

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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Annual Report of the Institute

ONE OF God's faithful of the past was asked "the secret of his service." His answer was, "There was a day when I died, -- utterly died -- died to myself, my opinions, preferences, tastes and will - - died to the world, its approval or censure died to the approval or blame of my brethren and friends and since then I have studied only to show myself approve unto God."

And is not that just what our Lord asked of his disciples "He that would be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." As another has said, "Self denial is not cutting off an indulgence here and There, but laying the axe at the root of the tree of self, of which all indulgences are only greater or smaller branches. Self righteousness and self trust, self seeking and self pleasing, self will; self defense, self glory -- these are a few of the myriad branches of that deeply rooted tree." Cross bearing likewise is "the cross on which the self life is crucified, the cross of voluntary self renunciation," just as did our Lord when he "made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

This is the spirit, we are confident, that all who are participating in the Institute's service are earnestly desirous shall fill their life and ministry.

At the end of another year under the Lord's direction in ministering to his people, we are thankful to report much blessing to ourselves, and we trust some to those we have served. As always it is very evident that all credit must go to the "Giver of *ever* good and perfect gift." The brethren have been very generous in their messages of encouragement which have greatly helped in maintaining our spirits. These brethren evidently have realized that we, like them selves, must meet the opposition of not only the flesh, and the world, and the great Adversary, but even of some "of the household of faith." Their prayer have enabled us to count all but "light afflictions," all fully offset by the assurance of the readers of the "Herald" and those who have received our pilgrim brethren that the ministry of the Institute has given welcome assistance in the thing of greatest practical value to the true Christian, the work of their sanctification, "the will of God concerning

you." While the witnessing to the world has as always taken second place to this, it has also been a joyful part of the service.

In this connection it is opportune to remind the friends that there is always on hand an abundant supply of tracts which they may order freely. The message's too precious for us to selfishly keep to ourselves. "Freely ye have received, freely give." "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand." The tracts can be followed up, where interest is shown by our booklets, "What Say the Scriptures about Hell," and "Our Lord's Return," and eventually by the larger volume, "The Divine Plan of the Ages," or perhaps at this stage, a free three months trial subscription to the "Herald" with its new series of articles especially for the newly interested.

PILGRIM SERVICE

Just, barely within the bounds of our fiscal year, the pilgrim, work has been very profitably augmented by the service of our dear Brother A. D. Kirkwood from (Glasgow, Scotland; and already the reports from his service have fully verified anticipations. he regular. pilgrim staff has, served many Classes and conventions in the United States and Canada.

Miles traveled	98,624
Meetings held	695
Attendance	16,286

CORRESPONDENCE

Communications offering suggestions and criticisms are referred to the proper Boards and so far as possible are replied to. However, we are grateful for the charity that recognizes the office's inability to do more with its limited personnel. Much encouragement, has come to us from the letters received and the assurance of prayers on our behalf. These are much appreciated.

Letters received	3,875
Letters sent out	4,935

OTHER FIELDS

The Revelation and Daniel volumes are still serving the friends with refreshment that we have reason to believe is of the Lord's providing. It has been the Institute's privilege also to act as intermediary in supplying assistance to some of the needy ones in Europe. We are warned, however, that either letters or parcels to brethren in Eastern Germany or other similarly controlled territory are apt to work severe hardship to the recipients. The office will be glad to advise as to where it is wise to contact needy brethren.

There are no startling results to report regarding the meetings that have been held for the public, but, there is still the same joy and blessing in these endeavors to grant some "crumbs from the Master's tape."

We ask your continued intercession at the Throne of Grace. As we close this report and look forward to another year, we join the" Psalmist in his prayer:

"Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, rid establish Thou the work of our hands."

The work of our hands cannot be established by the blessing of the Lord except as his beauty is upon us the beauty of his character, his holiness, transforming our lives and witnessing to, his work in our hearts.

Report of Annual Meeting

At 2:00 p.m. the Chairman of the Board, Brother J. C. Jordan, called for a hymn and a prayer for the opening of the meeting. Another hymn followed, after which nominations were received for chairman and secretary of the meeting. Brothers J. C. Jordan and P. E. Thomson were elected to these posts, and the Chairman gave a brief outline of the purpose of the meeting, with instructions as to who right vote in the electing of directors for the coming year.

The reports of the Board, the Treasurer and Auditors, and the Chairman of the Board were next given and approved. These reports indicated that the blessing of the Lord had indeed been with the Institute during the past year, and while not evidencing numerical prosperity, were clear indications of His favor and guidance; but also a desire for a careful watching for his leading in the year to come.

After the reading of the lists of new and deceased members, the Chair appointed Brothers L. Newman, J. H. Cumming, and C. M. Glass to, act as tellers for the counting of the votes and ballots in the election. During their absence for this purpose some time was given to the answering of questions regarding details of, the Institute's activity and to considering suggestions as to how the efficiency of the Institute may be increased. The tellers soon returned and announced the re election of the Board members of last year, Brothers F. A. Essler, H. E. Hollister, J. C. Jordan, J. T. Read, T. C. Smith, W. J. Siekman, and P. E. Thomson.

The inspiration of a solo, "Precious Lord Take My Hand," sung by Brother J. T. Read, together with a hymn and prayer closed the session.

Treasurer's Report

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, FISCAL YEAR ENDED APRIL 30, 1953

Statement of Income and Expense and Analysis of Net Worth Fiscal Year Ended April 30, 1953

Income

Contributions	\$8,566.20
Herald Subscriptions	1,338.68
Gain on Sale of Books, etc.	51.40
Rental Income	540.00
Legacies	500.00
Total Income	<u>\$10,996.28</u>

Expense

Pilgrim Expense	\$3,939.85
Herald Expense Including Printing, Mailing and Clerical	5,635.33
Free Literature	155.01
Maintenance of Property Including Taxes, Gas, Electricity, Insurance, and Repairs	941.75
Comfort Committee Expense	90.00
Office Expense	<u>419.84</u>
Total Operating Expense	<u>\$11,181.78</u>
Net Expense for Fiscal Year Ended April 30, 1953	\$ 185.50
Net Worth, May 1, 1952	<u>27,706.34</u>
Net Worth, April 30, 1953 (as per Balance Sheet above)	\$27,520.84

Statement of Auditors

The books of account and record of the Pastoral Bible Institute, Inc., were examined by us, covering the fiscal period from May 1, 1953, to April 30, 1954, and in our opinion and to the best of our knowledge and belief they show the correct historical record of the above stated year. The foregoing financial statements are in agreement with the books of account and record.

THOMAS P. TILLEMA
STEPHEN H. JONES
LOUIS NEWMAN

What Say the Scriptures?

Basic Bible Studies No. 5 Where Are the Dead?

"All go unto one place." Ecclesiastes 3:20.

THE preceding Scripture study ascertained that the first perfect man Adam by disobedience to the Divine command forfeited his right to life and entailed upon himself and his race the penalty of death, for by reason of inherited weaknesses "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). The truth of this Scripture statement is demonstrated by the inability of any one to fully obey the Decalogue of Mt. Sinai the Divine Law which measures a perfect man's ability and right to eternal life. Says the Apostle: We know that "all that the Law says is addressed to those who are living subject to the Law, in order that every mouth may be silenced, and that the whole world may await sentence from God. For no man living will be declared righteous before him on the ground of obedience to Law. Law simply brings a knowledge of sin." Hence "There is not one intelligent, not one seeker after God. All have turned aside; they have alike become worthless; there is no one who does good no, not one." Romans 3:19, 20, 10-12, *Weymouth*.

