

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## Shalom -- Peace on Earth

*"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." - Isa. 9:2, A.R.V.*

"BLESSED BE the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David." - Luke 1:68, 69, R.S.V.

It seems most fitting that the Evangel story should begin within the Sanctuary, and at the time, as is supposed, of the Morning Sacrifice. One day, while the priest, Zacharias (the name signifying "he who remembers Jehovah"), was burning incense in the temple, "the angel of the Lord" appeared to him, "And when he came out he could not speak to the people: and they perceived that he had seen a vision." Four hundred years Israel had waited for a message from heaven, every true Israelite eager that it should announce a king to deliver them from bondage, and eager that they should be among those to welcome the king. In quick succession there followed the angel visit to Mary, the prophecies of Elizabeth, Zacharias, and Mary, the heavenly messengers to the shepherds on the fields near Bethlehem, and prophecies of Simeon and Anna, then silence for about thirty years.

To Zacharias the angel revealed that, his son, though great, was only a messenger to go before the face of the Lord to convert the hearts of the people, "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke 1:12-17.) That this greater One should sit on the throne of his father David was revealed by Gabriel in his visit six months later to Mary. (28-33.) The mother of our Lord then hastened to the home of Zacharias and Elizabeth, and "Elizabeth filled with the holy spirit lifted up her voice with a loud cry and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And blessed is she that believed that there shall be a fulfilment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord." The almost tumultuous speed of Elizabeth's message vividly contrasts with Mary's equally inspired one that immediately followed, given calmly and in great simplicity. Hers is an echo of the lyrical poetry of the Old Testament, evidencing a mind that had absorbed and retained the phraseology of the sacred Scriptures as heard in the synagogue service since the days of her youth-or is it merely that the same spirit that inspired the messengers

of old was moving her. The latter is the more likely explanation, for even the poetic form of their utterances was followed:

"My soul doth magnify the Lord,  
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior  
For he hath looked upon the low estate of his bond maiden:  
For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.  
For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; And holy is his name,  
And his mercy is unto generations and generations On them that fear him.  
He hath shewed strength with his arm;  
He hath scattered the proud by the imagination of their heart.  
He hath put down princes from their thrones,  
And hath exalted them of low degree.  
The hungry he hath filled with good things;  
And the rich he hath sent empty away.  
He hath holpen Israel his servant,  
That he might remember mercy  
(As he spake unto our fathers)  
Toward Abraham and his seed for ever."

Two minds given over to the influence of the holy spirit as were the minds of these two mothers must have had precious communion in the three months that followed—a three months during which their meditation and conversation doubtless were of the hope of Israel and of the part their two lads might play in it, a three months that must have accomplished much in preparing them to efficiently mother the two infants.

Just as Zacharias may be described as the representative of the good and true in the priesthood at that time, "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, so the holy family of Nazareth may be considered as a typical Israelitish household. The scantiness of particulars supplied by the Gospels was intended, we believe, to prevent the human interest from overshadowing the grand central fact, to which alone attention was to be directed. "The design of the Gospels was manifestly not to furnish a biography of Jesus the Messiah, but, in organic connection with the Old Testament, to tell the history of the long promised establishment of the Kingdom of God upon earth." The object was as indicated by St. Luke (Luke 1:4): "That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed," and by St. John (John 20:31): "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." May there not be a lesson here for us in our inclination to give details that merely satisfy human interest and add nothing to the spiritual.

Eight days after the birth of John the rite of circumcision introduced him into Jewish citizenship, a rite without which no one has ever been accepted of the Lord as a member of that favored people. On this occasion a miracle advertised to the populace that God was dealing with their nation. It is recorded of Zacharias, who had been dumb since his vision of nine months before, that "his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, "blessing God." The holy spirit that loosed the tongue also used it for a message of assurance to the people, telling them as the spirit had, done through Mary, that now at last the blessings of the covenant with Abraham would be realized:

"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;  
For he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people,

And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us  
In the house of his servant David  
(As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old),  
Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;  
To show mercy towards our fathers,  
And to remember his holy covenant,  
The oath which he swore to our father Abraham ...  
And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High;  
For thou shalt go before the Lord to prepare his ways."

Six months passed, and the One whom the closing lines of this inspired message described, visited them, Jesus of Nazareth, by the Lord's providence born in Bethlehem, the city -of David, only six miles from their beloved Jerusalem.

"And it came to pass, while Mary and Joseph were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (translated "Guest chamber" in Luke 22:11). This lowly entrance into life, was not inappropriate to one whose dwelling place and labor were to be of the humblest for thirty years; one who for his closing-years was to have "no place to lay his head," and whose end was to be a thousand times more pitiable than this beginning.

In the same country where Abraham had ranged with his flocks and David had tended his sheep, "there were shepherds in the field, keeping watch by night over their flock. And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this its the sign unto you; Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace, which comes of God's good pleasure, is among men." - Variorum Bible marginal rendering.

### **"NOT MANY GREAT, NOT MANY WISE"**

With haste the shepherds came to "the City of David" and "found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger" and "returned, glorifying God." "The associations of our Lord's nativity were all of the humblest character, and the very scenery of his birthplace was connected with memories of poverty and toil. On that night, indeed, it seemed as though the heavens must burst to disclose their radiant minstrelsy; and the stars, and the feeding sheep, and the 'light and sound in the darkness and stillness,' and the rapture of faithful hearts, combine to furnish us with a picture painted in the colors of heaven. But in the brief and thrilling verses of the Evangelist we are not told that those angel songs were heard by any except the wakeful shepherds of an obscure village."

Forty-eight days later this babe with a name somewhat common among the Jews, but a name now "above every name that is named" because it is *his* name, was presented in the temple for the required purifying rites, probably with two pigeons or doves, the offering permitted to those too poor to bring a lamb. The Law also required that at this time five shekels should be paid into the

temple treasury that that firstborn son might be redeemed from the Aaronic priesthood-in this instance that he might become the High Priest of God for all mankind on the higher Melchisedec plane.

