They should consider each other's interests, and do all in their power "to provoke one another to love and to good works." - Hebrews 10:24. - *Reprints p. R5501. W. T., July 15, 1914.*

Extracts from "The New Creation"

All logical minds delight in reaching *a decision*, if possible, respecting every item of truth; and this the Apostle declares should be striven for by each member of the Church for himself -- "in his own mind." It is a common mistake, however, to attempt to apply this personally good rule to a Church or to a class in Bible study -- to attempt to force all to *decide on* exactly the same conclusion respecting the meaning of the Lord's Word. It is proper that we should wish that all might "see eye to eye"; but it is not reasonable to expect it when we know that all are fallen from perfection, not only of body, but also of mind, and that these deflections are in various directions, as shown by the various shapes of head to be found in any gathering of people. Our various kinds and degrees of education are important factors also in assisting or hindering oneness of view.

But does not the Apostle intimate that we should all, mind the same things? -- and that we will be all taught of God so that we will all have the spirit of a sound mind? -- and that we should expect to grow in grace and knowledge, building one another up in the most holy faith?

Yes, all this is true; but it is not intimated that it will all be attained in one meeting. The Lord's people not only have differently developed heads, and differences in experience or education, but they are additionally of different ages as New Creatures -- babes, youths, matured. It must not surprise us, therefore, if some are slower than others to comprehend and, hence, slower to be fully persuaded in their own minds respecting some of "the deep things of God." They must grasp the *fundamentals* -- that all were sinners; that Christ Jesus, our Leader, *redeemed us by* his sacrifice finished at Calvary; that we are now in the school of Christ to be taught and fitted for the Kingdom and its service; and that none enter this school except upon full consecration of their all to the Lord. These things all must see and fully and always assent to, else we could not recognize them as even baby brothers in the New Creation; but we have all need of patience with each other, and forbearance with each other's peculiarities--and behind these must 'be *love*, increasing every grace of the spirit as we attain more and more nearly to its fulness.

This being so, all questions, all answers, all remarks in meetings where several participate should be *for* the entire company present (and not personal to any one or any number), and should, therefore, be *addressed to the Chairman*, who represents all -- except when the Chairman may for convenience request the speaker to face and address the audience direct. Hence, too, after having expressed his own view, each is quietly to hear the views of others and not feel called to debate or restate his already stated position. Having used his opportunity, each is to trust to the Lord to guide and teach and show the truth, and should not insist that all must be *made to see* every item as he sees it, nor even as the majority view it. "On essentials, unity; on nonessentials, charity," is the proper rule to be followed.

We agree, however, that every item of truth is important, and that the smallest item of error is injurious, and that the Lord's people should pray and strive for unity in knowledge; but we must not hope to attain this by force. Unity of spirit on the first basic principles of truth is the important thing; and where this is maintained we may be confident that our Lord *will guide* all possessing it into all truth due and necessary to him. It is in this connection that the leaders of the Lord's flock need special wisdom and love and force of character and clearness in the Truth, so that at the conclusion of each meeting he who has led may be able to summarize the Scriptural findings and leave all minds under their blessed influence-expressing -himself clearly, positively, lovingly-but never dogmatically, except upon the foundation principles. - S. S. *Vol. VI*, pp. F326-F328.

Unity of faith is desirable; it is to be striven for -yet not the kind of unity that is generally aimed at. Unity is to be along the lines of "the faith once delivered unto the saints" in its purity and simplicity, and with full liberty to each member to take different views of minor points, and with no instruction whatever in respect to human speculations, theories, etc. The Scriptural idea of unity is upon the foundation principles of the Gospel: (1) Our redemption through the precious blood, and our justification by faith therein. (2) Our consecration, sanctification, setting apart to the Lord, the Truth and their service -- including the service of the brethren. (3) Aside from these essentials, upon which unity must be demanded, there can be no Scriptural fellowship-upon every other point fullest liberty is to be accorded, with, however, a desire to see, and to help others to see the divine plan in its every feature and detail Thus each member of the Body of Christ, maintaining his own personal liberty, is so thoroughly devoted to the Head and to all the members that it will be his pleasure to lay down all, even life itself, on their behalf. - S. S. *Vol. VI*. p. F240.

The Apostle declares that it is the Lord's pleasure that there be no schism in the Body -- no splits, no divisions. With human methods divisions are unavoidable -- except as in Papacy's period of triumph, when the nominal system became powerful and used drastic methods of persecution in dealing with all not fully in accord with itself. That, however, was *a unity of force*, of compulsion -- an outward unity, and not a unity of the heart. Those whom the Son makes free can never participate heartily in such unions, in which personal liberty is utterly destroyed. The difficulty with the Protestant denominations is not that they are too liberal and, therefore, have separated into many fragments, but rather that they still have much of the spirit of the mother institution, without possessing the power which she at one time exercised for quelling and suppressing liberty of thought. We will, doubtless, surprise many by saying, that instead of having too many divisions or splits of the kind we now see on every hand, 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. - S. S. *Vol. VI*, pp. F241, F242.

