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Living by Faith

"According to your faith be it unto you." - Matthew 9:29.

THE PRINCIPLE laid down in the above statement has been generally recognized as being particularly applicable throughout the Gospel Age, though there are instances in the Old Testament records where the same principle applied. Abraham, Moses, Samuel, and Elijah, and many others of the Old Testament Worthies, received "according to their faith."

As we recall some of the many instances in which this principle was used by our Lord and his disciples at the beginning of the Age, we find in each case a practical demonstration of the power of God available to those who have the necessary faith. Not only so, but we also recognize that the divine power made available is limited only by the degree of faith manifest before God.

Meditating upon the foregoing, most of the Lord's people no doubt will agree that this doctrine is in full accord with God's Word, but in spite of the acceptance of it in a general sense, how many of us demonstrate in our daily life, and to what extent, that this principle is applicable to us? "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith," says the Apostle Paul. May we suggest that we do examine ourselves along that line? Let us examine our everyday conduct. When we are in the midst of sorrow or affliction, do we remember that our Lord said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"? And do we really go to the Lord with our burden, sincerely seeking his aid, and then confidently expecting to receive the help we need; or do we arise from our knees still trying to carry the burden alone, as though we had not asked his loving aid? Again, when we meet with the difficulties and perplexities of life, perhaps not knowing which way to turn, do we ask for the Lord's guidance and then trembling and almost afraid to move, go through the experience in dread of making a mistake? Or remembering the dear Lord's promise to lead all who earnestly seek his guidance, do we use our best judgment as to what would be most in accord with his will, going forward with an assurance of faith in his precious promise that he will guide us aright and that the outcome of the experience will be for our lasting good?

As we are made conscious of our great lack of wisdom and remember the admonition of the writer of the Epistle of James, do we ask God for the wisdom we need and really expect him to give us that wisdom liberally, as promised; or do we go on lamenting our lack of wisdom in mock humility, "being

blown about with every wind of doctrine," not daring to take our stand for this or for that, lest we make a mistake? And last but not least, when we recall our dear Lord's assurance that our heavenly Father is more willing to give us his holy spirit than we are to ask or receive, do we really expect to be filled with that holy spirit when we pray for it? Many of us seem to go through our everyday life, and while admitting the promises are in the Holy Word (yet apparently not appropriating them to ourselves), we live as though those precious promises did not apply to us.

Let us review a few of those wonderful promises written for our benefit, upon whom the end of the Age has come: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray believe that ye shall receive them" (Mark 11:24). "Ask and it shall be given unto you" (Matt. 7:7). "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that I will do" (John 14:13). "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not" (James 1:5, 6). "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). These are only a few of the many precious promises given and well known to most of the Lord's people, yet how many fail to enter into the realities of such a life of faith, which God's Word indicates is possible even now to those who can really take God at his Word. Is it not true that if any of our experiences do not draw us closer to God, giving us a more earnest desire to have each experience work out in our heart the peaceable fruits of righteousness, the fault must be with us? "God cannot lie," and "all the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus," we are told; but the extent to which we appropriate those promises to ourselves will be in direct proportion to the degree of our faith.

The habit of generalizing when speaking or thinking of the Word of God can cause one to miss that personal contact which we believe is essential to a full realization of the relationship that is the present heritage of the children of God; and it does not tend to instill in us or build us up in our most holy faith. We must admit that though the promise, "according to faith," is a general promise in that it applies to all of the Lord's people, it is also quite personal in its working principle. It was the personal faith of the woman who for twelve years had a hemorrhage, that enabled her to receive that healing grace from our Lord, as he said, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke 8:48). It was the personal faith of the Centurion that caused our Lord to heal the sick servant without going to the house where the sick servant lay (Luke 7:2-10). It was the personal faith of Abraham which enabled him to be the father of the promised Seed which is to bless all the families of the earth (Rom. 4:19-22). In contrast, it was because of a lack of that same faith that our Lord did not do many mighty works in his own town (Matt. 13:58). Again, it was the personal faith of Peter, John, and Paul that enabled them to do many wonderful works in Christ Jesus' precious name, throughout their Christian journey, and gave them the victory over the world, the flesh, and the Adversary.

Seeing we are encompassed about with so great a company of witnesses, and are assured of the power of God through faith, and knowing that we began our walk with Jesus through a wholehearted faith in our Lord's precious sacrifice on our behalf, surely we can take God at his Word and confidently expect that he will supply that promised grace sufficient for our every need. "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord [by faith], so walk ye in him." Then we *shall* be kept from falling and be presented faultless before the presence of his glory. We *shall* be kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time, in direct proportion to our wholehearted appropriation of that wonderful assurance: "According to your faith be it unto you."

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen."

- H. J. Barlow

Our Sacred Obligation

"Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.." - Joel 1:3.

In this simple way, by God's grace, a living testimony. for truth is always to be kept alive in the land, the beloved of the Lord are to hand down their witness for the Gospel, and the covenant to their heirs, and these again to their next descendants. This is our *first* duty -- we are to begin at the family hearth: he is a bad preacher who does not commence his ministry at home. The heathen are to be sought by all means,' and the highways and hedges are to be searched, but home has a prior claim, and woe unto those who reverse the order of the Lord's arrangements. To teach our children is *a personal* duty: We cannot delegate it to Sunday -- school teachers, or other friendly aids. These can assist *us*, but cannot deliver us from the sacred obligations. Proxies and

sponsors are wicked devices in this -- case: Mothers and fathers must, like Abraham, command their households in the fear of God, and talk with their offspring concerning the wondrous works of the Most High. Parental teaching ~is *a natural* duty; who is so fit to look to the child's well -- being as those who are the authors of his actual being? Family religion is *necessary* for the nation, for the family itself, and for the Church of God. Would that parents would awaken to a sense of the importance -- of this matter. It is *a pleasant* duty to talk of Jesus to our sons and daughters, and the more so because it has often proved to be an *accepted* work, for God has saved the children through the parents' prayers and admonitions.

"I Will Come Again" -- Jesus

The subtitle of this volume on "the most important subject in the world today" is: "The Five Successive Phases of the Advent," and it is set forth by the author, Brother Horace E. Hollister, as "A Fresh Analysis of the Old and New Testament Prophetic Writings Concerning the Second Coming of Christ the Messiah." One of the most valuable features of the book is the reproduction of all the passages -- more than one hundred and twenty -- of the New Testament referring to the return of the Lord and his Millennial Reign, from the translations of the *Emphatic Diaglott* and Rotherham's *Emphasized Bible*, on facing pages. 330 pages. All orders should be sent to H. E. Hollister, 2718 Veranda Road, Albuquerque, N. M. Prim, postpaid, cloth \$2.25.

Our Lord's Return - Part II

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."- Titus 2:13

IN CONTINUING this consideration of the subject of our Lord's Return, we propose to deal with some aspects of it that to some may appear to be out of harmony with the thoughts expressed in our previous meditation. Much of the confusion in the minds of Christian people is due to the fact that the Scriptures do seem to present two viewpoints of this subject which on the surface may appear to be contradictory and inharmonious.