This universal judgment should not cause us to resentfully conclude that God is unrighteous in bringing the human race into existence only to remand them to death. Life, even under present circumstances is a precious gift from the Creator, who has, further, given Scripture assurance that humanity's experiences are objectively disciplinary and destined for eventual and eternal blessing. Our later study in the philosophy of the ransom sacrifice will disclose marvelous wisdom in the Divine inclusion of all mankind in Adam's sentence. For the present, let us note this whisper of hope: "The creation was made subject to frailty (not voluntarily, but by Him who placed it under); in hope that even the creation itself will be emancipated from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God." Romans 8:20, 21, *Diaglott*.

In these words we glimpse God's Love in a promise for the future, though as yet "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18) in the "covering cast over all people" (Isa. 25:7). For human beings are dying, and dying at the appalling rate of 100,000 every day, with billions already entered into the tomb!

"All that tread
The globe are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom."

How unutterably tragic is death with its legacy of tears and broken hearts! Friends, relatives, loved ones where are they now? Through the ages this ever present question has occupied the minds of the world's greatest thinkers. Let us note their conclusions before considering the true answer of the Scriptures.

THE STATE OF THE DEAD

Atheism answers: "There is no God. The Universe is a fortuitous agglomeration of atoms, and mankind but a strange disease in one corner of it. Death is merciful extinction; oblivion, the destiny of all."

Agnosticism answers: "We do not know. By his very nature man is incapable of forming trustworthy conclusions concerning ultimate reality. Knowledge of reality is therefore a huge indemonstrable assumption. There may be a God and there may be none: there may be a hereafter and there may be none."

Science answers: "Our knowledge is based on the accurate experimental evaluation of physical phenomena. We find the human body to be composed of the chemical elements found in the earth, built up into innumerable and highly complex living cells. Substantially the same type of organism is possessed by the lesser creatures; man differing in his larger and finer structured brain and greater reasoning capacity. We know nothing of the life principle which animates him. There is no evidence of any inner non physical entity that might survive death the dissolution of the body elements."

Philosophy in general answers: "The brief and disordered limitations of the present life are incompatible with the inherent capabilities of a being such as man with his fine sensibilities, great intellectual powers, and remarkable moral sense. Reason concludes that such a superior being must have a greater destiny in some future state. But where this future state will be, and whether it is attained at the moment of death or after an interval, we do not know."

Catholicism (Greek and Roman) answers: "All men possess immortal souls. All who die outside the pale of our church are doomed to an eternity of conscious and horrible torment. Members of our church who die endure a purgatorial experience for an allotted time; after which they enter the realms of eternal joy."

Protestantism answers: "Consciousness does not end with death. He who believes in Jesus Christ will at death go immediately to heavenly bliss. All unbelievers go to a hell of eternal torment."

It were a wearisome task to list the answers of Spiritism, Theosophy, Swedenborgianism, Christian Science, Rosicrucianism, Mohammedanism, Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and other religions and religious philosophies. All however, have this in common a belief that in one state or another there is *survival and consciousness after death*.

As we turn to seek from the Scriptures an answer to our question, we do well to heed Professor Young's admonitory words in the Commentary to his Literal Translation of the Bible: "The Bible is not a difficult book; the subjects it treats of are, in some respects, hard to be understood, but the language in which they are expressed is generally it might be said uniformly simple. The danger lies in attaching to the simple words of Scripture meanings which they *might, could, would, or should* have, and of straining the meaning to the utmost extent of which the words are capable. Starting with preconceived notions, formed it may be insensibly, the words are tortured to support them. . . . The plain grammatical and historical interpretation is the only clue out of this labyrinth. It is the only certain plan, as it is the easiest. The question is not What *may* this teach? but What *does* it teach?"

These are sound words from a famous Bible scholar. Let us therefore divest ourselves of human preconceptions, and rigidly excluding personal bias, analytically examine the Bible's teaching concerning the present state of the dead, commencing with a reexamination of man's nature.

THE NATURE OF MAN

What is Man, this strange creature that God has called into being? In contemplative awe the Psalmist speaks thus:

I praise thee for the awful wonder of my birth;
thy work is wonderful.
For thou didst form my being,
didst weave me in my mother's womb.
Thou knewest all about my soul,
my body was no mystery to thee,
as I was being molded secretly
and put together in the world below;
All the days of my life were foreseen by thee,
set down within thy book;
Ere ever they took shape, they were assigned me,
ere ever one of them was mine.
O God, what mysteries I find in thee!
How vast the number of thy purposes!
I try to count them? they are more than the sand;
I wake from my reverie, and I am still lost in thee.

From Moffatt's beautiful translation of these verses from Psalm 139 we turn to a much earlier Scripture. In Genesis 2:7, we read:

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

This is the record of Inspiration. To it all subsequent Scripture, and all human reasonings, must conform. We note the simple facts:

a Dust plus breath equals *a living* soul.

b Man *has* a body; man *has* a breath of life; man *becomes* (not *has*) a living soul.

Analyzing and expanding this Scripture, we have:

1 "The Lord God formed [cut out, carved, fashioned] man of the dust [elements] of the ground,"

The account describes the body as formed first. The wonderful organism was as yet unanimated. It had eyes, but saw nothing; ears, but heard nothing; a mouth, but spoke nothing; a tongue, but no taste; nostrils, but no sense of smell; a heart, but it pulsated not; blood, but it was cold, lifeless; lungs, but they moved not. It was not a man, but a corpse.

2 "and breathed [Heb. *naphach* inflated, blew] into his nostrils the breath [Heb. *neshamah* wind] of life [Heb. *caiyah* lives, plural i.e., such as was common to all living animals];"

The second step in the creative process was to give vitality to the properly prepared body; and this is described by the words, "blew into his nostrils the breath of life." When a healthy person has been drowned, and animation is wholly suspended, resuscitation has been effected by working the arms and thus the lungs as a bellows, and so gradually establishing the breath in the nostrils. In Adam's case it of course required no labored effort on the part of the Creator to cause the perfect organism to breathe the life giving oxygen of the atmosphere.

3 "and man *became* a living soul [Heb. *nephesh* a breathing creature; i.e., a sentient being]."

As the vitalizing breath entered, the lungs expanded, the blood corpuscles were oxygenized and passed to the heart, which in turn propelled it to every part of the body, awakening all the prepared, but hitherto dormant, nerves to sensation and energy. In an instant the energy reached the brain, and thought, perception, reasoning, looking, touching, smelling, feeling, and tasting commenced. That which was a lifeless human *organism* had become *a man*, a sentient being: the "living soul" condition mentioned in the text had been reached. In other words the term "living soul" means neither more nor less than the term "sentient being"; i.e., a being capable of sensation, perception, thought.

