

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## What Say the Scriptures?

**Basic Bible Studies No. 2 -- The Bible a Divine Revelation**

*"Borne by holy spirit, men spoke from God." - 2 Peter 1:21, Literal.*

IN OUR previous study we noted that scientific Rationalism has made wondrous progress in triumphing over time and space, microbes and atoms. But this pathway, with its absolute and almost naive faith in cerebral processes, has also led to a mechanistic concept of the origin and destiny of Man, a "gospel" of hopelessness. Furthermore, the resulting great technical advances have, in our day, brought pressing problems to the social world. There is mounting and alarming evidence that mankind is entering an era of Scientific Barbarism. It has become obvious that man's mentality has not kept pace with his techniques. The barbarians are making more progress in the application of science than Science is making in the control of barbarism. Two tragic conflicts of unprecedented violence have penetrated into the remotest corners of the world to shake modern civilization's illusions of solidity and permanence. In a world faced with disaster, apprehensive hearts, weary of destructive materialism and paralyzing skepticism, long for a resurgence of spiritual values. But from whence shall they come?

Whittier has said:

"We search the world for truth. We cull  
The good, the pure, the beautiful,  
The graven stone and written scroll  
And all old flower-fields of the soul;  
And, weary seekers of the best,  
We come back laden from our quest,  
To find that all the sages said  
Is in the Book our mothers read."

Fully persuaded that this wonderful book, the Bible, is the only fount of truth which can satisfy hearts and minds, our succeeding studies will examine its teachings in detail, in the firm

assurance we shall find them the answer to all the questions of men. But first, for confirmation of its claim to divine origin, we consider briefly the testimony thereto of men, of reason, and of our hearts.

## THE TESTIMONY OF MEN

From the many testimonials of scholars, statesmen, scientists, philosophers, and others concerning the Bible, we submit the following:

Chevalier Bunsen, German scholar: "The Holy Scriptures are intelligible to the humblest, commanding the reverence of the wisest; the only story of the origin of our race which we can harmonize with our natural conception of God, or with science."

Francis Bacon, English philosopher: "There never was found in any age of the world either religion or law that did so highly exalt the public good as the Bible. . . . I believe the Bible is the Word of God whereby his will is revealed."

Michael Faraday, English physicist: "As tears come from the heart and appeal to the heart, so the Bible comes from God, and he that is from God listens to her voice."

Sir William Jones, British jurist and Orientalist: "The Bible is the light of my understanding, the joy of my heart, the fulness of my hope, the clarifier of my affections, the mirror of my thoughts, the consoler of my sorrows, the guide of my soul through this gloomy labyrinth of time, the telescope sent from heaven to reveal to the eye of man the amazing glories of the far distant world. The Bible contains more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence than can be collected from all other books in whatever age or language they may have been written."

Sir John Frederick Herschel, English astronomer: "All human discoveries seem to be made only for the purpose of confirming more and more strongly the truths that come from on high and are contained in the Sacred Writings."

Immanuel Kant, German philosopher: "The Bible is an inexhaustible fountain of all truths. The existence of the Bible is the greatest blessing which humanity ever experienced."

Galileo Galilei, Italian physicist and astronomer: "The Holy Scriptures can in no wise say a lie or have a mistake; its pronouncements are absolutely and inviolably true."

James Dwight Dana, American geologist, in speaking to a graduating class in Yale University said: "Young men! As you go out into the world to face scientific problems, remember that I, as an old man who has known only science all my life long, say to you, that there is nothing truer in all the Universe than the scientific statements contained in the Word of God."

Simon Greenleaf, American lawyer:

"The genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures are established. The Scriptures are the voice of God."

John Locke, English philosopher: "The Bible is one of the greatest blessings bestowed by God on the children of men. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture for its matter. It is all pure, all sincere; nothing too much, nothing wanting."

Sir Isaac Newton, English philosopher: "We account the Scriptures of God to be the most sublime philosophy. . . . I find more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history whatsoever."

Sir William Ramsay, Scotch chemist: "The longer I study the New Testament, the more convinced I become of its absolute trustworthiness. . . . Christianity is the religion of truth; it is founded on truth, absolute and perfect truth."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, German poet and philosopher: "It is a belief in the Bible, the fruit of deep meditation, which has served me as the guide of my moral and literary life."

Rudolf Virchow, German scientist: "The Bible is God's Word.... Evolution is all nonsense."

Jean Jaques Rousseau, French philosopher: "Peruse the works of our philosophers; with all their pomp of diction, how mean, how contemptible are they, compared with the Scriptures! Is it possible that a book at once so simple and sublime should be merely the work of man? The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the Gospel, the marks of whose truths are so striking and inimitable that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero."

Matthew Arnold, English poet and essayist: "To the Bible men will return, because they cannot do without it; the true God is and must be preeminently the God of the Bible, the Eternal, who makes for righteousness, from whom Jesus Christ came forth, and whose spirit governs the course of humanity."

John Ruskin, English writer: "Everything that I have written, every greatness that has been in any thought of mine, whatever I have done in my life has been simply due to the fact that when I was a child my mother daily read with me a part of the Bible and daily made me learn a part of it by heart."

John Wanamaker, American merchant: "I cannot too greatly emphasize the importance and value of Bible study -- more important than ever before in these days of uncertainties, when men and women are apt to decide questions from the standpoint of expediency rather than on the eternal principles laid down by God himself."

Frederick William Farrar, English clergyman and author: "Nor has the widest learning and acutest ingenuity of skepticism ever pointed to one complete and demonstrable error of fact or doctrine in the Old or New Testament."

Sir Walter Scott, British novelist and poet -- it is related that about a week before his death he said to his son-in-law, Lockhart: "Read to me from the Book!" and when Lockhart asked him from what book, he said, "Need you ask? There is but one."

Daniel Webster, American statesman: "I have read the Bible through many times, and now make it a practice to read it through once every year. ... A great jurist must go to school to the Book; lying back of Blackstone and the Habeas Corpus Act and the Roman Institutes are the statutes of the Mosaic Code."

Giuseppe Garibaldi, Italian patriot: "The best of allies you can procure for us is the Bible, which will bring us the reality of Freedom. This is the cannon that will make Italy free."

Woodrow Wilson, twenty-eighth president: "When you have read the Bible, you will know it is the Word of God, because you will have found it the key to your own heart, your own happiness, and your own duty."

Melvin G. Kyle, clergyman and Egyptologist: "There has never been found anything that discredits statements of facts in the Bible."

William Ewart Gladstone, English Prime-minister: "I have spent seventy years of my life studying the Book to satisfy my heart; it is the Word of God. I bank my life on the statement that I believe this Book to be the solid rock of Holy Scripture. All the wonders of Greek civilization were not as wonderful as the single book of Psalms."

## **THE TESTIMONY OF REASON**

This commendatory verdict of notable men is most assuring. But if the Bible be the Word of God it is its own best witness. Let us examine it therefore with our own intellect. We are not here concerned with the minutiae of historical and archaeological details so wonderfully corroborative of the Scripture records and which are accessible to all in libraries. We shall restrict ourselves to a consideration of four major facts revealed in the volume itself, to account for which, we believe, requires the admission of super-human activity.