We have already dealt with the *manner* of our Lord's Return and noted some correspondencies with his First Advent. From the Scriptures, we have seen that the first period of his second Presence would be thief like in that it would be unnoticed and unknown by all except a few who would be eagerly watching for the signs which are to indicate his Presence. His Advent, we have seen, would be unseen by any, but immediately after, his Presence would be made known to those whose hearts were in the condition to receive the message which would then be proclaimed. As at the First Advent of our Lord, so at his Return, there would be a "harvest -- time" -- a period during which a work of separation would take place, when mere profession and heart sincerity would be made manifest.

It has also been noted that the *object* of our Lord's Return is to gather together his own faithful followers preparatory to the establishment of God's Kingdom in the earth, over which Christ with his Bride are to be the rulers. Furthermore, in our previous meditation we were reminded that the Scriptures clearly indicate *three distinct phases of our Lord's Second Presence*. First, there was to be the thieflike, unheralded aspect of his Return; second, a "bright shining" or manifestation of his Presence, during which the evidences of his Return would become more clear to those who were intently watching the signs of the times; and, third, "the uncovering" or revelation, which is so frequently confused with the *arrival* of our Lord. This latter phase the, Scriptures show is one in which the Church is to be intimately and closely associated with the Lord in glory. It is referred to by the Apostle Paul as "the manifestation of the sons of God" for which the whole creation is waiting..

Now for awhile we will consider Paul's statement to the Thessalonians in his first letter, chapter 4, verse 16 (1 Thess 4:16). This verse is one of those frequently used to support the view that the return of the Lord will be visible, seen and heard by all the world. A superficial reading of these words does indeed leave this impression in the mind, but then we are faced with those other statements of Scripture which so clearly and unmistakably speak of his coming and presence as being unobserved and unknown to all except a very few. If all these Scriptures are to be understood literally, then we are faced with a direct contradiction. We have on the one hand, *signs and evidences* given us to indicate that which otherwise would never be discerned; on the other hand, we have statements which, if accepted literally, would make all these signs and exhortations to watchfulness meaningless and of little value. How are we to harmonize these two seemingly contradictory viewpoints presented to us -- in the Word of God? We are exhorted to "reason together," and as we do this, we shall find that by "rightly dividing the Word and by comparing Scripture with Scripture, all its statements upon this subject are in complete harmony and in accord with the dignity and character of our God.

1 Thess. 4:16 -- *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first."* The fixed impression which many have gained from this passage is that the Lord Jesus himself, when he returned to earth, would come in a glorified human body, shouting and blowing a trumpet, and that all mankind would see his coming and quail before him. But how foreign is this presentation of the matter to the character and dignity of our Lord as we have been privileged to understand it, and how contrary it is to all reason. As we consider our Lord's walk upon earth during his three and a half years ministry, we are impressed by his quiet demeanor -- his dignity on every occasion and in every experience. He never lifted up his voice or cried aloud in the streets. How difficult it is to imagine that "this same Jesus" in his glorified condition would not still maintain that quiet dignity which characterized his walk here below.

It is not necessary to deduce from this verse that the Lord Jesus is himself the author of the shout, the voice, and the trumpet *sound* -- *the verse does not say that*. Our Authorized Version reads that the Lord shall descend *with* a shout, but the word translated *with* can just as properly be rendered "*in*" and, indeed is much more frequently translated in this way throughout the New Testament. By keeping this in mind, we are able, quite easily, to harmonize this version with the statements concerning his return "as a thief in the night" -- a return which would be unnoticed and undiscerned by nearly all. Can we not readily appreciate -- the fact that the vast majority of mankind would be so occupied and engrossed with the effects of "the shout," "the voice," and "the trump of God, that they would fail to discern the great event associated with them? The author or originator of the sounds described in this verse can be decided only by comparison with other texts of Scripture, but the point it is desired to emphasize is that it is not necessary to read into this verse that the returned Lord is the originator of them all.

What, then, are we to understand by "a shout"? The Greek word translated "*shout*" in this verse occurs only once in the New Testament and means -- "a shout of encouragement" or "a cry of incitement." The Lord is to return *in* this shout, or in other words it would be during a period when this "cry of incitement" is being made that the Second Advent of Christ would take place. In contrast to the "voice of the archangel," a shout implies that the message is designed for a large number of people; it implies that the cry is intended to be heard by a great multitude, and it is with the object of inciting or encouraging them. What do the Scriptures teach concerning the closing days of this dispensation and of our Lord's return? The Prophet Jeremiah, speaking prophetically concerning the judgment which is to come upon Christendom at the end of the Age, says in Jer. 25:29-31 - *"Thus saith the Lord of hosts ... I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of hosts. Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, THE LORD SHALL ROAR FROM ON HIGH, AND UTTER HIS VOICE FROM HIS HOLY HABITATION; HE SHALL GIVE A SHOUT, as they that tread the grapes, AGAINST ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a -- controversy with the nations."* In these verses Jehovah himself is portrayed as the originator of a great *shout* which is to be heard by all the inhabitants of the earth. In Joel 3:9-11, 16 we read -- *"Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles: Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye nations, and gather yourselves together round about; the Lord shall bring down thy mighty ones. ... THE LORD SHALL ROAR OUT OF ZION, AND UTTER HIS VOICE from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel."* The Prophet Isaiah in chapter 13 (Isa. 13) records that it is the Lord Jehovah who is mustering the hosts of the battle, and it is he who is inciting the people to prepare for the great day of the Lord of hosts.

What are to be the effects of this shout, and are they to be seen in the earth today? Again referring to Isaiah 13:4, we read there concerning the result of this mustering *shout* of the Lord: "*The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the Lord of hosts' mustereth the host of the battle.*" Many are the Scriptures which clearly indicate that due to the enlightenment of the latter days, knowledge would be increased, and as a result of this, great preparations would be made by the nations to defend themselves against the new order of things which is to bring their reign to a close. As we look about us, surely we realize that these effects are now operating in the earth, *and* have been in operation for some years past. Away back toward the close of the last century we read of the vast preparations for war which were even then being made. Although they cannot be compared with the more recent efforts of the nations, they were such as to cause thinking men and women to wonder and fear. Men of the world were speaking peace while at the same time they were devising weapons of war on a scale which had never before been known in the world's history. Is not this clear evidence to us that we are living in a time *when a great shout has gone forth from heaven*, inciting the masses to prepare for a great time of trouble, which is to wind up the present evil institutions of earth and make way for the righteous Kingdom to be inaugurated -- a kingdom based upon the principles of equity and justice? The quotation in 1 Thess. 4 indicate:, that it is during this period -- "*in a shout*" that the Lord would descend from heaven. Other Scriptures, as we have seen, teach that the world would not be aware of his coming or his presence, and it can easily be seen that only those who are watching the signs would discern that the Lord had returned.

