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The Program of Redemption

"After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things." - Acts 15:14-17.

IT IS remarkable to observe that the first council of the Christian Church ever convened should have outlined the whole scheme of redemption from Pentecost to the consummation of the ages. And whatever we may hold as to the binding authority of later councils, we must accept the deliverances of this at Jerusalem as final, since from the testimony of inspired Scripture we know that the Spirit so truly presided and guided in the assembly that in publishing its decisions it was written, *"It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us."* (Acts 15:28.) Jesus Christ is the Architect of the ages. Not only "all things were made by him" -- all worlds and systems of the material universe -- but all the dispensations were planned and predestined by him: "By whom also he made the ages." (Heb. 1:2.) His Church was not set upon her course until a complete program of her mission had been placed in her hands, the working-plan by which all her operations were to be directed. *"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world"* (Acts 15:18) is the significant declaration which accompanies the publication of this program. And, instead of being day-laborers working in ignorance, God would have us, as laborers together with him, to understand the entire divine scheme by which our efforts are to be directed, that we may be saved from presumption and despair.

"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name." (Acts 15:14.) Here is the first act of the great program. Because of the citation from the Old Testament which immediately follows-"And to this agree the words of the Prophets, as it is written After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down" -- it has been inferred that this Gentile outgathering and the tabernacle upbuilding mean the same thing; in other words, that the rearing of the tabernacle of David is a figurative expression for the building of the Church of Christ. By this superficial, though not altogether unnatural explanation of the passage, the whole program has been reduced to a single act, and the

inference drawn that the preaching of the Gospel in this dispensation is to issue in the conversion of "all the Gentiles."

A CLEAR PREDICTION OF ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

But it is only necessary to observe three things in order to correct this misapprehension: First, that the citation here made from the closing chapter of the Book of Amos is clearly a prediction of the literal restoration of literal Israel, and their reinhabitation of their land; for the words quoted are part of a passage which ends with this decisive language "And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God." (Amos 9:15.) Observe again that in making this citation the Holy Spirit inserts the words, not found in the original text, "After this I will return," and will build again, thus making the restoration of the Davidic tabernacle subsequent to the gathering out of the Church from the Gentiles, and connecting it directly with the personal return of the Lord. And, lastly, we are to notice that in announcing this election from among the Gentiles, it is not added, "in this are fulfilled the words of the Prophets," but "with this harmonize [Greek, symphonize] the words of the Prophets." It is but saying that the parts of the great oratorio of redemption perfectly accord, though centuries lie between its different measures; and then, to show us how they accord, the Holy Spirit sounds all the octaves thereof with a single sweep, and lets us listen to their grand unison. This, then, is the program of redemption by which we are to work in evangelizing the world:

"First, God did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the Prophets, as it is written:

"After this I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof and I will set it up:

"In order that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord who doeth all these things."

The three great stages of redemption are thus outlined in their order.

ACT I

The gathering of the Church is the first act, and this, having begun at Pentecost, is still going on. All the descriptions of it contained in Scripture mark it as elective. From the word of Christ to his first disciples, "I have outchosen you out of the world," to the triumph-song of the saved heard by the seer in Patmos, "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation," the Bride of Christ is always the Ecclesia, the called out. Nowhere is universal redemption predicted as the result of preaching the Gospel in this dispensation. If in the minds of those who are accustomed to speak of the world's conversion there is a violent revulsion from this saying, we remind them that we are simply affirming the truth of the doctrine of election, and its application to this entire Age. After eighteen centuries of Christian conquest the vast proportion of the world still "lieth in the Wicked One," and Christ's true Church is but a "little flock" in comparison. Only with pathetic sympathy for our fallen race in its ruin and helplessness can we contemplate this fact. And yet we must be reminded that all attempts to violate this decree by making the Church a multitudinous collection, instead of a gracious election, have only issued in apostasy. Sacramentarianism would take the world into the Church by instituting a baptized paganism instead of taking the Church out of the world by preaching spiritual regeneration; and behold the result in a half-heathenized Christendom. Latitudinarian-

ism, would make the Church co-extensive with the world by preaching the gospel of universal salvation - all men by nature the sons of God and thus, by crowding the Lord's house with "the children of the Wicked One," turn it into "the synagogue of Satan." Though it be in mystery, and sorrow and tears, we had best work on, therefore, by the divine schedule, preaching the Gospel among all nations for a witness that we may gather out for Christ a chosen and sanctified people, calmly answering those who say that God's ways are partial, with his own words: "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

And yet, lest we should take too narrow a view of this theme, other considerations should not be overlooked. Christ is called "The Light of the World." The beams of sunlight both elect and irradiate; taking out here and there from muddy pool or acrid dead sea a pure, crystalline drop and lifting it heavenward; but also lighting and warming all the atmosphere by their radiance. So Christ, preached among the Gentiles, elects from them a holy flock, a regenerate Church; but besides this, he changes the moral climate of the world so that such noxious growths as cannibalism, slavery, polygamy, and infanticide disappear. These two results inevitably attend the proclamation of the Gospel; regeneration saving some out of the world, and civilization putting something of Christianity into the world but by neither process as now going on is the Millennium destined to be ushered in.

Moreover, let us reflect that an election is never an end in itself; it is rather a means and preparation for some vastly larger accomplishment. The body of the elect is really Christ's army, gathered by a divine conscription from every kindred and people, that they may attend him as he goes forth to his final conquest of the world. "And they that are with him are called and elect and faithful." (Rev. 17:14.) Of this, however, we shall speak later.

ACT II

The second act of the divine program now comes into view. "*After this I will return and build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down.*" By Christ's personal coming in glory, the conversion and restoration of Israel are to be accomplished. The reader has only to compare this order with the redemption schedule drawn out in the eleventh of Romans to see how perfectly they agree. St. Paul, indeed, begins with the Jewish election, as St. James does with the Gentile election. And we must remember that the choosing out that is going on in this dispensation touches both: "not out of the Jews only, but also out of the Gentiles." (Rom. 9:24.) But each Apostle takes up the same succession of events; first the Gentile outgathering, and then the Hebrew regathering. The hardening of the Jews which we now behold is declared by Paul to continue "until *the fulness of the Gentiles* be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved. As it is written There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." (Rom. 11:25, 26.) By the "fulness of the Gentiles" we understand the predestined number, the elect company gathered through the entire period of this dispensation to form the Bride of Christ. When this number shall have been accomplished, then the conversion of Israel will occur and their national restoration to God's favor. The two parts of the aged Simeon's prophecy are strictly consecutive: "*A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel.*" (Luke 2:31, 32.) He will be the supreme glory of his people Israel, when he shall at last be owned as their Messiah and reign in the midst of them as King.