It is not generally known that the Scriptures speak of "souls" in connection with the lower animals. They, as well as man, are sentient beings or creatures of intelligence, only of lower orders. They, as well as man, can see, hear, feel, taste, and smell; and each can reason, up to the standard of his organism, though none as abstrusely nor on as high a plane as man. In the first, second, and ninth chapters of Genesis the term, "living soul" (*nephesh*) is applied in the Hebrew language to the lower animals nine times, but the translators of our English Bible (as though careful to protect the false but common vagary of an immortal soul, derived from Platonic philosophy) have used other expressions, so that the reader is kept in ignorance of this fact. We cite some examples:

"God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving [creeping] creature *that hath life* [Heb., *nephesh soul*]" (Gen. 1:20). This was on the fifth creative day, or period, long before man's creation.

"God created great sea monsters, and every living creature [Heb., *nephesh living soul*] that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly" (Gen. 1:21). This also was in the fifth "day" before man's creation. These were *fish souls*.

"God said, Let the earth bring forth the living *creature* [Heb., *nephesh living soul*] after his kind cattle and creeping thing and beast" (Gen. 1:24). These were dry land souls, higher than the fishes; but man, human soul or being, had not yet been created.

"And God said ... To every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is *life* [living *soul nephesh*] I have given every green herb for meat" Genesis 1:30.

"Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; . . . and whatever Adam called every living *creature* [Heb., living *soul nephesh*], that was the name thereof." Genesis 2:19.

MORTALITY AND IMMORTALITY

Having Scripturally determined that man does not *possess a* soul, but *is a* soul (sentient being) in common with the lower creatures, let us examine some associated terms upon which much misconception exists. Two of these are *mortality* and *immortality*. The general definition of mortal is *dying*; and of immortal, *everlasting*, but both are incorrect from a Scriptural standpoint as is obvious when they are applied to answer the simple question Was Adam created mortal or immortal?

If the answer be that he was created *mortal* (*dying*, according to the erroneous common definition) we inquire, How could God sentence him to death if he were already *a dying* creature and never had been otherwise? And if created *dying*, how could the Apostle (Rom. 5:12) declare that Adam's death came by his sin?

If the answer be that he was created *immortal* (*everlasting*, according to the erroneous common definition), we inquire, How then was he threatened with, and afterward sentenced to, death; and how could he die if he were death proof? and why the necessity of depriving him of access to the trees of life, lest he *eat and live forever*? Genesis 3:22.

It should be obvious that these two terms are incorrectly defined; and we submit the following as the true definitions

Immortal (literally, *not mortal*) the state or condition in which *death is impossible a* death proof, incorruptible, indestructible, imperishable condition. Any being whose existence

is dependent upon a source of life from without himself, is not immortal. Consequently immortality is not a quality possessed by men, angels, archangels, or even the Son of God, before and during the time he "was made flesh and dwelt among us." This quality inheres in God alone, as it is written: "The Father hath life in *himself*" (John 5:26); i.e., his existence is not a derived, nor a sustained one. He is "the King eternal, *immortal*, invisible" (1 Tim. 1:17). "He *only* hath immortality" (1 Tim. 6:16) as an innate or original quality of being. (This last Scripture may be held to apply to our Lord Jesus Christ in his present "highly exalted" condition, "the express image of the Father's person," with the Father excepted in all comparisons according to the rule of interpretation laid down by the same writer in 1 Cor. 15:27.)

Mortal signifies *die able*, a state or condition in which death is possible if the elements sustaining life are withdrawn. One possessing mortality possesses life dependent upon God for its continuance. Men are *mortal*, for in God (in his providence) "they live and move and have their being." Likewise the angelic host, who, though *mortal*, are enjoying life everlasting. Satan, also an angel, is *mortal*, and it is distinctly declared that in due time he will be destroyed (Heb. 2:14). Adam was created *mortal in a* condition in which death was a possibility, or everlasting life a possibility; according as he pleased or displeased the Creator. Had he remained obedient he would have continued living until now and forever and yet all the time he would have been *mortal*, liable to death if disobedient.

The theological doctrine of an "immortal," "never dying," or "ever living soul" (expressions found nowhere in the Hebrew, Greek, or English Scriptures), is a unique example of an opinion destitute of any foundation in the Bible, and in fact contradicting it, yet held firmly by large numbers of educated and intelligent Christians on the mistaken supposition that it is taught therein. This error, so prolific of many others, is directly traceable to Grecian philosophy, particularly Plato's "sublimest hallucination" the immortality of the soul which as part of the good

man's lofty moral teaching, when the early Christian Church became enamored of this world, passed easily and imperceptibly into Christian Theology, molding its phraseology and thought about the future punishment of sin. This unconscious engrafting on the teachings of the Bible has been a source of endless confusion, which persists even to our own day in the consideration of Death, and Hell, the place of the dead.

DEATH AND HELL

Adam was the first to incur death. To him it was plainly stated: "In the day that thou eatest thereof dying thou shalt die. . . . thou shalt return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 2:17; 3:19). Adam disobeyed, he was deprived of the life sustaining fruits, the dying process commenced, and after 930 years he died, "in the day" of his disobedience, within the 1000 year "day" of the Lord. (See 2 Pet. 3:8.) The animating breath of life being withdrawn, the body organism disintegrated into "dust," and Adam, as a sentient being or soul ceased to exist. There is not the slightest suggestion in the sacred record that he continued to exist in some other state, much less that he was subjected to horrible torments. St. Paul plainly declares, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Death according to the Bible is purely and simply "cessation of life." Life is existence death is non existence. To reason otherwise is to perpetuate the original Satanic lie: "Ye shall not surely die."

The doctrine of eternal torment, which crept into the Church with the falling away from Apostolic teaching, gained much force from the time when men tortured others for what they called heresies. The word "hell" became associated with this terrible theory as the place of torment, where fireproof demons were supposed to torture for ever and ever those who were consigned thither by God. This is by no means, however, the original meaning of the word "hell." Originally it meant a "hidden" or "covered" place and was, therefore, a proper translation of the Hebrew *sheol* and the Greek *hades*; equivalent terms which in the Bible denote all the graves in the world viewed as one, i.e., Gravedom, the dominion of death. In other words, oblivion, the death state, in which all the dead, good and bad, are at rest. It is very important that we should realize that there is no thought of eternal torment in the Bible use of the words, "sheol" and "hades."

In this connection, it is interesting to read Archbishop Whateley's words:

"It must be allowed to be strange that the word sleep should so often be applied to the condition of the departed if they are in a state of as lively consciousness and sensibility as before death, and in actual perception of more unmixed pleasure or pain."

Also those of Dr. Weymouth (translator of the New Testament in Modern Speech):

"My mind fails to conceive a grosser misrepresentation 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."

We cite some Scriptures which positively and directly answer the question, "Where are the Dead?"

"All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." Eccles. 3:20.

"His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." Psalm 146:4.

"There [in Sheol] the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together. They hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there." Job 3:17-19.

"That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; as the one dieth, so dieth the other." Eccles. 3:19.

"The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing." Eccles. 9:5.

"There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Eccles. 9:10.

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Eccles. 12:7.

To emphasize these Bible truths we contrast them with the traditions of men

(1) The Bible says In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. Genesis 2:17.
Tradition says There is no death. No Scripture.

(2) The Bible says The wages of sin is death Romans 6:23.
Tradition says The wages of sin is eternal torment. No Scripture.

(3) The Bible says The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Ezek. 18:4.
Tradition says The soul is immortal and cannot die. No Scripture.

