

# **THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM**

*VOL. XXXII. July, 1949 No. 7*

## **Annual Report of the Institute**

THE YEARLY presentation of these reports finds us always rejoicing, not in what we have done, but in what the overruling providence of the Lord has accomplished in spite of the "unprofitable" servants he has so graciously used, thus through the means of our weakness demonstrating his perfection and power. The feeling of gratitude which we experience as the year is reviewed at these annual meetings, is based on a "full assurance of faith that the divine promise of "grace to help in every time of need" has been fulfilled. Things have not worked out at times as human "wisdom" would have planned, but in this we rejoice, also, knowing that his ways are as much higher than ours as the heavens are higher than the earth.

Realizing, with our Brother Russell, that neither any truth, however exalted, nor any service, however necessary it may appear, can properly be permitted to interfere with the work of assisting the Bride to make herself ready, that branch of our activities has been stressed as usual above all else, endeavoring, however, faithfully to do with our might what our hands find to do, and encouraging all the 'brethren to the same fidelity.

### **FAITHFULNESS IN THAT WHICH IS LEAST**

While waiting for the promised day of the greater works than even those done by our Lord while on earth, we have accepted 'with joy the many opportunities of service in comparative trifles, acknowledging the Lord's wisdom in not risking the development of the pride that might have come from more spectacular performance. If in the acceptance of these little privileges we have been instrumental in giving any encouragement to one of the Lord's little ones, if thus these stars will be caused to shine one candle-power brighter for eternity, we do indeed have great cause for rejoicing in the One who has graciously accorded us this privilege. Nor is there less cause for gratitude in that there have been a few who through our ministry have begun the laying of a foundation of doctrines, and especially that such have been convinced of the necessity of not

stopping their work there, but "leaving the first principles, press on to perfection," adding and super-adding until the day the abundant entrance is administered into his Kingdom.

### **SERVICE THAT COSTS**

The endeavor to guide others into the way of truth brings blessings into the life in proportion as one gives himself in service. For this reason tract distribution has always been an especially appreciated means of spreading the "glad tidings." It is hard to account for the amount of courage it sometimes takes to ring a doorbell and offer to the home-owner the treasures which alone can bring comfort to the bereaved, and lasting joy and, peace in a world where perplexities are daily bringing increasing uncertainty into the hearts of men. There would seem to be a blessing to every one who makes even the slightest sacrifice of means or time or strength that the message may be heralded abroad. For those who make these things the limit of their sacrifice, the joy and the enriching of one's own character is as nothing compared with what comes -to the one who has the privilege of sounding forth the praise of the God of love with his own lips. And with that service comes the additional blessing of a testing as to whether he can speak with the meekness of spirit that glorifies the Master, avoiding the spirit that better represents the Adversary.

Witnessing to the world with "an eye single to his glory" also protects from the pitfall of seeking merely to build up an organization. Let the "wise Masterbuilder" attend to that, if that is his purpose, while we attend to our commission to "build ourselves up on our most holy faith, praying in the holy spirit."

### **THE PILGRIM SERVICE**

From correspondence received we judge that the blessings resulting from the Pilgrim service have been mutual for the servants and for those served. It is our desire that this fellowship might be of even greater benefit. To this end the friends are urged to feel free to accept it regardless of the smallness of their number, or their inability to assist with the expense involved. The Pilgrims gladly serve the ones and twos, realizing that their need is even greater than that of those who have larger fellowship. An announcement of willingness to provide for the entertainment of the Pilgrims where the Class is not so situated as to do so, has extended this service slightly further than formerly, but our hope is that still more brethren will take advantage of the offer, placing the blessing of fellowship above all minor considerations.

For the last two years there has been an extension of the Pilgrim service in another direction, one of our brothers serving the brethren in Great Britain and Denmark. We rejoice in the blessings which the correspondence from across the water indicates resulted. The ties that bind together in the bonds of Christian love brethren on both sides of the Atlantic, we feel assured, were materially strengthened by reason of this fellowship and service. The English 'brethren assure us they were rewarded well for the labor and expense involved.

Miles traveled:	95,332
Meetings held	684
Attendance	16,182

### **OUR CORRESPONDENCE**

Less personal and less limited in its effectiveness, but giving us connection with the far distant corners of the world, is the correspondence department. Not all of our correspondents find time for more than a business note in connection with their sending of orders, lists of three months and

regular subscriptions, etc., but the depth of spirituality evidenced by many of the letters is very encouraging. If any portion of the credit for this condition is due to some phase of our activity, as the writers often indicate, we rejoice.

From the beginning of our work in 1918 it has been a blessing, through correspondence with the friends, to keep informed regarding their development, their trials, and their faithfulness in making use of the means the Lord has placed at their disposal for Bible study, for fellowship, and for witnessing to the glory of the Father, who is by these means being revealed to them. It is no occasion for surprise that in this connection there should be disappointments, such as the discovering that a few are allowing things which they confess to be of minor importance 'to interfere with those things which are indicated by the Scriptures to be essential to our preparation for the eternal inheritance. We hope that some of these will prove to have merely stumbled for a season, being temporarily drawn aside by the will-o-the-wisps of human ideas and earthly hopes.

Number of letters received	4,250
Number of letters sent out	5,678

### **OTHER FIELDS OF ACTIVITY**

This opportunity is taken to thank the brethren who have sent us lists of addresses of those -they think may be inquiring for "the old paths." We urge all to be awake to this privilege of serving the brethren bewildered by the changed message that has been coming to them. Our convenient pocket edition of the "Divine Plan of the Ages has been a most effective assistance to some who had forgotten the sound of the true Shepherd's voice. In some instances the Revelation and the Daniel volumes have also been helpful. Occasional public meetings have been arranged, and we understand some permanent results may have been attained.

As in other years since the close of the war, friends have not only written us for addresses of suffering brethren in other lands that they might send food and clothing to them, but some have entrusted funds to us with instructions to use the money for assisting where it is most needed. The letters that have been shared with you in the "Herald" have already informed you as to how well worthwhile this following of the Scriptural injunction to "bear one another's burdens" has proved.

Giving all diligence to make our calling and election sure, let us not look to past attainments, however, for our encouragement, but to the evidence of the Lord's interest in that past. Above all let us guard well every spiritual advancement gained, and seek to enter the new year with a firm determination that only His will and His glory will be sought. He alone has made possible anything of the past in which we can rejoice. "The blessing of the Lord maketh rich." Let us through full devotion to him enter upon the richest year of our experience, turning from all human sounds to listen only for the tender accents of his guiding Voice.

## **Report of Annual Meeting**

In harmony with the provision of the charter of the Institute those members who were able to do so assembled in the afternoon of June 4 at the headquarters of the Institute, primarily for the election of directors, the absent members being represented by proxy. The voting replaced in office the directors of the previous year, namely: B. F. Hollister, H. E. Hollister, J. C. Jordan, J. T. Read, P. L. Read, W. J. Siekman, and P. E. Thomson. The reading of the report of the Board, of the Treasurer, the Auditing Committee, and the Chairman of the Board (the latter orally given), which immediately followed the devotional service and election of Chairman and Secretary for the meeting, all indicated the harmonious working of all departments to have continued through another year; and, as indicated especially in the report of the Treasurer, acknowledgment and appreciation of the good will of the friends, and the realization that only by the Lord's blessing could even the meager results obtained have been possible.