Holding the Profession of Our Faith

"Having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.' Let us hold fast the Profession of our faith without wavering." - Heb. 10:19-39.

THE AUTHOR of the Book of Hebrews, be he who he may, was well acquainted with the laws and ceremonies of the Jewish people and with the ancient customs of the Israelites in their early experiences in the wilderness, with the tabernacle of the congregation, its furniture, and especially with its priesthood. He recognizes them as a type and compares the priests of the Aaronic order with Melchisedec, that higher type of Christ, "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually" - "who received tithes from Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises." "And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him."

He is addressing a class of Jewish Christians who still lived in Palestine and under the disturbing influences of the old order of things, and in great danger of falling away from the new, and lapsing again into that condition from which they had escaped. He is appealing to them by reminding them of the superiority of the antitype, of the greatness of Christ, and the new order, when measured by the old sacrificial order-great as that was in the sight of the Jew of his day, who had it firmly engrafted into his very being by sixteen centuries of more or less close obedience. The Jew regarded himself as the chosen of God even though he had constantly departed from the Law. He remembered the miraculous deliveries of his people; God's leading from Egypt into the promised land; the glorious prophecies of his future greatness; the songs of David; the measure of achievement in the days of the Maccabees.

UNFOLDING GLORIOUS TRUTHS HIDDEN IN THE TABERNACLE

Looking back over the nineteen intervening centuries we see the scheming leaders; the priests and politicians of the day, inciting the populace against their Roman oppressors. The Jew was never conquered in spirit and he readily reacted to their play upon his nature. Prejudice, hatred, and all the evil of a distorted mind were let loose, little realizing to what he was hastening both as an individual and as a nation-that great tragedy of destruction which in God's plan was permitted to engulf them, scattering, them over the face, of the earth, where "they served other gods than they whom their fathers served."

At such a time the teaching of the despised Nazarene was equal to heresy and treachery, for it not only shocked their religious sense, but the national as well, for the followers of Christ have been taught that his "Kingdom is not of this world else would his soldiers fight." They were encouraged to nonresistance when the armies of the conquerors should come upon them. They were held in abhorrence because of this and coupled with their love of the old ritual and the memory of their former glory they found themselves longing for the "flesh pots of Egypt," so to speak. They had lost their first love, and were tempted to renounce the cause of him under whose banner they had enlisted.

The writer of the Epistle warns them of the danger of backsliding and explains to them the glories and beauties to which the old ordinances point, the hidden purposes of the rites and ceremonies of the old regime. He leads them step by step in the unfolding of these truths; shows to them how much higher God's ways are than man's ways; speaks of the marvels and wonders of the type and

shows them the grandeur, the greater glories, of the antitype. Great as was Moses, Christ is greater. Important as was the sacrifice of bulls and goats, it must be repeated each year and for each offense against the moral and ceremonial laws of Moses, while the sacrifice of Christ was made once for all-for all time and for all mankind. He endeavored to stir up their pure minds to a remembrance of the things in which they once rejoiced, of how the old order of things must give way to the new, and of how the Ancient of Days had given to One like unto the Son of Man an everlasting Kingdom -- a Kingdom which should never pass away. The Master had taught them to pray for the coming of that Kingdom upon the earth, that the will of God should be done upon earth as it is done in heaven. With an understanding of the old tabernacle and its services we are better prepared to understand the mind of the Jewish Christian and of the writer of this Epistle to the Hebrews.

STAND FAST IN THE FAITH

As the test was upon the Church of that day, so is it upon the Church of today. Our experiences are similar to theirs. How great the temptation sometimes to yield a little here and a little there, to compromise to a small degree with the spirit of the Age, tempted to listen to the voice of the siren and be lured upon the rocks of false views coming like strong delusions upon the Church. How often we need the Apostle's admonition "Stand fast therefore in the liberty. wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." - Gal. 5:1.

To stand fast means to continue well grounded in the faith once delivered to the saints as touching upon sound doctrines, contending earnestly for that faith in a Creator, who prompted by his love for a race made for his own pleasure, has given us an outline of his Plan for their salvation, their recovery from the degradation to which sin has carried them; faith in the redemptive work of Christ as the foundation upon which is built the entire structure of the Christian Church, that Church whose names were written in heaven before the foundation of the world; faith in the "exceeding great and precious promises that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." - 2 Pet. 1:3, 4.

These things and many others are being assailed by the enemies of God. Doubt and uncertainty prevail upon every side, and few know today just where they do stand in regard to their religious beliefs. We find that the promised strong delusions are abroad deceiving all but the very elect. But let us press on unto full sanctification, for this is the will of God. - 1 Thess. 4:3.

"Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of •Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God ... And this we will do, if God permit." - Heb. 6:1, 3.