(4) The Bible says The King only hath immortality. 1 Timothy 6:16.
Tradition says All humans are immortal. No Scripture.

(5) The Bible says Death is extinction of life. Psalm 146:4.
Tradition says Death is the entrance to a fuller life. No, Scripture.

(6) The Bible says The dead all go to one place; the grave. Eccles. 3:20.
Tradition says The dead go to Heaven, Purgatory, Hell, etc. No Scripture.

(7) The Bible says The dead are asleep. 1 Thess. 4:13.
Tradition says The dead are awake. No Scripture.

(8) The Bible says The dead know not any thing. Eccles. 9:5.
Tradition says The dead know more than the living. No Scripture.

We therefore conclude this study with the conviction that the teaching of the Scriptures is that *the dead are dead*; are in a state of complete nonexistence, of cessation of being, of oblivion. And such is to be their eternal state except as we shall find hope in the Scriptures of a resurrection from the dead. That this is exactly the wonderful hope the Bible holds forth for all mankind, our succeeding studies will reveal, for it is centered in Him who gave himself a ransom for all, and who has said:

"Marvel not at this; for an hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear my voice, AND SHALL COME FORTH."

W. J. Siekman

(The subject of the sixth article in this series will be: *"The Messianic Promise."*)

"He is Precious"

PART I

"Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious." - 1 Peter 2:7.

IN presenting these words for consideration to consecrated children of God, one can be sure beyond all question that the truth they express will be accepted and endorsed by all who love his dear name, and yield him his rightful place in their lives. To all such, he is precious, indeed, precious beyond gold and rubies; precious beyond the wealth of the whole world. To thousands of saints in generations gone by he was precious beyond price, and to thousands today in spite of all socialistic, communistic and materialistic trends, he is the One treasured above and beyond all others. In every way and from every point of view, Jesus is precious to his people their joy, their prize, their dearest and best. Nothing can replace him; nothing can compare with him; nothing can compete with him, for he is unique, the only one of his kind! Without him we could do nothing; without him we could achieve nothing, either now or in any coming time. Well might the Revelator weep as he heard the mighty angel challenge heaven and earth for one to come forth worthy to take the book and break its seals (Rev. 5:3-5), had there been no Lamb of God provided and found faithful unto death! Thank God for that Worthy Lamb the only One in heaven and earth equal to the task! And, as that Worthy Lamb he is rare, peerless, and unique!

One of our own sweet singers expressed this when she sang:

"My Savior is precious to me
Unspeakably precious is He,
I have yielded my all in response to His call,
Forsaking the world His to be.

* * * * *

"O, so peerless the beauty in Jesus I see
That I cry out in wonder, How could He love me."

But having quoted Peter's words, it must now be confessed that there is some measure of doubt that actually gave expression to those beautiful words in his letter to his brethren. Certain translations have a variant rendering, and some scholars and expositor's say that his words (in the Greek tongue) are capable of quite a different meaning. Indeed they even say that Jesus is not the subject of the phrase, but that it is the humble, honest believer whose honorable privilege is there spoken about; the believer, not Jesus, being thus the subject of Peter's inspiring words. These scholars say our English text should read: "Unto you that believe is the honor" the honor of being built upon and bonded into that chief corner stone, which God in the Psalms and prophecies proposed to lay in Zion, as a foundation for a new and better house for his future habitation.

It is by no means every translator, however, who agrees to this variant thought. Quite a few stand by the other translation as given in the King James Version, thus confining all the honor and preciousness to our worthy Lord. Thus the experts differ as to the right translation, and where they disagree, we poor unlettered students cannot hope to decide between the one or the other rendering; nor can we say that this is right or that is wrong.

Fortunately for us, other Scriptures indicate that both thoughts are true, and we are not obliged, therefore, to accept this or discard that, or express preference for this instead of that. We can take

both and extract the sweetness and comfort from each in turn. We can rejoice together in the preciousness of the Lord to each and all, and after that we can take to our otherwise unworthy selves the honor of such close association with our Lord as the bonding and cementing of living stones, suggests. And indeed, even here, the one elect and precious Corner stone can be shown to have a rarity, a preciousness, a uniqueness all its own; for no other stone could take its place; no other stone is so absolutely essential to the structure as this; no other stone could be the out and out foundation stone like this. It is the one stone of outstanding excellence; the stone that bears the weight; that sets the angles of alignment; the stone that bonds and links the other living stones into structural completeness. For every other stone, could it speak, would say that that special corner stone is precious and essential to it. So the two variant thoughts can be unified and blended into one major thought, which, while giving Jesus a preciousness beyond compare, also allows a place for the conscientious believer in close association with his Lord in the House which God designs to build.

But in order to extract the sweetness from both these thoughts we must trace each in its turn, in the light of other statements found in the context, taking first that of the honor to the living stones, and coming back in our concluding thoughts, to the exceeding preciousness of our beloved Lord, allowing thus this sweet and satisfying doctrine to linger longest in our hearts and minds.

Coming, then, to the reverent consideration of the living stones, we shall have to take note of the people to which these words were addressed; of the man who gave expression to the words, and of the precise purpose for which they were expressed. To whom, by whom, and for what purpose this theme was selected and impressed these are the first essentials of our quest.

We shall find as we proceed that statements are made in the script which were not exactly true of every believer in the Lord, as for instance the statement that the brethren addressed had been as "sheep", that were going (or gone) "astray," but were now "returned" to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.

This could not be exactly true of Gentile believers, for, in the first place, they had never been accounted as the sheep of the Lord's pasture, and though steeped formerly in sin, they had not within the sense of Scripture usage (especially Isa. 53:6) "gone astray." Again, as Gentile penitents and believers, though they had most truly "turned to" the Lord, they had not "returned to" him as the Shepherd and Guardian of their souls. To "return" to him is a different and much deeper thought than that of a first "turning to him. Again, these brethren were reminded by Peter that they had aforesaid been accounted by God as a "no people" which had not obtained mercy as they now were enjoying it. (1 Pet. 2:10.) "Once you were no people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." (R.S.V.) Within the scope of Scripture usage those thoughts and words are strictly limited to brethren of Hebrew descent, and, if Hosea's prophecy is to be accepted as our guide, to Hebrews descended from the ten tribed kingdom of Israel, which had been deported some centuries previously to these northern lands (or to some adjacent territories) in which these now restored sheep of his pasture were to be found.

These pointedly descriptive phrases, "not my people" and "not received mercy, based on the names of Hosea's ill-omened children, were made applicable (in the Prophet's usage) to the ten tribed people of Israel only, for Judah, we are told (Hosea 1:7), was to both find mercy amid the great upheavals and deportations of those days, and to remain for several centuries more, the people of the Lord. Judah was to remain in covenant relationship with her God until "the Coming One" was presented to her in the person and mission of our Lord. But Israel, as a nation, as a whole collective people, was to be cast off to be divorced from the covenant relationship to "not

find mercy" and to be "not my people" till the latter days when the spirit of the Lord revisits them, and restores them as a house (or nation) to share with Judah the opportunity of a renewed covenant relationship (Ezek. 37:15-28; Jer. 31:31) under the terms of a new and better covenant.