This first sign, as represented in the *shout*, enables us to approximate the period during which the return of our Lord would take place, but in order that we might have a correct appreciation of this matter, it is necessary that the further signs referred to be carefully considered *in order* that we may not be led to wrong conclusions. The next sign spoken of by the Apostle Paul is "*The voice of the archangel.*" The "*shout*," we have seen, implies that a multitude of people are to be incited in their preparations for the great day of the Lord. In contrast to this, "*the voice*" suggests something more personal and individual. This is not a *shout* which goes forth to be heard by all and sundry -- it is to be heard and discerned only by a few; it is "the voice of the archangel." According to Young's Analytical Concordance, the word "archangel" means "chief messenger," and there can be little doubt that this title appropriately belongs to the Lord Jesus, who is the chief agent in carrying out the purposes of God at the close of this Gospel Age. The Prophet Malachi refers to this Messenger in Mal. 3:1: "*Behold, I will send my messenger, and, He shall prepare the way before me: and, the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, EVEN THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.*" It is significant to note that this prophecy has its application during this present time, at the end of this Age when the Lord will sit "as a refiner and purifier of silver." The verse teaches that upon his return the Lord would be primarily concerned with his people -- *it is to his temple* that he would suddenly come, to those who delight in him. Surely, then, we can see the force of the expression, "the voice of the archangel." It speaks of communion and fellowship. What, then, is the message spoken by this "voice," and to whom is it spoken? Let us remind ourselves concerning the first work of our Lord when he returns. To, his disciples he said: "*I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I WILL COME AGAIN, AND RECEIVE YOU UNTO MYSELF; that where I am, ye may be also.*" (John 14:2, 3.) From the time of his departure from them, all true disciples of our Lord have longed for his return, and it is to these, to those who delight in him, this temple class spoken of by Malachi, that he is to return. The Lord Jesus also informed us that throughout the Age, the "wheat field" would consist of wheat and tares growing together, but at the close of the Age, during a harvest period, a work of separating the true wheat from the false (tares) would take place. It is, therefore, to the wheat class, or the

"temple" class, that "the voice of the archangel" would speak. And what is to be the message? We suggest that primarily it would be a message which would cause a separation among the professing people of God. *"BABYLON THE GREAT IS FALLEN . . . COME OUT FROM HER, MY PEOPLE, AND BE YE SEPARATE, SAITH THE LORD, and touch not the unclean thing, that ye receive not of her plagues."* (Rev. 18:2, 4.) . That message would be heard and heeded by only a few who loved the Lord more than any earthly arrangement or organization. Such would obey "the voice of the archangel."

Furthermore, that "voice" would inform them of his *return* -- *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my VOICE, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."* (Rev. 3:20.) It is important to bear in mind that the Lord Jesus, when he returns, is primarily concerned with his professed people, with those who have claimed to be his followers. The Scriptures clearly indicate that his return and presence would produce other effects, but his message and chief work is connected with those who have taken his Name to themselves.

We now ask, What is to be the effect of this "voice of the archangel"? The New Testament abounds with statements which indicate the severe shaking which would take place among those who call themselves Christians. Organized churchianity would be condemned because of her pride, because of her failure to maintain the spirit of him whom she called "Lord." She would, be reproved for her lack of zeal in proclaiming the true Gospel, and for her lukewarmness; she would be cast off from the Lord's favor. *"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou Overt cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."* (Rev. 3:15-17.) These are therefore rejected, and the call goes forth to those who are sincere in their desire to walk faithfully in the footsteps of the Master, to be separate from that condition of thing, which the Lord has condemned, to leave the confusion which characterizes this "great Babylon. The promise to those who obey the call is that he would sup with them and personally would serve them with meat. The Scriptures also indicate that whereas it had been difficult during the Gospel Age for the world to discern between the wheat and tares, between those who were sincere Christians and the professor, at the end of the Age; during the presence of the Chief Reaper, the true and the false would be revealed to all. It would be a time when all sham and make -- believe would be cast aside, and as the result of the shaking which would take place, only that which cannot be shaken would remain. *Have we seen these things, or do we see these things transpiring today?* There can be only one answer to that question. The "voice of the archangel" has spoken, and the sifting and shaking, the work of separation which has been going on for a number of years, continues to sort out the professed people of God. *That work is still going on.* Organized Christianity is cast off from favor; she has no message to give which is consistent with the Word of God; she speaks with many voices which bring confusion, and has no appreciation of the plans and purposes of God. Those who have heard "the voice of the archangel" have come away from that condition of things, and what has been the result? They have received a message which is in harmony with the Word of God, a consistent message, one which appeals to the reasoning faculty as well as being in full accord with Bible teaching; a message which has revealed the character of God, his love and wisdom as well as his power and justice. How else can we explain the enlightenment which has come, in the understanding of God's Word in these latter years? Things which have been hidden and obscured for centuries past, have been made plain to those who are really desirous of understanding the ways of God. Yet here is a lesson and solemn warning to ourselves. The Adversary is ever ready to stumble the Lord's people, and today he is 'more concerned with those who have heard "the voice of the archangel" than with those who remain in darkness. Even among those who have separated themselves from the great

systems of error in Christendom a shaking work is proceeding. It is more subtle and severe today than it ever was! Experience is teaching us how possible it is to be separate from the Babylonish systems and yet to still have the spirit of Babylon and confusion. And how sad it is that some have become boastful and proud in their knowledge of the Truth -- to "thank God that they are so much better than others," instead of humbly realizing that it is by God's favor that we have been so enlightened. It is possible also to retain the spirit of intolerance which characterizes Babylon; to become "lukewarm" in our zeal for the Lord and his Truth. May we be ever watchful of our own hearts, and remember that the Lord, as he tests and proves us, is watching to see, not so much the quantity of Truth we have received, for that is somewhat governed by our mental capacity, but *the effect* which the Truth is working out in our lives and characters. Is it making us more Christ -- like, more long suffering and tolerant, more gentle in our dealings with others who may not, appreciate things exactly as we do? Is it making us more zealous in service for the Lord? In Romans 14:10 we read, "*We, shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*" When that time comes, we shall not be asked just how much of Truth we know; we shall not be asked concerning the quantity we have received. Rather, our position in the Kingdom will be decided by the sanctifying influence which has been wrought in our lives by the 'Truth we have been privileged to understand.

THE TRUMP OF GOD

The third sign associated with the coming of our Lord and spoken of by Paul is "the trump of God." "*The Lord shall descend from heaven . . . with the trump of God.*" The trumpet or cornet is an instrument that was very much used in Israel in connection with their religious and national affairs. It was used by them to announce the jubilee, to proclaim a new year, to sound an alarm in time of war; and it was used in times of praise and rejoicing. We have seen that the "shout" and "the voice of the archangel" are symbolic expressions; therefore, it is but reasonable to assume that the "trump of God" does not refer to a literal trumpet sound. The significance of this expression may be seen by comparison with a few of the prophetic utterances where the trumpet is referred to. Psalm 47:5 -- this Psalm prophetically speaks of the time when all nations shall be subject to Israel. It opens on a triumphant note: "*O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph. For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.*" Verse 5 reads, "*GOD IS GONE UP WITH A SHOUT, THE LORD WITH A SOUND OF A TRUMPET. Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding. God reigneth over the nations: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.*" Here God is referred to as sounding a trumpet to indicate the subjection of the nations of earth to God and to Israel. The Prophet Isaiah in chapter 27 speaks of the time when Israel will again be restored to her own land, and in Isa. 27:13 it is recorded: "*And it shall come to pass in that day, THAT THE GREAT TRUMPET SHALL BE BLOWN, and they shall come which were ready to perish in, the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem,*" Here again the trumpet is used to assemble the nation of Israel in their own land. The Prophet Joel also speaks of a trumpet which shall be blown to sound an alarm, and there can be no doubt that the prophecy has an application during the closing days of the Gospel Age. "*Blow ye the trumpet in Zion and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of tempestuous obscurity like the morning dawn spread out upon the mountains.*" (Joel 2:1, 2. See Leeser.) Reference should be made to one further prophecy -- in Zechariah 9. This also has particular reference to the time when God will stand up for his, people Israel and will defend and save them. "*Turn you again to, the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope: even today do I declare that I will recompense twofold (good) unto thee.... and then will go, forth like the lightning his arrow: AND THE LORD*