1. Opening the Bible's pages we find it to be not one but sixty-six separate books, one of which consists itself of one hundred and fifty separate compositions. These treatises come from the hands of at least thirty distinct writers of every sort of temperament, of every degree of endowment, of every time of life, of every grade of attainment, of every condition in the social scale, from shepherd to king. The time of their labors stretches over a period of some fifteen hundred years, from Egypt's hoary past to Rome's splendor under Augustus, and embraces specimens of nearly every kind of writing known among men: histories, codes of law, ethical maxims, philosophical treatises, discourses, dramas, songs, hymns, epics, biographies, letters both official and personal, prophecies—all gathered here in one volume. Confined for ages to a rough, isolated corner of the globe, in the keeping of a peculiar tribe of men, it suddenly bursts all boundaries and deluges the world. In the face of stinging contempt and blood-thirsty cruelty, opposing ancient prejudices, habits, customs, and religions, it sweeps them away like so many straws. Human society in every stage of development, under every form of administration, and composed of every race of men, yields itself to it. It is difficult to conceive the immense revolution in the lives of men which it wrought. And still does the Bible stand in all the world exercising its immense power in the restraining of evil passions, and in the advancement of all that is good and true and elevating. Where does this Book get its influence? Does not this remarkable formulation of diverse writings over such a span of time, from so many unrelated sources, and with such influence, indicate the supernatural? ,

2. As we observe the internal character of the volume, a most striking unity is found to pervade the whole despite its diverse parts. They are so linked together that the absence of any one book would introduce confusion and disorder. The same doctrine running like a golden thread from beginning to end, strings book after book upon itself like so many pearls. Each book adds something to what the others proclaim, but the development is orderly and progressive. An unbroken historical continuity pervades the whole. The Old Testament ends with Malachi pointing through the silent ages to a path seen in the Gospels. The New Testament fits on to the Old so exactly that it is difficult to doubt they were consciously planned each for its place. The gradual framing of the Bible in all the marvelous harmony of its inner relations, indicates design kept constantly before an Intelligent Mind for fifteen hundred years, and so excludes human supervision.

3. Another outstanding fact is the Bible's numerous prophetic statements. Prophecy is a continual miracle set in the midst of the Bible as sure proof to all ages that it comes from God. Space would fail for an enumeration of the multitude of minute details of predictions which have already been fulfilled, and which announced the fall of flourishing cities, the ruin of mighty empires, the coming of the Messiah and the subsequent fate of the Jewish race -- the latter an everliving witness to the truth of the predicted judgments of long ago. The remarkable events of our own day -- the worldwide distress of nations, the amazing increase in knowledge, the phenomenal means of transportation, the extreme emphasis on the material rather than the spiritual in daily life, the lack of vitality in the religious professions of the vast majority and their instructors, and the restoration of the Jews to their homeland -- all fulfillments of prophecies recorded thousands of years ago -- are perfect demonstrations that the Book which contains such predictive information is indeed divine. So admirably has this sort of evidence been contrived by the wisdom of God, that in proportion as the lapse of ages seems in men's minds to weaken the argument derived from the miracles recorded in the Scriptures, the unfolding of fulfilled prophecy, by that very lapse, serves only to strengthen the argument for the supernatural origin of the Bible.

4. The fourth fact bearing on the inspiration of the Bible and one of greatest weight is, that amid all the diversity of its subject matter, the whole Book is taken up in the *portrayal of one person*. On its first page he comes for a moment before our astonished eyes; on the last he lingers still before our adoring gaze. From that word in Genesis which describes him as the "Seed of the woman" and at the same time her Deliverer -- through book after book, in Levitical sacrifices, in the lives and experiences of men of faith, in the intensely emotional Psalms, in the eloquence of Prophets, in the records of his disciples -- to the end, where he is discovered on the throne and judging all nations, the one consistent but gradually developed portraiture grows before our eyes. Are we to believe that the astoundingly successful creation and dramatization of such a character through the ages is but a human fiction? This would demand for its author something more than has yet been seen in man. Rather are we drawn irresistibly to the conviction that such a portraiture revealed from Genesis to Revelation is undeniable evidence that the Bible owes its origin to a Mind able to superintend its composition for fifteen hundred years with a genius unexampled among men.

### **THE TESTIMONY OF OUR HEARTS**

Lastly we consider the Bible in its appeal to our hearts. Do we find in it the truths which answer our questions, which satisfy the hunger of our spirits? We open its pages, and confusion becomes order and darkness light. It takes us straight into God's very presence, and gives its message there by an authority which is his and his alone. It satisfies every longing of our natures, it irradiates with clear and certain light the whole duration of our existence, both the present life and the future beyond it. It tells us all we need to know and in it we find peace and rest. It supplies our practical wants, alleviates our sorrows, remedies our ruin, and throws light upon our darkness. It is a book that is adapted to all the different divisions into which society is divided by rank, and birth, and wealth, and fashion. It fills the heart with happiness amid the sanctities of our Christian homes, and comforts the wanderer in a strange land. It ennobles life and tranquillizes death, and gives to man the hope of glory and eternal life. Within its compass is milk for babes and strong meat for men -- plain truths, simple enough for the loving comprehension of a beginner in faith, and mysteries high and deep enough to overtask the powers of an archangel. Its great truths are universal truths; truths capable of reaching and making entrance into and taking a strong hold upon the heart of man as man, and of all men equally, independent of their race, affinities, or intellectual advancement. It is a book which knows us, puts our thoughts into words, fills up our need, and teaches us the prayers which God can answer. It dries our tears, rejoices our hearts, and

sets our feet upon the pathway that leads to God. It is in its sanctifying thought, its agreement with the character of God, and its living energy and ability to deal with all our needs and hopes that we recognize its authority to speak as the Revelation from God. All the evidence, both of contents and results, binds us to stand upon the "impregnable rock" of Holy Scripture. And sealing its testimony are the words of Him who is Himself the Truth

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

- *W. J. Siekman*

(The subject of the third article in this series will be: "The First Man, Adam.")

## **Consecration**

### **Is it Always Followed by Begetting ?**

*Question: -- Can any one be consecrated and not begotten of the Holy Spirit?*

*Answer: -- We believe that there is still room. That is to say that the full number of the elect has not yet been found, and tested, etc., and therefore our expectation would be that any one making a full, thorough consecration of himself to the Lord would still be, begotten of the Holy Spirit. But if the question be in the form in which it is here stated, "Could one be consecrated and not be begotten of the Holy Spirit?" we would say, "Yes, he could be consecrated so far as his part is concerned." Your consecration and my consecration, our part, is merely to present ourselves to God. It is for God then to say whether he accepts that consecration. During this time, this Gospel Age, the Scriptures speak of this as the acceptable day, the acceptable year, the acceptable time of the Lord, and we believe that he is ready and willing to accept all of those who come unto the Father through Christ, and that all such are accepted, and if they are accepted as members of the Body of Christ they will be begotten of the Holy Spirit. But as we have said before, so we say again, we believe that in the not distant future there will be people who will make a consecration, who will make a presentation of themselves to God, and for whom there will be no place left, because, as the parable shows, the wise virgin class will all have entered into the marriage and the door will be shut, and then there will be no one else enter in, because that class, when completed, will have no additions. Those who would then present themselves would not be begotten of the Holy Spirit. But this would not mean that God would be displeased with the offer of themselves; rather God would be very pleased to have them offer themselves -- just as God was, undoubtedly pleased with Abraham, with Isaac, with Jacob, and all the Prophets who offered themselves freely to know and to do the divine will to the extent God was willing to receive them. They got a great blessing. So we should advocate, with every person with whom we have an influence, that the proper course, the proper duty for every human being, the reasonable service would be to present his body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. He will not spurn the sacrifice, but whether he will beget you by the Holy Spirit depends on whether your sacrifice is offered in time, before the door is shut, before the last member of the elect has been gathered in.*

- *What Pastor Russell Said*, page 151.