"When the parents brought in the child Jesus, . . . Simeon received him in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

"Now lettest thou thy servant depart, O Lord,  
According to thy word, in peace;  
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,  
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples;  
A light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
And the glory of thy people Israel."

And then directing his prophecy to Mary, he continued:

"Behold, this child is set for, the falling and the rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." - A. R. V.

Once more, this time through Anna, a prophetess, the spirit spoke "to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem," "the consolation of Israel," and the thirty years of silence began. Then again Jesus came to them, but now a man, legally and actually, offering to remove the desolation that had fallen centuries before upon that nation. Short-sighted, unappreciative, a type of the spiritual Israel that began there, they nationally rejected him; and Mary, after three and a half years of ministry at his hand, learned the full force of what it meant to have a "sword pierce her soul." Jerusalem was "left desolate," without a king, as it is to this day. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto her" "if thou hadst . . . known in this day, even thou the things which belong unto thy Shalom," thy peace. - A. R. V.

Again peace, the Christmas message, must wait; this time while the Prince of Peace lies three days in the tomb. Darkness covered the earth as he entered death's portals, but

"The three sad days are quickly sped;  
He rises glorious from the dead."

"Angels, roll the rock away!  
Death, yield up the mighty Prey!  
See, the Savior quits the tomb,  
Glowing with immortal bloom.  
Alleluia, Alleluia."

The first word on the lips of the risen Savior when he came into the upper room in the evening of that eventful day was the Christmas message, "Shalom," Peace. The fulfilment of the angelic prophecy that the shepherds heard, there began; not the peace of earthly prosperity, taxes paid, food and clothing provided; but the peace that nothing can disturb, the peace of One who had not where to lay his head, the peace of the One who promised, "My peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth give I unto you." "Peace on earth, good will toward men."

The following paragraphs from the pen of our late beloved Pastor will meet a response in the hearts of all who have learned the true meaning of the "Good tidings of Great Joy":

## **"LET HEAVEN AND EARTH REJOICE"**

"The Message of the angels to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem becomes more and more precious to each child of God in proportion as he grows in grace and knowledge. As his ears and eyes of understanding open more widely to the lengths and breadths of God's great Plan of the Ages, that prophetic Message is the more highly esteemed as an epitome of the entire Gospel. Nor can our attention be called too frequently to the great event which lies at the foundation of that Message -- the Savior's birth . . .

"The angelic Message was a prophecy of good things to be accomplished for the Church and the world during the Millennial Age. The Church is to have the first blessing. The First Resurrection is to be composed only of the blessed and holy who shall live and reign with Christ during the thousand years. Then Satan shall be bound, and the good influences of truth and righteousness shall enlighten the whole earth. (Rev. 20:1-6.) The declaration of the Scriptures is that the deliverance of the Church will come early in the morning of the Millennial day. As the Prophet declares, 'God will help her early in the morning.' -- Psalm 46:5, margin....

"But much as we rejoice in the glorious hopes of the' Gospel set before us who now see, who now rejoice with joy unspeakable, we are glad that the divine mercy and love are of such lengths and breadths and heights and depths as to encompass the whole world of mankind, and provide a blessing for every member of Adam's race through him who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood... .

"Truly, the more we see of the Divine Plan for our salvation, which began to take shape in the birth of Jesus, the more we feel like shouting with the angelic choir praises to the God of heaven, thankfulness for his mercy to the children of men! It mattered not that the babe born in Bethlehem was the Savior only in prospect, that he could not even be anointed to do his work until he reached manhood's estate thirty years later. It mattered not that even then it would be necessary for him to lay down his life gradually during the three and a half years of his earthly ministry, to be finished at Calvary. Nor did it matter that his resurrection was still three days after his death, and his ascension forty days later; and that the blessing in general would be deferred for nearly nineteen centuries thereafter. As the angels could sing and rejoice at the first budding of the Divine Plan of Salvation, so also can all who have faith in the, ultimate outcome rejoice with joy unspeakable and give praise to God in the highest and to his Son our Lord."

"Joy to the world! the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her king:  
Let every heart prepare him room,  
And heav'n and nature sing."

*- P. E. Thomson.*

## Fellowship Through the Mails

*"They shall speak of the glory of Thy Kingdom, and talk of Thy power." - Psalm 145:11.*

Thank you for sending the *Studies in the Scriptures*, and for your wish to share with me your inner peace.

Madame Chiang Kai-shek-China

(In a recent issue of the *Reader's Digest*, Madame Chiang Kai-shek wrote an article entitled "The Power of Prayer." Impressed with her article, one of the brethren sent her a copy of *"The Divine Plan of the Ages."* - Ed. Com.)

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Ordinarily it would seem unappreciative to sell a gift, but under the circumstances I believe you would have done the same. The other day, while I was locating some papers for a business caller, I suggested that he glance through Brother Streeter's two-vol. exposition of the Revelation, which you so kindly gave me, and which was lying open on my desk. When I returned, the caller said he was a minister, and at their weekly Bible class they were studying Revelation; therefore, he would like to purchase a set of these volumes. Striking while the iron was hot, I sold him your gift, and telephoned to the office for another set.

Mrs. A. Tornquist - N.Y.

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It was with pleasure that I noted your comment that you [P. L. Read] and also Brother John T. Read, enjoyed, and were supporters of the "Frank and Ernest" radio program. I had always believed this, but it seems that some hear rumors otherwise.

Alfred L. Smith - D. C.

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I'm thoroughly enjoying The ABC of Bible prophecy.

Mary Zolynski - N. Y.