These considerations throw some light back up, on the introductory words of this Epistle, for Peter wrote specifically to "the exiles of the dispersion" in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. The term "dispersion" does not in itself indicate that the recipients of the Epistle were of the house of Israel by national descent; it is the other phrases relating to their standing in God's sight as "not my people," and the "not received mercy;" which determine the question of their line of descent. Jews also members of the house of Judah were also spoken of as belonging to the Dispersion, if they lived distant from the homeland and from Jerusalem.

Peter's reference to Hosea's prophecy does not indicate that in becoming sons of God, within the terms of sonship pertaining to this Gospel Age, these members of the Dispersion were fulfilling, in an exhaustive and final sense, the terms of that prophecy; for nothing could be clearer than that these brethren were but a small company called out from among the great mass of deportees then resident in that and other regions of the earth. They, like the first fruits of the Jews, and from the Gentiles, were, at most, but a kind of first fruits from Israel, called to become one new man in Christ, and be constituted, as Peter terms them, "the elect of God." It was merely a token fulfillment, limited in time and number by the special circumstances of the day, and by a faithful response to the Gospel call. These were some of the "other sheep" of which Jesus spake, whom he must bring so that there could be "one fold" beneath the watch care of the one Great Shepherd of the flock. Peter had not forgotten these words of his Lord, and knew, as in this case, exactly how to apply them when the right circumstances arose. True, Gentile believers also would be units of those "other sheep" which the Shepherd of the whole flock must bring, ere there could be but one fold; but these dispersion brethren were, lost sheep of the ancient house of Israel in a sense that the Gentile convert never was, or never could be. "For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls." (1 Pet. 2:25.) Then, as if it were a subject he was loath to leave, he resumes in a little while, "I exhort the elders among you, . . . Tend the flock of God that is in your charge, not as being lords . . . but as examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory." - 1 Pet. 5:1-4, R.S.V.

These words were surely very comforting to these overseers of this scattered flock, but then and here is a query we must raise, Why did Peter take it on himself to write to them at all? What induced him to introduce himself into their lives in this way?

In the light of such evidence as we possess, these dispersion brethren were not the fruitage, of Peter's labors in former days. He had not traveled in those parts. Only in a remote sense could any of them be accounted converts by his ministry; and that would be in a most indirect way. Strangers from some of these provinces are stated to have been in Jerusalem for that memorable Pentecost when Peter, with the eleven, stood up and told the assembled multitudes of their folly and their sin in crucifying the Holy One of God, whom God had raised up from the dead and exalted to his own right hand. (Acts 2:14-36.) Among those crowding multitudes were "devout men" from Cappadocia, Asia, and Pontus. These may have heard him speak, and may have carried to those distant parts the seed thoughts of a new life, and of a readjusted faith, and have told to friends and family the first tidings of a better Way; and that the despised and rejected Man of Nazareth who had died "mid shame and scoffing rude" had been made of God both Lord and Christ, and exalted to his own right hand. But all that happened at least thirty years ago, and those who heard him may have passed to their rest.

Some of these provinces had been evangelized, by Paul, but others lay outside the sphere of any known ministry. Of Pontus, for instance, we have no records of any, apostolic ministry, yet saints of God had been discovered there, for Aquila, the co-tentmaker with Paul (Acts 18:1-3) originated thence. Of Asia and Galatia we know a little more. Paul had been there in former days and had left many congregations of believing souls as fruitage to his ministry. (Acts 19:10; 20:31.) Luke also had been laboring in that varied field prior to his joining up with Paul at Troas for the work in Macedonia, but exactly what had been done we cannot hope to say.

So far as Peter is concerned there is not one jot of evidence that he had ever traveled or witnessed in those parts. Even if he wrote his letter from the banks of the Euphrates (1 Pet. 5:13) which many students doubt he was still a long way distant from the habitat of these dispersed brethren, to which the letter was sent.

There is one phrase in the Epistle which indicated that Silvanus (or Silas) may have been the Lord's instrument in the evangelization of some parts, at least, of those provinces. After his co-partnership with Paul in Macedonia came to its end, and Paul had bade all his helpers Goodbye at Corinth, except Priscilla and Aquila, Silas is thenceforth lost to view, until we find him, quite a few years later bearing this letter from Peter to the brethren in those northern parts. Silas would be known to the brethren in Galatia, for, with Paul, he had labored there (Acts 16:6), and it is not difficult to believe that when he found himself alone, after Paul's departure from Corinth, he would tend to retrace his steps through Troas to those towns and villages where he knew a welcome would await him, and where he knew a field of opportunity lay unexplored.

Of him Peter says, "By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written to you." (1 Pet. 5:12, R.S.V.) The Authorized Version here says: "By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, . . . I have written briefly." There is some little doubt as to the correctness of the Authorized Version translation here, but even the best scholars cannot definitely decide where the "unto you" really belongs, and it has to be left an open question whether Peter said that Silvanus was a "faithful brother unto you" by whom he had written briefly, or that "by Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written unto you."

It is very probable that Silvanus had labored in these parts, and that he was extremely well known to the brethren there, and that they were, in large part, the fruitage of his ministry over long, and tedious years. And the words of Peter seem to stand as a recognition and commendation of that faithful service rendered by Silvanus to them all. If such were indeed the case, then Silvanus would stand in the position towards them as a general overseer, much in the same, way that Paul did to the churches which he, under the Lord's hand, had been instrumental in establishing in other places.

But now another question arises: Why had Silvanus been to Peter, and why had Peter made him, the writer and bearer of this letter to this section of the flock? Careful scrutiny indicates that a period of intense tribulation had set in and that some were in danger of falling away from the faith. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, . . . If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye." (1 Pet. 4:12-14.) "Ye have been put to grief in manifold trials, that the proof of your faith, might be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."- 1 Pet. 1:6, 7.

It is believed by many careful students that this fiery trial had its source of origin in Rome, after the disastrous fire which Nero attributed to the Christians there, persecution which spread only too readily to the distant provinces east and west, and which in course of time had reached these provinces in Asia Minor. Hence, there was need for some one whose own heart and mind was

deeply at rest in the Lord to speak or write a word of comfort and assurance to these less courageous souls.

But there is more than that to be seen if we look more closely at the text. There were malice, guile, envy, and hypocrisy at work among the flock, and these evil things were subverting and quenching the pure love that once had united them, and which was still needed to unite them in the face of the peril that surrounded them. (1 Pet. 1:22 and 1 Pet. 2:1.) There were enemies without and foes within, and both faith and maintenance of life were tending to wilt and lose their special Christian characteristics.

Digging down again beneath the surface of the text, it is not difficult to discover evidence that the source of these evil things was to be found in the Hebrew section of these Christian communities who were pressing to the front their national advantages, and forgetting the great fact that, in Christ, the Jew had no advantage over the Gentile. It is also assumed by some who have given long and close attention to the text that Silvanus had striven to his utmost to correct this nationalistic tendency, and to heal the broken affections between them, but had failed to arrest the dry rot that had set in, and had gone out to the east seeking help from someone of larger stature than himself. Some say he had gone seeking Paul, hoping that he would be able to return with him to quell the Judaistic tendencies, and to restore the assemblies to peace and love within, and to the exhibition of a common front towards the dangers surrounding them from without. But Paul was not to be found, having gone (so it is supposed) as he had long intended, to Spain and to the far West.