The Apostle explains how the typical ceremonies and the high priest pointed to a new arrangement upon an infinitely higher plane, and says, "We have such an high priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens: a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man." (Heb. 8:1, 2.) Again referring to the Atonement Day sacrifice, he says of the high priest, "And it is appointed unto men once to die but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." - Heb. 9:27, 28.

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. Wherefore when *he* cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sins thou

hast no pleasure. . . . Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By, the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." -- Heb. 10:1-10, 19.

NEED FOR THE APOSTLE'S WARNING TODAY

Here is the Apostle's appeal to the Jewish Christian of his day. While our difficulties are not exactly those of his time, yet they may be similar, and we may be in danger of falling away after we have once tasted of the heavenly gift and have been "made partakers of the holy spirit." The same appeal and the same warnings may be needed to bring us into a close relationship with our Lord and Master. Our faith in God and our affections may have weakened; we may be dozing and may need awakening.

The writer of this Epistle has most powerfully shown the superiority of the new and living way based upon the sacrifice of Jesus. While we are not in -danger of passing over into Judaism, yet there are things which may just as surely bring about our destruction, "for if we sin willfully after that we have received a knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

If we look within ourselves with a mind open, what may we find? Do we maintain the fervor and intensity of our early Christian life? Have we departed in any way or degree from our first love? Are we developing character, 'and do we show increasingly the fruit of the spirit? We may be zealous for the cause of Christ, and we may do much work, but is there anything lacking which we once possessed? If so, how can we make our way back to our former condition of loyalty, and maintain our standing before God? Have we to any degree trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith we were sanctified, an unholy thing, and have we done despite unto the spirit of grace?

The Apostle has made a masterful comparison of the type and antitype, between Moses and Christ, between the sacrifice of the old economy and that of our Savior. He had compared our High Priest with the Jewish high priest and shown the failure of the latter and the superiority and efficacy of the former. He had explained how the high priest entered once a year into the holy of holies with the blood of the bullock and the goat to sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, to make atonement for the coming year, and if properly done it was indicated by his emerging and blessing the people. As he passed under the veil he represented the death of the true Christian and his entering the presence of God as a member of the Body of Christ. It also represented according to the argument the privilege of each consecrated Christian of this Age coming through the Head of our great High Priest into the presence of God himself that we might commune with him. Here we find our High Priest, as our advocate, vouching for us as long as we remain under his robe of righteousness.

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST ALWAYS EFFICACIOUS

We are bidden to enter with boldness into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus-boldness, not in the sense of impudence, but in the sense that our welcome is assured. Thus we may come boldly to God by the blood of Jesus Christ and lay before him the problems which perplex us, and obtain help by the renewing of our strength at the Source of all strength. Entrance into the most holy was forbidden to all men except the high priest, but now we have access to the real Holy of Holies, for the first was but an emblem of the second, into which we may enter by this "new" and living way, the original meaning of which referred to something slain recently or just dead. The word "new" occurs nowhere else in the New Testament with this meaning and indicates a freshly prepared way, and a living way, because it is always open, the blood of Christ always as efficacious as when it was first shed, while the blood of the animal sacrificed must be sprinkled while it was yet warm, before it became clotted and accounted polluted. It is the way of life for the whole race in God's due time. It is like a fountain always flowing, constant and perpetual, unchanging as the living God himself-a way consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say his flesh, set aside for us, his Body, and for the salvation of man. His body here is likened to the veil which separated the holy from the most holy of the tabernacle, beyond which none dared even to look, while we are bidden to enter boldly into his presence because we have a High Priest over the house of God, a greater than the high priest over the tabernacle in the Jewish economy.

"HEARTS SPRINKLED FROM AN EVIL CONSCIENCE"

The next exhortation is to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Of what possible avail can this new and living way be unless we make use of it. We are living in a day of great intellectuality, when men are questioning all things, when their materialism demands visible proof before a proposition is accepted as true. Speculative religion has replaced the faith professed by those of the past. Belief in God with his provision for the race no longer fills the minds of men with hope. Education seems to have separated God from man rather than to have drawn him closer. Increase of knowledge has made man a skeptic, an agnostic, or has lost him in a maze of discordant views and he exclaims, Who knows? -- or with Pilate of old, "What is truth?" To quote, "You may prove that this Book contains a divine revelation, but it is very possible that the proof may go for nothing and the belief it produces perish, unless by the devout study of the sacred pages the conscience and the heart come to discover that a voice of mighty and mysterious power speaks through the writings of prophets, psalmists, evangelists, and apostles. You may prove that by the Lord Jesus Christ atonement was made for human sin, but nothing can infallibly perpetuate a full assurance of this great doctrine, except the consciousness that through Christ's death the soul is enabled to speak to God without fear."