ETERNAL WILL BLOW ON THE TRUMPET, and he will go along in the tempests of the south. The Lord of hosts will be a shield over them; . . . And the Lord their God will save them on that day as the flock of his people; for (like) the stones of a crown, they shall be lifted up as an ensign over his land." (Zech. 9:12-16. See Leeser.) These and many other prophecies clearly refer to the last days of this evil dispensation, when God will himself sound a trumpet to assemble his people, to sound an alarm and to defend and save the nation of Israel. In the New Testament the Revelator speaks of the last trumpet that will sound. After the seventh angel had begun to sound his trumpet, a message then goes forth to indicate a change in the government of earth. *"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." -- Rev. 11:15.*

From these Scriptures it would seem that the "trump of God" indicates God's intervention in the affairs of men. There would be preparations for a change of government in the earth and a gathering together of God's ancient people Israel. They indicate also that as a result of the trumpet sound, great preparations would be made by the nations to resist any change in the established order of society. Mankind is not prepared to acknowledge a kingdom based upon the principles of justice and love, neither are they prepared to recognize that favor has returned to God's chosen people. That is why the Prophet Joel speaks of a dark and gloomy day as the vast preparations are made to hinder the establishment of 'God's Kingdom on earth, In Rev. 11:18 we read the result of the announcement that a change of government is impending: *"The nations were angry." How vividly the Psalmist describes the conditions of that time -- "Why do the nations rage [tumultuously assemble], and the people meditate a vain thing? The kings of the earth raise themselves up, and rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break asunder their bands, and cast away from us their cords. He who dwelleth in the heavens will laugh: the Lord will hold them in derision. Then will he speak unto them in his anger, and in his displeasure will terrify them, saying, Yet have I appointed my King upon Zion, my holy mount." -- Psalms 2:1-6.*

It is during this same time that signs would be seen of a regathering of Israel to their own land, and of endeavors to frustrate God's purpose to establish them there. Do we see the evidences that "the trump of God" is sounding at the present time? *Are the nations angry? Is Israel being regathered in her own land of Palestine? Are attempts being made to prevent the settlement of this people in that land?* Surely we need spend little time in seeking to find an answer to these questions; the facts are so plain that they cannot be disputed. *The "trump of God" has sounded, and as a result of the announcement of a change in the established arrangements of earth, the nations are angry. The Jewish people have been experiencing something of this anger because of the many evidences of their returning prosperity. Nazi Germany vented her anger upon this unarmed people in acts of savagery and barbarism such as was not thought possible in this enlightened twentieth century. Italy also in recent years concentrated some of her anger upon this chosen people of God. The Arab races are angry because the "trump" has sounded; and God's promises to Israel that they should be settled in the land he had given them are beginning to realize their fulfillment. In other nations of the earth there are endeavors to persecute, oppress, and blot out this people. Well, "He who dwelleth in the heavens will laugh: the Lord will hold them in derision."* The story has not yet been fully told except in the prophecies of God's Word. Let us watch and wait. *"In those days . . . I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them therefor my people and -- for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, AND PARTED MY LAND."* (Joel 3:1, 2.) The Hebrew word -- "chalaq" -- translated "parted," means "to give a portion," "to apportion," and how significant that the United Nations did just this to the land of Israel on November 29, 1947. What a "burdensome stone" it has been to them!

In summing up it is suggested that the three signs which were to be associated with our Lord's return -- (a) the "shout"; (b) the "voice of the archangel"; and, (c) the "trump of God," are intended to indicate to the diligent and watchful student of God's Word, -- events which at that time would transpire (a) in the world; (b) among the professed people of God; and, (c) in the affairs of the nation of Israel. Today we are witnessing the accomplishment of these things and are 'persuaded that our Lord has returned and is present. Our confidence, is established, not because we have heard only "the shout," or "the voice of the archangel," or "the trump of God"; but we have discerned *all* these signs, and thus we are able to "lift up our heads," knowing that "our deliverance draweth nigh."

What manner of persons ought we to be! The final establishment of peace and blessing in this sin cursed earth cannot be accomplished *until the Church has made herself ready and fit to share the throne with her Lord*. What a wonderful honor has been bestowed upon us, that we should be invited to share with our Lord in the work of clearing away completely all that is sinful, all unrighteousness and iniquity; all those things which make for misery, sorrow, and death, and to establish in their place -- life, peace, happiness, and joy, and love toward God and men. Is it not worth some effort on our part to make ourselves fitted for this work? and if, it means sacrifice and suffering, or even death -- well, it is "the way our Leader trod," and thus shall we be made sympathetic priests for our future work of blessing. Never again will such an opportunity be afforded to any of God's creatures, and the Lord is now present completing that work of preparing this class, which he began at his first advent nearly two thousand years ago.

"Hold fast that thou hast, let no man take thy crown." -- E. Allbon, Eng.

"The Hidden Life"

"Your Life is hid with Christ in God." - Col. 3:3

IN FORMER studies the thought has been several times repeated that none save those whom God has called and "anointed by his holy spirit participate in the membership' of the Anointed company. It is repeated here again to form the premise to 'another aspect of this sacred theme. Obviously "calling" and "anointing" imply personality as recipients. Just as surely as there is one who calls, so also must there be one who is called, as surely as there is one who anoints, so also must there be the one who is anointed. It was exactly like that in Aaron's case. There, indeed, was the divine personality of him who called, there also was the human personality of him who was called.

Everything within the sacred enclosure of the Holy Place implied the needs-be of an attending personality. For what purpose burned the holy light save as illumination for a man? For what purpose the presence-bread save as food for a living ministrant? To what end the Golden Altar save as the crucible for a man's devotions before his God? Very truly then anointing implies personality. Had there been no personality such as Aaron and his sons available, the divine instructions to anoint them would have been purposeless and irrelevant. So also on the higher, better plane.

That initial premise being presented and accepted, the question which will next arise is: What is the nature of the personality thus required? Is it a man in his natural capacity as a man, or is it a something else additional to, or super-imposed upon the natural capacity which constitutes the prerequisite to this anointing on the higher plane? Is it the natural man or is it the New Creature (a term which, we must later define) which is the subject of the anointing procedure?