ACT III

These two stages of redemption the Gentile election and the Hebrew restoration are to be accomplished "in order" to a third, namely, "that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called."

Without enlarging upon the thought, what a profound hint of this does Paul give in Rom. 11:12, 15 where, speaking concerning his rejected people, he says: "Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, *how much more their fulness.*" "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, *what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?*"

"It is clear," says Lange, "that the Apostle awaits a boundless effect of blessing on the world from the future conversion of Israel." Then shall the word of Joel concerning the effusion of the spirit have a complete fulfilment, as it had a partial and prefigurative accomplishment on the day of Pentecost. For if we turn to the Prophet, we find it said "And ye shall know that *I am in the midst of Israel*, and that I am the Lord your God and none else. *And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh.*" (Joel 2:27, 28.) And with this agree the words of Isaiah where he predicts the desolation of Zion as continuing "*till the spirit be poured upon us from on high.*" (Isa. 32: 15.) When the Lord shall shed forth the holy spirit abundantly upon his covenant people, through them will come unspeakable blessings to the Gentiles. The modern post-millennial interpretation completely deranges the program of prophecy at this point by making redemption terminate with its first scene. "The end of the Age," brought in by the second coming of Christ, misleadingly translated "the end of the world" in our common version, is supposed by many to close the probation of the race, winding up the present earthly scene, and bringing in the final judgment and the eternal state, instead of opening into the triumphs of the age to come. Is it possible that the first Christians could have had this idea? If so, how could they have so ardently desired, and earnestly looked for, the speedy return of the Lord, since his coming would end the work of Gentile ingathering, while as yet only a handful had been saved? On the contrary, take the words of Peter to the Jewish rejecters of Christ, and observe how clearly they teach the very opposite "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus; whom the heaven must receive until the times of the restoration of all things." (Acts 3:19-21, R.V.) Here we have, as constantly throughout the Scripture, the repentance of Israel directly connected with the return of Christ from heaven, and their conversion and the Lord's appearing resulting, not in their cutting off from the presence of the Lord, but in times of "*refreshing from the presence of the Lord*"; not in the winding up of all things, but in the "*restoration of all things.*" Three acts of the divine program appear again in this declaration of Peter -- the coming of Christ, the conversion of Israel, and world wide redemption -- corresponding exactly with those revealed in the texts from James and Paul already considered.

CONCLUSION

It is thus seen that the redemption of the world comes at last, following (1) the glorification of the Church at our Lord's return, and (2) the conversion and restoration of Israel. If it be said that this is a Jewish conception, borrowed from the Old Testament, we will answer: "Yes, and reiterated and more explicitly unfolded in the New Testament." For nowhere is the order of events so distinctly revealed as in the Acts and Epistles.

"Election, partial and opposed to world-wide redemption," has been the verdict of thousands who have replied against God, knowing little of the range of his eternal plan. "Election, gracious, and preparatory to world-wide redemption," is the discovery which a deep pondering of Holy Scripture reveals. The elect Church transfigured with her risen Savior, and the chosen nation, Israel, restored and made glorious on earth--these are his appointed agents, trained by long discipline and trial for bringing all peoples and tribes into obedience to God. As to the Gentile election, so to the Hebrew restoration, objectors may be reconciled when it appears that this, too, is instrumental and preparatory to world-wide salvation. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and

the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, " is the summons which the long captive daughter of Zion shall hear, and then the blessed result:

"And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. " - Isa. 60:3.

- Condensed from *Ecce Venit (Behold He Cometh)* -- A. J. Gordon, Boston, Mass., 1889.

At Eventide It Shall be Light

Israel! my Israel! how weary thou, and worn.
Israel! my People! how rifled, robbed, and shorn.
Though nations through the centuries have scorned
 and injured thee,
Thou art my People still today,
For I have Purchased thee.

Israel! my chosen! my beloved vineyard fair!
Long have I sorrowed over
Thy branches, stripped and bare.
Thy wanderings and thy sorrows
My Heart to thee have turned.
At eventide thy light shall rise.
My name thou shalt have learned.

With mercies will I gather thee,
Thou art my very own.
I long to heal thy sorrows
And Bless thee from my Throne.
The Writings of the Prophets,
Graven on the Sacred Page,

The Light and hope of Israel
Which lives from age to age.
With mercies will I gather thee,
Thou scattered of my Wrath!
'Twas only for a moment,
And not meant for 'thy death.
'Tis time to seek my favor
And to own my cross and live.
My Kingdom still is waiting,
Which in Kindness God will give.

When Thou wilt cry, "My Father,"
As the Prophets spake of old,
The mighty arm of Israel's God
Will Israel's sons uphold.
Then will thine eyes be opened,
And thy Blindness fall away.
At eventide Thy light shall rise
To bring thy Glorious day.

- Anon.

Toleration

When Abraham sat at his tent door, according to his custom, waiting to entertain strangers, he espied an old man stooping and leaning on his staff, weary with age and travel, coming toward 'him, who was a hundred years of age. He received him kindly, washed his feet, provided supper and caused him to sit down, but, observing that the old man ate and prayed not, nor begged for a blessing on his meat, he asked him why he did not worship the God of Heaven. The old man told him that he worshiped the fire only and acknowledged no other god; at which answer Abraham grew so zealously angry that he thrust him out of his tent and exposed him to all thee evils of the night and an unguarded condition.

When the old man was gone, God called to Abraham and asked him where the stranger was. He replied, "I thrust him away because he did not worship Thee. " God answered him, "I 'have suffered him these hundred years, although he dishonored me, and could'st thou not endure him one night, when he gave thee no trouble?" Upon this, saith the story, Abraham fetched him back again and gave him hospital entertainment and wise instruction. Go thou and do likewise, and thy charity will be rewarded by the God of Abraham.

- *Jeremy Taylor*

(Jeremy Taylor says that the account of this incident is to be found among the Jewish records.)

Waiting and Watching

Waiting and watching the livelong day,
Lifting the voice of her heart to pray;
She stands in her sorrow the bride and queen,
Counting the hours that lie between.

Lone as a dove, on a stomp-swept sea,
Teaching her heart hope's minstrelsy;
With a cheerful note, though a weary wing,
She learns o'er sorrow to soar and sing.