## Annual Meeting of the Institute

Members of the Pastoral Bible Institute are hereby reminded of the privilege which is theirs of nominating in the pages of this journal the brethren they wish to elect as directors for the fiscal year 1953-54. While the attention of new members is especially drawn to this matter, we desire to emphasize in the minds of old members also, not only the privilege, but also the responsibility which continued association with this ministry brings.

All should be aware of the fact that the affairs of this Institute are in the hands of seven brethren who are elected from the Institute's membership to serve for a period of one year or until their successors are elected. The next annual meeting will be hold Saturday, June 6, 1953, at 2 p.m. in the parlors of the Institute, 177 Prospect Place, Brooklyn New York.

The brethren whose term of service will expire are:

F. A. ESSLER  
H. E. HOLLISTER  
J. C. JORDAN  
J. T. READ  
W. J. SIEKMAN  
T. G. SMITH  
P. E. THOMSON

The brethren named above are pleased to report that a spirit of Christian love and harmony exists in their midst; and they have every reason to believe that the Lord has seen fit to bless their association in this ministry. They realize, however, that those carrying on any work often fail to see opportunities for improvement and expansion apparent to others not charged with such responsibility. For this reason changes in office not infrequently *have* beneficial effects. They desire above all things that the work of the Lord (for the furtherance of which this Institute was formed) be prosecuted with the greatest possible efficiency, and to this end are ready cheerfully to step aside for others *whom* the membership believe to be fitted for the work. They therefore urge upon all the members of our Institute that they make this a special occasion of prayer, and they also earnestly pray that our Father's will may be expressed in the vote of the members. If after prayerful meditation any are led of the- Lord to nominate brethren, and will forward the names and addresses of such brethren so as to reach this office on or before April 10, 1953, such names will be published in the .May issue of the "Herald," that all members may have an opportunity of voting for them.



## Resurrection Prospects

*"Our God is a God of salvation; and to God, the Lord, belongs escape from death." - Psa. 68:20, R.S.V.*

NO OTHER event in all the annals of creation or history can equal in importance and significance the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is true not only as respects man, but as respects the heavenly host, our Lord himself, and even the Father. Would that we were able to convey in words just a little of what this really did mean.

"Blessed be that God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy, hath begotten us again unto a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." - 1 Pet. 1:3.

The resurrection of Jesus must have brought great joy to all the heavenly host. It is recorded that "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" when the foundations of the earth were laid; and when Jesus was born, again it is recorded that the heavenly host gave praise and glory to God. It is even said that "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repents." (Job 38:7; Luke 2:13, 14; 15:7, 10.) Then what must have been the exultation of the heavenly host who, for thirty-three years, had been witnessing the great drama of the Son of God in his work of redemption! His struggle against Satan and the forces of evil must needs be carried through without the least deviation from the course of righteousness; whereas, the opponent, Satan, resorted to every subterfuge and device of which he was capable.

With what intentness of interest, and perhaps trepidation, they must have watched as they saw him betrayed, ill-treated, falsely accused, scourged, condemned, crucified, forsaken and entombed. It appeared that Satan and the forces of evil had triumphed—that the cause of righteousness and the hope of mankind was lost. It may be that God alone knew what was to occur. Whether this be true or not, those hours of waiting until the dawn of that first day of the week, must have gripped them in a tenseness of emotion that only hallelujahs of praise and thanksgiving could relieve when they witnessed the resurrection of the Son of God.

And what did resurrection mean to our Lord? As we can scarcely appreciate the joy that will come to those who are restored to perfection of human life, how can we possibly conceive of the joy which our Lord realized in his resurrection and exaltation to the nature of the Father himself? What must have been the sentiments of his heart when, in the moment of resurrection, he realized that all that for which he had longed and struggled was now an assured fact; that never again would his intimate relationship and association with the Father be interrupted; that he had fully justified his Father's confidence in him; and that now he would be able to carry out his Father's will in every particular? Excepting the Father, as we must in every comparison, only Jesus could know the extent of that joy, for, as yet, there were none to share his glory.

And then, to climax it all, what must the Father himself have felt when, through resurrection power, he received unto his own bosom his only begotten Son, the dearest treasure of his heart? Has God placed any possibilities of depth of feeling in any of his creatures which he himself does not possess? Could any father or mother possibly know a joy at birth of an offspring that would compare with that which the Father must have felt when his only begotten Son was born to his own nature and station? We, of course, cannot presume to say, but we doubt if any but the Father himself will ever know the depth of that joy.

We do well to recall all the precious promises contained in the Word regarding our resurrection hope and that of mankind, based on the resurrection of Jesus, in order that the impressions made upon our minds and hearts may be deepened, and become unalterably fixed there. Life beyond the grave is possible only through a resurrection of the dead. This is the only prospect set before us in the Scriptures whereby we may be restored to life. The Old Testament writers reveal the resurrection hope in many of their prophecies, though oftentimes, it is true, by statements so obscure, that until something is said or done to reveal their meaning, we would scarcely recognize them as having any reference to a resurrection.

An instance of this kind is brought to our attention by Jesus when controverting the argument of the Sadducees -- that sect in Israel which did not believe in a resurrection. The Sadducees considered the five books of Moses, namely, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, to be the only authoritative teachings, given by God, by which their lives were to be ruled and guided. Therefore quotations from the Prophets or the Psalms, had little or no convincing weight with them. Jesus evidently considered this fact, when, in attempting to prove to them the error of their belief, he quoted from the writings of Moses.

Chapter twenty-two of Matthew's Gospel records how the various sectarian groups in Israel tried to refute the teachings of Jesus. Taking advantage of the presence of the Herodians, a sect that sought to curry favor with Rome by conforming their religious views to Rome's wishes, the Pharisees asked Jesus a question calculated to discredit him with the authorities: "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar?" But perceiving their wicked intent, Jesus said, "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?" Then employing a method that has been a criterion in the exercise of wisdom even unto this day, he asked them to show him the tribute money, and they brought him a penny. "And he said to them, whose is this image and superscription? and they say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. And they marveled and left him and went their way."

Failing to be warned by this experience of their rival sect, the Sadducees had a question to ask, which, in their opinion, would make belief in a resurrection ridiculous. And so addressing Jesus, they said:

"Master, Moses said, if a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto, his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven?"

It does not require any great imagination to visualize the smug look on their faces as they awaited his answer to their question. We would probably have advanced reasons why she should belong to the first or the last husband, and would have had considerable difficulty in meeting the objection, they could have raised. But Jesus, possessing an insight and a wisdom that dwarfed mere human reasoning, answered: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven."

Then Jesus asked them a question, concerning which he cited the Word of God through Moses:

"But as touching the resurrection of the dead have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not a

God of the dead, but of the living. And when then multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine."