These queries will introduce into the question an issue which, to some students of the Word, is perplexing and sometimes a little baffling -- an issue which has to do with the experience described as "spirit begetting," and thus with the initial beginning of new creature existence. A second issue arises also in the relationship of the "begetting" to the "anointing": Which precedes which? Does spirit begetting precede spirit anointing, or does anointing precede begetting?

Perhaps at this stage it will be well to get our terms on proper balance and trace them to their respective sources. Nowhere in all his writings does Paul ever use the term "spirit -- begetting," nor any phrase even remotely related to it. To his mode of thought, entry into the Divine Family is either by "adoption" (Rom. 8:15, 23; Eph: 1:5), or by creation. (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.) It is to John we must turn to pick up the thought of spirit birth (and of spirit begetting), and to the Lord, from whose lips John had learned them. - 1 John 3:9; 4:7; John 3:3-8.

It would not be helpful, at this time, merely to argue out the different implications arising out of a spirit begetting and a spirit birth. For the sake of comparison with Paul's dual mode of thought, it will be far better to conjoin spirit begetting and spirit birth into one idea and think of the new personality thus defined as having been spirit produced. From that point of view our definition describing the genesis of the new life will then fall into fairly close agreement with one of Paul's lines of thought -- that of creation. A spirit born personality, supervening upon a spirit begotten inception, would bring to light the fact that a new being had begun to exist. So also would the statement that a "new creature" had been created. In both cases a new life, with all its potential

powers (perception, determination, attachments, etc, etc.) would have been, begun. Here is a measure of similarity. The differences would arise out of the external means necessary for that beginning. Begetting and birth imply duality of parentage (or something equivalent thereto); creation could be direct, an immediate production instantaneously wrought.

Adoption is an entirely different thought, suggestive of the introduction of an outside personality, already born, already existent, into the home circle of some benevolent and kindly householder. That thought is thus too wide from our present study to receive further consideration here.

Starting then from the point of agreement between John's thought and Paul's, the major issue as to the needs be for spirit begetting and birth, or the creation and development of New Creature personality can best be presented from the standpoint of the heavenly call -- the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. It is said of Jesus that he is leading many sons to glory. (Heb. 2:10.) Paul cherished the expectation of being "forever with the Lord." Jesus had caused his disciples to hope that where he was in the heavenly estate, there would the disciples be. (John 14:3.) The realization of all these hopes and projects indicates that certain honored individuals who had begun their conscious existence on this sad old earth, would at last, in some certain way, have been fitted and prepared to continue that existence in the highest courts of heaven.

Now flesh and blood cannot enter into that highest estate (1 Cor. 15:50); hence, at some time prior to their entry upon that higher life, it would be essential that a "something having life" -- call it what you will at this stage of the argument -- must have begun to "be," and also must have begun to be prepared for its transplanting from these earthly scenes to the, better ones above. That means to say that beings once adapted and indigenous to this present earth will have been loosed from its connections, ties, and associations, and while still retaining their identity-hood -- so that the Paul who ran the course "so as to obtain" will be the same Paul in the glory-land -- will be so changed and new-created as to be "at home," and fully "en rapport" with conditions in which only angelic and divine beings can exist. So tremendous and far reaching will be that change and transformation that (if Peter's words may be our guide) nothing less than divinity will be their goal.

Perhaps here we may bring Peter's thought alongside our argument. Peter blesses God because of his great mercy he had begotten them again into (eis) a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Now, unless read carefully, this expression could be taken to have reference; only to the renewed hopes 'begotten in the hearts of his disappointed and disheartened little band when they became persuaded that Jesus was really raised from the dead. When they saw him rejected, crucified, and done to death, their former hopes had withered right away and died. This is very obvious from the dejected responses to the "Stranger's query on the Emmaus way. (Luke 24:21.) "We trusted that it was he that should redeem Israel." "We trusted . . ." -- a trust that was now as withered leaves, sere, shriveled, dead!

But what an awakening awaited them when the Guest blessed and brake the bread! And what joy and exultation did they find in Jerusalem when their night journey was at an end, and they found yet others who could also say, "The Lord is risen indeed"! Ah yes! hope had been born again in rejoicing hearts by the resurrection of the Lord from the dead!

But was that all that had been begotten in them as consequence of his resurrection and return from the dead? Peter's next words bid us to presume that that was not the only thing begotten and made to live in hope, -- indeed, the *Diaglott* interlinear text shows that the living hope was really a "hope of life" to be experienced in the enjoyment of "an inheritance, incorruptible, and . . . undefiled, . . . reserved in the heavens" and "ready to be revealed in the last time."

Obviously, we are here brought face to face with our former thought that "something which has once been earthborn would undergo a change which would fit it for that "inheritance" which was being reserved in the heavens, until the time of the Church's exaltation. And to that end and purpose "something" was being "kept" and guarded by the power of God so that it would exist and be ready for that heaven going experience, when its due time had come. Construe the passage as we may, we are bound to make allowance for some transforming work that would make those sons of the earth capable of transference to the heavenly courts.

Paul also makes certain references to what he calls an "*it*" which is "sown in corruption," but will be raised in incorruption, "sown in dishonor," but will be raised in glory; "sown in weakness," but will be raised in power (strength); an "*it*" that could now be "clothed," then become "unclothed," and later "clothed upon"; an "*it*" which could maintain its personality and identity even if this present habitation came to be dissolved, and be then "homed" and "housed" in a habitation not made with hands, a building of God, eternal in the heavens. - 1 Cor. 15:42, 43; 2 Cor. 5:1-5.

Obviously Paul is in full agreement with Peter's thought that the "*it*," "the hidden man of the heart" (1 Pet. 3:4), begins to live here and now in this present world, and is the same "*it*" that will find its inheritance and destiny awaiting it "in the heavens," when its necessary preparation is complete.

We must, thus make allowance for a new personality to come on the scene at some point during the present earth -- experience, and be possessed of such potentialities of heart and mind, as to be capable of change and adaptation to a heavenly home. But whether that new personality is "begotten" or "created" seems to be a matter of secondary import. Even the process of birth can be accepted as a form of creation -- a producing of something that did not exist before.

Perhaps the strongest evidence relating to the begetting side (or birth) of the comparison will be found in the Master's words to Nicodemus in John 3:1-12: "Except a man be born anew [or from above] he, cannot see the Kingdom of God," said the Master. "How can a man be born when he is old, can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" asks the astonished Pharisee. Begetting, gestation, birth! -- this natural sequence was the Pharisee's dilemma. Jesus passes right over all this sequence, and answers only from the standpoint of the new personality's appearance on the plane of life. "That having been born *out of* flesh, flesh is." (*Diaglott* interlinear translation.) There is no consideration of begetting, or embryonic life in the Master's reply; it is the new personality's emergence on the plane of independent life. Whether therefore we take Paul's thought of direct, immediate creation or John's thought of begetting, birth, the actuality that must stand before our mind is that of the new personality actually arrived.