Abroad through the earth is a sound of war,
Distress among nations, wide and far;
And the failing of strong men's hearts for fear
Of the dreadful things that are drawing near.

Famine -and pestilence stalk abroad;
Scoffers are slighting the Word of God;
And the love of many is waxing cold;
Dimmed is the sheen of the once fine gold.

But she stands in her safety, the bride and queen,
Leaning as only the loved can lean
On the heart that broke in its love for her,
When bearing the burden she could not bear.

- *British Evangelist*. From *Reprints*, page R195.

That I May Win Christ

"Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may win Christ." - Philippians 3:8.

WE NOTE that this is a letter written by Paul long years after he had found Christ as a Savior. He had *found* Christ, but he had not yet *won* him. In this letter he is revealing the great objective underlying all of his reactions in the service and fellowship of Jesus. To many, Christ is made a means to an end, but to Paul, Christ was the end to be gained, and all phases of the Christian life were looked upon as means to that end. Overtake Paul where we will in all the long years of his after life, and we will always find him reaching forward to this attainment. Let us observe that he is not revealing that his thought is focused primarily on gaining a place in the Kingdom, attaining a crown, etc., but that "I may win Christ."

In all undertakings, even in temporal things, so much depends on a proper beginning. Any one starting out in a business life without some definite plan of action will be almost certain to make a failure of the attempt. Our Lord teaches that this is sure to be true of any one attempting to live the Christian life. The cost is to be carefully considered, and the goal clearly understood.

It is worth while noting the two questions asked by Saul when he met Jesus:

Question No. 1: "Who art thou, Lord?" This question was never fully answered to Paul. Throughout his whole life he was asking that same question. Oh, "That I might know him and the power of his resurrection." Like the Psalmist, who was so eager to know God that he too could say, "As the hart panteth for the water brook, so panteth my soul for thee, O God." What a blessed thirst after a knowledge of God. Jesus' definition of eternal life was "Knowing God."

Question No. 2: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And the answer to that question was not forthcoming in a day, nor in a year. Paul discovered a further and greater answer to that question the longer he lived. His longing to know God, and his fervent desire to learn more and more of what the Lord would have him do, made Paul the outstanding example to us that he is. Progress in the Christian life is an utter impossibility to us, too, unless we are constantly asking these same questions.

The difficulty with most of us is that we "came into the truth" all too suddenly. We go back to some date in the past when we first caught sight of some of the outlines of truth, and there "we came into the truth." Ask Paul after his years in Arabia, perhaps fourteen, "Paul, when did you come into the truth?" Ask him the same question ten years later, twenty or thirty years later, and fancy him smiling at us and saying, "When did I come into the truth? Why, my dear brother, I am only *just coming into the truth* as yet." True, he came very quickly to a knowledge of the fundamentals of the truth, the doctrines constituting the faith once delivered; but this was not the end of progress. It was merely the beginning. To obtain a full knowledge of Christ Jesus, his Lord, was to Paul, too great a matter to be fully grasped at once. He liked to write about "unsearchable riches" and of "love surpassing all understanding," and to urge all to seek "all the fulness of God."

Very early in the new life he grasped the fact that sin was the one great problem -- the effective barrier to fellowship with the Lord -- and that as a foundation of all progress, knowledge, and

fellowship, the question of sin must be given the needed attention. Paul did not offer many excuses for sin, but he constantly emphasized its sinfulness, and he insisted on holiness as the standard of the Christian. In his ministry to the Church he preached the facts of a full deliverance from sin through faith in Christ. To the ungodly his ministry was by no means calculated to "strengthen the hands of the wicked by promising him life." Felix trembled, when Paul reasoned "of righteousness, temperance, and judgment. " He was able to say after years of preaching, "I am free from the blood of all men"; "I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God."

The point is just this: We must have proper views of sin and God's attitude toward it, and understand his remedy for it, if we are to enjoy a real, intimate fellowship with, and *win* Christ. Paul made a sharp distinction between being in contact with Christ and being "in Christ. "

Many of us have fallen into the habit of using some important texts in a rather superficial way. For example: "For me to live is Christ." The meaning, some would say is "to live for Christ"; "that I might win Christ" -- "win a place in the Body of Christ." This was not the meaning Paul placed on these statements. He meant exactly what he said. The thought of many is really limited to "contact" with Christ. Paul's objective was nothing short of "union" with Christ, and not merely contact with him.

The difference between contact and union may be illustrated thus:

Place an indissoluble substance in a glass of water, and you can have all the contact possible, but no union. Place in that same water some dissoluble substance, and at once you will have perfect union. That is what Paul meant in the above and other similar texts. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This thought should be clear enough to us. We have little difficulty with the words of Jesus when he teaches the same union with the Father. He declared that none of his words and works were his own, but those of the Father, who dwelt in him. As Jesus could say, "The Father liveth in me," so Paul desired so to be in Christ and Christ in him that he could say, "Not I, but Christ." And what will all this lead to in Christian experience? It will lead to the sweetest and most intimate fellowship with Christ.

The Bible is truly a most wonderful Book! All the emotions of our souls are embodied in suitable language for us in the Word of God. We are glad for all the pictures and illustrations it furnishes us. We get a thrill out of the illustrations of a soldier standing fully equipped for the battle, and out of the illustrations of servants, watchmen, etc. But there are some emotions that would be left without a fitting expression if only these illustrations were used in the Bible.

Let us look on another picture provided in the Word of Inspiration for us: The Book of Canticles depicts two lovers vying with each other in expressions of adoration and love. Love, consuming love, has a language all its own, a language of the heart. Our Lord is here brought before us as a Lover. "He is seen as manifesting his love to those who appreciate it and to whom it is more precious than all else." By the use of this love story we want to raise our voice once more in a plea for greater emphasis on the devotional life of the Christian.

The Song of Songs, as another has said, is a book for the heart. . . . The inspired title of the book, *The Song of Songs*, indicates its surpassing excellence.... No subject could be greater or sweeter than the love of Christ, and those responsive movements which it awakens in the hearts of those who know it. To have the personal enjoyment of the love of Christ transcends all other joys This song delineates in a figurative way the affections that are in the heart of Christ towards his own, and the affections which have place in their hearts towards him."

We fear there is more emphasis put upon the head knowledge and far too little upon the heart devotion to the person of Christ.