During the absence of the Tellers for the counting of the votes, the opportunity given for discussion was used largely for suggesting means of increasing the effectiveness of our service; and the suggestion was made that all should give much thought during the coming months along this line. Also a message of love, together with a verse of the hymn, "Blest be the Tie that Binds," and the Scriptures, Psalm 116:12 and Romans 1:11, 12, were entrusted to Brother Thomson to deliver to the British friends when visiting them this summer. The ballots and proxies having been entrusted to the Secretary for safekeeping and destruction at the end of six months, the meeting closed with a hymn and prayer.

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; J. T. Read, Acting Secretary. The Editorial Committee of last year was reelected to service: Brothers H. E. Hollister, J. T. Read, P. L. Read, W. J. Siekman, and P. E. Thomson. Brothers elected for full time pilgrim service are Brothers H. E. Hollister, J. T. Read, and P. E. Thomson; part time: Brothers LaRoy Benedict, C. Czohara, J. E. Dawson, F. A. Essler, C. M. Glass, E. W. Hinz, B. F. Hollister, A. Jarmola, J. C. Jordan, W. Lankheim, C. Loucky, G. Oberg, W. H. Peck, F. W. Petran, P. L. Read, W. C. Roberts, W. J. Siekman, T. G. Smith, T. P. Tillema, W. Urban, A. L. Vining, J. B. Webster, and J. Wyndelts.

## Treasurer's Report

### Inventory and Sale of Books

	Inventory	Sales
Pocket Edition, Divine Plan	789	275
Revelation Exposition, Volume 1	796	46
Daniel Exposition	848	48
Hell Pamphlet	1,306	133
Our Lord's Return Pamphlet	1,312	135

### Balance Sheet April 30, 1949

#### Assets

Cash-On hand and in bank		\$12,510.79
Accounts Receivable		204.53
Inventory of Books, etc.		
Pocket Edition - Divine Plan	\$291.93	
Revelation Exposition-Vol. I	398.00	
Daniel Exposition	424.00	
Hell Booklet,		
Our Lord's Return Booklet,		
Tabernacle Shadows, etc.	<u>238.63</u>	
Total Inventory		1,352.56
Annuities Receivable		8,445.30
Property at 177 Prospect Place, Brooklyn, N. Y		<u>12,000.00</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>\$34,513.18</b>
Less: Liabilities		none
Net Worth (as per statement below)		<u>\$34,513.18</u>

### Statement of Income and Expense and Analysis of Net Worth May 1, 1948 to April 30, 1949

#### Income

Contributions - General Purpose		\$ 5,617.15
Legacies - Samuel Lauper, Switzerland		100.53
"Herald" Subscriptions		1,326.85
Gain - on Sale of Books, etc		67.09
Rental Income		540.00
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>\$ 7,651.62</b>

#### Expenses

Pilgrim Expense	\$3,436.35	
Printing and Mailing "Herald"	2,135.45	
Allowances to Office Staff	960.00	
Allowance to "Herald" Contributor	430.00	
Allowances to Pilgrims	none	
Free Literature	264.47	
Maintenance of property, including taxes, coal, gas, electricity, insurance and repairs	1,414.87	
Comfort Committee Expense	685.74	
Office Expense	<u>408.73</u>	
Total Expense		9,735.61
Net Expense for fiscal year		\$ 2,083.99
Net Worth, May 1, 1948		<u>36,597.17</u>
Net Worth, April 30, 1949 (as per Balance Sheet above)		\$34,513.18

## **Statement of Auditors**

The books of account of the Pastoral Bible Institute were examined by us covering the fiscal period from May 1, 1948 to April 30, 1949 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

## **Free From Stain**

"I watched the sparrows flitting here and there,  
In quest of food about the miry street;  
Such nameless fare as seems to sparrows sweet  
They sought with greedy clamor everywhere.

"I, too, like thee, O sparrow, toil to gain,  
My scanty portion from life's sordid ways.  
God grant I too, may have the grace,  
To keep my soul's uplifted wings from stain."

"Yet 'mid their strife I noted with what care  
They held their fluttering pinions fleet.  
They trod the mire with soiled and grimy feet,  
But kept their wings unsullied in the air.

## Christ's Offer of Freedom

*"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." - John 8:36.*

TODAY THE whole world is divided between human slavery and human freedom-between pagan brutality and the Christian ideal. We choose human freedom -- which is the Christian ideal."

Thus spake President Roosevelt in his historic address on the evening of May 28, 1941. Then, after observing that it was possible for the seeds of the present menace to human liberty to be planted and allowed to grow only in a world such as the postwar world of the 1920's, which "we will not [again] accept," he went on to say, "We will accept only a world consecrated to freedom of speech and expression -- freedom of every person to worship God in his own way-freedom from want and freedom from terrorism."

The next day Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden stated Britain's war aims. He called for permanent guarantee of the "four freedoms" mentioned by President Roosevelt. He spoke of "a new moral order" in the world, in which there will be no starving peoples, in which nations will trade at will and to mutual advantage, in which there will be work for all and assurances that chaos must not come again to this world. He envisioned the establishment of social security in all lands.

Unfortunately details as to how this "new moral order" is to be secured and the "four freedoms" established do not appear in either speech. Nor are we ourselves able to furnish these details, much as we can and do sympathize with their objectives. We know only that God has, indeed, promised such a world as these statesmen hope to see-one even better than they hope, and that His promise is certain of fulfilment. Meantime we are determined not to think or **spea**k or **do** anything that might tend to discourage in the slightest degree, those who, in high places, are filled with such ideals and who are laboring to accomplish them in the earth. On the contrary let us pray for such and to the extent of our ability cooperate with them to those ends. - 1 Tim. 2:1-3.

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE

There have been two main contributing causes which have operated to produce the liberty known and experienced in the world to date. One of these is the Bible. As we compare the various degrees of civilization throughout the world, and note that the wisest and best laws and the wisest and best execution of them and the greatest true liberty of the people within reasonable bounds are found in those nations which have most revered the divine message, the Bible, it is a strong argument that the Word of God has not only influenced the "little flock," who take it most seriously, and who lay aside every weight and hindrance and worldly ambition to run with patience in the footsteps of Jesus, but it has influenced the minds of many who have never taken this step of full consecration. In a word, the liberty wherewith Christ makes free is not the liberty of license but the liberty of reason, of justice, of love; and in proportion as any one has received the spirit of the divine teaching, in that same proportion he is a freeman. We thank God, therefore, for the measure of national liberty which prevails throughout the world, even while we see clearly from the prophecies of the Scriptures, as well as written on the pages of the daily press, that a great misinterpretation of liberty is rapidly spreading throughout the world, which will eventually wreck the present civilization in anarchy.

## **THE FIGHT FOR LIBERTY**

The second contributing cause of the liberty known and enjoyed by mankind up to the present time is warfare. We think it is not an over-statement to say that all, or nearly all, the liberty there is in the world today has been paid for; practically none of it has been attained without sacrificers. Why? Because selfishness is so entrenched in the race that those who possess power, authority, privilege, opportunity, would hold these for themselves to the disadvantage of others-to the enslavement of others were not the rights and liberties fought for. Looking back over the history of nations and, regardless of one's views as to the propriety of a Christian engaging in warfare, every reasoning mind can see that only through wars have liberties come to the human race. The mistake that is being made by many today is the supposition that humanity would ever be able to attain the condition of absolute equality and unselfishness through laws or wars or any other means within the power of Adam's race.