Although Moses said nothing about a resurrection, yet his words definitely and positively affirm the necessity for a resurrection from the dead.

But what did Jesus mean by this statement? Was he intimating that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had not died? Or that they were already risen? Modern theologians, in contrast with the Sadducees, go to the opposite extreme in their beliefs, for most of them look upon man as being a combination creature, possessing a spiritual soul in a human body. They affirm that there is no death, but that the soul, immortal, indestructible, merely changes its place of abode from the human body to some form of dwelling in the spiritual realm. With the poet, Longfellow, they say:

"Life is real! Life is earnest!  
And the grave is not its goal;  
Dust thou art, to dust returnest  
Was not spoken of the soul."

When we see how prone man is to erect a superstructure of belief around a theory of his own, or that of someone else, it should cause us to re-examine our own faith superstructure. Are we relying solely upon an understanding of the Word of God, which has been arrived at through an unbiased and honest comparison of Scripture with Scripture? or are we building on human theories? A true love of truth will cause us to test every belief by the Word of God, and only faith thus tested will enable us to stand in this evil day, and avoid being snared by human theories.

It is really surprising how many Scriptures one can misconstrue in supporting a theory he has adopted as his own. Take this theory of an immortal or indestructible soul for example: to those who accept it, the quotation Jesus cites from the writing of Moses, interpreted in the light of their theory, becomes a, strong pillar in the superstructure of their belief that the dead are not dead. Their preconceived idea blinds them to the real significance of Jesus' argument in his discussion with the Sadducees. Failing to make a proper comparison of Scripture with Scripture, this statement of Moses very easily becomes added proof to them that the dead are in a conscious state of existence somewhere.

Then take the statement of Jesus to Martha, recorded in John's Gospel, chapter eleven, verse twenty-six "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." This, we will agree, is a plain statement of fact. But in ignoring its context in the preceding verses, their understanding is in error. Jesus said to Martha:

"Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

Manifestly, Jesus is not telling Martha that there is no death, or no resurrection from the dead; but that as the Savior of the world, he has the power to resurrect and to give life. And when he calls the dead forth from the grave, as he definitely promises shall be done (John 5:28, 29), then those who believe in him shall never die.

Another statement relied upon to support the no death theory, is that of the wise man in Ecclesiastes, chapter twelve, verse seven. At the conclusion of his poetic description of the

coming of old age, and the gradual decay of the physical body, he says: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Often is this verse quoted at funerals as proof that only the body dies that the soul has gone to be with God. But here again, the words of Scripture are misconstrued, in order to support a preconceived theory. The spirit that is said to return to God, is the same spirit or power of life that originally came from God when he imparted the breath of life to Adam. The same breath or spirit of life is common to all breathing creatures (Eccl. 3:19, 20, A.R.V.), and when imparted to Adam, it caused him to become *a living* soul, a sentient being. And when the body returns to the elements from which it was created, and the spirit or breath of life returns to God, then man is non-existent just as before his creation; and except for the fact that his identity is kept in the memory and power of God, to be restored in the resurrection, he would be forever non-existent.

The same wise man, in chapter nine, tells us that "The dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward: for the memory of them is forgotten." We are also told in this same chapter, to make wise use of our present existent state, "For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave [Hebrew, *sheol-state* of death] whither thou goest. " - Eccl. 9:10.

These examples show how necessary it is to give heed to divine instruction by comparing spiritual things with spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:113), and to remember that "no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. " - 2 Pet. 1: 20.

This does not mean that no individual should interpret God's Word, but, as Rotherham translates the verse, "No prophecy of Scripture becometh self-solving." Those who have acquired a general knowledge of the Divine Plan of the Ages (Eph. 3:11, *Rotherham*), have a guide that enables them to understand many Scriptures that would otherwise be difficult of explanation, and so are not nearly so apt to stray from truth by some man-made divergent path.

Whereas the word "resurrection" does not occur in the Old Testament writings, yet the doctrine of a resurrection is clearly taught there. Job says:

"Man dieth and wasteth away: yea man giveth up the ghost [Hebrew, *gawvah*, to breathe out . . . expire] and where is he? ... O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave [*sheol*], that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands."

What could this mean but the anticipation of a resurrection from the dead?

Again in chapter nineteen, verses twenty-five to twenty-seven, Job says:

"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."

If any one of Adam's posterity ever had cause to think there was nothing left in this world to live for, Job was that one. Tormented by his physical ailments-bereft of all worldly possessions -his family destroyed, except for his wife who advised him to curse God and die-and now, the last straw to his endurance -- falsely accused and condemned by friends from whom he had anticipated sympathy and consolation. When Job besought God to hide him in *sheol*, we may be sure he was not asking for additional torment (as many would have us believe is the fate of those

who go down into *sheol*). He had experienced all the torment he could stand. What he now desired was rest; and the oblivion to pain and distress of mind that death and the grave insure. But Job knew that God would provide a Redeemer, and that a day would come when resurrection power would restore the willing and obedient of mankind: "Thou wilt call, and I will answer thee."

David likewise, in Psalm sixteen, verse ten, says (Psa. 16:10): "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (*sheol*); neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption." In commenting on this, Peter tells us:

"The patriarch David . . . is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." - Acts 2:29-32.

This, therefore, was a prophecy concerning the resurrection of Christ. But Paul's argument in First Corinthians, chapter fifteen, assures us that the resurrection of Christ, is a guarantee that all will be raised. Also in Acts (Acts 24:15), in defending himself against the false accusations of the rulers of the Jews, Paul says, "I have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust."

All Christians are familiar with that beautiful twenty-third Psalm, wherein David says, "He restoreth my soul. . . . I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." There is a sense in which the souls of the righteous are being restored in this Age, as we shall presently note; but to live in the house of the Lord forever, David's own soul, his own being, will need to be restored from death, and from the power of the grave. That this is precisely what will occur, is proved by the Word of the Lord through Hosea, when he says, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." - Hosea 13:14.

## **TIME OF THE RESURRECTION**

A point about which many have been confused, is the time of the resurrection. This has been due largely to erroneous beliefs concerning the soul, and what it is that will be resurrected. Obviously, if the soul is immortal -- indestructible, it would not need to be resurrected; for a thing that is already alive, can not be restored to life. Consequently, those who hold this view, if they are consistent, are forced to think of the resurrection as applying only to the body. This would mean that the identical elements or atoms, that once formed the body, would have to be brought together again, that the departed souls might reinhabit them. All will then stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, who will send them back to heaven or hell, but this time in their bodies.

There are of course many absurdities in connection with this view that cannot be harmonized with the Scriptures. To begin with, man is not possessed of or by a soul, but is a soul. God breathed into the nostrils of the body he had formed, the breath of life, and *man became a living soul*. And when man dies, there is nothing left to go anywhere. "The soul that sinneth, *it shall die*." (Ezek. 18:4.) "Death is the wages of sin." (Rom. 6:23.) Speaking of man's state in death, the Psalmist says: "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." - Psa. 146:4.

THE time of the resurrection is declared to be "*the last day*." Martha, when speaking to Jesus of her deceased brother, Lazarus, said, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Her source of knowledge had probably been Jesus, for four times in chapter six of John's Gospel (verses 39, 40, 44, and 54), Jesus designates the time of the resurrection as being the "last day"

"And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

"No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

"Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

The "last day," refers to the day of judgment, the seventh thousandyear period of earth's history since man's creation. Paul says:

"God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained., whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead." - Acts 17:31.