THE SECRET OF THE STAIRS

"O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs." (Song of Solomon 2:14.) It is the espoused bride that speaks. We have learned many important secrets, the mystery hid from ages, etc. Have we learned the secret of the stairs? Stairs represent a means of rising from lower to higher levels. If we went into the Empire building or any skyscraper structure and desired to go to the top, we could ascend by the stairs. We would not find one continuous flight of stairs leading to the top. Perhaps ten or twelve steps, then a landing, and so on to the top. Those landings would represent the different attainments of professing Christians. Many have climbed only a few flights and have reached their heaven. They have contact. Others may climb a little higher and learn a little more "about Christ." Others who entered the high-calling lost sight of everything but Christ himself. Not until they have reached the top by the last flight of stairs revealed to their devoted eyes will they rest content.

And is there really any secret about these stairs? There must be, for we observe that when one talks about some of the higher possibilities of the Christian life, many are disposed to consider he is merely indulging in some flights of fancy. There is more than one saint who has been "caught away" into blessed visions of Christ, and in that heaven has heard things that cannot be uttered. There are some very vital features of Christian experience which must remain matters of personal experience. They cannot be written in a book for others to read, nor spoken audibly for others to hear. These thrills are to be found in the secret of the stairs.

This, beloved friends, is the life that is lost *in Christ*. He is "the chiefest among ten thousand." "Yea, he is altogether lovely."

- J. J. Blackburn.

Fulfilled Prophecy

A radio sermon by C. E. Randall, Tempe, Arizona

FULFILLED prophecy has been neglected in Biblical preaching. Few students of the Word are able to recognize unfulfilled prophecy, but no one is justified in neglecting fulfilled prophecy. No type of Scripture quickens and establishes faith and insures the accuracy of the Word of God as does fulfilled prophecy. Jesus made this plain when he said: "Now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe." - John 14:29.

Prophecy is not given for the purpose of making prognosticators out of students of the Word, but is given as a warning of what may be expected, that when those things happen, the truth of the Bible is confirmed and one's faith in the Word is established. Prophecy came to us through inspiration and was promised as a blessing for all who would receive it. In 2 Peter 1:19=21 it is recorded: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye stake heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy spirit."

It is evident from this text that prophecy came in times past through men who were moved by the holy spirit to speak of things that were to happen in future times, although this was not the sole work of a prophet. A prophet spoke to people of his own time and generation as a messenger of God, and then he spoke of things to come.

Isaiah 13:19 reads: "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah."

A Turkish army officer asked Dr. Cyrus Hamlin if the Bible was truly a book written from God. In reply, Dr. Hamlin quoted Isaiah 13:19. Then he asked the officer whether he had ever visited the site of ancient Babylon. The officer replied in the affirmative, and then continued 'by saying he had taken a hunting party through the ruins and had found them a nesting ground for owls and birds, with wild animals hiding in the debris. He stated that they had difficulty when the party decided to make camp for the night. The Arabs in the party refused to remain near the place, saying, "It is haunted by evil spirits," and that great charm would befall them if they stayed.

Reread a portion of the text read, and two other verses: "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there." You will observe that the Arabian would not pitch his tent there, neither would the shepherds make their fold there, but it would be a place for wild beasts. This has happened and is the condition that exists at the present time.

Isaiah 37 gives account of the invasion of Palestine by Sennacherib the Assyrian and of his coming against the city of Jerusalem. This happened in the days of righteous King Hezekiah. Hezekiah was a man that trusted in God rather than in chariots and horsemen. The Assyrian king had left a scorched earth behind him in' his invasion of the Holy Land, burning and sacking over two hundred towns and villages. As he encamped around the walls of Jerusalem, he felt it would

be a small thing to subdue the capital and reduce the people to slaves. There was one power, however, with which he failed to reckon, that being the power of God. The Lord promised Hezekiah that the Assyrian king would not shoot an arrow into the city, nor cast a bank against it. The recorded account reads:

"Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord. For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. Then the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses."

For years, many so-called critics ridiculed the idea of Sennacherib's army being destroyed. Since the discovery of the cylinder giving the exploits of the invasion and Sennacherib's subsequent departure from the Holy Land, however, no student has questioned the truth and accuracy of Isaiah's description. This cylinder, in the museum of Chicago University, describes Sennacherib's invasion of the Holy Land and the destruction which he wrought and his encamping against the city of Jerusalem. It ends abruptly with the words, "And he went home."

Isaiah 45:1, 2 describes the capture of Babylon: "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron."

This prediction was made more than one hundred years before the event took place. Babylon was a city surrounded by a wall three hundred feet high and fifty feet wide, and there was an inter-city which was surrounded by a wall. This stronghold was considered impregnable by the kings of Babylon. It had one weakness. A river ran through the city and under the walls surrounding the city. Over the river were gates of brass that closed like the leaves of a great book. The lower portion of the gates was lowered into the water, thus making it impossible for any one to come into the city from that approach. Cyrus, however, whom God had chosen to take the city and punish the Babylonians, observed that there was an old river bottom around the city. He diverted the waters from the main channel to this old bottom, and while Belshazzar and his men were in the intercity, drinking and spending themselves in an orgy of immoral practices, Cyrus moved his men into the city through the two gates of brass, marching in through the river bed. Thus another chapter in fulfilled prophecy has been cataloged for us that we may have faith to live and dare to do right.

Our next fulfilled prophecy is found in Micah 3:12: "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest." This was prophesied about 100 B. C. During the reign of the Turkish Sultan Suleiman II, a decree for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem was issued. The architect who drew up the plans made a mistake and left out that section of the city known as Zion. Today, it is plowed as a field. Although over two thousand years have elapsed, yet the Word of God was fulfilled as predicted by the Prophet Micah. For hundreds of years, the Jews were unable to understand how Zion would be plowed as a field. Today every one can look at a map and see its fulfillment.

Another prophecy, in Ezekiel 26, describes the fate of Tyre. According to this prophecy, Tyre would be destroyed, her towers broken down, and the place would be scraped of her dust and

become like the top of a rock. The rubble would be placed in the sea, and Tyre would become a place for the spreading of nets. We read:

"Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it; saith the Lord God: and it shall become a spoil to the nations: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water." - Ezek. 26:3-5, 12.

Nebuchadnezzar came against the city of Tyre and destroyed it, but the Tyrians, being a naval people, moved to a small island in the Mediterranean. Later, Alexander the Great came through the same country and found that a sandbar ran from the shore to the island. He took the rubble from the destroyed city of Tyre and built a causeway to the island where the Tyrians lived. He literally scraped her dust and put it in the sea. From that time on, the ancient site of Tyre has been a place for the spreading of nets, and, even today, fishermen can be seen sitting on its ancient site mending their nets. The prophecy was literally fulfilled.