The Scriptures point out to us that there is a limit beyond which we must not expect selfish humanity to make progress-that any progress beyond that limit must come from on High, through the establishment of the Kingdom of God's dear Son; that while wealth and influence and talents will yield to the pressure of the masses for their own protection and aggrandizement, they will not yield everything, but would permit the entire social structure to dissolve rather than to submit to a general equalization, as is the aim of Socialism. Hence Socialism, while not 'intending anarchy, will produce anarchy; while striving for greater liberty and universality of blessings of earth, will effect a wreck of all these. Thanks be to God that his program is that -on the wreck of present institutions 'he will establish the true reign of liberty on the plane of love, under the guidance of the Master and his joint-heirs.

However, while we await that Kingdom let us not despise our present national liberty, imperfect though it be. Usually blessings are valued rightly only when they are taken from us. It is not long since we were doing some sober thinking as to the possibility of losing our national liberty. Such thoughts should lead us to very earnest thankfulness to God that this liberty has been preserved to us. Nor should it be difficult for us to be grateful also to those who bore the brunt of the sacrifice, many of whom laid down life itself in the cause of freedom.

## **LIBERTY TO BECOME SONS OF GOD**

From these reflections on the liberty known and experienced by mankind in general, let us now turn to another phase of our subject: "The glorious liberty of the children of God." (Rom. 8:21.) Dearly as we may love liberty, there is no man who actually possesses it yet, for as the result of the fall of Adam all men became the slaves of Sin and, to a great extent, the tools of Satan; and never, until the promised restitution of all things is completed, will men enjoy the precious boon of liberty in its full sense. This is one of the elements of the Gospel, that Christ is to bring liberty to the captives of sin and death, and to let all the oppressed go free. - Isa. 61:1.

Of course, to those who believe that death itself is a great blessing, liberating our spirits from their present bondage to earthly conditions, -the Gospel message is without meaning. But to us who have learned the true nature of man, and who know that he is mortal, and- not only mortal, but dying, this promise of liberation from -the prison-house of death, though stated centuries ago, holds our interest with a stronger grip than would tomorrow's headlines, if we could read them today.

While, however, the actual freedom or liberty of the children of God is not yet enjoyed by any, the inheritance of it being lost by Adam's fall, a few have regained their title to that inheritance,



How did they do this? By faith in Christ, who, with his own precious blood, purchased it for all who will accept it as the free gift of God's grace. And these few have, by faith, already passed from death to life (John 5:25; 1 John 3:14) and are now, therefore, reckoned free -- free from sin, and its condemnation, death-righteousness being imputed to them.. Thus they hold a sure title to this glorious liberty, which all the sons of God will possess when fully restored to the mental and moral image of God.

### **A ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

As above indicated, the full liberty of the children of God is not yet ours, except by faith. However, while realizing this, let us not fail to note the measure of that liberty which is ours: even now. It is very considerable. The liberty of the Christian is stated by the Apostle John to be the liberty, power or privilege, of becoming a son of God. "As many as received him [Jesus], to them gave he the power [liberty] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." (John 1:12.). That is to say, our Savior offers to all who accept him, and who desire to regain the mental and moral image of God, lost by Adam, and who desire to return to the relationship of children of God, a release from the sin which brought condemnation upon us all six thousand years ago; it means also that over such he will throw a robe of righteousness, which will cover all their present imperfections and unavoidable weaknesses. Clothed thus, in this white raiment, they need not wait for the Millennial Age, but may at once go to God, by faith, and find immediate acceptance in his presence, and secure grace to help them in every time of need. Thus may they continue under this precious robe of righteousness throughout their earthly career until, having proved, by their obedience in the present life, the sincerity of their consecration to God's will and service, they shall ultimately be delivered from all the present weaknesses into grand, perfect, spiritual bodies, like unto their Lord's. This is the promise to the overcomers, who thus will be received into final and complete sonship as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord and Savior.

A remarkably clear and, we believe Scriptural, presentation of the meaning of the robe of righteousness, or "white raiment" as it applies to the believer's standing in the present life, is found in the writings of Brother Russell, under the caption:

### **"WHITE RAIMENT LOANED TO US"**

"The Scriptures give us to understand that at the very beginning of our Christian experience we, figuratively, are clothed in white raiment. This white raiment represents justification -- we are justified freely from all things. It is a robe without spot. It is sometimes spoken of as Christ's robe of righteousness because it comes to us through Christ. It is to be had only through him. He is able to impute to us, to, loan to us, grant to us temporarily, this robe. It is spoken of as the wedding garment. At an oriental wedding, a wedding garment of white linen was used to cover over the clothing worn by each guest. It was loaned to the guest at the wedding by the host, when he appeared at the wedding feast. White linen signifies purity. So when Christ gives us the use of his merit, it is as a white garment to cover our imperfections. It is an imputation of his righteousness which is to us justification. We are exhorted to keep our garments unspotted from the world. The imputation of righteousness given us we are to preserve, to maintain. But we cannot fully maintain it of ourselves. Our tongues may sometimes say things that we wish they had not said, and our hands may sometimes do things we would not desire. Hence God has provided a way by which our blemishes or transgressions may be eradicated-those not willful. This way is our daily application for the cleansing of these unwilling transgressions through the precious blood. Thus we keep our garments unspotted from the world. Thus our justification, our white robe, is maintained -- should be maintained."

White raiment, however, is not only provided as a precious covering robe for the believer to wear during this present life. It is stated as the reward of the overcomer which he will realize in the future. "They shall walk with me in white for they are worthy." "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment." - Rev. 3:4, 5.

The significance of this figure of the white robe in the sense of a reward to be granted the overcomer after he has successfully completed his trial and been faithful unto death, is also most clearly unfolded by Brother Russell in another article:

### **"THE WHITE RAIMENT OF THE KINGDOM"**

"It is not sufficient that we have the *imputation* of our Savior's righteousness. This imputation is only a temporary arrangement. We need to come to the place where we shall have a righteousness of our own. Our flesh is imperfect. . . In spite of our best endeavors things are bound to go more or less wrong. But we are to prove ourselves overcomers-more than overcomers. The Lord has arranged that at the conclusion of our trial, at the end of the present life, all the overcomers shall receive the new body. This new body will be a body of actual purity. Thus, as the Apostle says, we shall be 'clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.' So our raiment will be changed from a garment of imputed perfection, our justification by faith, to that which represents actual perfection. At the resurrection we shall receive that body of inherent purity, without blemish, without spot, which is here pictured as 'white raiment.'

What a wonderful Gospel it is, and how little do we need to be ashamed of it! And all this grace comes to us merely by believing in the name of Jesus, and all that that name implies. The name Jesus signifies Savior or Liberator, as indicated in Matthew 1:21, which reads: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins."

But is it only to believers in his name that our Lord grants this privilege or liberty of becoming sons of God? Yes, we answer, only to these. Belief in no other person will do, nor will the acceptance of our Lord by any other name than the one which acknowledges his ransom-sacrifice avail. He must be recognized as Savior not merely as Teacher or Guide. He saves his people from sins that are past, as well as teaches and guides them to abhor and avoid sins in the future.