To round out John's thought to its full extent, we may look again at Jesus' words, "If any man be not born of [out of] water and spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." "Born out of water and spirit" -- evidently a statement of truth, in a metaphorical way, which came later to be greatly developed and expanded to show the emergence of a new personality as the result of an individual's consecration (born out of water) and vitalization by the holy spirit (born out of spirit). On this point Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Most assuredly I tell thee, that what we know, we speak, and what we have seen, we testify." Jesus himself had passed through this very experience, when, after passing through the water -- "into", and "out of". the water -- "the heavens were opened and the spirit of God appeared, descending like a dove and resting on him." -- Matt. 3:16; John 1:31, 32. -- *Diaglott*.

All that Jesus had to say to Nicodemus concerning the new life had been experienced by himself in his own person -- hence he could not only know the truth of the matter for himself, but could also testify to others of these deeper, or heavenly, things.

No statement of John's Epistles can go further than this original outline of his Master in this matter of explaining the begetting, or birth, of the new personality, and therefore every statement of later date (from this particular viewpoint) must agree with the Master's own definition.

Regardless, therefore, of any special preference we may entertain for "begetting" over "creation" (or vice versa) here is the evidence for the appearance of the needed personality which the act or process of anointing requires. Its existence lies beyond the "out of water" and "out of spirit" experience, both of which, in the Master's words, condition and prepare it for its emergence into life. And only subsequent to its emergence into life can the anointing to its sacred calling be effected. "Begetting" or "creation" must therefore precede "anointing," exactly as it was in the case of Aaron and his sons.

But this has also answered the further question which was propounded at an earlier stage of this study: What is the nature of the personality thus required? -- is it a man in his natural capacity as a man, or is it a "something" else additional to, or something super imposed upon the natural capacity which constitutes the prerequisite to this anointing? Is it the natural man or is it the new creature which is the subject of the anointing procedure?

If we have the matter aright, the natural man with all his capacities was left "in the water" in the act of consecration, and that which came "out of it" was the new creature -- a new personality super imposed upon the old physical structure of the now accepted believer, simply because there is no other body or structure provided through which the new creature can function or operate, or undergo the mighty change and transformation necessary ere it is ready for its heavenly home.

From this time forward there is, in the accepted believer, a "hidden life" -- the living entity, which, in due time, if growth and development proceed to a satisfactory degree, will be caught away from earthly scenes, and be clothed upon by the "house (body) of God's providing. The new creature whose hidden life is now begun is in actual deed and fact a son of God, exactly in the same way that Jesus was a son after the spirit of God descended on him (Matt. 3:17; Luke 3:22) in proof whereof John can say, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God; and such we are." -- 1 John 3:1.

And for that reason the world -- the natural *kosmos* -- knows us not even as it knew Jesus not. (1 John 3:1; John 16:3.) He had walked the streets of old Jerusalem, of Capernaum and the other cities by the Galilean Sea, yet men had not known, nor understood him for what he was. Likewise his many brethren walk the streets of many towns and cities in many lands, and fellow townsmen and citizens know them not for what they are. Is that not strange? Are they not known as fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters, as citizens and fellow countrymen in many lands?

Here is one of the deep enigmas of life. Assuredly they are fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters; assuredly they are citizens and fellow countrymen in many lands, but even so; this word of God must be accepted as a statement of a truth which lies outside the boundaries of external and superficial appearances. There is a hidden life super -- imposed upon or super -- infused into, that which may be seen and known of men -- a hidden life known only to God, its Creator and Father, and to Jesus, its Sponsor and Keeper, and to those who likewise are blessed by the same heavenly consciousness.

Here again we see a measure of parallelism with the life experience of Aaron and his sons. Within the camp and their own tents they were known as fathers, sons and brothers, fellow citizens with all their kin of the commonwealth of Israel, but when robed and habited in ceremonial garb, and moving here and there within the Holy Place, they pictured forth a hidden life, known only to him who dwelt between the cherubim and to each other thus highly privileged.

Here we touch on super sensuous things; things beyond the octaves of common experience. Exactly as there are rays of light beyond the spectrum band, so in this "higher life" there are perceptions and sensations beyond the merely human range. And just as there are sounds 'up beyond the range of human audibility, so there are harmonies and symphonies of thought far up above the mere processes of the human mind.

It may not be unreasonable to think of sentient man as the keyboard of an instrument. Some are of very meager range -- a single octave, or, at the most, two; others are of larger compass, say perhaps three octaves or four. Very few are of seven octave capacity. But without God as the ruler of his life, every human instrument, no matter what its capacity, is sadly out of tune. Some are "flats," others "sharps" -- discordant in themselves, and discordant with their fellows. No wonder the orchestras of the nations mar the melody and rhythm of life!

Think now of the effect of the Master tuner's hand upon our lives -- our strings are tuned up or down, as our case may need, by the spirit of the Lord, and the melodies and harmonies of life peal forth thereafter in tune with the Infinite. But this is but the effect upon our normal register -- the register of human audibility, and visibility. This regulation of our tonal qualities will make us better men, better citizens, better in every way, yet make us only better *natural* men.

But now suppose it possible to super impose another instrument upon the same old piano legs, an instrument tuned to the higher, inaudible frequencies, yet introduced in such a way that its higher octaves are coupled with those below, so that when the lower range peals forth, the vibrations of the upper over tones add a fulness and a richness of quality and timbre to those below which they could not otherwise possess the inaudible still not being heard, yet influencing those that are heard by their fully tuned harmonics. That of course is but a supposition, but it may serve very feebly to illustrate the twofold range of responsiveness to the divine Music master in those who have been blessed with the hidden life. The old piano legs and frame are still in use, the balanced melodies of life peal forth harmonious and audible within the natural human range, yet, because the spirit of the new life actuates the melodies, a grace and charm as of supersonic overtones, influencing and permeating them, make them richer, fuller, deeper, sweeter; and more satisfying to all.

The same old brain must still be used to think, the same digestive organs to deal with food, the same five senses to link up with the sensuous world, yet superimposed upon (or super infused into) all these things is a new seat of determination, a new philosophy of experience, a new outlook on life, which, with the quickened mortal body, constitute (because the spirit of God indwells them) what there is to date of the new personality, -- the new creature in Christ Jesus. These are the things that can take on all the graces and fruits of the spirit, and be caused to grow into a likeness to Christ, so that when this transforming work is done, the only thing that will need to be replaced is the poor, old battered instrument of flesh. To replace this inefficient instrument, a house from heaven, prepared by God, will make the new personality complete, and the work, initiated and carried through under great handicap, will bring the new creature without spot or wrinkle or any such thing into the presence of our dearly beloved Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, entire and complete.

Our theme has been treated as though the Anointing *must* succeed the begetting (or creation) of the new personality, and the case of Aaron and his sons cited as illustrative evidence of that. It would be unwise, however, to press unduly what comes first, or what follows after. Such illustrations as may be used are only intended to help our poor brains to comprehend, more or less hazily, events which in reality may be simultaneous -- God's creative work in one mere moment of time. The action of the divine spirit upon the newly consecrated believer could create (or beget) and anoint the new creature in a single tick of time, and thus impart life, and authorization to serve in a priestly manner, simultaneously.