Scores of other prophecies of similar nature predicted long before the events happened were literally and accurately fulfilled at the appointed time. These all should give one faith in the Word of God and create a confidence that those prophecies still unfulfilled will, at God's appointed time and in the way predicted, be literally and completely fulfilled. God's Word has never returned unto him void. There is nothing surer than the prophetic Word of God.

-Restitution Herald.

Card of Thanks

Sister Blackburn requests that we express her appreciation for the many letters received and the prayers of which she was assured in connection with her recent apparently successful operation on her eyes. Considerable time probably must pass before she can use her eyes much for writing.

Love

"God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." - 1 John 4:16.

Love is the principle of self-sacrifice-the law and habit of preference for others; first of all giving God the place, and then denying self for the sake of unselfish ministry of men. Meekness is love at school. Temperance is love in training. Gentleness is love in society. Goodness is love in action.

God is twice defined in this fourth chapter of John's First Epistle, as Love-because he lives to impart blessing, and he gave his most precious possession, his Son, to be the Savior of the world.

To love, as he loved, is the perfection of all character and attainment, and the steps are here given:

1. We know and believe the Love of God towards us.
2. We confess that, Jesus is the Son of God, and so dwell in God and God in us.
3. Love is made perfect in casting out fear, even of the judgment.

The love here commended is the exact opposite of selfishness, which develops into hate. As selfishness centers and focuses all upon self, love radiates and diffuses blessing upon others.

Here again is a new attitude as to service. We perceive that Christ "died for all, that they who live, should not henceforth live unto themselves. The Devil's maxim is, "Spare thyself." The Lord's maxim is, "Deny thyself." Compare Matthew 16:22-25. Love loses life for self to find it in others. Selfishness, in saving life for self, loses it as a source of good to man and glory to God.

Here again love is not treated as a feeling, or even as an affection, but as the divine principle of self-oblivion. And because God is Love, he that loveth is begotten of God and knoweth God.

Here is the last great executive act of the will -- the self-surrender of Love in supreme devotion to God and in unselfish ministry to men.

This is what we understand by Christian "perfection," not the faultlessness of perfect holiness, but the blamelessness of a complete separation unto God, a full apprehension and appropriation of Christ, and a yielding to the control of the spirit of, Life, Light, and Love.

- A. T. Pierson.

Consecration and Separation

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." - 2 Timothy 1:13.

THIS LETTER was written by Paul to his "dearly beloved son" shortly before his death, and has to *do* with the personal walk and testimony of a true servant of Christ in a day of apostasy. It also reveals the *pathway* of an approved servant in a day of apostasy.. Paul says, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 1:13.) For "bad men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, misleading and being misled." (2 Tim. 3:13.) And again we read, "Do not deceive yourselves. God is not to be scoffed at. For whatever a man sows, -that he will also reap. He who sows in the field of his lower nature, will from that nature reap destruction; but he who sows to serve the spirit will from the spirit reap the life of the ages." - Gal. 6:7, 8, *Weymouth*.

Is it possible that we who have believed and have tasted of the good Word of the Gospel can be deceived or become deceivers? The Apostle in the First Epistle to Timothy reveals the foundation and spread of apostasy among believers in the early Church. "In contrast with these false teachers he tells him that the purpose of the Gospel is love out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and a faith unfeigned, failing of which some turned aside to vain jangling, against whom he has warned them, testifying to them before the Lord not to -fight about 'views'-a thing entirely useless-to the subversion of -the hearers. Instead, strive to present thyself approved unto God, a workman, unashamed, rightly handling the Word of Truth." St. Paul, writing to Titus, says, "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in *works* they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work void of judgment." (Titus 1:15, 16.) God's firm foundation stands impregnable with the double inscription, "The Lord knoweth them that are his," and "Let every one who nameth the name of Christ stand aloof from unrighteousness."

IMPORTANCE OF CHRIST IN THE HEART

However widely we may differ on other subjects, there is one point upon which we must agree, and we believe the Lord is awakening the hearts of his people to a deeper sense of the need of having Christ in the heart and Christ in the life. The person and work of Christ is the one great necessity and that which marks -the new creation as distinct from the old, the children of light from the children of darkness. We are called to entire consecration of ourselves to do the will of God. "Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." - Eph. 6:6.

Having, by the grace of God, found Christ, the preliminary step of consecration must be settled once for all. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness. Therefore, it remains for us to choose whether or not we will be set free from the bondage of sin, that we may share the glorious liberty of the sons of God; and so he invites us to give ourselves to him that he may work his will in us.

God's purpose in our redemption is for our entire consecration, and this consecration is binding upon every one who has named the name of Christ. 'Consecration means not only doing the will of God, but it includes separation in all the fulness of the word. Separation in the Scriptures is twofold: namely, separation from whatever is contrary to the mind of God, and separation unto God, as revealed in 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18: "Be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

LOVE TO CHRIST THE SPRING OF ACTION

In an evil world it is impossible for God to bless and use his children who are in compromise or in complicity with evil; in other words, we cannot be half the Lord's and half the world's. Hence, the Savior says, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:33.) This is not separation from contact with evil in the world, but from complicity with and conformity to it. This fact is shown in Jesus' 'prayer in behalf of those men whom his Father gave unto him out of the world. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." (John 17:15-17.) Love to Christ must be the spring of action, for he is our Model. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." (Heb. 7:26.) Yet he was in contact with them for their salvation.

To consecrate one's self to God is to offer or devote himself to the worship and service of God. Fenelon says, "True religion resides in the will alone." A man's will is really the man's self. Therefore, when we consecrate our wills, we are giving ourselves to God. He calls upon us to yield our wills unto him that he may take control and "work in us to will and to do of his good pleasure."

There are two things the will must do when it is given up to God. It must believe and obey. This will lead to separation -- separation from self, separation from the world and its enjoyment and friendship, separation unto holiness. The Apostle James says, "Whoever therefore determines to become a friend of the world renders himself an enemy of God." (James 4:4, *Fenton*.) Hence the admonition, "Cherish neither the world, nor yet what is in the world. If any one cherishes the world, the affection of the Father is not in him; because all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are not from the Father but they are from the world." (1 John 2:15-17.) These are Satan's most successful instruments for entangling and finally drawing away into an evil course those who have named the name of God and his dear Son.