It is worthy of notice, too, that this privilege of becoming sons of God was not extended to the overcomers of the past ages, nor will it be offered to such as prove faithful during the Millennial Age. These are represented in the Scriptures as receiving their life from Christ (Head and Body). They will thus be not sons, but grandsons, if you please, of the Father. Though the race in general will not become sons of God, they may secure, through the sons of God, freedom from death, pain, etc. (Rom. 8:18-22.) The children of Christ -- all who receive the redemption life, will stand as dear and as close to the Father, Jehovah, as sons, even as in the earthly family, the grandsons are as dearly loved, and as kindly treated. But none of them can be made perfect, without us, the sons and heirs, as the Apostle makes plain in Hebrews 11:40.

The manifestation of the sons of God is, therefore, the great event for which the whole race of mankind waits and hopes and groans, even though most of them do so in ignorance. Their hopes and expectations, not being clear, may be summed up as a vague longing for a Golden Age, a good time by and by.

Just now we said that the privilege of becoming sons of God is extended, in this Gospel Age, wily to believers in Jesus as their Savior, their Liberator. Some one has put this thought in a heart searching question and presented it in a couple of verses which appeal very strongly. They read:

"It means so much to me, that, when He came,  
They called Him 'Jesus!' 'Tis a gripping name  
That takes a saving hold on one like me,  
Who lifts new-visioned eyes that now would see  
All false lights fade in presence of the true --  
What does it mean to you?"

"It means so much to me, in crisis hours  
When right seems baffled by opposing powers  
To hear His strong voice call,  
'Be of good cheer,  
For I have overcome this world of fear.  
Here's refuge in My Word -- My Word is true!' --  
What does it mean to you?"

Brethren, let us appreciate to the full Christ's offer of freedom -- the glorious privilege he extends to us of becoming sons of God. Let us be strong, acquitting ourselves like men, receiving now by faith the special favor to be brought to us at the appearing of our Lord Jesus, who will himself present us (by his side before the Father, unblameable and unproveable in love.

- P. L. Read

# "God Seeketh Such"

## PART I

*"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshipers." - John 4:23, R. V.*

IF WE would appreciate aright the importance which John, the beloved disciple, placed upon the conversation which Jesus had with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, we must give consideration to two things: first, the purpose which actuated John when choosing the material for his Gospel; and second, the times for which he wrote. A proper appreciation for these two points will predispose us to appreciate also a third thing--the most important of them all -- the place and value which true worship and devotion should occupy in the life of every Christian believer throughout this whole Gospel Age.

Apparently John (under the holy spirit's guidance) did not compile his Gospel with the same immediate purpose in view as did Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John did not set out to place on record the story "of all that Jesus began both to do and teach," as Luke, in his first treatise for his friend Theophilus, had done. (Acts 1:1.) Nor did he seek to trace out the genealogy of Jesus back to Abraham, as Matthew had done (Matt. 1:1-16), nor to Adam, as Luke had done. (Luke 3:23-38.) John's specific purpose in the selection and compilation of his source-material, was to present the story of the life of Jesus of Nazareth to the younger generation contemporaneous with his old age in such a way that they would be convinced and satisfied that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God. - John 20:30, 31.

He does not claim to have retold all that Jesus said or did, nor for that matter did any of the other three Evangelists do so, in spite of the way Luke speaks of his former treatise to his friend Theophilus. We have at least one statement which Jesus is attributed to have made that comes to us from an entirely different source, which runs: "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35.) In this case we are indebted to Paul for this saying of the Lord; and that this was the only saying of the Lord left unrecorded by the three principal narrators is most unlikely. Presumably this statement, judging by the way that Paul appealed to the brethren's "remembrance," was a matter of common knowledge to them all, and only needed quoting by Paul to buttress his protestation of unselfishness to show that his life had been in accordance with the words of the Lord.

In the course of his intensive ministry it is more than probable that Jesus had done and said many things which had not been placed on record with pen and paper (or parchment) by any of the Gospel writers. It is also probable, in view of their dull hearing, that Jesus may have said certain things more than once at different times, and under varying circumstances, which may account for the fact that certain sayings are found in different contexts, and connected with different episodes. As a case in point we may compare Matthew's single account of Jesus' reply regarding the end of the Age (Matt. 24) with Luke's three but more fragmentary accounts found in chapters, John 12:35-48; John 17:22-37; and John 21:5-36. Perhaps we might not be so puzzled by these seeming discrepancies if we could be sure that Jesus had said some of these things more than once.

Then, too, we call to mind that there were no written records of these things for at least the first twenty or thirty years after Pentecost (none have survived if such there were), and that during all that time the stories of Jesus' words and miracles were transmitted by word of mouth, having first

been uttered and "confirmed by those that heard him" (Heb. 2:3); constituting thus a floating fund of information that passed from lip to lip, and from which such of the writers as were not eye witnesses drew the material needed for their accounts.

We are not forgetting divine supervision over these matters, even though there are differences in the accounts. If we will but reflect what occurs to rumors, and even true accounts, that pass from lip to lip today, and how in course of repetition they begin to lose almost all semblance to the original, we will be compelled to acknowledge more than a little divine supervision in that these separate accounts differ so little from each other.

John's account, unlike that of Mark or Luke, was an eye-witness account, given at first hand, at a later time, and for a different purpose. It is these differences that make cross-reference with the other Gospels so difficult and complex. Moreover John does not seem to have chosen his material with any strict chronological sequence, as the others seem to have done, but selects and assembles it to produce a crescendo-like volume of evidence, piling point on point, so that when the whole is set forth complete, each story, act, and miracle has contributed its own special quota to the verdict he desired to have reached. As in his first epistle, a threefold cord runs throughout the whole: Life (John 1:4); Light (John 1:4; 8:12; 9:5); and Love (John 3:16; 14:23, etc.) by means of which he led his readers on to confess that Jesus on account of such utterance, could be none other than the Christ.

A full third part of his account recounts the story of Jesus' last days in Jerusalem, in which he adduces proof in abundance that Jesus was truly what he claimed to be. Beginning with the basin and towel, with its depths of mystic meaning; then the long talk, replete with things no other lips could speak, concluding with that incomparably intimate committal prayer here was evidence beyond dispute that Jesus held relationship to Almighty God that no other man before or since had ever done. Then the stories of his appearances and disappearances after he was raised, were recounted to place on record his uniqueness and separateness from men. .

But these are proofs that lie outside our present purposes. Nor can we find time or space to set in review that sublime introduction to his Gospel, John 1:1-5, in which John gives his own parallel account with Paul, of what the latter calls "his emptying himself of his former glories." (Phil. 2:7.) Here also is evidence full and complete that Jesus was not as other men.

Nor can we take extended note of his incisive forceful teachings in the Temple (see chapters 7 and 8) with all their telling repercussions upon the vexed and irritated Pharisees, provoking them in sheer desperation to take up stones to stone him and put him out of their way: "I am the Light of the world . I know whence I came . . . I am from above . . . Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day and was glad ... Before Abraham was I am." Such were some of these illuminating flashes which he threw into their prejudice-darkened minds. Surely here are evidences of those depths of divine philosophy which none save One who had "heard from God" (John 8:40) could enunciate! But we cannot stay to sharpen up these points of evidence at this present time.