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May I also express my appreciation of the new layout of the "Herald," and also for what to me is a great boon -- the change from glossy to non-glare paper. My eyes are very bad, and I was not able to read for very long, the older "Heralds," and had to take frequent rests, but the last two issues (June and July) I have been able to read in comfort and concentrate. Above all, I appreciate the rich spiritual food which our heavenly Father provides through its pages.

J. M. Stephenson - Eng.

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We have been privileged to have had the services of Brother P. E. Thomson here recently. It required no great insight to realize his depth of humility, sincerity, and spiritual comprehension. I believe the brethren here all appreciated him and his message of grace. I could not help but note his tolerant attitude. He encouraged the brethren to continue bearing witness to the Truth by whatever means possible, including that of lending support to the "Frank and Ernest" radio witness. He also spoke on unity amongst the Lord's people; on how to get along together in the narrow way. I am glad I did not miss any of his lectures.

Jack Wiebe - Can.

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Already a year has passed since I returned here, to Athens, Greece, to visit my people, after an absence of many years. Through the pages of the "Herald" I am able to experience the blessedness of Christian fellowship with yourself and the other brethren, as all of you seek to edify those of like precious faith.

I note the conventions for St. Louis and Chicago are scheduled, as usual, for the first two weekends in October. Please extend my best wishes in the Lord to all who attend.

Here in Athens, I rejoice to say, I meet with brethren who are really free, worshiping God in spirit and in truth. We have a class of about fifty. To me it was a pleasant surprise to find so many men and women who had given their hearts to the Lord. Perhaps it was that the afflictions and privations of the war, and the occupation which followed, prepared them to receive the message of the true Gospel.

The work of witnessing to the Truth progresses, but with great caution, because of adverse conditions. Pray for us here. Within the next few months I expect to return to the United States and hope to see you in Chicago again.

Speros G. Pappas - Greece

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To: P.L.R.

If I were to submit an article for possible publication in the "Herald," would it be judged on its harmony with the letter and spirit of the Word of God, rather than on its harmony with Brother Russell's views on the subject?

W. F. Hill - Wash.

*To: W.F.H.*

*By me it would be judged on its harmony with the letter and spirit of the Word of God, and I feel sure this is true also of my fellow-editors.*

*P. L. Read-Mo.*

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I continue to be favorably impressed with the "Herald." I especially appreciated the statement on page 150 of the November issue, re Brother Russell and the *Scripture Studies*; also that you expect to reprint the "booklet on "Our Lord's Return," which is a very important subject. Then your emphasis on witnessing-not to convert the world, but to look for a true grain of wheat -was timely. Also I greatly appreciated the quotations from *Reprints* selected for Testimony meeting preparation. Additionally your answer, on page 158, to the question re Isaiah (as to whether the Book was written by one or two persons) was enlightening to Helen and me.

Laura Kelsey - N. Y.

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Just a few words to say that Brother John T. Read's records arrived a few days ago, and the Reading friends keenly enjoyed hearing them again and again. All remarked at the clear enunciation, and absence of extraneous sounds. The records are in such an attractive album.

E. K. Snyder - Pa.

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We, as a committee, felt we should like you to know how grateful we are to our American brethren, for making it possible for Brother John T. Read to visit us. I have had a considerable number of letters of appreciation. His ministry has been a stimulus to the brethren; often those who never meet, have joined together in fellowship in the classes he has visited. . . . We noted with pleasure your word of welcome to Brother Ford, in the July "Herald."

W. R. Walton - Eng.

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Will you please send me thirty copies of "The ABC of Bible Prophecy" and twenty of "After Death the Judgment." These 16-page booklets are really tempting reading matter to pass on to interested friends, as they say so much in so concise a manner. The writer of these booklets displays the same spirit as the late Brother Copeland, whose thoughts are so agreeably expressed in his letter, published in the May "Herald." Those thoughts are mine, too.

Mrs. Robt. Collier - Wash.



## **Half Hour Meditations on Romans**

### **No. 10**

*How then can man be justified with God? --Job 25:4  
The just shall live by faith. -- Hab 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb 10:38*

THUS FAR in this series we have sought to profit from the life and example of our author by refreshing our minds with respect to the outstanding incidents of his early years, his conversion, and his apostolic career.

We have also made inquiry as to the "saints" in Rome to whom he wrote and have endeavored to place ourselves in their midst. Then, too, we took the time to notice the chronological as well as other relationships that the Epistle to the Romans bears to St. Paul's other letters and to the remainder of the New Testament. In our last "Meditation" we satisfied ourselves that we may come to the study of our Epistle in the confidence that except for some variations of very minor significance, we have the text as it left the Apostles hand. This last conclusion was reached after an examination of the three fold testimony of the Greek Manuscripts, the Ancient Translations, and the Quotations to be found in the writings of the Christian authors of the second century.

### **A Fourth Witness**

While we listened to these witnesses, a fourth witness stood in silence, waiting to be heard. We refer to the internal evidence afforded by the Epistle itself.

We are about to examine that which is satisfying not only to our heads but rejoices our hearts also. Many who know little or nothing of the testimony of the three witnesses previously examined may through diligent study of the Epistle itself recognize that it is a "genuine production" of the Apostle Paul and realize that it is none other than a part of the inspired "word of God which liveth and abideth for ever. This must be accompanied by whole hearted "obedience to the faith" it inculcates, and by a faithful attempt to the best of their ability to practice its precepts.

### **An Affectionate Embracing of the Truth**

We have already had our attention drawn to the necessity of a right attitude of heart in approaching the study of this Epistle (Meditation No. 1) and have noted that it is to those who hunger and thirst after (not information so much as) righteousness that it especially addresses itself. In the words of Thomas Chalmers "there must be an affectionate embracing of truth with the heart; and there must be a knowledge which puffeth not up but humbles and edifies; and there must be a teaching of the Spirit of God. . . . For let it be observed that the wisdom of the New Testament is characterized by moral attributes. It is pure and peaceable and gentle and easy to be entreated, and full of mercy and good fruits and without partiality [or] . . . hypocrisy. Let us not confound the illumination of natural argument with that which warms the heart, as well as informs the understanding -- for it is a very truth that the whole demonstration of Christian doctrine may be assented to by him who is not spiritual but carnal."