"BE YE SEPARATE"

The history of Lot affords one of the most effective examples of the influence of an evil world. When Abraham was called of God and departed from his country, Lot went with him, but his desire for wealth caused him to "pitch his tent toward Sodom." And how dire was the result, for we next find him "sitting in the gate of Sodom." As we further trace his steps to the end of his course, we find it one of confusion and sorrow.

This history was not left on record without a purpose. Our relationship to God, even our salvation, rests upon our faith and complete separation from all that is defiling or that is contrary to the expressed will of God. "The world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." (1 John 2:17.) Our part is to "seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness." His will is to be the first object of our lives.

In the Scriptures we find many examples of consecration and separation. The Levites, for instance, were a separated people, God's special possession. Taking the place of the first-born, who were saved from the sword of the destroyer by the blood of the lamb, they were a typically dead and risen people, consecrated and set apart to God. In this they were a picture of God's 'Church, the members of which have been lifted from degradation and sin, washed in the precious blood of Christ, purified by the application of the water of truth and fitted for a holy purpose.

The Church is called to the higher work of bearing the Name, the testimony, the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, to live after the manner of the Son of God -- "to walk even as he walked." We are to study the portrait of 'Christ, and to look at things from the divine standpoint. In a word, the Christian's standard and test for everything is the Christ-life. Our hands and hearts are to be so filled with Christ that we shall have no desire for the things of this world. As the poet has expressed,

"Living for Jesus a life that is true,
Striving to please Him in all that I do,
Yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and free;
This is the pathway of blessing for me."

The divine command is, "Be ye separate." To the Levites it was said, "Ye shall be holy unto me, for I the Lord am holy and have severed you from other people that ye should be mine." (Lev. 20:26.) When we speak of holiness, it is not with the thought of perfection. True holiness consists in conformity to the will of God, whereby a child of God is distinguished from the world. How needful it is for the children of God to watch their hearts. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. 4:23.) In the Scriptures we are also taught to look up to the Searcher of hearts for grace to purify those corruptions which, after the most rigid self-examination, may still remain hidden from our observation.

It is the little foxes that spoil the vine; therefore, it is for our interest to ask the help of the great Searcher of hearts for power and grace to cleanse our hearts from secret faults and protect us from the little foxes. Unless they are destroyed, there will be no fruit. Satan is a wily foe. He knows that he cannot turn us aside by noisome beasts or roaring lions, nor lead us into sins of a gross nature. Therefore, to accomplish his avowed purpose to destroy as many as possible of God's consecrated people, he employs and makes use of the little foxes. The turning away from our consecration and separation may be gradual. If not checked, it will continue to grow, until finally the love of God has been crowded out and the love of the world has taken its place.

Wherein then lies our safety? What will insure our protection from the world, the flesh, and the Evil One? Our answer would be, *a whole-hearted* consecration and devotion to the Lord—a consecration that is *daily* renewed, with the determination, "This *one* thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things that are before." If we are faithful in this, the Lord will protect us from all evil and give us the victory. We need a vision of the Lord, such as was given to Isaiah, a vision that will enable us to see the Lord "high and lifted up" and enthroned. (Isa. 6.) When we get a real vision of him, we realize with Isaiah that, we are "undone," "unclean," and in need of forgiveness. Then is revealed the divine provision—God's "Altar." Isaiah said, "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand; which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he laid it upon my mouth and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and ~thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." (Isa. 6:5-7.) In this we see that the guilt which the "Throne" detects, the "Altar" removes. In Proverbs 28:13 we read, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Confession is good for the soul. "With the mouth confession is made unto

salvation." (Romans 10:10.) Then we have the assurance, "If we confess our sins, he [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Again we view the action of the "Throne" and the "Altar" as one -- united.

Did not the Master say when here on earth, "I and my Father are one"? (John 10:30.) Too much stress cannot be laid upon the union that exists between the Throne and the Altar, because it is the only ground upon which our full salvation can be obtained. Christ Jesus our Lord is the Christian's Altar on whom, full forgiveness, perfect cleansing from all defilements, restoration and communion with the Throne, rests. "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." - 1 John 2:1.

David, the sweet singer of Israel, testifies that "God's way is in the sanctuary." (Psa. 77:13.) There the voice of the Altar (blood) speaks peace and reconciliation. There the Throne (holiness) of God is made known by his forgiveness of sin through the cross of his beloved Son. We need this priestly ministry to keep us clean.

"So wash me, Thou, without, within,
Or purge with fire, if that must be,
No matter how, if only sin
Die out in me, die out in me."

What comfort for the people of God to know that there is a righteous Representative ever before the Throne to make intercession for them in their daily weaknesses and transgressions. In all matchless grace from the day of Pentecost to this very hour our "Altar" has been acting as an advocate with the Father, interceding for us in all our failures, and sympathizing with us in all our infirmities and in all our sorrows.

Let us praise and thank God for this Altar (Christ) who is ever ready to hear all our requests and to be to us a "present help in every time of need." If we ask in His Name, the Throne (God) is faithful and just to grant unto us these requests.

"Yea, only as this heart is clean
May larger vision yet be mine;
For mirrored in its depth are seen,
The things divine, the things divine."

- *T. G. Smith.*

Can God Destroy the Soul?

The subject of the soul, its nature and immortality, is discussed at great length by Plato in "The Phaedon," a dialogue on Immortality; and therein is discussed the question of the literal destruction and extinction of the soul. Plato wrote in Greek, his native tongue; and the Phaedon became the great classic treatise on the subject of Immortality; read, studied, and debated throughout the Greek-speaking world during the four hundred years between its writing and the ministry of Christ.

Plato's words practically stereotyped the philosophic phraseology of the time. The purpose of the dialogue is to show that in death the soul does not become extinct; that it cannot die, perish, or be destroyed. Modern orthodoxy, therefore, is found ranged with Plato against the Word of God.

With reference to the philosophic use of "apollumi" (A Greek word for "destroy, perish"), here is an extract from "The Phaedon": "Socrates, having said these things, Cebes answered: 'I agree, Socrates, in the greater part of what you say. But in what relates to the soul, men are apt to be incredulous; they fear ... that on the very day of death it may be destroyed and perish ... blown away and perishes immediately on quitting the body, as the many say. That can never be ... the soul may utterly perish ... the soul might perish ... if the immortal be also perishable. The soul, when attacked by death cannot perish.'"