The understanding of the order and rotation of those two phases of the one supremely important event is of much less moment to us than that of participating therein. It cannot but be a source of joy unspeakable to every one of us if we can look back with faith and confidence to that happy day when we first knew ourselves to have been made sons of God, and to have become possessors of the unction from the Holy :One, as proof and token of our acceptance in him. That is the more important thing, for if that is true with us, we shall have the daily witness of the holy spirit that we are indeed sons of God even now, and that all things will be made to work together for our good.

Having traced out these features indicative of the new personality's emergence into life, we may now go on to note the qualities, experiences, and duties which go to make up the fabric of its hidden life -- its faith, its liberties, its activities, its devotedness, and its final perfectness and place in the divine scheme of things. Meantime let us say with emphasis, Thanks be to God for his Unspeakable Gifts!

-- *T. Holmes, Eng.*

A Word of Explanation to Our Readers

In the past few weeks a number of inquiries have reached our office, as to the reason Brother P. L. Read is no longer serving as a director of the Institute, or as a member of the Editorial Committee. Some have even wondered if his retirement from office indicates a disagreement with the other members of the Board or Editorial Committee.

We are most pleased to state that the only reason for Brother Read's retirement (which we are hoping will not be permanent) was his desire to step aside, to permit other (especially younger) brethren the opportunity to gain experience in such offices.

If they will review the "Herald" for the past twelve months, our readers will see that (while Brother Read has not been serving on the Editorial Committee) it has contained at least as many articles contributed 'by him as it did in prior years. Moreover, we have Brother Read's assurance that he hopes to continue as a contributor in the future.

In regard to his retirement from our Board of Directors, when, after more than three years of prayerful consideration, Brother Read finally reached the conclusion he did, he wrote us what we regard as a most cordial letter. We have his permission to do so and, believing it should remove any misunderstanding which may be in the minds of our readers, we take pleasure in quoting it below.

P. E. Thomson, Secretary.

Dear Brethren:

In resigning from the Board it is only natural that I should do so somewhat wistfully. As you know I was a charter member of the Institute. It was my privilege to have a small share in its formation -- serving as secretary at that never to be forgotten meeting in Providence in 1918, which authorized its organization. During its formative years, when its tone was being set, while declining service on the Board and Editorial Committee, because of a keen sense of deficiency in qualifications for such service, I was nevertheless in the counsels of such brethren as R. E. Streeter, I. I. Margeson, and H. A. Friese, all of blessed memory. During those years it was also my privilege to engage in the Pilgrim service; including three trips to most of the Classes in the British Isles. (1922, 1927, and 1932.)

For the past twenty one years I have served continuously on the Board of Directors and Editorial Committee. During that time it has also been my privilege to serve as secretary two years and as treasurer seventeen years. While for the past ten years my physical disabilities have not permitted me to engage in the Pilgrim service as extensively as formerly, I have appreciated the less frequent opportunities in which I have been privileged to share.

Yes! -- looking back I can surely "praise the way" He has led "through the years."

"These many years! What lessons they unfold
Of grace and guidance through the wilderness
From the same God that Israel of old
In the Shekinah glory did possess.

How faithful He through all my griefs and fears
And constant murmurings, these many years!

"Thy presence wrought a pathway through the sea;
Thy presence made the bitter waters sweet;
And daily have Thy hands prepared for me
Sweet, precious morsels -- lying at my feet.
'Twas but to stoop and taste the grace that cheers,
And start refreshed, through all these many years!

"Lord, what I might have been, my spirit knows
Rebellious, petulant; and prone to stray;
Lord, what I am, in spite of flesh and foes,
I owe to grace that kept me in the way.
Thine be the glory! Merit disappears,
As back I look upon these many years!"

Nor. has this been true for me alone. Ours has been a goodly fellowship. I am happy in the belief that my retirement will make no difference in the cardinal principles of the Institute; that the remaining members of its Board and Editorial Committee will continue to "stand firmly for the defense of the only true foundation of the Christian's hope -- redemption through the precious blood of the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom [a corresponding price, a substitute] for all (1 Pet. 1:19; 1 Tim. 2:6);" and that, standing "free from all parties, sects, and creeds of men" -- free from all "confessions of faith" -- -- it will seek to bring its ministry more and more into the fullest subjection to the will of God in Christ, as expressed in the Holy Scriptures.

Finally, brethren, I commend you all, individually and collectively, even as I commend myself, to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build us up, and to give us an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

Your true friend and brother in the Lord,

-- P. L. Read.
June 20, 1950

A Visit to the Brethren in Germany

On the 10th of May last it was the privilege of Brother and Sister Fox and myself to travel to the Continent with a view to visiting and serving the classes and groups of brethren throughout Germany. An itinerary was suggested by Brother H. E. Nadal, who has made several visits to the brethren in that country, and Brother W. Trippler of Herford, Germany, completed arrangements in connection with it.

Plans were made for visits to brethren in the West, North, East, and South, and this was made possible through the fact that the entire journey was undertaken by automobile. In the Lord's providence we were enabled to visit all the places scheduled for us.

We arrived on French territory on Thursday, May 10, too late to commence our journey across Belgium. Next morning, however, we left Dunkerque and traveling all day through Belgium we reached Aachen. It was therefore with great joy that at Aachen we found our dear Brothers Kaasa and Obert waiting for us. Owing to a delay in the Channel crossing, due to the weather and tides, these two dear brethren had been kept waiting for several hours. Brother Kaasa was to accompany us through the whole of our journey as interpreter, and so we had no difficulty in exchanging greetings and expressions of brotherly love one with the other. Brother Obert returned to his home that night while Brother Kaasa who was to complete our "family" for the trip, accompanied us on our journey. That night we stayed at Dusseldorf (in an underground bomb shelter converted into an hostel), and next morning left early to start our program proper.

At Hagen and Dortmund we had some happy hours of informal fellowship joining in songs of praise to the Lord and uniting our hearts in prayer with the friends. On the evening of Friday, the 11th, we met the brethren at Munster where a company of about 34 were present. Here the brethren listened eagerly to the words spoken, and it was apparent that there was a oneness of spirit -- the same spirit of the Lord -- in the hearts of all. It was instinctive and responsive. We were not surprised to find this and to be so very conscious of it, but it served, in a special way, as a stimulus to us, a foretaste of further blessed experiences. of calm joy, of mutual love, and a realization of the bonds of the family, rooted in our relationship to the Lord, which hold us together as one.

Our next visit was to the Convention at Kirchlengern, and this was a happy experience indeed. There were upwards of 350 brethren present, and many had traveled long distances, under conditions which are not conducive to material comfort, in order to be present. To behold these brethren, many of whom had been through very hard and harrowing experiences over a prolonged period of time, suffering pain which was calculated by their persecutors to break their spirit and cause them to compromise their faith, was a source of encouragement and strength.

The local ecclesia contained a goodly number of younger brethren who showed a seriousness of purpose in their consecrated life and a glowing enthusiasm. Many of these younger brethren formed part of a choir of about fifty voices and led the singing of the Convention very effectively. It was pleasing to listen to the singing of these dear brethren as they were joined by all the friends with such evident feeling.