As, therefore, we stand on the threshold of the Epistle to the Romans, which the above writer calls "by far the mightiest and closest of those demonstrations" let us, with Moule, renew our determination "not to analyze only or explain but to submit and to believe." With "our beloved Brother Paul" let us "bow the knee to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant us

according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith; that being rooted and grounded in love, we may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph 3:14-19).

### **The Epistles Broad Outlines**

At the beginning of our study of this Epistle it will be profitable for us if we first seek to grasp its broad outlines and note the divisions into which it logically falls. If in subsequent Meditations we are led to dwell on individual passages and texts, those gems of truth will appear to greater advantage and shine into our hearts with an added luster if we have the outlines of the Epistle well drawn in our mental vision. Let us for the time being imagine ourselves back amongst those beloved ones of God in Rome, hearing the Epistle read for the first time.

The Gospel narratives according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have not yet been written. It is doubtful if we have seen any of the few portions of the New Testament that have been written up to this time.

Some of us have been raised in the Old Testament scriptures, although few if any of us actually possess a copy of our own. Others of our number have been brought up in heathen idolatry. All that any of us know of the Gospel has come to us by word of mouth, and that not from an Apostles lips. And yet, somehow, in the Lords providence the blessed Message has come our way that by simple faith in the precious blood of Jesus we may be saved; and with weak and trembling faith we have believed. Now a letter written by one specially commissioned by our risen Lord himself to strengthen our faith and confirm us in our consecration has been brought to us by Phebe.

### **A Preferred Method of Reading an Epistle**

Of one thing we may be very sure -- when that letter arrived it was read and re read. May we suggest to all who are sharing these Meditations with us that at this time we extend our "half hour" to an hour and a half and re- read the Epistle. Those who are in the habit of reading an epistle at a sitting without stop ping will not need to be persuaded to do this now.

They know the advantages that accrue from such a habit. For those with whom this will be a first experience there awaits a sense of satisfaction and refreshment not otherwise obtainable. Moreover, as we read, let us do so with the thought in mind of tracing only the outlines of the Epistle, as before suggested, reserving to subsequent occasions the consideration of its details.

It will not be difficult to see that the Epistle consists of three main divisions:

- 1) Preface
- 2) Exposition of the Gospel
- 3) Conclusion

Discussion of each will be in the above order.

## **PREFACE**

"Like St. Paul's other letters, the Epistle to the Rom. mans begins with a *preface* (Rom. 1:1-15) that includes the address and a thanksgiving and is intended to form the relation between the author and his readers. But in this letter the *address* is more elaborate than usual. This difference arises from the fact that the Apostle did not yet know personally the church to which he was writing. Hence it is that he has strongly emphasized his mission to be the *Apostle of the Gentiles*; for on this rests the *official* bond which justifies the step he is taking (Rom. 1:1-7). The *thanks giving* that follows and is founded on the work already accomplished among them leads him quite naturally to apologize for not yet having taken part in it himself and to express the constant desire he feels of being able soon to exercise his apostleship among them for the confirmation of their faith and his own encouragement and as well for the increase of their church (Rom. 1:8-15)."

## **EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL**

The Apostles exposition of "his" Gospel extends from Rom. 1:16-15:13. It falls into two main subdivisions: one chiefly doctrinal, the other chiefly practical. The doctrinal portion or that which relates to principles extends from Rom. 1:16 to chapter 11. The practical portion is that which seeks to make application to the affairs of every day life of the principles laid down in the doctrinal portion. It begins with the well known passage "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service," (Rom. 12:1) and ends with the passage of equal dearness to the believers heart: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the holy spirit" (Rom. 15:13).

## **DOCTRINAL PORTION OF GOSPEL EXPOSITION**

In this portion the Apostle gives us four things:

1. A concise statement of his great theme, which he sums up in these words: "The just shall live by faith" (Hab. 1:16,17);
2. A discussion of this theme (Rom. 1:18 - Rom. 5:21);
3. His answer to one important objection or the relation of sanctification to justification (Rom. 6:1 - Rom. 8:39);
4. His answer to the other important objection or the explanation of Israel's rejection (Rom. 9:2 - Rom. 11:36).

"After the full solemn and digressive greeting and thanksgiving" we have seen in the preface, St. Paul passes in a very skillful and yet "in a most natural manner" to the development of his all absorbing subject. "He proposes to show that the salvation of every man, whoever he may be, rests on the righteousness which faith procures; he supports this proposition immediately by a scripture declaration," namely Hab 2:4.

In the development of this Gospel theme, three leading thoughts appear:

- (1) the worlds need of such a righteousness,
- (2) Gods provision to meet that need,
- (3) "the ruinous work of Adam has been reversed by the healing work of Christ."

### **The Worlds Need**

"Since the necessity of this mode of salvation arises from the universality of sin, which deserves Gods wrath, The Apostle proceeds to prove that all have sinned. Of the sinfulness of the Gentiles he gives a truly fearful picture in the rest of the first chapter; and then [to Rom. 3:20] he enters on the proof that the Jews have sinned no less fatally." Wrath being on all, even on the Jews, the world is in evident need of salvation.

### **Gods Provision to Meet that Need**

"The free and universal *gift* of the righteousness of faith given by God to men" was made possible the Apostle declares "by the expiatory work of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:21-26). It is offered to Gentiles as well as Jews in accordance with the principle of Jewish monotheism" (Rom. 3:27-31). "Aware of the extreme novelty" of these conclusions, he devotes the fourth chapter to show that "this mode of justification is in keeping with the decisive example, that of Abraham."