"CLEANSE THOU ME FROM SECRET FAULTS"

The Apostle has proved that through the death of Christ we may enter boldly into the holiest, so he emphatically says, "Let us draw near." How comforting to us, if we feel that in any way whatsoever we may have become lax in our privileges, if our love has grown cold, if we have allowed the things of the flesh to unduly occupy our consecrated minds and crowd out the spiritual things, if we have become indifferent and lukewarm in our devotions, or by any other means, upon self-examination we find we are not measuring up to our privileges.

We may go further in our examination with the, searchlight of a sensitive conscience turned within us. Are we guilty of any secret sin visible perhaps only to ourselves and our God?

"Cleanse thou me from secret faults," is the remedy. Let us scrutinize ourselves with a sane and honest scrutiny. Let us remove any spot or wrinkle from our garments. "The way, thou knowest." We have an Advocate with the Father. Let us cry unto him for help, for he is faithful that promised. Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance that the shed blood is efficacious, with an unwavering confidence which leaves no doubt, with a heart sprinkled from an evil conscience. Sin repented of is freely forgiven and no longer produces remorse and fear of God's wrath, but a consciousness of joy and peace with gratitude and love welling up and overflowing, and we realize that God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of love, and of power, and of a sound mind. We emerge from the experience with a feeling of increased strength and confidence in God's love, for we have again proved that he cares for us, and that we have a part in the divine Plan, and that he is gracious and ready to forgive.

- S. D. Bennett.

(To be continued)

Think on These Things

[The thoughts set forth in the following article were furnished by a Brother in his 91st year. We would like to think that our minds would be as clear and logical, should the Lord's providence call upon any of us to reach such an age. - Editors.]

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." - Phil. 4:8

THESE WORDS of instruction and exhortation given by the Apostle Paul to the Philippian believers constituted the 1947 yearly theme text suggested by the publishers of "The Herald" for the consideration of its Bible student readers.

"Think on these things"! -- What things? Why, says Paul, on the things that are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, of good report--those things having virtue and that are praise-worthy. This Philippian Church was one of the first of Paul's planting in Europe, and was deeply loved by him because they were a lovable class of *united* brethren in Christ. And yet the Apostle continues to pray for their further development and growth in grace and knowledge.

In verses 9 and 10, chapter 1, he says: It is my prayer that your love may *abound* yet more and more, and may be accompanied by clear knowledge, and a keen perception, for the testing of things that differ: so that you may be men of transparent character, blameless and harmless, in *preparation* for the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God.

The "*called in Christ*," therefore, are a class in preparation for service in "*the day of Christ*," the day of his power and his Kingdom. The Poet enlarges on these words of Paul, and says:

"Take time to be *holy*, Be calm in thy soul;
Each thought and each motive Beneath His control;
Thus led by His Spirit To fountains of love,
Thou soon shalt be fitted For service above."

"Think on these things" was a very fitting text to follow the one of the previous year which was "*Selah*." This term "*Selah*" is used in the Psalms about 71 times, and several times by the Prophet Habakkuk. Its significance, while somewhat uncertain, is said to be that of a musical mark or sign which called for a pause by the singers of the temple choir, while the players of instruments continued to play on. If true, this would seem to suggest a period of calm meditation or reflection on the words that had just been sung.

Fausett's Bible Encyclopedia says that the mark, *Selah*, reminds us that the Psalm, or the words of the Psalm, or other so marked statements of the Scriptures, or a Divine prophecy, calls for, and requires a peaceful and meditative soul, which can apprehend what the spirit propounds; and suggests that what is written is of deep, and far-reaching significance.

The Scripture that was given for consideration in 1946 was Hosea 6:3. Quoting from the American Revised Version, it reads impressively: "Let us know! Let us follow on to know Jehovah: his going forth is sure as the morning." And we would add, *Selah*.

Instructed then by the further harmony of the Lord's Word and its teachings, we say, Yes! his going forth in the development of his plans and purposes for the blessing of his people, and the restoration of all things, "is sure as the morning light." The shortest and simplest yet most homely definition of the term *Selah* that we can give is Stop, Look, Listen -- three things that the world, and even some Bible students, fail to always practice.

The poet says: "*Take time* to be holy! The world rushes on!" Our dear Brother Ritchie once said, "Let the crowd go by, but let *us know* our God, and follow on with him. Seek ye first of all, the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other needed blessings shall be added unto you: Don't worry! *Be sure God will take care of you.*"

But how shall such fallen, imperfect beings, so far from God in their blemished condition, come to know him who is so far above them, so holy, so high -perfect? I recall that Brother Barton once said that though God is so great, nevertheless, he is humble. He knows that he is the greatest being in the universe; he knows that the universe could not get along without him, even for a single moment, but God is humble; for it requires true humility on God's part to condescend to fallen, blemished human creatures, such as we are, so far beneath him. It is a truly noble attribute of the Divine perfection and its operation is evidently wise and profitable or it would not be exercised by God in the successful development of his purposes.