Faced with that situation, Silvanus had then sought out Peter, as the next best source of help, and had told them both of the persecution that had befallen the congregations of the Eastern lands, and of the still sadder defections that had been taking place; within the fold. And Peter, though personally unknown to them in any really intimate way, and knowing none of them by name, rose to the occasion, and sought, in the name and strength of the Lord, to arrest the sad decay, and to strengthen them for the great ordeal, that faced and surrounded them on every hand. Unable himself to accompany Silvanus on his return, Peter unhesitatingly attempted the next best thing -- and sent this authoritative and instructive Epistle to the Hebrew members of these Eastern congregations in the name of, and by the authority of, his Lord, and by virtue of his own Apostleship. Hence, the abrupt and official nature of his introductory clause, "Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect, who are sojourners," etc.

Now if these suggestions are right and true, we have a most interesting situation here, in that one great leader of the Christian Church takes it *upon* himself to stretch out his authority and influence into the sphere and province of another brother leader of the Church, a state of things which *in* these days, would be likely to be looked upon as an invasion of another man's parish, or another Bishop's See. Among even Bible Students, it might be looked upon as an invasion of another group's preserve, an interference in the relationships supposed to exist between a Head Office and a Class. How would Peter's course be looked upon today, either within or outside the ranks of present truth? Would he be reminded that this was another man's (or organization's) field? and would he be thanked not to interfere in other men's affairs, and remain content with what the Lord had committed to his own particular and personal care?

The great leaders of the early Church knew of no such special interests or fields as these. They lived and labored anywhere in the full conviction that the flock was the Lord's, not theirs; and that when need arose, it mattered not that their fields of labor overlapped or interpenetrated each other, so long as the interests of the flock were served thereby. "Tend the flock of God which is among you," said Peter to the elders of the churches there; and that sane advice was exactly the

one and only reason for this letter sent by him to these congregations set up and established by other men's evangelism. To him the Church was one wherever found; to *him* the Church was actually the Lord's, whoever may have founded it; hence, he felt free to serve nay, felt duty bound to serve wherever opportunity called for it in the name of the Lord.

Herein is an object lesson for every one who claims to draw this commission from the Lord, and who, deep in his heart of hearts knows that the flock belongs only to the Lord, and that at the very utmost he is nothing more than an under shepherd, under his Lord's control.

Now, while Peter, as an Apostle of the Circumcision wrote only to the former members of the Circumcision, who *at* that time (in common with many *other* former members of the Circumcision) were seeking to make circumcision and other features of the *Law* integral parts of the Gospel way of life, it is to *be* noted how ably and valiantly he supported and reinforced the teachings of his Brother Paul. He definitely and forcefully supplemented the claims of Paul that a day of change (or reformation) had truly come, and that henceforth ancient Jewish privileges were null and void, and that all believers, of Hebrew blood, had been redeemed and set free from their old conversation (or manner of life) by the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot. Old things, old privileges, old institutions had been superseded by better things, and Peter, like *his* Brother Paul, had no other course before him than to state and stress this as a fact.

But we must leave that part of the story for another day.

- *T. Holmes*, Eng.

The Faith of Adam and the foreshadowing of Grace

IT IS stated in John 1:17 that "the Law was *given* I by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." This, of course, is true: the Law, a disciplinary and foreshadowing arrangement, was introduced by Moses; and "in due time," when the obtaining of righteousness and life by obedience to strict requirements of law had been proved impossible, a new dispensation of faith righteousness and a gift of life was brought by Jesus Christ, who, himself was "full of grace and truth." "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did." Heb. 7:19.

But there was a law of commandment before Moses, even as there was grace shown before Jesus Christ; for "thou shalt not eat" (Gen. 2:17), is a commandment; and certainly it was an act of grace recorded in Genesis 3:21 when, "Unto Adam, and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, a d clothed them."

This clothing is significant. It was a divinely provided garment, the obtaining of which necessitated the shedding of blood; and aptly illustrates the truth continually witnessed to in the sacrifices of *the* law dispensation, and the great theme of the New Testament writers, that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission." Thus early was it manifested that no covering provided by self is suitable to give relief from shame and the sense of guilt in God's presence; for had not they, the sinning ones, sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons before hiding from the presence of God?

Very little is recorded about our first parents: nothing to satisfy morbid curiosity; but what is recorded, we are assured, is "written for our learning."

What we are particularly interested in just now, is

(a) the nature of Adam's transgression; and

(b) his react on to the promise of redemption through "the seed of the woman."

First, the nature of Adam's transgression: Adam's transgression was the deliberate violating of the commandment, "Thou shalt not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (Gen. 2:17.) This is the truth advanced by the Apostle *in* Romans 5:12-14: "*For* until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression."

From Adam to Moses: there was no commandment given that might be transgressed; yet the whole race meanwhile had gone, or were going, into death wit out the imputation of the sin of breaking a commandment, none had "sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Sin was introduced by Adam and death came as the result of sin. Rom. 5:12.

But it is not our purpose at this time to treat of the nature of sin. This we may do, the Lord willing, in a succeeding article. It is the nature of the transgression that we are dealing with.

Continuing, then, we note that Adam did not sin against light; he sinned against a commandment. In this transgression "Adam was not deceived." He knew full well what was the penalty for disobedience, if we are to accept the Apostle's statement in 1 Timothy 2:14 (and we do so accept). Adam believed God's word; he expected to, and did eventually, go into death for disobedience. Sinning against light implies the loving of darkness rather than light; it involves a certain amount

of hypocrisy, and willing self deceit, a shutting of the mind against truth that may be known lest it bring conviction; and accounting such truth a lie. True, Adam had not been enlightened as to the long reign of sin and death consequent to his disobedience of the thousands of year's of misery and degradation that would be experienced by his posterity, but he was conscious of the truth of God's word: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Adam believed God. "Adam was not deceived." - 1 Tim. 2:14.

Secondly, let us note Adam's reaction to the promise of redemption through "the seed of the woman."

Very significant is the naming of the woman after the promise that her seed shall bruise thy (the serpent's) head. Looking back to Genesis 2:21-23, we will more clearly see what the giving of the name "Eve" to his wife by Adam implies. In this passage we read, "Adam said, This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman [Isha, Hebrew] because she was taken out of may [Ish]." (1 Cor. 11:8, 9.) The woman, whose existence came out of man, was now acknowledged to be the one that would mother the Seed who would restore existence. So he "called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother or life giver." - Gen. 3:21, see marginal readint.

This is generally thought as meaning that Adam, called his wife's name Eve because she was to be the mother of the whole human race descended from his loins; but this is not what is intended by this passage, Schofield's Reference Bible gives the marginal reading for "Eve" as "living, or life giver"; Young's Analytical Concordance renders it "life, life giving." This name, Eve, was given her after the promise of the life giving Seed, and before she was ever a mother actually. Thus it is recorded that Adam believed God now for life to be restored, as he had believed God restore the transgression in regard to death.

Then it is that we read, "Unto Adam and to his wife is the Lord God make coats of skins to clothe them", covering given in grace, foreshadowing the righteousness that is to come to them through the shedding of the blood of "the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all." - 1 Tim. 2:5, 6.