With that short passing reference we must pass over all these masses of powerful evidence, and note in the main that John builds his case for Jesus of Nazareth's Messiahship upon seven selected episodes (or signs) and two outstanding conversations. His talk with the woman at the well was one of these.

The presentation of these signs commences with the story of the turning of water into wine at the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee. (John 2:1-11.) Of this John says, "This beginning of his signs

did Jesus in Cana of Galilee. . . " A most wonderful event indeed! but noted here only as the first sign.

Next came the challenge to (and thorough domination of) the desecrators of the Temple, and their expulsion, with all their wares therefrom. (John 2:13-24.) The psychological mastery of all this crowd, upon this time-honored, privileged ground, undertaken for the honor of his Father's Name and Temple was an indication of the Messianic zeal which the Prophets had foretold. - Psa. 69:9.

Thirdly, came the distant unseen healing of the Nobleman's son in Capernaum when near the point of death. (John 4:46-53.) This was an extraordinary case of healing, the abatement of the deadly fever coinciding exactly with the moment Jesus spake the reassuring words. How was the gap twixt speaker and sufferer bridged if not by a higher Power? Was not that a testimony to his Messiahship? (Perhaps a wee word of explanation will throw additional light on this miracle. Actually there had been two miracle-signs wrought by Jesus since his return to Galilee from Judea. "This is now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee." (John 4:54.) One is recorded, the other is not. Why? -- This is clear proof that John selected just such signs as were needed by him for his purpose.

The fourth "sign" was the remarkable cure of the chronic paralytic -- a sufferer of no less than thirty eight years duration. The mental rehabilitation too, which enabled this broken, hope deferred creature to defend himself against the cavils of accusers was not less noteworthy than his physical regeneration. Wrought by Jesus on the Sabbath day, this arresting miracle set in motion a long train of circumstances which crystallized into the deadly hatred of the Jews and which after several futile attempts (John 5:18; 7:1; 10:31) eventually brought about his death.

The fifth "sign" was the amazing act of multiplying bread and fish to such amounts that five thousand mouths were fed to repletion, with an abundance still uneaten, when the repast was at an end. This miracle set in motion those deep cross-currents of opinion and inquiry narrated in chapter 6, ending eventually in the bread-and-fish followers falling away from him.

Next came the healing of the man born blind (John 9:1-40) with its culmination in the claim that Jesus made to be the Shepherd of the flock. (John 10:1-16.) Resentment, reaching dangerous proportions, broke out after this miracle-it also was performed on a Sabbath day -- causing Jesus to have to withdraw to the countryside. Never had such a deed been seen before in Israel; but what mattered that to the tradition-ridden sticklers in Jerusalem! Better to them that a hundred born-blind sufferers should remain permanently blind than that one should gain the gift of sight on a Sabbath day!

The last and most astounding of all these signs was the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Here, in the sight of both friend and informer (John 11:46) the four days' corruption and putrefaction was stayed, and Lazarus called to "come forth" to resume his life on, earth. This event-the final testimony against the resentful authorities-drove them finally to their decision that he must die.

In these seven selected signs John set forth the evidence of Jesus' wonder working powers, each one, in spite of their different spheres, cumulatively higher in the scale of the miraculous till the last one culminated in that altogether unprecedented display at the opened tomb -- a veritable crescendo of testimony, which, witnessed and attested by John, could point to but one unchallengeable conclusion. Never since human time began, in any land, or at the hands of any man had such proofs been given that he that performed them all was authorized and endowed by God! Thus far the brief testimony of the seven signs-and "these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." - John 20:31.

Added to these was the testimony of his many conversations, of which two are particularly singled out by John as suitable to his special purpose in the first of these John reveals and records the astounding fact that one of Israel's most pious and open minded teachers was soon talked far out of his depth and found himself non-plussed and beaten by the unexpected profundity of the "teacher come from God." From his studies of the ancient prophecies, Nicodemus, together with the whole Rabbinic band, had acquired certain expectations concerning Kingdom glories, which presumably he wished to discuss with the new, young Teacher in their midst. To his increasing consternation Jesus said, Unless so-and-so takes place he cannot see this Kingdom of God . . . unless so-and-so occurs he cannot enter this Kingdom of God. "Cannot see . . . cannot enter." And this to a pious Rabbi in Israel! Of these deeper things, he was as obviously ignorant as a little child -- indeed he soon found he had been interrogating One who could go forward far beyond the stage where he left off, into realms that lay beyond the utmost boundaries of Rabbinic thought.

Here was food indeed for reflection and thought for John's disciple band in those later days -- a whole octave of facts, which if pondered as it ought to be, could lead to but one conclusion alone -- a conclusion so obvious and unmistakable that it would be impossible to use those facts for any other purpose than to prove -- that "Jesus was the Christ," and in whom believing, they should find eternal life.

Having now touched but briefly this massive weight of testimony adduced by John, we may henceforth be prepared to see and understand something of the prime importance and significance attributed by him to that conversation at the well. Among so many interwoven lines of testimony this one has its place, filled to repletion as it is with its facts and lessons for all who wish to win conviction concerning Christ, not less in our own day than there in John's.

In view of this importance as it appeared to John, no wonder he should say, "And he must needs pass through Samaria." (John 4:4.) An overruling Providence had been guiding his steps to that time-hallowed spot so that something of more than local interest might there be said which could not be uttered even in Jerusalem. And though it was designed that his active partner in this conversation should be a woman -- a woman of Samaria at that -- the gist and germ of all that he was to say was intended to be for his disciples' benefit, and for all who in course of time would claim relationship to the God of heaven as "children" to a "Father." In this conversation three things stand out in special prominence:

- (a) Jesus had supplies of living water to give to those that asked.
- (b) The Father sought only such to worship him who could worship in "spirit" and truth.
- (c) "I that speak to thee am he" -- a statement of almost unparalleled directness not found elsewhere in his utterances.

Here are depths of emphasis and certitude which none but the very Christ of God could have uttered depths of truth which only he who had learned of God could proclaim!

Looking back from the vantage ground of his mature and ripe old age, this last surviving witness of Jesus' earthly ministry culled and brought together this selected inventory of evidence to present (as sure and certain fact) to a bewildered and uncertain generation that the despised and rejected Jesus of Nazareth was in very deed the Christ of Israel, and withal, by his resurrection from the dead, demonstrated also as the Son of God. It had been his lot to live through many tragic years and numerous strange experiences. He had seen, in younger years, "many myriads,

still zealous for the Law" (Acts 21:20), believe and crowd their way into the Christian Church, only to fall away again and become more hostile than theretofore. He had seen "hardness in part" settle down upon Israel, as the darkening clouds of divine disfavor spread abroad over the land. He had seen his callous kith and kin fling defiance to mighty Rome, and unhesitatingly join warfare with the strongest nation on the earth. He had seen besieging armies encamp about Jerusalem and lay it with the dust. He had known the City's streets run deep with blood as a thousand thousands went to a gory death. He had memories of the Temple of the Living God given to the flames; her stones cast down till foundations were exposed, with priest and Levite crushed beneath. In all these things he had seen the death-pangs of an Age-and the death-throes of the once accepted people of Jehovah God.