The Apostle Paul, in substance, says that God takes this very humble, though wise, course in this Age, in order to show to all his intelligent creatures, men and angels, his much diversified wisdom and creative power, in the call and development of the Body of The Christ, his new creation, the Elect Church of this Gospel Age taking them out of the fallen human race; training them in the school of Christ and under his leadership, that he might exalt them far above angels and principalities and powers, and every name that is named, either in heaven or on earth, and seat them with Christ his Son beside himself on the throne of the universe. *Selah*.

There is a very natural disposition on the part of many to say: This is far too great a change-far too great an honor for fallen, unworthy creatures, such as we are, to expect or to hope for, or even to talk about. But let us not forget that this new creation is God's work, and our part in its development is to exercise faith in God, and in his Word of promise; and to submit our wills to him, to be led, molded, and fashioned according to his good will.

And so the Apostle says, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God"; not on account of works which we have done-or can do, lest any man should boast: for ye are God's workmanship, created (new creatures) in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:8-10.) Let us not overlook the fact that Paul talks eloquently about the hopes and prospects of this new creation (Eph. 1:9, 10, 15-23) and here prays that God will give us the knowledge and understanding which we should have of this high calling.

Jesus made it plain that these honors promised to the new creation would be given only to those overcomers who prepare themselves for them; and for whom they are prepared. We are also plainly told by the Apostle that we are called to joint-heirship with Christ in all that was purchased with his blood, as well as in all his Father's possessions. (Rom. 8: 17,18.) This is what joint-heirship means; and Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

The story is told of an earnest and anxious seeker after light and knowledge who set out to find the one true Church, but after he had traveled long, he became weary of his fruitless search, and

knelt down in the dust to pray. While he prayed, a holy rapture stole through his inquiring soul, and a strange visitor came into sight. Beseechingly he asked: Who art thou? But such a hallowed splendor filled the place, he knew it was the Lord's own face. I was a sinner, he said, and was afraid; then kneeling there in the dust I prayed:

"O Christ my Lord, end Thou my search,
And lead me to the one true Church;
He spoke as never man may speak,
The one true Church, thou shouldst not seek!
Seek thou forever more, instead,
To find the one true Christ its head.
The Lord then vanished from my sight,
And left me standing in the light."

As a fitting climax to this story, we have that beautiful old Gospel hymn that so well expresses the same thought, and tells what walking in the light will mean:

"Walk in the light; so shalt thou know
That fellowship of love
His Spirit only can bestow,
Who reigns in light above.

"Walk in the light! and thou shalt find
Thy heart made truly His
Who dwells in cloudless light enshrined,
In whom no darkness is.

"Walk in the light! and thou shalt own
Thy darkness passed away,
Because that light hath on thee shone,
In which is perfect day.

"Walk in the light! thy path shall be,
Peaceful, serene, and bright;
For God, by grace, shall dwell in thee,
And God Himself is light."

The answer then to the question, How shall we come to know God, the high and holy One of Israel, is given by the Lord Jesus himself. He said, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." (Matt. 11:27.) Ye shall seek for me and find me, when ye search for me with all your heart. (Deut. 4:29.) Furthermore, he tells us that the Father had given him power over all flesh; that he should give eternal life to those that were given him. (John 17:2.) And the purpose of that life is the knowing of God and Christ: "That they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." - John 17:3.

Our hearts respond to these plain statements of the Lord, and with all our heart we say: Yea Lord, we want to know thee better; and all thy grace explore: for we feel sure that if we could know our heavenly Father better, we should love him far more. Let us then who are begotten by his holy spirit of truth, and who know the joyful sound, (Psa. 89:15, 16) follow on to know our God better,

whose goings forth on our behalf are as the morning light, which shineth more and more brightly unto its full noonday power of the perfect day. - See Prov. 4:18; Isa. 30:26; Rev. 10:5-7.

Then too, through the Prophet Malachi (3:16,17) God has said that out of this class who think on his name, his character, his plans and purposes, and who talk about them often one to another-he will in due time make up his jewels; and through them establish his Kingdom, the Kingdom for which. Jesus taught us to pray: "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven." "Know ye not," said Paul, that "The saints shall judge the world; yea, they shall even judge angels. -1 Cor. 6:2,3; Dan. 7:22,27.

"THINK ON THESE THINGS"

A certain very well known commentator has said: "There are very few subjects for meditation that will be found so full of blessing as the meditation upon the *image* of God as that image is manifested, in the life, work, and teachings of Jesus. It is recorded that Jesus said: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father"; and when the bewildered multitude asked him, "What shall we do to work the works of God?" Jesus answered, "This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent." - John 14:9; 6:28, 29.

"Labor not, for the meat which perisheth: but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed." (John 6:27.) The flesh, Jesus said, profiteth nothing: it is the spirit of the truth that gives life; the words which I have spoken unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. - John 6:63.