"A day with the Lord is as a thousand years," Peter tells us; and so this would refer to the thousandyear judgment-day, the reign of Christ, "who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." - 2 Tim. 4:1.

Resurrection in the full and complete sense will take place during the second presence of Christ; the one exception to this being the resurrection of Christ himself. The examples, foreshowing the power of God to restore the dead, that are given us in the Old and New Testaments, were not complete resurrections, but merely the first step in the resurrection process; they returned to the death in Adam condition and went into their graves again; whereas, those who experience real resurrection, die no more. Concerning the resurrection of the Church, it is written: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." - Rev. 20:6.

This verse gives us to understand that there will be more than one resurrection, otherwise it would not speak of a first resurrection. It also identifies those who partake thereof as being kings and priests of God, and says they reign with Christ a thousand years. The first resurrection, therefore, pertains solely to the Little Flock Class who are declared to be "a first fruits" unto God of his creatures.

We find also that the time element enters into this first resurrection, that it started nearly two thousand years ago with the raising of Christ Jesus, the first of the first fruits, and will end with those "who are alive and remain" unto the coming of the Lord. Paul informs us in 1 Thess. 4:16, that the sleeping saints, who lived and died prior to the second coming of Christ, would be the first to be raised; then, following this, those who are still alive and remain, when he comes, will not need to sleep, but will be caught up at the time of death, and, together with those who preceded them, will meet the Lord in the air -- the spirit realm.

Following this, there are at least three additional resurrections that will occur: namely, that of the Great Company-the servant class whose position will be before the throne of God, where they will serve him day and night in his Temple (note the way this class is contrasted with the Little Flock class) (Rev. 2:26, 27 3:12, 21; 7:14, 15); that of the Ancient Worthy class which is promised a better resurrection in reward for their faithfulness; and that of the world of mankind who will be raised up and perfected by the judgments of the Lord.

Those classified as "they that have done good," mentioned by Jesus in John 5:28, 29, will include the "Little Flock," the "Great Company," and the "Ancient Worthies"; they will have perfect organisms and powers of life restored to them instantly; but the world will be raised up gradually, and will be restored in all the component parts of their beings simultaneously.

### **PRESENT RESURRECTION EXPERIENCE**

We have purposely left to the last, the consideration of that phase of our resurrection, about which we should feel the deepest concern; for on it depends the kind of resurrection we will eventually attain. In all probability, most of us rarely think of ourselves as undergoing the process of a resurrection; but in the perfecting of the new mind, the new creature, we are being raised just as truly, as will the willing and obedient of mankind under the judgments of Christ in the coming Age.

A more than casual consideration will cause us to note that there are a number of ways in which our resurrection process parallels that of the world. First, there must be the release from the legal sentence of death, imposed by Divine justice because of the disobedience of Adam. The basis upon which this release can be granted, is that "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man." (Heb. 2:9.) We, the Church, experience this release *through faith* in the blood of Christ, and in consequence of the fact that "Christ hath appeared in the presence of God for us." "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." - 1 John 2:1.

The world of mankind is still under the sentence of death. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36.) Therefore the world in general does not experience release until the great High Priest enters within the veil a second time; as pictured in the Tabernacle types, he will then lift up his hands (symbol of the exercise of power) and bless the people. In contrast to the Church, mankind will be subject to the authority of the Mediator, without choice, and will come forth from the grave at his call, to experience the judgments by which they will learn righteousness, and be gradually perfected in being. "The soul that will not heed that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." - Acts 3:23.

All who make good use of that thousand years of judgment in learning to obey from the heart, will thereby become fixed in the character image of God, and will acquire an immunity to temptation that will forever guard them from the possibility of sin. Those whose conformity to Kingdom regulations does not spring from the love of God, will not be able to resist Satan's wiles when he is loosed at the end of the thousand years; and so, along with Satan, will be annihilated in the second death.

The resurrection process in the development of God-likeness -- the most essential part of the resurrection in so far as the award of eternal life is concerned, is a matter that takes time, and requires both willing and active cooperation on the part of the Church and the world. We, in contrast to the world, have had to exercise faith in order to come under the influence of resurrection power. With us, that power has operated through God's spirit, "working in us both to

will and to do his good pleasure." And when God's workmanship in us this side the veil is finished, our new bodies, like unto Christ's, will be given us in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. - 1 Cor. 15:35-58.

Both phases of our resurrection are set forth by Paul in his letter to the Philippian Church, chapter three, verses 10 and 11 (Phil. 3:10-11). Therein is revealed Paul's whole-souled sanctification in his endeavor to know Christ, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings in being made conformable unto his death, that "if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Paul's desire to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, had to do with his day-by-day development, for he couples it with having fellowship in the sufferings and death of Christ experiences confined to the present life; and this was all to the end that he might attain unto *"the [first] resurrection of the dead."*

Paul's experience in sanctification must needs be the experience of each one who will share in the first resurrection. But how it should rejoice our hearts to know that our perfecting in the character-likeness of God, is God's own work in us; and if we will continue to be wholly sanctified unto him-if we sanctify him in our hearts-he is both able and willing to finish the work he has begun in us, and will do so to the end that he may establish our hearts in righteousness, and make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

- *John T. Read.*

## Recently Deceased

Brother Otto Ahrens, Buffalo, N. Y.-(February).  
Sister Selma Fraser, Arlington, Mass.-(February).  
Sister Florence Gimble, Sharon, Pa.-(February).  
Sister Nellie Hogle, Appleton, Wis.-(February).  
Brother John Josefowicz, Milwaukee, Wis.-(February).  
Sister Rachel Lardent, London, Eng.-(February).  
Brother Charles Moody, Buffalo, N. Y.-(February 1951).  
Brother Clarence Potts, Vineland, N. J.-(February).  
Sister Nellie Tillewine, Brooklyn, N. Y.-(January).



## The Question Box

*"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." - Isaiah 7:14.*

### *Question:*

What is the lesson to be drawn from Isaiah 7:14? I suppose you have noticed the controversy in the public press over the *New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible, particularly in regard to this verse. Perhaps you could relate your answer to this controversy.

### *Answer:*

As noted in the March "Herald," this prophecy has a dual application: (1) to Isaiah and the nation of his day and, (2) to Jesus and all mankind.

Richard G. Moulton, in *The Modern Reader's Bible*, has well observed that "To him who at this day reads in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, the paramount question is still, 'Understandest thou what thou readest?' " (Acts 8:30.) To understand this prophecy we must inform ourselves of the circumstances under which it came to be given. This we may do without becoming involved in the many difficult problems which have perplexed the scholars. Briefly, these circumstances were:

1. Ahaz was King of Judah.
2. Judah was threatened by an alliance which had been formed against it by Israel and Syria.
3. The Lord, through Isaiah, told Ahaz not to fear this alliance, but to repose his confidence in God.
4. Ahaz, instead of trusting God, sought an alliance with Assyria.
5. Isaiah, to encourage Ahaz to exercise faith in God, said he might ask for a sign, in confirmation that God would, indeed, be with him.
6. This Ahaz refused to do.
7. Isaiah then said that God, nevertheless, would give Ahaz a sign, namely, that a child should be born, to whom the name Immanuel was to be given -the very name "Immanuel" having the meaning, "God with us."
8. All this failed to turn Ahaz from his course. He carried out his intention of forming an alliance with Assyria, with disastrous results.