These words of Plato were known and of fixed meaning in the days of Christ and the Apostles. Christ came to reveal the truth; and he said, "Fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna." Shall we say that, knowing as he did the meaning of the words used on the subject of the soul, he willfully and without explanation took these very words concerning the very same subject, and used them in an altogether contradictory sense? The idea is impossible.

To those who knew these words of Plato, and who taught them and argued about them, there was sent a Teacher from God; and standing in their midst he reiterated the fact that Plato was wrong; that the soul could be destroyed, that it would perish. What would any of that day have thought of the suggestion to make such words convey the sense of endless misery, so diametrically opposed to their meaning? Would he not have been justified in replying in the language of a well known Public School Headmaster: "My mind fails to conceive a grosser misinterpretation of language than when the five or six strongest words which the Greek tongue possesses-signifying 'destroy' or 'destruction,' are explained to mean maintaining an everlasting but wretched existence. To translate black as white is nothing to this."

We believe sufficient has been shown 'to establish the fact that, in the usage and meaning of "apollumi" and "apoleia," destruction, utter and real, is the true meaning, and that is the wages of sin.

- *THE BIBLE STANDARD, Auckland, N. Z.*

The Question Box

Hebrews 4:9-11

This passage reads as follows:

Verse 9-"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

Verse 10-"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

Verse 11-"Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

Question:

Who are "the people of God"? What is the "rest" that "remaineth" for them (verse 9) ? And when do they "enter into that rest" (verse 11) ? In your reply please include a discussion of verse 10. What connection, if any, does it have with verse 9?

Answer:

The "people of God" are the overcomers of this Gospel Age. The "rest" that "remaineth" for them, is that complete satisfaction of heart and mind which awaits them when they enter the joys of their Lord on the other side of the veil. By faith and consecration, however, this rest is entered by them here and now, in this present life. Heb. 4:10, although apparently offering no logical support to verse 9, is vitally connected therewith, as we will endeavor to show in a later paragraph.

TWO ASPECTS OF REST

Rest may be understood in two senses: (1) rest *from* work and (2) rest *in* work. With us both forms of rest are experienced. In various ways, with brain or hand or both, we work. When the labor has been especially hard, we become rested and refreshed by ceasing from it. We are enabled to return to it, whatever it is, and to do it better, because we left it for a season. This is rest *from* work, a most true and refreshing rest.

But is mere cessation from toil our best and most welcome refreshment, our truest rest? By no means! To see our work well done; to search into it and find no flaw; to feel that it comes up to that conception, that ideal, of it, which we had framed in our mind - *this*, when we get it (which is not often, we fear) gives us a far more perfect and restful satisfaction than mere sitting or lying still. This is rest *in* our work as distinguished from rest *from* our work; and the one is immeasurably higher than the other.

GOD'S REST

Thus, only very much more so, must it have been, always, with the Eternal God. Thus must it have been with him in the period we call "creation." Day by *day*, *this* consummate Artist, this master Musician, this peerless Poet, may be seen at work (in the first two chapters of Genesis). The work proceeds happily. Day by day God sees that the work of the day is good. "And God saw that it was good," is the familiar refrain appended to the story of each day's toil. At last the six days come to an end, and with them the work. And now God surveys all that his hands have made -the heaven and the earth, land and sea, day and night; sun, moon and stars; fish, birds, beasts;

man and woman. As he surveys them he rejoices in his finished work, and pronounces them not "good" only, but "very good." They answer to his thought. They are *his* thought, in varied and beautiful forms. He takes delight in them and blesses them. *This is his picture*; and it is a finished and triumphant work of art. This is his *music*; and it is perfect harmony, perfectly rendered. This is his *poem*; and it is without flaw. He rests *in* it and is refreshed.

It is true, of course, as the Scriptures record, that (the works of creation being finished, Gen. 2:1, 2; Heb. 4:3, 4) God rested *from* them; but it is also true that his is a rest (a sense of refreshment, Exod. 31:17) *in* them. Indeed, the idea of rest, in his case, as mere relief from weariness, is repugnant to us, as it is to the whole tenor of Scripture. "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" (Isa. 40:28).

Moreover, the term "rest" as applied to God, not only could not imply relief from weariness, but also could contain no suggestion of inaction. Indeed, no less an authority than our Lord Jesus himself, affirmed: "My Father worketh *hitherto*" -- *that* is to say, up to that very hour in which Jesus made the statement (John 5:17). Having ceased *from* the works of creation, and while resting *in* them, God proceeded to work on a higher plane. Rising from the works of creation, he commenced the work of sustaining and providentially administering them. And rising yet higher, he proceeded to the work of redemption, including his "New Creation." And who can doubt but that *these* works of providence and redemption (which he is accomplishing during his day of rest from his works of creation -- a day which, so far as we have been able to ascertain from the Scriptures, *will never end*) who can doubt but that *these* works do but heighten and intensify his "rest." *

* Foregoing we have ascribed the works of (1) creation, (2) providence, and (3) redemption, to God. However, there is a school of thought which ascribes only the works of creation and providence to the Father, that of redemption being ascribed to the Son. The truth is that all three are works of God (the Father, the Great Jehovah). In all three, however, his Only-begotten Son has been and will continue to be his honored Agent. - John 1:1-3; Col. 1: 16, 17; 1 Cor. 8:6.

GOD'S REST OFFERED TO MANKIND

Rest *from* work may be considered as the negative, and rest *in* work the positive form of God's rest. In God's rest man was destined to share. But he failed to attain it at the creation, for after that, all too soon, came the fall.

When God began dealing with the typical people, Israel, his offer of rest was first presented in the negative form. Even God himself condescended *thus* to rest, although, as we have seen, this was far from realizing his idea of rest, either for himself or for man. *It was, however, the only idea of rest which Israel could grasp.* The Pharisees, at the time of our Lord's first advent, do not appear to have understood in any degree the significance of his words when he insisted that his Sabbath keeping should be like that of his Father, who "worketh until now"; that the sabbath *he* regarded, was one in which *works* (good works, of course) were appropriate -- a sabbath made *for* man, not one for which man had been made. The Jewish sabbath, therefore, was God's offer of rest in its most elementary (its negative) form, of rest from work.