It is a very proper question that is sometimes asked: "Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?" Indeed, the Apostle advises us to examine ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5) whether we be in the faith. This text is made even more forceful in the translation that reads: "Examine yourselves, whether ye are holding to your faith." Are we as fervently in love with the Lord, with his will and ways, and with his faithful brethren, as we were when we started to walk with him in the narrow way of life? Do you understand, the Apostle asks, how that Jesus Christ is in you (now, and to continue) lest in the end you be castaways? Has your anchor held? Will it continue to hold in the storms of life, when the clouds unfold their winds of strife? When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain, will your anchor drift, or will it firm remain?

If from the full assurance of faith there comes the heart-cheering answer, Yes! The old ship of Zion is safely moored, it will the storms of life withstand, for it is well secured by the Savior's hand, and the cables, passed from his heart to mine, can defy all blasts through strength Divine, then, fastened to the Rock which cannot move, grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love, we may rest secure in the blood-bought hope and possession, which, if we remain faithful, will assure us a place with him forever more. - See Eph. 1:13, 14.

FAITH AND IMPORTUNATE PRAYER

The Apostle says, "Faith is the victory that overcometh the world." We have an example of this in the life of Jacob, to which reference is made in Isaiah (Isa. 43:1, 2), where we read: "Thus saith the Lord [Jehovah] that created thee, O Jacob; and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine."

When, we ask, did God call Jacob by his name? And what is the name referred to? Evidently, it was the time that is spoken of in Genesis (Gen. 32:24-28) where it tells of Jacob's experience in wrestling with the angel. God told Jacob to return to his own country, and that he would bless him

there. But Jacob was fearful of Esau, and of what might happen to him; and he besought God for a renewal and further conscious assurance of the hopes and promises that had been given to his father, Abraham. And there appeared an angel of God who contended with him (as it were a man) until the break of day, at which time, the angel sought excuse to leave Jacob, intimating that he had other duties that needed his attention: "Let me go, the day breaketh." But No! Jacob's soul was too deeply moved: this was a critical time in his life; he hungered and thirsted for the important blessing which he sought, and would not allow this solemn hour to break up without the promised and hoped for results. And so he said to the angel, No! "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

It was then that the angel asked, "What is thy name?" And when told it was Jacob, the angel replied, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob [supplanter] but Israel [a prince with God]: for as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed"; and the angel blessed him there. Faith and importunate prayer had prevailed.

It has been observed that many say prayers, but how many really pray?

"Were half the breath that's vainly spent
To heaven in supplication sent,
Our cheerful song would oftener be,
See what the Lord hath done for me."

God' knew before the birth of the twins, that Jacob would be the one that would really appreciate the birthright, and so he overruled the circumstances of their lives so that the worthy one might have the opportunity; and when Jacob, through prayer and supplication, had prevailed with God, he was given a suitable name, and was claimed by God as his own: "Thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers; they shall not overflow thee: When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior." - Isa. 43:1, 2.

Inspired by the spirit of God's many promises of love and care for his faithful people in their extremities, and by the many examples of his faithfulness on record in his Word, Charles Wesley penned the lines of the hymn that follows:

"God of Thine Israel's faithful three,
Who braved the tyrant's ire:
Who nobly scorned to bow the knee,
And walked unhurt in fire.

"O breathe their faith into my breast,
In every trying hour;
And stand, O Son of Man, confessed
In all Thy saving power.

"The hosts of sin their wars may wage,
I mark their vain designs,
And calmly smile to see them rage
Against a child of Thine."

The Psalmist's question is reasonably and fervently our question too: "From whence cometh the knowledge and help we need to know, to love and worship God, in a way pleasing to him, and profitable to us? "My help cometh from God"; "My soul wait thou only upon him "From him cometh my salvation"; "He only is my rock"; "From him is, my expectation and my defense"; "I

shall not be greatly moved"; "Hear my prayer, O Lord"; "When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I."

"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Psa. 16:11.) "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness." - Psa. 17:15.

One of Brother Blackburn's favorite hymns was "Higher Ground," and it seemed to voice the spirit of his entire Christian life in his ministry of the truth:

"I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining every day;
Still praying as I onward bound,
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.

"I want to live above the world,
Though Satan's darts at me are hurled
For faith has caught the joyful sound,
The song of saints on higher ground.

"Lord, lift me up, and I shall stand,
By faith on heaven's table-land,
A higher plane than I have found,
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."

- Johnson Oatman, Jr.

There also comes to mind the words of another old hymn that seems to carry this happy theme a little farther:

"Our God is love, let all His saints
His image bear below;
The heart with love by God inspired,
Will love to all men show.

"Let all in whom the Spirit dwells,
In whom God's Word hath place;
The all-uniting faith disclose,
The all-enduring grace."

- H. D. White.

The Shepherd's Care

THE TABLE OF HIS PROVIDING

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." - Psa. 23:5.