More than this, he had recollections of those tragic persecutions of Christian saints in Rome when Nero gave their thousands to the flames or to the hungry beasts. He had also recollections of the safe withdrawal from Jerusalem to the stone fastnesses of Peraea of so many of his friends ere the doomed city fell -- a signal act of God to save his own.

He had also lived to see every other member of "the Twelve" complete his course in death, to leave him remaining the sole witness on earth (perhaps) who had seen and loved the Man of Nazareth.

He had lived on into the darkest era of the whole Christian Church -- an era of which less is known than of any other period of the Gospel Age. Historically it was a time of silence, where a little while before all had been life and activity. Historians will tell us that at this point the light suddenly expires. Of this period Neander (a Jewish-Christian historian says), "We have no information, nor can the total want of sources for this part of Church history be at all surprising." Dean Farrar says, "When with the last word in the Acts of the Apostles we lose the graphic and faithful guidance of St. Luke, the torch of Christian history is for a time abruptly quenched. We are left, as it were, to grope among the windings of the Catacombs. . . . It is probable that this silence is in itself the result of the terrible scenes in which the Apostles perished."

Another writer says, "Once arrived there (at Rome); once securely planted in that central and commanding position, the Church, strange to say, . . . suddenly vanishes from our view. The densest clouds of obscurity gather round its history, which our eager curiosity in vain attempts to penetrate. It is gone, amid a wreath of smoke as completely as when a train plunges into a tunnel." And still another says, "Black darkness falls upon the scene; and a grim brooding silence-like the silence of impending storm, holds in hushed expectation of the "day of the Lord" the awe-struck, breathless Church. No more books are written, no more messengers are sent, the very voice of tradition is still."

Those thirty years lying between Jerusalem's fall and the close of the first century are the darkest of all the dark years of the Christian centuries. And in the midst of that unfathomable darkness stands one lone, venerable figure battling with the hosts of darkness then seeking to seduce the depleted remnant of the bewildered *souls* still constituting the Christian Church.

The generation that saw that terrible visitation fall upon Jerusalem had witnessed the too-tragic fulfillment of the dire threatenings of the Lord, yet the longed-for Kingdom had not come! A time of trouble such as that nation had never previously known, had overwhelmed it, yet no Michael had stood up to bring relief; nor had there been an awakening of those that slept in the dust of the earth, as Daniel seemed to imply. What did it all mean? Had the Hand of the Lord failed in its task of setting righteousness to flourish in the earth? Had the Lord of Life and Glory failed to establish his "Church" upon the "Rock" as he had said he would? Where in all the earth was an



explanation of this strange situation to 'be found? Do we wonder that the scattered, depleted flock was in an uncertain mood, with an altogether unsettled outlook.

We have at least one source of scanty information through which we can read Church history between the lines. This source of information is found in John's three Epistles. Here we can detect the evidence that Alexandrian philosophers had invaded the little company, some of whom sought to wipe "sin" from the slate; others sought to prove that Jesus, when in the flesh, was not the Christ; and that his sacrifice had not wrought "propitiation" for sin.

That one lone, venerable figure was the sole bulwark against this tidal-wave of negation and denial the one sole living companion of that ascended Lord whose earthly life now lay two generations back on the stream of time. Among the scanty few still living who may have had immediate memories of the Man of Nazareth, John stood forth as a man unique and unparalleled in his position and responsibility among the saints.

It is he -- this very lonely patriarch-who turned memories' pages back and took from its archives, the few facts he wanted to demonstrate and prove that the Lord and Master of his youthful heart, had truly been the very Christ of Israel and the very Son of God.

There are very many lessons we could draw from these chosen excerpts from memories' venerable pages, but, for our present purposes, one only will be drawn.

Amid all the changed unsettling circumstances that then prevailed, the right, appropriate worshipful attitude of the saint towards his God was one that needed very specifically to be stressed. At times like that, when the old landmarks have disappeared and the means of taking one's bearings anew is difficult, if not impossible, it is very easy to loose one's contacts on the higher things as well as on those that lie around. Having been taught to expect that once the visitation of wrath began, that same generation would not pass away till all was fulfilled, the whole believing company could well be excused if, after Jerusalem was destroyed, they then began to ask if the work- of -God had failed, and his control of human affairs become ineffective. It is under such conditions that faith wilts away, and devotion evaporates. To meet that situation in his own day John went back to that episode at the Well to recall how Jesus had foreseen and foretold a time yet to come when the special privilege of Jerusalem as the city of God, and of her Temple as the exclusive place of worship, would be withdrawn, yet notwithstanding that, the God of heaven, the Father of a wider family, would still be seeking some to worship him who could worship in spirit and truth. He would stand ready to accept the devotion of their ' hearts as incense sweet, because it was the sincere expression of their inmost souls. Ceremony and ritual would cease not only on Mount Gerizim, but in Jerusalem too, and then the fervent adoration and praise rising heavenwards from God's free-born sons throughout the whole wide world would mean more to him than all the chants of the white-robed priests, or all the blood of bulls and goats, though all the cattle on a thousand hills were presented to him in sacrifice. Of these things his soul was utterly wearied, for the deeper worship he would "seek."

We too are living mid the crashing structures of an expiring age; we too behold the death-throes of an ancient civilization. We too find that some of our expectations have miscarried, at least in point of time. We also need the assurance and consolation of that lone figure of long ago to direct our minds to the vital, worth-while things, that we may be found among those whom God seeks to draw near to him in worship, devotion, and praise. Just as John used that conversation of Jesus to persuade his brethren in that former day to turn, amid their perplexity and uncertainty, to the devotional side of life and experience, so also do the same words invite us to do exactly the same thing today, when dispensational. disappointment has damped the warmth and enthusiasm in very many hearts.

*-T. Holmes, Eng.*

**Paul to Philemon**  
**A MODEL LETTER EXAMINED**  
**PART 5**  
*(Conclusion)*

*Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. Having confidence in thine obedience I write unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say. But withal prepare me also a lodging; for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you. Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, salute thee; and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow-workers. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. - Philemon 20-25.*

THE APOSTLE as his final argument asks that the comfort that hearing of Philemon's faithfulness has already given him, shall be added to by granting the present request: "Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my heart in Christ." The word translated "yea," is an adverb of pleading for which no one seems to have found an adequate English substitute when used as in this passage. Similarly the original of "joy" is impossible to put into graceful English. It is a play on words, one of the most difficult of the translator's problems. Very literally, and quite awkwardly the verse would read: "Oh, brother, let me be onesimied ("have joy") by you. In effect Paul is saying: I am sending you Onesimus, the helpful; and thus you have an opportunity to The helpful to me, comforting my spirit by letting me hear that you have extended your helpfulness to this new brother in Christ, one with whom you might be tempted to be over-severe in view of his past unhelpfulness, yes even unfaithfulness. I hope you will remember the need of an aged prisoner for all the consolation he can have, and add my need to your reasons for accepting this former slave, now a new fellow-bond-servant of Christ, accepting him even as you would accept myself. I am not asking that you give me merely the pleasure natural human beings could enjoy; it is my "heart in Christ Jesus" you will be giving rest, repose to.