They sang earnestly, with both heart and voice. The Germans as a people are great music lovers and singers.

We were informed that the Convention hall which had a capacity of about 450 and was a very fine building, including the schoolroom downstairs and living accommodations for two families, was built entirely by consecrated labor. Likewise, all the seating was constructed by the brethren, who devoted about 15,000 working hours. The only financial cost entailed was in the buying of the necessary materials. This seemed truly to be a house that the Lord had built, for the love and zeal displayed by his children, was of him. With characteristic thoroughness there seemed to have been nothing left out.

It was our privilege to minister to the brethren during the Convention and also to share in the warmth of their loving fellowship. After the meetings on Sunday and Monday we had to part from them, although the Convention continued in session for a further four or five days. These subsequent days, we understand, were devoted to open Bible study and discussion of subjects which were uppermost in the minds of the brethren, and covered every aspect of truth both practical, doctrinal, and of the prophecies relating to the wonderful prophecy fulfilling days in which we live. We believe that about 100 brethren remained for these meetings.

Moving on from Kirchlengern we visited the classes at the various places in our itinerary. We had much joy en route in visiting the isolated and some who were bedridden, also some of the smaller groups of brethren. Everywhere we found the same sweet spirit and the evidence of a strong abiding faith which, in most instances, had been tested in passing through the crucible of severe trial and affliction. The brethren never volunteered to speak of such experiences. Their gratitude and praise to the Lord for his goodness, their "Songs of Deliverance," were the sentiments to which they more readily and spontaneously gave expression. There was evidence of a restrained, but nevertheless, deep joy, and of a calm waiting upon the Lord for continued strength to be faithful to him, whatever may lie ahead.

At one place arrangements had been made for us to call upon a small group of five sisters, four of whom comprised one family after the flesh. When being ushered into one of the two rooms occupied by three of them (they were in apartments provided for "displaced persons") we were confronted with an elderly sister (80 years of age) who had been bedridden nearly five years. This dear sister was overjoyed at seeing us. Her husband was still in the Russian Zone of Germany, and in 1940 her only son was shot dead by the Nazis because, as one seeking to follow the Lord, he refused to take up arms and fight. Thus this aged sister was left with her three daughters, one of whom was married and lived with her husband in another part of the town. Of the other two, one stayed at home to look after the mother, and the other daughter, to use her own words, was "the breadwinner." They prepared for us a most satisfying and delicious meal out of their meager store, revealing the goodness and generous love which is a hallmark of God's children. Then they played for us upon a stringed instrument and also sang. Upon inquiring the title of the hymn they had been singing; the reply came: "*Praise Ye the Lord.*" It reminded us of the words of Hab. 3:17-19. Here was a living demonstration of their truth, and we thanked the Lord as well as took to heart the lesson for ourselves. With these five dear sisters we sang and prayed together, and with them wept tears of joy and sympathetic love. How wonderful, how beautifully strong and precious is the love of our Father and his own spirit which he has shed abroad in our hearts, knitting them together.

On Thursday afternoon, May 24, we met with the brethren at Munich where a convention for that day had been called. There were about 225 present and quite a few of these had traveled from places up to about 50 miles distant. Nothing seemed to be as a difficulty, nor any time inconvenient for these dear brethren (as indeed was the case in almost every place visited) to come together for worship and praise. Having been deprived of the opportunity for so long, being forbidden by the Nazis to meet, they eagerly assemble. Quite a large proportion of the brethren

present at these meetings in Munich had recently come away from the Society classes in the neighborhood. We pray that in the Lord's providence and under the direction and influence of his spirit, we were able to be of some help to them in light of the fact that we ourselves had been through the same experience. There was a spirit of joy and a sense of expectancy very marked at this place; as if the question -- "Lord, what wilt thou have ... [us] to do" was in the minds of most and in a special way, fitted their condition.

Many are the experiences that could be related, but space will not permit. Suffice it to say that everywhere we found a loving, warm, and gracious spirit manifest; a very generous hospitality. Once again we were made forcibly to realize that there is "ONE Bonn, and ONE SPIRIT, even as ye are called in ONE HOPE of your calling." We mentioned to the brethren many times that we deemed it to be inappropriate to speak of German, American, or English brethren. Rather it is that we are brethren together, members of "an holy nation" who happen to be sojourning in these various countries; that we are all "pilgrims and strangers" (in this world), with our citizenship not here on earth but *in heaven*. Thus the Father has drawn us together into the bond of his family and there is neither German nor English, bond nor free, "*ye are all one in Christ Jesus*." The language of the tongue was different, but that of the heart was so fully realized to be the same.

Of the material conditions now prevailing amongst the brethren we are able to report that these are now much improved, and to use the words of one responsible brother with whom we spoke concerning this aspect of things: "Generally speaking there is now no urgent need that the brethren in Germany themselves cannot cope with." For this we all join in thanks to our Father, and the brethren in Germany want it to be known how very grateful they are and have been for the love shown toward them in the unstinted assistance which has been given hitherto. In the Russian Zone however, conditions are still very hard indeed and the need is great. The brethren there continue to suffer, but at the hands of a different regime. During the course of our journeyings we came across isolated cases of real hardship and impoverishment, and these, by the Lord's grace, will be assisted as in the past. But, in the main, our experience and observation as we traveled amongst the brethren confirmed the view expressed by the brother with whom we spoke on this matter. Goods and food; appear to be plentiful, but prices are high, and for some things, exorbitant. This fuel, coupled with the shortage of money, restricts the availability of these things.

Should it be the desire or intention of any brethren to send parcels for relief of the friends in the Russian Zone, it was suggested that such parcels be first sent to the Kirchiengern class* who would endeavor to see that same were forwarded with discretion and care into the Russian Zone. The: fear; was expressed that if parcels were sent direct, it might involve the brethren in that Zone in further trouble with the authorities there. In the Western Zones also there are still individual cases of urgent need.

The brethren everywhere wanted to know how their fellow brethren in other lands fared. They inquired concerning our meetings, studies, and witnessing efforts. In the discussions, that took place there was evidence that the minds of the brethren were alert to the implications in the events transpiring in the earth today. The need for watchfulness and prayer and "watching unto prayer" was ever before us. Many were the questions concerning the relation of the Revelation prophecy to these present days, and we rejoiced to find that in some features, our understanding was identical. Everywhere we were charged to convey the love, and greetings of the brethren, together with Psalm 133 and Hebrews 13:20-21 -- Scriptures which *were* most frequently quoted. Always there was the singing of "Blest be the tie that binds."

As we returned from this visit, having completed nearly 2,650 miles travel by road, we gave thanks to the Lord for his goodness as manifest in and through the experiences of our brethren in Germany -- of his power and deliverance wrought for them; for their steadfastness and faith, their courage and fortitude. We thank the Lord also for his watch care over our way and for the needed grace which enabled us to fulfill his will. The experiences served to strengthen the bonds forged by our Father's own spirit through -- the Truth, and to intensify our prayer and longing for the day soon to come, when "The toils of the road will be ended," and we shall share that song of triumph and victory in our Father's presence -- AT HOME.

-- *G. H. Jennings, Eng.*

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