AMONG those who have sought to discover and unfold the practical significance of this wonderful shepherd Psalm, this "rarest gem in the song treasury of the world," the thought seems to be quite general that the Psalmist at this point changes the figure from that of the experiences of the shepherd and his sheep to that of a banquet table. One who has given much careful study to this Psalm, and who has brought forth from it many wonderful, practical, and comforting thoughts that have been greatly blessed to the Lord's sheep, interprets it this way, and has expressed this general thought, as follows: "At first it seems difficult to catch the exact sequence of the Psalmist's thought, as he turns from the sheep-cotes to the festal board."

But, is it necessary, we ask, to understand that the Psalmist at this point changes the figure? We are inclined to think not. One who was familiar with every circumstance and condition connected with the varied experiences of the Syrian shepherd and his sheep, and who is therefore good authority on this point, has said that it is in the words, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies," that the grand climax of completeness in the shepherd's care of his sheep is reached: "Ah, to think that the shepherd's highest skill and heroism should be lost from view as the Psalm begins to sing of it, and only an indoor banquet thought of!" As we come to learn more fully concerning the tender, watchful care of the Syrian shepherd in providing sustenance for his sheep, and in protecting them from their enemies while they are feeding in the prepared pasture, we believe that it will be seen that this Syrian writer has the true, the correct thought, that this most helpful and comforting Psalm continues to its very end to describe the experiences of a shepherd and his sheep; and it is only when considered from this viewpoint that we are enabled to draw from it the most comforting and helpful lessons. In other words, while it is true that the great central truths designed to be taught in the use of this figure is that of the Great Shepherd's provision for the feeding and protecting of his sheep, it is not necessary to understand that the Psalmist's thought at this point in the beautiful song turns from the sheep-cotes to the festal board or the indoor banquet. Perhaps that which has caused so many to think that the beautiful figure of shepherd life has been changed to that of a banquet hall or festal board is that the Psalmist makes use of the word table -- "Thou preparest a table." Concerning this, it will be seen by all, we believe, that the word table is here used figuratively, as also in other of the Psalms. Referring to the unbelief of the children of Israel in the wilderness concerning God's promise to provide for them, the Psalmist expresses their lack of faith by putting into their mouths the words: "Can God prepare a *table* in the wilderness?" The word table as thus used means simply something "spread out." We are told that in those olden times, the table in the Syrian country was often the same as that which may be seen today among the Arabs -- only a piece of skin or a mat, or cloth spread on the ground. The Psalmist in another place says, "Let their table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap." (Psa. 69:22.) The Psalmist in making use of this figure was thinking simply of meals spread on the ground in the open country.

"IN THE PRESENCE OF ENEMIES"

As the Syrian writer has said: "This is the kind of a table that would be thought of in shepherd life. Why not so in a shepherd song? Now is not that exactly what the shepherd prepares for his sheep? Along with finding water, he has the daily task of searching out a good and safe feeding

place. He '*prepares a table before them*' in truth, and it is none the less a table in his eyes because it is a spreading slope of ground.

"All the shepherd's skill and often heroic work are called forth in this duty, for it is done many a day 'in the presence of the sheep's enemies.' There are many poisonous plants in the grass and the shepherd must find and avoid them. The sheep will not eat certain poisonous things, but there are some which they will eat, one kind of poisonous grass in particular." This Syrian writer cites an instance in which his relative once lost three hundred sheep because of a mistake of this kind made in performing the difficult task of selecting or preparing feeding ground for them. He also describes other difficult tasks that entered into the life of a shepherd in connection with preparing pasture for his sheep, and defending and protecting them from their many enemies:

"Then there are snake holes in some kinds of ground, and, if the snakes be not driven away, they bite the noses of the sheep. For this the shepherd sometimes burns the fat of hogs along the ground. Sometimes he finds ground where moles have worked their holes just under the surface. Snakes lie in these holes with their heads sticking up ready to bite the grazing sheep. The shepherd knows how to drive them away as he goes along ahead of his sheep.

"And around the feeding-ground which the shepherd *prepares*, in holes and caves in the hillsides, there may be jackals, wolves, hyenas, and panthers too, and the bravery and skill of the shepherd are at the highest point in closing up these dens with stones or slaying' the wild beasts with his long, bladed knife. Of nothing do you hear shepherds boasting more proudly than of their achievements in this part of their care of the sheep.

When we come to see that this was one of the most important duties of a shepherd in caring for his sheep, it seems clear that the Psalmist of Israel continues to use the figure of shepherd life when he gives utterance to the words: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies."