The word "heart" is, as in verses 7 and 12 (Philemon 7-12), our nearest approach to a correct translation. The Greek word indicates the higher organs, the heart and lungs, reminding us of the plea of the Apostle Paul: "Let-this-mind-be in you which is in Christ Jesus." Here the verb which the first four words are used to translate implies much more than the English expresses. It is based on the noun which is the name of the diaphragm or midriff, the most powerful muscle in the body, the one that separates between the higher and lower organs. All these organs on the two sides of the diaphragm were used by the ancients to represent the mind, and fittingly represent the two prevailing types. Thus he is exhorting, "Let this separation be in you which -was in Christ Jesus who never lived for a moment for the gratification of the lower desires, but lived always for the things of eternity.

His instruction is that the Christian should "give all diligence" to "set his affections [his *heart*] on things above," be filled with the spirit," *breathe* with him the 'heavenly atmosphere.

Only by thus conforming themselves to the character of their glorified High-priest can the under-priesthood be prepared to share with him in the work of teaching the world to come to the temple to worship: and only *by making all else secondary to this matter of attaining his character-likeness* can they themselves hope in their proving time to dwell together in peace "in the Lord." By the economy of, one symbol the Apostle expresses all this truth in Ephesians 2:20, 21: "Jesus

Christ himself being the chief corner stone, *in whom* all the building fitly framed *together* groweth into an holy temple [a place of worship for the world of mankind] *in the Lord*. Those for whom old things have passed away and, all things have become new, receive as *in the Lord* those whom he has chosen *in himself*, marry *in the Lord*, labor *in the Lord*, do their glorying *in the Lord*, recognize all faithfulness in themselves and in others as traceable to their relationship *in the Lord*. He is in fact their "all in all." - Rom. 16:2, 12, 13, 22; 1 Cor. 1:31; 4:17; 7:39.

This closeness of relationship of all 'Christians with each other is, represented by the picture of membership in the Lord's Body, he the Head to do the thinking and directing, and we the organs to accomplish his purposes, every organ connected with the Head by a mysterious spiritual nervous system that thus "in Christ Jesus," gives them connection with every other member of the Body for mutual helpfulness. And "whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." (1 Cor. 12:25, 26.) Only a diseased member would fail to respond involuntarily to pain in any other member or even a threat of it. "In Christ Jesus" written on every Christian, and it alone, can conquer all harshness, all judging -- disheartening manifestations of selfishness -- traces of which must persist until the day when we are "filled with all the fulness of God" and all the unloveliness of the old self has been crowded out: until the day we are ready to be ushered into the Father's presence.

It is a laudable ambition for men to seek to please each other in righteousness, but for Christians there should always be additionally the higher motive Paul is suggesting to Philemon--that of giving a fellow member pleasure in the Lord; that is, give him pleasure because of their relationship in that mystical Body, and therefore give pleasure to the Head who is over all. They consequently must act, must speak, "not as pleasing men, but God." (1 Thess. 2:4.) It should however be no surprise to us if Philemon should have as his first thought, "What will my neighbors think?" And Philemon's neighbors could be counted on to criticize any leniency on his part as an encouragement to faithlessness on the part of the thousands of slaves of their community that would hear about it. However he cannot serve two masters. Pleasing God requires that we do not "walk in the counsel of the ungodly."

Confidence as to the result is expressed in the twenty-first verse; probably almost entirely because of his knowledge of Philemon's sterling character, but perhaps there was some slight credit given to the arguments he had presented. Nothing less than compliance could The anticipated (1) from one whose record had long been one of faithfulness, and (2) since the request is made as from a Body member to a Body member in Christ Jesus, and (3) for the preservation of the very principle that bound them together, love, (4) as an effort to give comfort to an aged prisoner of Christ Jesus, but risking nothing (5) since Paul would pay any indebtedness, and (6) since the one he is requested to receive is a changed man and (7) would not disappoint him, but (8) will be found profitable (9) as a brother, (10) a son, and (11) a fellow bond-servant of Jesus Christ, (12) one the Apostle loved enough so that he wished he might keep him with him; but best of all because (13) there is reason to believe it was God who sent him away that he might come (back to be this added blessing to Philemon and all the congregation in his house, and (14) much more beloved to him than even to Paul, (15) Philemon's partner and (16) the one to whom he owed his very life.

"The liberal deviseth liberal things and in liberal things shall he be established." (Isa. 32:8.) One who has been liberal in giving himself, his all to the Lord, finds it easy to be liberal with others, generous in deeds, in giving, and in judgment. Though Philemon knows this, the Apostle makes the matter as easy as possible for his brother by expressing his confidence in him. Often unwise teachers assure disobedience on the part of the child by informing him by tone or by word that that is what is anticipated. "A will which mere authority could not bend, like iron when cold, may be made flexible when warmed by this gentle heat" of love in the heart and in the tone, is the

testimony of Brother Maclaren. In accord with this principle Paul writes: "Having confidence in your obedience I write unto you, *knowing* that you will do even beyond what I say." Love does not plan on the *least* it can do, but the most.

"The word emancipation seems to be trembling on the Apostle's lips, and yet he does not once utter it," Lightfoot comments. No such suggestion was necessary for, as Wordsworth observes, "By Christianizing the master, the Gospel enfranchized the slave. It did not legislate about mere names and forms, but it went to the root of the evil -- it spoke to the heart of man. When the heart of the master was filled with divine grace, and was warmed with the love of Christ, the rest would soon follow. The lips would speak kind words: the hands would do liberal things. Every Onesimus would be treated by every Philemon as a beloved brother in Christ."

According to the bent of mind one might take Paul's added request that a lodging be prepared for him as either a sly way of urging Philemon to promptness in his obedience, or as a reward for the generosity toward Onesimus he has already said he *knows* will be exercised.

Paul's desire for a visit in Colosse is strong and he asks the prayers of his brother that he may have that privilege. He says "*I know you will act like a Christian toward Brother Onesimus; but I hope my own eyes can have the joy of seeing you together as brothers.*" We do not know that Paul did have that privilege, but we know those prayers were answered. They were not, "Send Paul to Colosse because I wish it," but "Send Paul to Colosse if it is your will." The first is the prayer of faith in self. The second the prayer of faith in God and his superior wisdom. That prayer can never be denied. Unfortunately the expression, "Prayer of faith" is commonly used to indicate the prayer of selfishness, a determination to have one's own will done. True faith fears to have his own will considered, knowing that God's will is always as much higher than his as the heavens are higher than the earth. Many saints were praying for Stephen, but he was stoned; and what a blessing he left for us through his martyr's death. Jesus prayed for Peter, but he denied the Lord; and thus showed us the length to which God's mercy can go.

We cannot doubt that Philemon's love for Paul and Paul's love for Philemon inspired them to pray earnestly that if it were the Lord's will he might "come quickly." Paul's desire was not that Philemon might be driven to the performance of an unpleasant task, but that he might have larger joy in service. Joyful, free willed service is the kind that yields the richest fruitage. It is said that the finest wines are from grapes so ripe no pressure is necessary to extract their juice.

There is a similarity between the pleading of Paul and that of his Master. Both accept deeds done to their loved ones as if done to themselves, find joy in imperfect works done from the motive of love, expect the love that will do more than is requested, long for the day of reunion, and use that hope to inspire faithfulness. Christ, like Paul, prefers the tone of love to that of authority, binds himself to pay all our indebtedness, reminds us that we owe him our very lives—a debt that eternity cannot cancel, and asks us to prepare an abode for him in our hearts. Paul joins with us in praying the necessary assistance to that end: "I bow my knees unto the Father, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." - Eph. 3:14-16.