So much for the circumstances under which the prophecy came to be given. In regard to "the controversy in the public press" mentioned in the question, this; of course, was not entirely unexpected. In former times men have gone to the stake for confessing their judgment as to the meaning of the Scriptures. ' It is not surprising if, today, we learn that one minister publicly set fire to pages in the New Bible and that a State Senator announced his intention of introducing in the legislature a resolution barring the sale of the *R. S. V. Bible* in his State. Less heat and more light is always desirable in matters of this sort, and the present instance is no exception.

I: is a fact that long before the *New Revised Standard Version* appeared, able translators and commentators had recognized that the Hebrew word in Isaiah 7:14 means "a young woman old enough for marriage" (*Westminster Study Edition of the Bible*). Leeser translates: "This young woman shall conceive"; and, in a footnote, observes that the word "does not necessarily signify virgin, but a young marriageable woman in general." Moffatt translates: "young woman," while Robinson, in the *Moffatt New Testament Commentary* on Matthew 1:23 states that the Hebrew (Isa. 7:14) "has no thought of a miraculous birth, for the term rendered *maiden* (in the Moffatt translation of the Bible) simply means an adult woman, young enough to become a mother, and is by no means confined to virgins. This has been recognized by Jewish scholars for centuries, and is admitted by Christian students of the Old Testament."

Evidently the able commentator, Morrison, realized that, regardless of the meaning of the Greek in Matthew 1:23, the Hebrew in Isaiah 7:14 might have a more general meaning than virgin, for he says: "Whatever scope for doubt there may be regarding the flexibility of the meaning of the word for *virgin* in Isaiah's Hebrew, there is no scope for doubting regarding the meaning of the Evangelist's term." Barnes has several pages of notes on Isaiah 7:14 and its context. Therein amongst others he makes the following points: "The word properly means a girl, maiden, virgin, a young woman who is unmarried, and who is of marriageable age." The word "does not, however, imply that the person spoken of should be a virgin *when* the *child* should be born. . . . Whether she was *to be* a virgin *at the time* when the child was born, or was to remain such afterwards, are inquiries which cannot be determined by a philological examination of the word."

It has been argued (in my view unsuccessfully) that since the prediction concerning the birth of Immanuel, in Isaiah 7:14, was to constitute *a sign*, that is to say, a *miracle*, only a virgin in birth would satisfy this prediction. However, those who thus reason, evidently overlook the fact that not only Immanuel, but Isaiah himself, and his two other sons, were given for signs. ("Behold, I, and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders [and tents] in Israel." (Isa. 8:18.) Here no question of a virgin birth arises. Moreover when, in Hebrews 2:13, the inspired writer makes reference to Isaiah 8:18, as having its application to Christ and his Church, he does so without at all denying that Isaiah and his children, were given for signs *in Israel*; that is to say, in the Israel of Isaiah's day. He simply fails to mention this earlier application.

Similarly, Matthew, under the guidance of the holy spirit, make application of Isaiah 7:14 to our Lord Jesus as *the fulfillment*, of the prophecy, with no thought of nullifying the earlier application to Isaiah and his times.

With the foregoing facts before us, let us consider the passage as a whole, that the lesson, WITH US IS GOD, may not be lost on us in the difficult days *through which we are now passing, and which are not likely to grow less severe in the days ahead.*

Isaiah has been called the Evangelist of the Old Testament. At the commencement of his ministry he had been given a vision. In vision he had seen the Lord (Christ Jesus - John 12:41) high and lifted up; that is to say, he had been given a vision of the Age to come, when Christ would be exercising kingly authority, and as the result of such rulership, the whole earth would become full of the glory of God. (Isaiah 6:1-13.)\* This vision which he had seen, others might see. It became the all-absorbing passion of his life to make them see it.

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\* For a fuller discussion of this chapter see the "Herald" for September, 1940.

The burden of his message was "God is with us"; not far from us, though we have wandered far from him; not alienated from us, though we have alienated ourselves from him; not adverse to us, though by our disobedience we have set ourselves against him; but with us and for us -- with us, to cleanse us from all our sins by his loving chastisements; with us that, being cleansed from sin, he may establish us in righteousness. In effect, Isaiah's message to the sin-stricken nation of his time was: "You do not need to climb to heaven in order to find God, nor cross the troubled seas to locate him; he is with you, even within you, and proves himself to be with you by the response which my words awaken in your hearts. Would you find him, look within. You have only to look and listen to discover that God is already, and always, with you." - Deut. 30:11-14; Isa. 45:19; 55:6; Acts 17:27, 28; Rom. 10:6-8.

This is the tone, this is the approach, this the method, of an evangelist; this is the good news which Christ revealed more fully. Hence we rightly regard Isaiah as the Evangelist of the Old Testament and find His words the clearest and fullest anticipations of the Gospel.

Isaiah summed up *his* message in the name he gave to one of his sons, a name in which was summed up also his own personal experience; the name *Immanuel*. In this child was embodied Isaiah's great message to Judah -- "with us is God."

This was his *great* message, but not his *only* message, as we have elsewhere shown. \*\* The conditions of the time were, indeed, too complex, and its moral condition too depraved, to admit of only one prophetic message. It was necessary that the Prophet should bring more messages from God than one -- messages of warning as well as messages of comfort -- to a people that had well-nigh lost God. Isaiah had to admonish them of the due reward, that is to say, the natural consequences, of their iniquity, as well as to assure them that, despite their iniquity, God would never leave nor forsake them. The time was terribly out of joint, and there were few who even strove to set it right. Hence the people of Judah were threatened with nothing short of extinction. All their choice and trained warriors had fallen in a single day before the confederated armies of Israel and Syria. These armies, flushed with victory, were advancing to the siege and assault of Jerusalem itself. And, though Isaiah was given to see that the assault would fail, that the hostile confederation would be broken up, he also foresaw that a nation so corrupt and godless as Judah had become, had doomed itself to destruction; that it must fall before the first vigorous, resolute, and steadfast attack. God would be "with them" for the present, indeed, and so with them as to deliver them from their immediate danger. And God would also be with them in the hour of apparent annihilation, watching over them in their captivity, and bring back "a righteous remnant" to re-people their wasted land. But they must not hope to escape the natural results of their own weakness and division and corruption. The years were fast approaching in which the fierce and hasty Assyrians would "speed to the spoil and hasten to the booty," ravaging and depopulating both the holy land and the holy city.

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\*\* See "Herald" for September, 1940.