THE SAINTS ARE His PECULIAR CARE

How true it is of the Great Shepherd that he not only provides the food for his trusting ones, but sees to it that no poisonous elements shall get into it, or it by chance there should, he sees to it that they are not injured thereby: "Surely" says the Psalmist, "He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence." (Psa. 91:3.) He will guard his sheep from the pestilence of false doctrines. "For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" are our Lord's words. (Matt. 24:24.) Never was there a time like the present when these warning words of the Savior are so applicable. Thousands are falling away from the faith of the Gospel; but from all these doctrinal pestilences, the Lord's trusting sheep shall be protected. The Good Shepherd has spread a table for his trusting sheep in this present time in the very presence of enemies—a table of precious truth, that will keep them from falling into the destroying errors peculiar to our day. Evolution theories, Higher Criticism, Spiritism, and Christian Science, are causing many who it was thought were strong in the faith, to fall away. Even among those who were conversant with this special, spread table of truth, very many are being confused or led away by cunning sophistries, and fanciful interpretations of so-called types. How is this? we ask. There can be but one answer: those who are being led astray, those who are being confused or destroyed by the enemies of the sheep, have failed to listen or to give heed to the voice of the Great Shepherd, who has said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him." (John 10:27,5.) The Good Shepherd has always cared for his trusting sheep. Those who are familiar with the eventful history of the Lord's

true sheep are well aware of the many snares that the wily Adversary has laid to entrap them. The Apostle warned against these when he said, "After my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember," etc. Again as we read the history of the Dank Ages, described by the beloved John in the Apocalypse, when all that dwelt upon the earth, except those whose names were written in the book of life of the Lamb, were deceived, and bowed down and worshiped at the altars of a false, a counterfeit Christianity, we cannot help inquiring, How was it that there were any who were not deceived? The Psalmist answers this query: "Thou preparest for me a table in the presence of mine enemies."

But one will inquire, How can we apply the words of the Psalmist, "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over," to the shepherd life? Before replying to this question we notice that those who, in the previous expression, change the figure from shepherd life to that of a banquet hall or festal board, when they come to the words, "Thou anointest my head with oil," are obliged to change the figure again. These words are applied to the anointing of the antitypical priesthood, the Church, with the holy spirit, which, of course, can have *no* reference to a banquet hall. Again, when explaining the figure "My cup runneth over," the figure has to be changed again. It is true that the word *cup* is used in the Scriptures to represent sweet or bitter experiences, sometimes both. One who explains it this way has said: "The intimation is that the Lord's cup signifies bitter experiences and trials in the present time, as Jesus said, 'The cup which my Father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it?' And this was the *cup* -his cup-which he offered to his disciples, and which we, becoming his disciples, propose to share with him, and which is symbolically represented in the communion cup. (1 Cor. 10:15-17.) It is sweet and precious, in many senses of the word, to be privileged to participate in any sacrifices or services for the Lord and his cause. The sweet mingles freely with the bitter. 'But the Lord promises that in the future, the cup of new wine in the Kingdom shall more than compensate for any bitterness of the present time. Our cup is full, but we would not wish it one drop less."

While all of this is true, and is taught in many statements of Scripture, it is not necessary to apply these figures of the shepherd life to these experiences, which to be sure, are very important matters connected with the lives of the consecrated. But where, one may say, can we find these figures in the shepherd life? It is at this point that we have a beautiful picture of what begins to take place at the end of a shepherd's day of toil. "The Psalm has sung of the whole round of the day's wandering-all the needs of the sheep, all the care of the shepherd. Now it closes with the last scene of the day. At the door of the sheepfold the shepherd stands and the rodding of the sheep takes place. The shepherd turns his body to let the sheep pass; he is the door, as Christ said of himself. With the rod he holds back the sheep while he looks them over one by one as they *go* into the fold. He has the horn filled with olive oil and he has cedar-tar, and he anoints a knee bruised on the rocks, or a side scratched by thorns. And here comes one that is not bruised-but is simply worn and exhausted; he bathes its face-and head with the refreshing olive-oil, and he takes the large two handled cup and dips it brimming full from the water he has brought for that purpose, and he lets the weary sheep drink. There is nothing finer in the Psalm than this. God's care is not for the wounded only; it is for those who are just worn and weary."

How comforting *in* this connection are the words of Jehovah recorded in the Book of Ezekiel, which, while having special reference to fleshly Israel in the near future, *may* properly be applied to spiritual Israel of the Gospel Age. The words are addressed to the false shepherds who have led astray the Lord's sheep:

"Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord; thus saith the Lord God; behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from

feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my *flock* from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them. For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek *out my* sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. . I will feed them in a good pasture, and *upon* the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in *a* fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock and I *will* cause them to lie down, saith the the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and *will* bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment." - Ezek. 34:9-16.

How comforting it is for the Lord's people to know that the Good Shepherd not only cares for the needs of -his 'sheep collectively, but that he does not by any means overlook the various special needs of each individual. How much more comforting, however, it is to draw closer to the Great Shepherd and say to him, "Thou preparest for me a table in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." It is only the obedient, the trustful ones, that realize experimentally the tender, loving sympathy and care of the Great Shepherd in the many trying experiences encountered in the narrow and difficult pathway that leads to the heavenly Home beyond. How blessed, how precious it is to know that he cares for the needs of the tired, the weary, the wounded ones of the flock. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently' lead those that are with young." - Isa. 40:11.

- R. E. Streeter