The first eleven verses of chapter 5 assure the consecrated believer that "whatever may be the tribulations of the present, this righteousness of faith will never fail him." Even now he has by faith received the atonement (Rom. 5:11) and is therefore reckoned perfect through Christ, and ultimately he will be saved from wrath ("restored to the proper condition of a son -- liberated from sin and from death, which is the manifestation of Gods wrath") through that same faith in the precious blood of Jesus (Rom. 5:9).

### **Adam Versus Christ**

"This universal condemnation and this universal justification" are traced in the remaining verses of chapter 5 to Adam and Christ respectively. The Apostle there shows them extending "their opposite influences: the one of condemnation and death and the other of justification and life over all mankind, but in such a way that the saving action of the one in finitely exceeds the destructive action of the other."

### **The Relation of Sanctification to Justification**

Having established the principle of righteousness by faith, the Apostle proceeds to meet objections. The evilly disposed mind, *knowing nothing experientially* of the power of the spirit of Christ to war against sin in the consecrated believer will be prone to respond to the matchless grace of God as set forth by the Apostle and may suggest that we may therefore "continue in sin that grace may abound." While this suggestion will find no place in the heart of one who is hungering and thirsting after righteousness, the Apostle realizes that such an one will nevertheless be concerned to know if Justification by faith will "be able to found a *rule of holiness* comparable to that which followed from the Law and without having recourse to the latter. After having excluded the Law as a means of justification are we not obliged to re turn to it when the end in view is to lay a foundation for the moral life of believers"? The answer to this question like the Apostles development of the Gospel theme itself contains a discussion of three principal ideas:

(1) Justification by faith *contains a principle of holiness*;

(2) the Law is no more able to sanctify than to justify;

(3) the spirit of Christ *gives victory* over sin.

Every Christian of experience will realize how great the temptation is for us to dwell upon rather than to merely touch the outline of the doctrine now advanced by the Apostle. For while it is undoubtedly implied in the earlier chapters, now, the truth appears in chapters 6-8 in all its sparkling beauty: we are to be delivered not alone from the guilt of sin *but also from its power*.

The faith that justifies is not indeed "dead belief but inspiring confidence." And when we have once believed with the heart, then belief becomes self surrender; self surrender becomes self conquest; self conquest rises into spiritual incorporation with Christ in unity of love and life. This passive union soon passes into an active force: the life in Christ, the life not in the flesh but in the spirit. And thus all true faith is inseparable from works. Justification becomes sanctification. The guilty man becomes the holy man.

The wicked man is turned from his wickedness and lives. The leper is cleansed. The prodigal comes home.

The soul is saved. Oh! how good is the news of the Gospel. It is a message of peace to all who will receive it. It tells us how we may be found in Christ, not having our own righteousness but that which cometh from God: even the righteousness that begins with the faith of simple trust in God and ends in the faith of union with his spirit and fulfillment of his will.

### **Is There Unrighteousness with God?**

After showing that there is a principle of holiness in the relation to Christ on which Justification by faith rests, the Apostle proceeds to deal with the next objection: "If salvation rests on the righteousness of faith, what becomes of the promises made to the people of Israel who have rejected this righteousness? What becomes of the divine election of which this people was the object?"

Again the Apostle makes a threefold reply:

(1) God is sovereign Lord of all and nothing can restrict his freedom;

(2) in the exercise of this liberty God always acts justly and his rejection of Israel is no exception to this rule;

(3) as a matter of fact the rejection of Israel is only partial and merely temporary: not absolute or final and will result in the blessing of all mankind.

What "food for thinking Christians" is contained in chapters 9-11. How clear and convincing are the Apostles conclusions! What comfort they contain! If the temptation was great with us to linger lovingly on chapters 6, 7, and 8, what shall we say now, when before our wondering eyes we see him exhausting all the aspects of this question in a discussion "which may be called the masterpiece of the philosophy of history." In this outline we cannot attempt even to approximately reproduce the details of his argument.

We can only rejoice in the knowledge that nothing can hinder the free flow of Gods mercy that is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that reverence him. We rejoice further in the fact that his promises are ours and that they are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Though the promises to Israel have been up to this time understood to give them an almost exclusive claim to Gods favor, they cannot operate to prevent him from extending his mercy to whom he will. And, while this may seem an astonishingly new doctrine, the Apostle shows that it is nothing more than the proper understanding of their own scriptures.

### **PRACTICAL PORTION OF GOSPEL EXPOSITION**

"Justification by faith, after having been positively established has come forth triumphant from the two trials to which it has been subjected. The question was asked, Could it produce holiness? It has shown that it could and that it was the Law that was itself powerlessness in this respect." The question was asked, Could this offer be extended to the Gentiles without violating the promises to Israel? It has shown that it could. What yet remains? "One thing only: To show the new principle grappling with the realities of existence and to depict the *life of the believer* who by faith has obtained justification."

Far from being a "simple appendix" not specially related to what has gone before, this practical portion of the Epistle "rests not less than the doctrinal portion on the theme formulated in Rom. 1:17, the just shall live by faith, for it completes the development begun in chapters 6-8 of the words *shall live* ." First the Apostle sketches the consecrated believers life in a *general* way in chapters 12 and 13; then he applies the moral principles there established to the *special* circumstances of the Christians in Rome (Rom. 14:1 - Rom. 15:13).

In the general application four prominent ideas are developed:

- (1) the consecration with which the believers new life in Christ begins (Rom. 12:1, 2);
- (2) his life as a member of the church (Rom. 12:3-21);
- (3) his life in relation to the State (Rom. 13:1-10);
- (4) the goal in view (Rom. 13:11-14).