These were the various messages, or parts of one complex message; which Isaiah was commissioned to deliver. And it is striking to observe how, not content with mere words, he embodied them in his own family life, in the vary names he gave to his children and the children of the virgin prophetess whom he took for his second bride.\*\*\* Isaiah's own name meant "the salvation of Jehovah," and therefore expressed the ruling tone and theme of his mission. And he so named his three boys that they, too, might bear witness among the people, for God, and remind them both of the admonitory and the consolatory aspects of his great message. Thus he named one of them, Maher-shalral-hash-baz, which means, "Make haste to the spoil, hasten to the prey." (Isa. 8:3), in order to fix and perpetuate his warning that the fierce and terrible Assyrians would ere long sweep through the land, despoiling it of its wealth, and making its inhabitants their prey. He named another son Shear-jashub, which means "The remnant shall return, to remind them that, even when that terrible judgment fell upon them, and they were carried away captive to a Strange land, God would not suffer them to be wholly consumed, but would preserve a sacred seed, a righteous remnant, from which a new and purer national life might spring. (Isaiah 7:3; 10:20-23.) And now he\*\*\*\* calls a third son (the first by his new bride), Immanuel, to remind them that, whether in adversity or in prosperity, in freedom or in bondage, God would always be with them and for them-not absent, not alienated, not adverse.

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\*\*\* While there are other interpretations of the narrative contained in the earlier chapters of Isaiah, this is probably the best and is the mast widely accepted by Scholars.

\*\*\*\* Some scholars have expressed the thought that the true rendering in Isaiah 7:14 is probably, "And thou (Isaiah) shalt call his name Immanuel."

And that this was, as has been said, Isaiah's great and ruling message, that his mission was one of comfort mainly, and not mainly one of judgment and warning, becomes evident to us, not only as we catch the tone and spirit of his writings, but as we consider the names of his household; names which caused him to exclaim: "Behold, I, and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and wonders [portents] in Israel." (Isa. 8:18.) For, if one of these names implied judgment, three of them implied mercy. The omen in the name, "Make haste to the spoil, hasten to the prey," was doubtless full of terror; for the Assyrians were the most fierce and cruel race of ancient times, and would sweep through the land like a destructive storm; but, if this one name was so terribly ominous and suggestive, all the others speak of an untiring and inalienable compassion: "Shear-Jashub" predicted that God would bring back a faithful remnant even from the cruel bondage of Assyria; "Immanuel" assured them that God would be with them in all their perils and reverses; while the name of Isaiah himself pointed to the end of all Jehovah's dealings with them-"salvation" from all evil.

Brethren, suffer this further word of exhortation, in closing; a word, you may be sure, which is spoken as much to myself as to you: When once Isaiah had seen the vision vouchsafed to him (as recorded in the 6th chapter) and grasped its tremendous import, nothing else mattered to him. The events and changes of time could no longer sway him with their former power. He was raised above the shows and lures of time; its changes, its fears, its griefs; for he could look through them and discern the sacred and abiding realities which lay beyond. He had seen a vision; he had seen the Lord, high and lifted up, and he looked for the time to come when he would exercise his control, and bring in everlasting righteousness, peace, and joy.

We are not prophets, nevertheless we represent, even though but feebly, the Lord's cause in the earth today. And the experience of Isaiah is, illustrative of that through which we must pass, if we are truly consecrated, and would engage in some small measure in the service of God. Like Isaiah we must be *seers* before w e become servants. As many of us as *are* servants, *have* seen a vision,

which others do not see, and have heard a voice they do not hear. For us, as for Isaiah, the eternal realities have shone through the pomps and shows of time, and we have heard a divine voice bidding us look to the things which are unseen and eternal, not the things which are seen and temporal.

Nor should we allow ourselves to become discouraged by the failures we have experienced in the past; by the slips and stumblings, even by the downright back-slidings which may have been ours, if these have been truly repented of, and the Father's forgiveness sought and received. For "with us is God." There were times, no doubt, when even Isaiah, noble and good man that he was, found his faith flickering. For after all he was but a man, of like passions with ourselves, subject to the same infirmities and fluctuations of spirit. But we may well believe that in such moments as these, when, weary of his own endeavors after personal holiness, and weary of his poor success at influencing others, with faith and hope and courage waning, he would return to the glorious vision with which his prophetic career had commenced. We may well believe that there were many darkened hours in his experience; hours of broken faith and defeated hope, from which he would be revived by falling back on his earlier faith and brighter hopes; and as he recalled the vision, and realized once again the glorious truths it contained, truths which he had recognized and taught in his hours of clearer insight, the faith with which he had first responded to the Divine message would return, and he would go forth a true prophet again.

Thus must it be with us; we need to realize very distinctly that the Lord will surely establish his Kingdom, which shall yet fill the earth with his glory. We have been granted such a vision in these last times, through the unfolding of the Divine Plan of the Ages, as even Isaiah could have comprehended only dimly. In the light of the glorious truth that has shone on our pathway now these many years, the wondrous character and purposes of God may be seen as never before. If, as we turn to others with the message which has so cheered us, we find few who are able to appreciate it, and fewer still who gladly surrender their lives to it, we must not permit such experiences to so discourage us that we would cease all further endeavor to pass on the good word. We must remember that here and there a member of the "holy seed" may be reached. We must remember that this was true in Isaiah's case, it was true in the case of our Lord and his Apostles, and, we are assured in advance, must be true also in ours. Let us hold the vision clearly before us. Let us remember that it is for an appointed time, and that, though it may seem to tarry, it will not do so in reality. And let us, in the spirit of renewed consecration, yield whole-hearted obedience to the heavenly vision in all the various details of our lives. In so far as we *are* obedient to the heavenly vision, our life will be a life of faith "in the things which do not appear" to sense; we shall walk as seeing him who is invisible; our character and conduct and our labors in his service, will be drawn, gradually but surely, by an unseen power, even by God's holy spirit, into ever closer accord with his mind and will concerning us.

And, at last, if we continue faithful to the end, we shall hear the Master's voice: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord."

*-P. L. Read.*

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Just as we go to press the suggestion reaches us that, in view of the importance of the subject, the related New Testament passage (Matthew 1:23-25) might well be discussed at this time. We are asking Brother Read to do this in our next issue. - Ed. Com.

## The Church of Today

*"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." - 2 Cor. 13:5.*

THERE is nothing in the history of the world hitherto, and especially nothing in the present status of its affairs, to favor the doctrine of our modern millennialists, or to make us think it likely, if at all possible, that the Church in this dispensation, by any human activities or improvements, will ever be able to bring about a condition of universal conversion, righteousness, and peace, such as some say will and must come "before" Christ comes. As no preaching of the Gospel, or efforts of evangelical workers, the holiest and most efficient in all these many centuries, have succeeded in making converts and saints of the entire population of any city or locality on this earth, it would seem to be sheer folly to expect these agencies and endeavors to do for the whole earth what they have never done for any part of it, however small. In all the ages ... whithersoever it has come it has taken out a people for the Lord, who will live and shine with him in immortal glory, ... whilst . . . the majority have everywhere been on the outside ... and how can we suppose that it will ever be different in the present order of things? And when we examine the condition in which nearly two thousand years of the Gospel have left the most favored nations, not to speak of the regions beyond, we look in vain for solid evidences that another two thousand years of the same would bring the world any nearer the fancied millennial state [before Christ comes] than Christendom is at present. . . . Some hold up their hands in holy horror at the idea that "Christendom," as it now exists -- "this chaos of intermingled divisions, antagonistic communions and interminable contentions, jealousies and strifes" -- is to remain. They cannot think that the Greek Church, the Papal Church, the disagreeing Protestant churches, together with the many sects and heretical coteries which "disgrace" the Christian profession, are to continue to the end of time.