In forwarding the greetings with which the letter closes Paul designates Epaphras as his fellow-prisoner and lists Aristarchus among his "fellow-workers." These designations are reversed in the accompanying letter to the Colossian brethren. (Col. 4:10, 12.) Since both designations fit each brother, the explanation of Meyer seems a most likely one: "These attendants of Paul voluntarily took turns in ministering to him in his place of confinement; hence one at a time, and another at another, would be Paul's 'fellow-prisoner.'"

At the point we have now reached in the letter, Philemon has but the few words of the final greetings to read before he turns to Onesimus to pronounce sentence upon him. This inspired short "short-story" leaves each reader to supply for himself the conclusion. In Philemon's presence stood the one who had run away from his service an ignorant heathen, a slinking culprit, with rebellion and mutiny in his heart and stolen property on his person, fearful of his life; but now returned, his "life hid with Christ in God," the trusted representative of the greatest of all Christians, longing for the perfection of holiness, knowing and loving God, hoping for a kingly crown and the privilege of reigning with Christ at his appearing, in the meantime joyful in any service, ready to do good to all men *as* there is opportunity, and doing "all as unto the Lord." The little missive in *his* hand, by implication, tells Philemon all this. Need *we* have any misgivings as to what his answer will be, or the joy that will flood Paul's prison-dwelling, nay that did fill his cell in the very writing of it, *knowing* that Philemon would do even beyond what he said?

Each letter of the Apostle's preserved for us is a precious self-drawn portrait of himself; (but none so faithfully or nearly so clearly drawn as each tender pen-stroke has made this one. And there is no part of the letter more Pauline, or more telling for the accomplishing of his purpose, than the petition that calls for divine guidance for Philemon in making his decision, the benediction at its close. Who can fail to see the two brothers in a typically oriental embrace when Philemon has read these final words. In a lower corner we find the identification to correspond with the name that stands at the head of the letter:

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."

- P. E. Thomson.

## The Question Box

### James 1:25

#### *Question:*

In James 1:25 we read of "the perfect law of liberty." The language here employed seems contradictory. On the one hand "law" is defined as a rule of action prescribed by authority. "Liberty," on the other hand, suggests freedom from restraint. What has "law" to do with "liberty?" Do they not mutually exclude each other?

#### *Answer:*

At first glance it would seem so. Closer study, however, discloses that while the terms are self contradictory, the statement itself gives expression to a remarkable truth. Other instances of this paradoxical form of expression may be found in the New Testament. To mention but one, we quote 2 Cor. 6:9, 10: "As unknown and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, and yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

Here the Apostle likens himself to the son of a millionaire, not yet in possession of his future inheritance, but nevertheless able to draw on the infinite resources of his Father. From one point of view he had nothing, yet, since Jehovah himself was his portion, did not the Apostle truly possess all things? No doubt from one standpoint he was poor; yet who could appraise his value to the Church, and *how rich* he has made us by the lavish manner in which he spent and was himself spent in the service of the Master and in the service of us all.

So it is with this peculiar expression, "the perfect law of liberty." It is a paradox. Let us examine it. It can be best understood perhaps by means of an illustration. Here, let us say, is a boy to whom has been given an untrained dog. The dog is totally unacquainted with the boy. It is taken out into the fields when, without the least warning, it breaks loose from the boy and scampers away, paying no heed whatever to the boy's whistles and calls. Here we have an illustration of liberty without law.

Eventually the dog is recaptured and placed on the end of a chain. Thereafter, whenever the boy and the dog go out for a walk, the dog is always on the end of a chain. He is allowed no freedom. This illustrates law without liberty.

During this period of law without liberty, however, the boy is teaching the dog to love and respect him. No one is allowed to feed the dog except the boy. The boy speaks encouraging words to him when he is well-behaved; scolds him at other times. The day comes at last when they go out together to the same fields as they went on their first walk. The chain is removed, and again the dog scampers off. The boy whistles and what happens? The dog gladly heeds the call of his master and scampers back. The chain of steel is no longer there. Another one, however, has taken its place--an even stronger one. It is the cord of love and understanding woven during the training period. Here is an illustration of the law of liberty.

So long as the dog remained untrained, he was unfit for the law of liberty. Law without liberty, as illustrated in the chain, must be his only portion. From this homely illustration we believe it will be apparent that the perfect law of liberty mentioned by the Apostle James is for the well disposed only; that is to say, it is applicable, at the present time, only to members of the new creation -- the little flock. Others are still under the Mosaic Law, as servants, not fit for "the

liberty wherewith Christ makes free" the sons, or else they are under the condemnation of the original law, the condemnation of death.

Before these, Jews and Gentiles alike, will be fit for the perfect law of liberty, they must be placed under the rule of a rod of iron, for a thousand years. During that time they will be shepherded by Christ and his Church, who will administer the laws of the Kingdom with justice tempered with mercy.

Not until the close of the Millennial Age, when the willful evil doers shall have been cut off in the Second Death, will the race, proved perfect and fully in accord with the divine standard, be put under the perfect law of liberty -- love and its golden rule.

- P. L. Read.

## Encouraging Messages

Dear Brethren

"For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God." (Heb. 6:7.) As our own words are lacking to express the longing of our heart to thank the Institute and all those who labored in love to minister unto us, we use these words of Scripture. We want to be that "good earth" and we did drink in eagerly and thirstily all the "rain" which came from the Lord through the lips of the speakers to us. Now we have His promise in these words that if that seed sown in our hearts bears fruit and flowers, we shall receive blessing from God. We wait, humbly and patiently we trust (for even humility and patience come only as "Christ liveth in me") for that growth which will reveal or manifest, not fruit only, but the fragrance of ripe, mellow fruit to His glory, and the blessing and profit to others. "From me is thy fruit found." - Hosea 14.

We were led from the first step of denying self in that beautiful discourse, "Not I, but Christ," through the experience of one "greatly beloved of God" -- Daniel, and its lesson for us of constancy, loyalty, prayer, purity, and privilege, to the humility, a ripe fruit which adorned our Savior's life, beautifully. The suggestions in this discourse were searching, and inspired an intense yearning in our hearts for Christ-likeness in this respect. Then from the brazen altar to the Most Holy with its special treasure of God's words and presence, until we came to, the discourse which showed us the purpose of all discipline-to purify us of the chaff and make us useful in strengthening our brethren, as illustrated in Peter's life.

We doubt not that the remaining testimony meeting and final discourse added to the crowning touch, as it would be suggested that our God proveth us to know whether we love Him supremely. We were unable to stay.

God bless you all richly as He has us; and we send our heartfelt thanks and love for one more trysting-place together at Jesus' feet.

With much love in Him,  
O. D. A. -- Mass.

Dear Sir:

I have received several copies of "The Herald of Christ's Kingdom" which I have enjoyed very much. So I want to, thank you or whoever sent them to me. And I am enclosing \$1.00 for which please send it to me for a year as I do not want to miss any of them since reading a few. I am

Sincerely,  
J. T. W. -- Va.

### **Card of Thanks**

Brother Nadal, whose report of a visit to Germany was recently published in the "Herald," requests that we express for him 'his thanks to a sister who has sent him a gift anonymously, signing herself as "a sister who is rejoicing."