"The Apostle lays down as the basis and point of departure for the redeemed life the living sacrifice the believer, touched by the mercies of God, makes of his body in order to do Gods perfect will, which is revealed more and more to his renewed understanding.

"This gift of himself the believer accomplishes in the first place as a *member of the church*, the Body of Christ, by *humility and love*."

He carries it out in the second place in his relation to the "powers that be" that are permitted to rule "until He come whose right it is"; and he does so in the two forms of *submission* to authorities [except where this would conflict with the Law of Love, which is the Law of Christ] and *justice* to all."

That which animates and sustains him in all his relations with other members of the church and with the world from which that church has been called out is the glorious hope he has unceasingly before him: "Christ coming again, and with him the day of salvation breaking" -- a day which

shall prove to be a day of salvation indeed to those who are found clothed with Christ.

After the application of the principles developed in the first eleven chapters to the general life of the consecrated believer, the Apostle proceeds to make special application to the brethren in Rome. The leading thought is "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification, for even Christ pleased not himself" (Rom. 15:2, 3).

### **CONCLUSION:**

"This local application, while closing the practical treatise, restores the author and his readers to the midst of the church of Rome; it thus forms the transition to the epistolary conclusion that corresponds to the introduction (Rom. 1:1-15). From Rom. 1:14 the style indeed becomes that of a letter.

"This conclusion treats of five subjects:

(1) After having justified anew the very considerable didactic work he had written them by the commission he has received for the Gentiles, the Apostle reminds the Romans that his apostolic work is now finished in the East. Therefore, he hopes soon to arrive at Rome on his way to Spain (Rom. 15:14-33). This piece corresponds exactly to the passage in the preface (Rom. 1:8-15).

(2) He recommends the bearer of his letter to his readers and charges them with greetings for all the members of the church known to him. To these personal salutations he adds greetings to the whole church with which he has been charged by the numerous churches he has recently passed through (Rom. 16:1-16).

(3) In passing, in a sort of postscript, he invites them to be on their guard against the Judaizing emissaries, who will be sure to make their appearance as soon as they hear of a work of the Lord at Rome (Rom. 16:17-20).

(4) He transmits the greetings of those who surround him and even lets his secretary Tertius have the word to greet them in his own person, if one may so speak (Rom. 16:21-24).

(5) He closes with a prayer that corresponds to the desire with which he had opened his letter (Rom. 1:11). He said there how much he longed to be able to labor for their *strengthening*. He did what he could with this in view by sending them such a letter. But he knows well that his work will not produce its fruit except in so far as God himself will do his part in working by it: Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my Gospel. "

-- P. L. Read

## **With Brethren Overseas**

**MAY 13 TO SEPTEMBER 9, 1955**

IN making this report of my visit with the friends in the British Isles last summer, I wish I could convey to you some measure of the blessing received in the privilege of coming to know the friends in their home life as well as in the association of Class meetings and conventions, the latter being designated Home Gatherings.

Meeting with friends in their homes one gets to know more of the problems, trials, and physical difficulties they have to contend with, and of the good fight of faith they are waging in their endeavors to prove worthy under trying circumstances. One also comes to realize that none are without trials. They may look contented and happy, and give outward evidence of the blessing and peace of mind and heart they enjoy in the Lord, for they do have a peace and a joy that the world knows not of; but this closer association also reveals that they have their trials, sorrows, perplexities, and times of difficulty in knowing which way to turn, or what may be the Lord's will in some decision that confronts them.

As followers of the Master, we know that such trials, rightly received, work patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and that hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of 'God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy spirit which is given unto us. (Rom. 5:3-5.) The trials themselves do not produce the character-likeness to God, but they do constitute opportunity for the exercise of the graces of the spirit which abides in us, and which, as Paul *shows, is the power* that produces growth in the image of Him who is our pattern in godliness.

I am not quite as old as the little girl thought who, when told that I was a pilgrim, asked her grandmother if I came over in the Mayflower; but I am approaching an age when one thinks twice before venturing forth on such an extended trip. When I left the British Isles in 1948, I really did not expect to return. But in the providence of God, the call came, and I felt little or no hesitation in taking advantage of the opportunity the invitation to service afforded, and the pleasure of renewing fellowship with the many friends I had learned to know and love in my two former visits.

The Midland Classes took the initiative in arranging for my visit this time, and a group of five brethren was appointed to work out the details of the itinerary. Having arranged such details for myself and others in the USA and Canada, I was well aware of what is entailed in thought and time spent with railway and bus guides in looking up transportation, correspondence, etc. Accordingly I took the opportunity afforded by the farewell meeting held in London the day before my departure, of expressing my appreciation and thanks to these brethren for their kindness and labor of love.

The friends in all the classes were most kind and considerate in making conditions of travel as easy for me as possible. The railway strike was unforeseen, but a number of brethren with cars came to my assistance and made it possible to fill all appointments except for an afternoon meeting at Sheffield, where I was scheduled for both the afternoon and evening.

Religious services aboard ship were held by only two groups, namely, Church of England and Catholic adherents. Nevertheless I had opportunity of witnessing to several people individually, two of whom came to me, having heard that I was a minister. One of these told me that it was the fear of eternal torment which had caused him to become a Christian. However, I assured him that



such fear could not make one a true Christian. Only the goodness of God revealed in the love of Christ could constrain us to surrender our hearts to him.

The boat docked at Southampton where I was met by Brothers Allen, Barrett, and Jennings, who drove me up to London. There, on the following day, I was scheduled to address the Central London Class.

Generally speaking, the attendance at meetings was a little less than on my former visits. Quite a few of the brethren then active have gone from us to experience, if I understand the Scriptures correctly, their next conscious moment in the presence of their Lord. Homes and even classes visited in 1948 no longer exist, and those fellowships therefore, were missing. In Ireland, however, the attendance was somewhat better than formerly. They now hold regular meetings in Londonderry and Dublin, and the Belfast Class is perhaps a little larger. It was gratifying to see that though the Irish friends were still but few in number (about 70 all told), they nevertheless have a true love and zeal for the Lord and are active and striving to be found worthy.