In addition we mention that there has been some incorrect reasoning regarding Adam's penalty, it having been taught that Adam went into second death because his sin was willful. But we note that the term "second death" implies that there has been a first. Now the proscribed penalty for disobedience was, indeed, death; but, before there could be a second death penalty, there must be a release from the first death penalty, or a heart condition so at variance with righteousness and truth that "the setting forth of Christ to be a mercy seat through faith in his blood" (Rom. 3:25) would be met with contempt, and the spirit of grace shown would be despised. This was not Adam's condition. No! So God's response to Adam's faith in the promise of a life restorer was all grace.

Fe stop to realize that the life which each of us has, on being born into the race of man, was derived from he loins of Adam; and if that life was sentenced to a death from which there is no redemption, then each and all of his posterity must follow him into his death far "in Adam all die." Thank God for the truth that "since by man came death, by man came also he resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." For Jesus Christ "came to seek and to save that which was lost," to give himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time." -1 Cor. 15:21, 22; Matt. 18:11; Luke 19:10; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6.

- F. A. Essler.

The Question Box

"We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image" - 2 Cor. 3:18.

Question:

In the "Herald for October 1952, in answer to the question "What is the present mission of Church?" you replied that its mission, throughout the Gospel Age, has been twofold, namely: (1) To grow in grace and (2) To bear witness. How is growth in grace accomplished?

Answer:

I do not wish to over simplify the matter, but it is nevertheless true, that the answer to this question is very simple, and may be stated in two words: "Beholding" and "Reflecting"; beholding and reflecting the glory or character of the Lord. In the New Testament St. Paul expresses the thought that, as we gaze into the Lord's Word, as we continually meditate therein, we behold there his character and, beholding it, there is created in us a desire to reflect it, and, as we continue to behold it, and to the best of our ability to reflect it, we become like him; t at we actually become gradually, of course, but none the less surely like *him*; changed into his *image*. The text to which I allude is given at the head of this "Question Box." "We all, with unveiled face, beholding [or reflecting] as in a mirror the glory [or character] of the Lord are transformed into the same image from glory to glory [from one degree of character development into another] even as from the Lo d the Spirit." A. R. V.

In this passage St. Paul is applying to us what appropriately enough has been termed the law of influence; and the is showing how the influence of Christ on his Church conforms to this law in accomplishing her transformation. Let us look at this law of influence briefly.

It is a well known fact that we become like those whom we habitually admire. Children, especially, are apt to imitate, are apt to have their characters molded by those whom they love and esteem, and this same law of influence carries over into adult life. I wonder if we are sufficiently grateful, not only to God, but to all the human beings whose influence has played so great a part in the development of our character to date. Think how large a part god parents and teachers have played, who guided us in our early years! How much we owe to the authors, most of whom we have never met, whose though is and emotions, expressed in words or music, have contributed so much to our education along many limes; particularly along moral and ethical lines!

Try to contrast what your own character today would have been, regardless of your parentage if, immediately after you were born, you had been separated from your parents, dropped in the midst of a heathen nation, and allowed to grow up like a weed; contrast, I say, the character you would have become in such an environment with what you are today, and know that for much of your attainment you are indebted to the men and women who founded this country with its institutions of liberty, and justice, and opportunity for all. While part of what we are is the result of the operation of the law of heredity, traced back to Father Adam, a very great deal of our personality today, is the result of our environment, of the various influences to which we have been subjected, sand to which we have subjected ourselves, since birth.

How important then, that, insofar as it lies in our own power (and to a very considerable extent it does lie in our own power), we should endeavor to secure the best possible environment, and submit ourselves to only the most elevating influences.

When Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthians, he himself was a changed man; a very different man from what he was when he had met and been conquered by Christ on the Damascus road. And he knew, exactly, how this change had come about. He had been spending his whole life since then, absorbed in the Master. He had been giving heed to no other influence except the influence of Christ and, occupied thus with Christ, he had become more and more like Christ.

As in the case of Paul, so it is to be with the rest of us. We all, says he, with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting the character of the Lord are transformed into his image.

The operation of this principle (this law) of influence may be clearly seen in the Book of Psalms. While the Psalms may be studied with profit from many standpoints, their chief appeal to us lies in the encouragement they lend us in our endeavors to walk worthy of our high calling; in the strength we gain from them to lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us; in the incentive to holy living their continual use affords.

And yet, while this is true, it is instructive to observe that *they do not accomplish this result directly*, but in indirectly. Here and there indeed, we find direct exhortations and warnings; exhortations to righteousness, and warnings against unrighteousness. But in the main this is not the method of the Psalmists. No! instead of continual exhortation to holy living, instead of stressing the importance of developing a character like to our Lord -- a character which we have been called to develop, and which we so greatly desire to possess; of which we are deeply conscious of coming far short instead of continually urging us to "grow in grace," the grand mission of the Psalmists seems to be to display the character possessed by Jehovah. By concentrating our minds on the surpassing excellence of Jehovah, the Psalmists knew that *they could thereby bring us under an influence which itself would transform us*, if we did but continue under it. Acting on the self same principle which, as we have seen, is so lucidly set forth by the Apostle in 2 Cor. 3:18, the Psalmists set their songs purposely to display before our eyes the wondrous perfections of our God. If only they can get us to continually behold him, they feel, we will need no urging to become like him. It will be the one all absorbing passion of our lives. For example, listen to these words from Psalm 146:7-10:

"(Jehovah) who executeth justice for the oppressed;
Who giveth food to the hungry.
Jehovah looseth the prisoners;
Jehovah openeth the eyes of the blind;
Jehovah raiseth up them that are bowed down;
Jehovah loveth the righteous;
Jehovah preserveth the sojourners;
He up holdeth the fatherless and widow;
Praise ye Jehovah."

How could one continually meditate on the character of Jehovah, as portrayed in these words, without having his heart drawn towards him; and longing, to be like him?

Or again, in that very familiar Psalm 103:2-4:

"Bless Jehovah, O my soul;
And forget not all his benefits;
Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;
Who healeth all thy diseases;
Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;
Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies."

One related question has been raised, which ought to be considered here. It is this: Is our transformation into the likeness of Christ the work of the Lord or our own work?

I answer: It is the work of both. Let me give you two illustrations, which may help to make the matter clear. My first is that of an astronomer in the observatory, photographing the spectrum of a star. From one point of view it is the star which takes the picture. It is the light of the star on the photographic film which takes the picture. But if the astronomer doesn't have his instrument properly focused and brought to bear on the star, there will be no picture, let the star shine ever so brightly.

Another thing: While the star's position in the heavens is fixed, the earth moves. And since it requires a time exposure to get the photograph desired, the astronomer must make allowance for this motion of the earth.

Another thing: While the star's position in the heavens is fixed, the earth moves. And since it requires a time exposure to get the photograph desired, the astronomer must make allowance for this motion of the earth.

It is thus with us. Our great star, Christ Jesus, will keep on shining, but he will shine in *our* hearts, only if they are, properly focused, and brought to bear on him. And just as the astronomer's telescope has to be continuously in adjustment to allow for the motion of the earth, throughout the entire time of film exposure, so we must allow for the drifting motion of the world, which will otherwise quickly carry us out of the line of vision. And we must do this throughout the entire time we are here in the flesh. We do this by the exercise of our wills, setting our affections on "Christ and keeping them there.

It is the star that takes the picture; it is also the astronomer. It is the Lord who accomplishes our transformation; it is also our own work.