CANAAN REST TYPICAL

The offer of rest in Canaan went beyond this negative aspect. While falling short of the perfect rest which remained for "us (the Gospel Age Church), it was nevertheless a development in that direction. Israel, however, that is to say, all those who came out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses, so provoked God by their disobedience -- their lack of faith and lack of fidelity -- that he would not permit them even to enter the Land of Promise, much less would he allow them to enter *his rest* (Heb. 3:1-19). Joshua *did* take their *children* into Canaan, but even they did not realize the true rest there, for (as our Author points out in Heb. 4:8, where the word "Jesus" should be "Joshua") if Joshua *had* given them rest, there would have been no occasion for God, by his holy spirit, to have extended the invitation once again, as he does in Psalm 95:7, 8, "*Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart.*" The fact that this gracious invitation was once again made *then*, "after so long a time" (Heb. 4:7), (that is to say, after so long a time as the interval between the entrance into Canaan and the date of Psalm 95) shows that the promised rest had not yet become their portion.

In view of all this failure on the part of mankind in general and of Israel in particular, to obtain the rest promised, what shall we conclude? Obviously-so reasons *unbelief-we* must conclude that the promised rest will never be possessed; it is nothing but a beautiful mirage!

This, however, is not the conclusion of our Author. Instead, he exclaims: "Not so! I happen to be acquainted with God. He is my Father. Perhaps the most wonderful thing about him is that he has a craving to share this rest of his with his intelligent creatures. Moreover his desire is so intense that, though the invitation to share his rest remains without response for centuries, the effect is merely to extend the horizon; meantime renewing the invitation. My Father craves intelligent fellowship *and will not be denied*. The King's house must be filled with guests. Surely you will recall our Master's own parable (Matt. 22:1-14; Luke 14:15-24). Since they to whom the good tidings (of entering into his rest) were first preached, entered not in because of unbelief, it remaineth that some (that is, some others) must enter therein" (Heb. 4:6). *Our Author's inference*, from Psalm 95:11, thus seen, *is based on the gracious character of God*.

GOD'S REST REALIZED BY CHRIST

At this point we turn to Heb. 4:13 for guidance in properly understanding Heb. 4:10. In the Authorized Version, Heb. 4:13 reads:

"But all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

Rotherham, Moule, and others, however, have pointed out a preferred translation, which reads

"But all things are naked and exposed to his eyes: -- *As to whom is our discourse*. (Italic ours.)

Ah, yes! Christ is his theme from beginning to end of his epistle. If in our attempt to follow his involved discussions, we find ourselves, at times, in danger of forgetting the main theme, our Author will not long permit us to do so. Christ is the theme of his discourse, and if we do but remember this *as we ponder Heb. 4:10*, the reflection cannot fail to prove helpful in reaching the proper understanding of that verse.

In the Authorized Version, it reads:

"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

This verse is one of peculiar difficulty. It is not surprising that scholars differ in their expositions of it. These expositions fall into two groups, which, freely translated, are:

(1) "Whosoever has entered into God's rest, has ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

(2) "He, Christ, entered into God's rest, having himself ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

In support of the second view a number of reasons have been advanced, which may be summarized as follows:

(a) The definite phrase, "he who entered"; (not as R.V. "he that is entered").

(b) The emphatic pronoun, "himself."

(c) The historic tense "entered upon rest"; (not as R.V. "hath rested").

(d) The implied contrast with Joshua (Josh. 4:8).

(e) That otherwise there is no mention of Jesus' experience or achievements between Heb. 2:1, and Heb. 4:13.

(f) That otherwise read, the verse offers no logical support to Heb. 4:9, but interpreted thus supplies the ground on which the Sabbath -- rest is offered to Christ's followers.

While at first sight this second view may be surprising, it gains in beauty, the more it is considered. God's rest which is set before us, our Forerunner (our Joshua) has already entered. He who once said, "I must work while it is called Today" (John 9:4), on entering into God's rest, ceased from his own works, as God did from his. He said, "It is finished" (John 5:36; John 17:4; John 19:30). Joshua gave Israel no deep and satisfying rest; but Jesus (our Joshua) Son of God, has entered into rest on our behalf, and by him, we too, may enter. He it is, whom Heb. 4:10 represents, with a marked and isolating emphasis, as having "himself entered into rest." Thus understood, the verse does not stand alone and unconnected, but prepares the reader to return, after having seen the supremacy of Jesus over Moses and Joshua, to the consideration of his representative character, his high priesthood, already mentioned at the end of Heb. 2 and the beginning of Heb. 3.

In our consideration of Heb. 4:10 foregoing, we have endeavored to distinguish the two main viewpoints of scholars, and we confess that if we had to choose between them, we should take the second. But why not combine them? Since the rest that Jesus realized was not for himself alone, but for all who share his fellowship; since he could and did offer the rest of salvation to all who came to him -- "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28); and even the deeper rest of consecration to those who would take his yoke and learn of him (Matt. 11:29, 30). Since these things are so, may we not understand from Hebrews 4:10 that *Christ first, and we after him*, are to cease from our own works as God did from his? It would surely seem so.

THE REST OF FAITH

At the outset we said that by faith and consecration, God's rest is entered by us here and now, in this present life. This thought has been beautifully expressed by the poet in the following lines:

"Canst thou not see
That there remains another rest for thee?"

"There is a rest which still he waits to give --
A rest wherein we all may daily live --
The rest whereby,
As in his death, by faith, we die,
So he will live in us,
And living thus
Will change our death to life -- a life no longer ours,
But his, renewed with resurrection powers.

"O now receive
The calm, deep peace which comes as we believe
That all the works, and zeal, and strife,
With which we sometimes sought to fill our life,
Are vain and dead, at best:
Thus shalt thou understand, and enter into rest."

In the Manna for May 18 we have a choice paragraph bearing directly on the passage. We quote it here as a fitting close to the foregoing discussion.

"Our rest in the Lord is as complete as is our belief in him. He who believes fully *rests* fully; he who believes only partially *rests* but partially. The ideal condition of the spiritual Israelite is the attainment of a perfect rest, a perfect Sabbath keeping, in his present experience, and a waiting and laboring for another and still more complete rest -- the actual rest of the perfected condition -- the rest that remains for the people of God. 'Let us therefore labor to enter into that rest [Sabbath] lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief' (of fleshly Israel)."

- P. L. Read

Recently Deceased

Brother W. M. Batterson, Brazil, Ind. - (June)
Sister Emma L. B. Fiske, Providence, R. I. - (July)
Brother Joshua Grant, Newbury, Mass. - (February)
Brother S. E. Moore, Electra, Texas - (June)
Sister H. R. Wollin, Lake Mills, Wis. - (1952)