The same divergence of doctrinal views exists among the British brethren that we meet with in the States. On certain points it is more pronounced, and on others less. In some of the classes visited it was evident that my own convictions were not shared by all present. Nevertheless, my endeavors to stir up their pure minds, and to be helpful in setting forth the things which all recognize to be essential to our growth in Godlikeness, and to our becoming approved as overcomers, were appreciated, and there was little, if any, criticism respecting the points on which they differed.

Just what is to occur when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ to face the records of our lives here as his disciples, is not definitely revealed to us. The promises of the Word are, that as long as we are faithful to our sanctification vows, and are trusting in the blood of Christ as the atonement for our sins, there is no condemnation to us. Judgment has been operative in respect to the house of God throughout the Gospel Age. Not only have we been privileged to judge ourselves as regards the correcting of the things which we see to be wrong, but when lax or unaware of things that would hinder our perfecting in holiness, we have been judged of the Lord lest through weaknesses of the flesh or a measure of indifference or neglect we come into judgment with the world.

The judgment, therefore, that awaits us (the Church) is not an investigation of all our thoughts, words, and deeds, pursuant to their punishment and correction as it will be in the next Age, when the world of mankind as a whole is on trial, for that work is being accomplished in us here. Instead, what awaits us is the revelation of the Lord's verdict. As the Weymouth translation somewhat freely renders the words of the Apostle in 2 Cor. 5:10, "We must all appear before Christ's judgment seat in our true characters, in order that each may then receive an award for his actions in this life, in accordance with what he has done ["practiced," *Diaglott*], whether it be good or whether it be worthless."

The Bible does not give us to understand that our final award will be decided on the ability we have manifested in respect to the understanding of all the minutiae of doctrine. Nowhere is it intimated that our Lord will be concerned as to how well we have understood the philosophy of the Atonement, or how clearly we have comprehended the use that will be made of our participation in Christ's sacrificial sufferings in being baptized or buried into the likeness of his death. Our part is to be faithful in suffering with him. It is not ours to decide what value that suffering has or does not have in his sight. Whereas the correct understanding, of the Divine purpose in respect to, such operations is very enlightening and helpful in fortifying us to stand-in

this day of subtle attacks on our faith, it is not indispensable to the making of our calling and election sure.

Again: There is satisfaction in recognizing our own "mother" that is to say, the covenant that gives us birth; also in understanding the manner and phases of our Lord's presence. But we had no volition in these matters -- we did not choose the covenant which mothers us; nor did we have any part in determining how or when our Lord's second presence should occur. Our part has been, and still is, to be ready and expectant when our call comes to graduate from this place of schooling and to experience the change necessary to our union with him in the spirit realm. We know of course that this change and union takes place at the end of this Age; but in actuality, the call has been coming individually to each one of the saints all down through the Gospel Age, and all have been warned to be watchful and ready. This readiness has had to be accomplished in the span of each saint's earthly experience, for his next conscious moment will take place in the presence of his Lord, *regardless of the time he has spent in the sleep of death* (a passage of time that will mean absolutely nothing to him) .

What is expected of us, therefore, is faithfulness in following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; diligence in fashioning ourselves in Divine holiness; full submission to God's will, and whole-hearted cooperation with his spirit in the development, establishment, and fixing of our hearts in the principles of righteousness and love.

On the whole, I have found that the friends abroad are placing less emphasis on the things about which there is some disagreement, and more emphasis on those things about which there is little, if any, difference of viewpoint. They are recognizing that the teachings that constituted the burden of our Lord's ministry and that of the Apostles, were things that have to do with our transformation into the character-likeness of those with whom we are to- be eternally associated if we become approved for life. "He that hath this hope in him," says John, "purifieth himself even as he is pure." Thomas Binney well expressed the necessity of such purity when he wrote:

"Eternal light! Eternal light!  
How pure the soul must be,  
When placed within Thy searching sight,  
It shrinks not, but, with calm delight  
Can live and look on Thee."

What a joy it will be to be able to stand in the presence of God and of Christ with no sense of shame or unworthiness, but with only a glow of gratitude in the realization of the wondrous perfection and beauty that has been wrought in us by God -- "Out of Zion, *the perfection of beauty*, God hath shined" is a prophecy yet to be fulfilled. "The King's daughter is all glorious within," says the Psalmist. (Psa. 50:2; Psa. 45:13.) The accomplishment of this marvelous work in the Christ is to the end, says the Apostle Paul in Eph. 2:7, "That in the ages to come, God might manifest the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness [the marvel of his workmanship] toward us through Christ Jesus."

May God enable us to realize that the operation of his spirit toward and in us, is not for the purpose of making us all-wise in the knowledge of doctrine, leading us to contend and more or less disfellowship one another because of differing conclusions in regard to non-essentials; but that, on the contrary, the object has been to glorify God's name in us by transforming us into the Divine likeness, that we may eternally live and take joy in his presence.

One thing which I feel that we in America would do well to imitate in our British brethren, is to cultivate the attitude of reverence which they manifest when the time arrives for taking their seats in the place of meeting.

I observed that many bowed their heads in prayer, and that usually a few minutes of quiet obtained in recognition of the promised presence of him with whom they had assembled to commune. At the London Convention they had arranged for a three-minute period of silent prayer to precede the opening of the morning, afternoon, and evening sessions. This helped to bring us to a realization of the purpose for which we had assembled. I have attended many conventions in America where in order to gain attention and start the meeting on time, the chairman has been required to make a louder noise than was made by the din of voices of those that were present. One could hardly imagine our Master having to shout

and bang the pulpit with a songbook in order to gain attention. But that is what actually occurs when a chairman, who is the representative of the Lord, endeavors to get our attention. All of us are more or less guilty in this matter, and so each one should do his or her part to remedy the situation.