My second illustration is that of two sailing boats. There they are out at sea, lying motionless in a calm. Suddenly a strong wind begins to blow, and both ships start to move. What causes them to move? You reply: the wind, of course. True enough, I answer. But why does one go east, and the other west? Let the poet tell us:

"One ship sails east, another west,
By the self same wind that blows;
It is not the gale, But the set of the sail,
Which determines the way they go."

In conclusion then, let us examine, and constantly reexamine ourselves, to make certain that there are no baneful influences in our lives to which we are voluntarily submitting, and, in the words of our text; let us all, with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting (or, to use Rotherham's choice translation: mirroring) the glory of the Lord, become ourselves changed into his likeness, the change being wrought upon and in us, by the power of the holy spirit of our Lord.

- P. L. Read

Encouraging Messages

My dear Brethren:

Greetings in the name of our precious Lord and Savior.

Nearly one year has passed since it was our joy and privilege to be among our fellow brethren in the United States and with the approach of the Brooklyn Convention I feel constrained to send you my hearty greetings and the assurance of my prayers that this season of fellowship may prove to be one of real spiritual blessing and an incentive to greater zeal and faithfulness. Many happy memories crowd into my mind as I recall the wondrous preciousness of that fellowship we were privileged, to enjoy during the Convention of last year. This was but, the beginning of many further blessings which; were showered upon us as we traveled your great Continent from East to West.

Since my return to England both Sister and I have receive many letters of love and appreciation, and our hearts have been cheered by the assurances that the Lord has blessed the little service we were able to render as we endeavored to exhort to "a closer walk with God." It has been a grief to me that I have been unable to reply to all the messages we have received, and I have wondered just how I could make my response. Perhaps you could convey my love and appreciation through the pages of the "Herald," for I know that by that means it would reach many of those who have so lovingly written to us.

Many, are the prayers which have ascended to the Throne of Grace or you all since we were privileged to note the general circumstances in the midst of which the Lord's people of the United States are being tested and proved. In the Lord's providence you have been placed in the midst of the general prosperity and abundance which is the lot of your great country in these recent years; sharing the compative comforts and ease of living which it has brought. There are few places in the world today so richly favored with so many temporal blessings; indeed millions of mankind know no other experience than that of unbroken hunger and abject misery.

Spiritual health is not easy to maintain under conditions of prosperity, comfort and ease, and the tests which accompany such circumstances are no less severe than these which our more needy brethren must experience. That is why you are especially remembered in our prayers. The "cares of this life" are as great a danger to you as they are for those who have less of this world's goods, and Jesus spake a parable to show how possible it is, for "the cares of this world, and the *deceitfulness* of riches" to "choke the Word" and cause one to become unfruitful.

Brethren, the time is short! We are rapidly approaching the" day when the last member of the Church will have passed over to the other side. The signs in the earth are clear evidence that "our deliverance draweth nigh," and we who love His appearing are longing to see Him our precious Lord and Bridegroom face to face! Shall we not "lay aside every weight" and give still greater diligence to make our calling and election sure? Let us pray for one another (there is so often little else we can do) that our loving and all wise Father will grant to us each those experiences which will prove the depth of our love for Him, and that He will grant the enabling grace and strength to be overcomers day by day.

Both Sister Allbon and I join in Christian love and greetings. May God bless you all.

Your brother in Christ by Divine favor, Edwin Allbon Eng.

Dear Brethren:

The arrival of the March "Herald" reminds me that my subscription has not been renewed and I enclose herewith a money order for one dollar for that purpose. Once more my thanks go out to you and to the heavenly Father for another twelve months of blessing and refreshment through the very fine articles that you have published. One cannot fail to realize that it is a labor of love on the part of all who contribute of their time and means to the publication of the "Herald" magazine.

In these days when so many are preaching a Christ of contention, it is a great blessing to receive a publication devoted principally to the strengthening of the Christian life -- for if we fail here, we fail of the grace of God.

The "Herald" has been a monthly visitor here for quite a number of years, and I do feel that you have never failed to make a consistent effort to spread the good news of the Gospel and build up the brethren in the most holy faith, ay the God of all grace reward you richly in His own good time and sustain your ministry until you hear His "well done."

Your brother in Christ,
G. M. -- B. C.

Dear Brethren:

If you only knew how we think of all of you dear brethren there! I wish I could write you every day and tell you of all we go through, but that would be selfish. I don't want to do that; yet I do want you to know we are with you 100 per cent.

We are so thrilled with the "Herald." We are lost in wonderment when we read of the experiences of others similar to our own. We were greatly touched in reading the letter of Brother Holmes from England, because we so enjoy his articles as well as the other articles.

But the experiences of that dear brother in regard to his health concerns us so much, Our health is poor too, and then we wonder how many more of the Lord's dear ones are afflicted in the same manner. My husband is in the Veterans, Hospital . . . and *my* sister, is here with me. We both have heart trouble, and *she* is blind in one *eye* and has only an operated eye to depend on. Her husband was in an auto accident in September, 1952, and his nerves never fully recovered so he is hospitalized. . . So you see, brethren, we have our hands full.

I am wondering if we could have the privilege of having Brother Kirkwood with us when he comes through Pennsylvania, or are we too late for the schedule? I pray not. If you us let me know when it is possible, we will try to arrange our hospital visits accordingly. . . . Do remember us to the Brethren there and all the dear ones with you. And I do as an interest in your prayers, on our behalf that the Lord grant us the strength to carry our cross to the end.

Much Christian love.
Mrs. W. F. N. -- Pa.

Dear Brethren:

As "workers together with God our privileges are many. The years go by, and we realize our inability to do the things that we would love to do. In other words, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is Weak." Many of us are o at the stage where "one can do so little for so many."

In those "last days" in these "perilous times" the Church of God needs to be aroused to the lateness of the hour, and to the possibilities and essentials of the "life that is hid in Christ."

Those things are the burden, yes, the substance of the Apostolic writings. Bessie Porter Head has written:

"Stir me, oh, stir me, Lord! Thy heart was stirred
By love's intensest fire, till Thou didst give
Thine only Son, Thy best beloved One,
E'en to the dreadful cross, that I might live:
Stir me to give myself so back to thee
That Thou canst give Thyself again, -- through me.

"Stir me, oh, stir me, Lord! for I can see
Thy glorious triumph day begin to break.
The dawn already gilds the eastern sky.
Of Church of Christ, ARISE! AWAKE! AWAKE!
Stir us, Lord, as heralds of that day!
The night is past; our King is on His Way."

I can but say to you all, "Carry on." Your labors may, as yet, no bear the visible fruits which your dear hearts desire. This is no new thing as regards service for the Master. All past records are a proof of this. (John 1:5, 10, 11; 2 Cor. 12:15) Great privileges and opportunities are yours. The time is short. Soon life's work will end; let us "do with our might hat which our hands find to do," and may your combined efforts redound to the praise and glory of the Father and His dear Son. May the fulness of Easter joys be to *you all*, a precious evidence of redeeming love and grace, as in simple fait you look to the cross and the open tomb, and see in the, hat which lies beyond life as we see it today joy, happiness, peace, and eternal rest. - Rev. 21:1-7.

Thanking you and your fellow workers, I am, by grace, our brother in the Lord,

W. W. -- B. C.