But this state of things is exactly what has developed under "nineteen hundred years of the Gospel proclamations," and what has been is that which shall be, unless radical changes come, by the intervention of some new power and method of administration, such as the coming again of the Lord Jesus to judge and rectify will bring. . . .

When we look at the evils and the tares that have all the while been growing, at the sad estate into which "Christendom has been brought" by the spirit of sect, human ambition, self-seeking hypocrisy, unbelief, misbelief and the super-exaltation of humanitarian goodishness, which makes nought of doctrine, it seems next thing to absurdity to say that "this" is the instrument and agency to convert "the world" to truth and genuine godliness.

People say, "Oh, yes; but only set the Church aright. Put it to work to do as it should; bring it up to what it 'ought to be' in enterprise and liberality, and there can be no question that it will soon conquer and sway the world to Christ and salvation." Be it so; but who is to convert Christendom and put it in condition to convert the world? Reform, Reform! That is the watchword. The whole Church and the whole earth are full of reformers laboring at reforms. But the sad fact remains: "That which is crooked, cannot be made straight; and that which is wanting cannot be numbered," while the doctoring is often worse than the disease. . . . To convert the world there must first be a conversion of the Church, and that can never be until Christ the Judge shall come.

Yet another thing to be noted in connection with our subject is the character of the times in which we live. The Scriptures abound in allusions to the moral aspect of the world in its "last" period -- the period bordering on the time when Christ shall come with power and great glory, and everywhere those times are represented as full of unbelief, lawlessness, outbreaking sin, rampant

lust, blasphemous mockery, and reviling of sacred things -- a very carnival of bad passions and God-defiant crimes.

The question, therefore, arises, whether our times are not of the character thus divinely described and fore-intimated.... Have "we" not withal fallen upon a time of extraordinary degeneracy and wickedness? Has there not come a grievous falling away from the faith, a giving of heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies? Have not people become lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to law and rightful authority, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, "holding certain forms of godliness," but failing to show the power of godliness in their lives? Have "we" not plentiful examples of those mockers who were to come, walking after their own lusts and likes, and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" [Parousia, presence, *Diaglott* translation.]

Think of the startling multiplication of divorces, the breaking down of the sacredness of marriage, the shameless prevalence of licentiousness, and the commonness of infanticide, and secret blood guiltiness of which physicians tell. Note the growing indifference to the solemnity of oaths, to sacred promises, to moral obligations, to the laws of God, and to all holy things. Observe the rapid accumulations of colossal robberies, swindles, defalcations, embezzlements, rascalities and false dealings, which disgrace our civilization, much of it also in high places, by people of social rank, education and refinement. Estimate the increasing killings, murders, incendiaryisms and lawless and malicious misdoings of men and women, and the trampling under foot of right and justice in political, commercial and banking circles.

Observe the awful increase of suicides, which, within the past few years, have exceeded the number of *200,000* per annum! Lusts and crimes and fiendish passions seem to have reached flood tide, blossoming like trees in springtime, filling our "daily journals with their stench," and, yet, treated and familiarly talked of as ordinary and trivial things! And when we consider that all this is within the realm of so-called Christendom, we may well wonder that we should have Christian people singing over it, and telling us that we are on the march to a glorious Millennium [before Christ comes]. What this state of things betokens is not millennial glory, but "the day of Judgment, on the margin of which the world of today is treading." . . .

The question whether there is to be a glorious Millennium on this earth before the return of Christ is not to be decided by what is most agreeable to our reason and fancy, nor yet by what we imagine the most effective to stir zeal in effort to benefit the world lying in sin, but by what the Word of God says. What does not accord with that Word must go under, without regard to human likes, reasonings or opinions... . That many good and sensible people have need to examine the question with more thoroughness than they yet have done is abundantly evident; and that what we have thus written may help some to right conclusions is our earnest wish.... Nor can we leave the subject without solemnly laying it on the consciences of all whom we can reach, not to rest satisfied with notions which flatter and please a rationalistic fancy, but which they have never critically examined; and to beware of giving sanction to a modern popular persuasion, which they may find without just foundation in Scripture. . . .

It is indeed a fact for all to consider, that the side which we take on the question will and must make serious difference in the whole system of our theological thinking. There is scarcely a doctrine which is not more or less affected by the ground we take upon this question. Our decision will and must affect our views of the Resurrection of the Kingdom of God -- of the

Second Coming itself of the nature and purpose of the Present Dispensation -- particularly of the judgment, and what is to come after it, and the whole condition and life of the finally redeemed.. .

And it will and must make or unmake to us many most pregnant passages of Holy Writ, rendering them grandly luminous, or sealing them as meaningless and uncertain-mere riddles for interpreters to guess at, without agreement as to their clear and certain import.

A decision so far-reaching and momentous in its consequences and effects cannot safely be treated with indifference, and certainly demands a very serious, candid and thorough examination, that the conclusion may be one solidly founded in the revelations given us in the sacred Scriptures.

For our part we are deeply convinced and satisfied that the doctrine of a glorious Millennium of Christianity triumphant throughout all the world before Christ comes is "groundless" and damaging to the cause it would promote.

*- J. A. Seiss (R3612, August, 1905)*



## Encouraging Messages

Dear Brethren:

Grace and peace. We are writing to ask you to send us Pilgrims any time you have one coming into this far-away place, for we always greatly appreciate any and all of them, and get great good from their visits and lectures.

Our Good Hopes for this year is that we may be able to send you at least \$ during this year. We are not working any more at any gainful occupation, since I am 73 this year, but from our meager income we hope to be able to spare that much if it is the Lords will for us to remain and rejoice in His Name and Plan and work.

Yours in His Name,  
H. R. M. -- Texas.

Dear Brethren:

... I have been thinking a lot about 2 Corinthians 11:3 of late: 'But I fear, lest by, any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, So your minds should be corrupted from the *simplicity that is in Christ*. Simplicity--it seems to me is a virtue often lacking even among Christians although Paul may not have had in *mind the* same thing I am thinking of. I think Satan 'finds it comparatively easy in this modern, restless, active age to blind us to the "*one thing needful*" and confuse us with a multitude of things *seemingly* needful. As in the case of Martha, to whom Jesus said, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about *many* things -- but *one thing is* needful." We are apt to be concerned with many material things to an unnecessary degree, instead of spending more time at Jesus' feet listening with Mary to His word. And might we not carry the lesson even further and apply it also to the tendency to be "careful and troubled" about many minor doctrines and traditions of men to the virtual exclusion of the *one needful* tilting love. - Col. 3:14.

Yours in our Lord,  
L. W. -- Mass.

Dear Brethren:

Your monthly Herald still continues to be welcomed in our house. Through the years it has continued in the same spirit it started with. And this I think is the all-important trait. We say not all be able to see eye to eye, but we can all have this spirit of tolerance. In fact, if we have the *Holy Spirit* we will have this humble understanding spirit.

In editing such a paper there is, we know, a grave responsibility and many a care, and we ask God's blessing on your labors. It is only those who have undertaken such duties that can realize how much is involved. It seems to be human nature to underestimate other peoples' efforts. However, we know the time is coming when all men will be judged according to their works. May that time soon come, and may we be ready when it does come.

Am enclosing \$ Money Order. Please renew my subscription and put balance to your general fund.

Your brother by His kind favor,  
L. E. H. -- Alta.