The time from February 1 to May 6, on which date I set sail for Southampton, was spent in pilgrim service in the South and up the east coast of USA, after which I spent four months in the British Isles. I traveled more than 19,000 miles, 4,520 in British territory. Altogether I visited 116 classes and addressed 19.3 meetings-fifty classes and eighty-five meetings in the British Isles. The attendance totaled 4,105-1,490 at 108 meetings in the USA, and 2,615 at 85 meetings in Great Britain. More of the British meetings were conventions which would account somewhat for the larger attendance. As nearly as I could estimate, the number of friends served in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales would be about 1,000. "Blest be the tie that binds."

Your brother by God's grace,

- *John T. Read.*

## **Appointments for A. A. Hart**

Some of the Classes have inquired if Brother Hart will be prepared to deliver public discourses. To this we are glad to reply: Yes. He was one of the first to accept appointment to serve in the Pastor Russell Bible Lecture Bureau-over forty years ago. Consequently, to address an advertised meeting will present no problem to him.

Others of the friends have asked us what Brother Hart believes on doctrines uppermost in 'their minds. As to this we must remind all that it has been the consistent policy of the Institute not to questionnaire the speakers listed. As stated on the second page of each issue of "The Herald" such "are believed to be loyal to the Word of God," and "clear in its fundamental teachings.... Those to whom they minister are counseled to prove all things and to hold fast that which is good."

## The Weekly Prayer, Praise, and Testimony Meeting

*"We went . . . where prayer was wont to be made." - Acts 16:18.*

*New subscribers are invited to write us for a free copy of the July "Herald." Therein, on page 109, a brief introduction is given, bearing directly on these Reprint excerpts, and on the value of the weekly Testimony Meeting: "the one meeting most helpful in spiritual growth." - Ed. Com.*

### MANNA TEXT DECEMBER 1 -- MATTHEW 22:39

*"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."*

These words were quoted by our Lord in his summarizing of the Ten Commandments. Dividing the Ten Commandments into two parts, he showed that one part related to the duty and obligation toward God, and the other to the duty and obligation toward fellowmen, toward the neighbor. The first part calls for all the love of our heart, our being, our mind, our strength, for the Lord and his service; and the second part, which relates to humanity, calls for us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

To this effect he on one occasion gave them a parable-that of the Good Samaritan. In that parable he pictured a man who was not a Jew ministering to a Jew who had been injured. A Jewish priest had seen the wounded man and had passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, not so close in relationship to God as the priest, is represented as looking at the man and then also passing on the other side. Then came this stranger, a Samaritan, one not in relationship to God at all. The Samaritan promptly served the injured man-anointed him and bound up his wounds.

### "WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?"

The Lord, in this parable, and in his statement of the spirit of the Law as related to our fellowmen, was laying down a principle that all should be neighbors and treat each other in a kind, neighborly manner, which is the only proper rule amongst mankind. We are to express our love for our neighbor by being thoughtful and considerate of his welfare and interests, and helpful to him as far as is in our power, other obligations being considered.

When we come to the Church, there is a special relationship and bond between its members. We are to love one another as Jesus loved us. This is a new commandment. The 'Golden Rule is not a new commandment; for it properly belonged to man when God created him, and is designed to be the rule of life. The Jewish Law, as it related to the attitude of the people of Israel toward one another, had for its essence the Golden Rule. But Jesus said to his disciples, *"A new commandment I give unto you."* He meant *this*: Those who have become new creatures have a new relationship; they belong to a new family the family of God.

Our brethren on the spirit plane are nearest to us of any. Whoever is a new creature, and thus a brother to all those who are new creatures, is not merely to observe the Golden Rule, but is to be ready to do toward any and all of the brethren as Jesus did; namely, to lay down his life for them. He is not to say, "I would lay down my life for him, and so I expect him to be willing to lay down his life for me." No! Regardless of his own interests and life, regardless of what others do or do not for him, he is to be willing to spend and be spent for the blessing of the brethren. He is to have *sacrificial* love, which goes beyond the Golden Rule. Thus we are to be true disciples. - *Reprints*, pp. R5699, R5700.

## **MANNA TEXT DECEMBER 8 -- JOHN 15: 18**

*"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you."*

When the Lord's followers take a firm stand for truth and righteousness, as did their Leader, the results are the same. Satan is their implacable opponent; he will see to it that they suffer, that there will be opposition, not only by himself, but by the world, which is largely under the influence of his spirit in various ways. Having taken this stand, the Lord's people must not marvel if the world hate them and say all manner of evil against them falsely, for Christ's sake. The more prominent they may be, as in our Lord's case, the more virulent will be the attacks against them; the more interested will be the great Adversary in overcoming them.

This thought that Satan opposes us, and that we are contending not merely with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers and wicked spirits in high positions of power (Eph. 6:12), would be appalling to us did we not, on the other hand, realize that by this same positiveness of decision for truth and righteousness we acquire great help and assistance by other unseen powers. From the moment of our positive resistance of temptation and positive standing up for the Lord and his cause, we become stronger in the Lord and in the power of his might: Let us remember that "greater is he that is for us than all that can be against us." - Matt. 5:11; Eph. 6:12; 1 John 4:4.

### **BURNING AND SHINING LIGHTS**

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." We are not enjoined to make a show of carrying our Bibles everywhere in an ostentatious manner. We are exhorted to show forth in our daily lives the lessons we learn from its precious pages. As the Bible is the Lamp provided by the Lord to all those who walk in his footsteps, so each of these in turn is a lamp which should shine forth upon others the light, the knowledge, the spirit of the truth, for their satisfaction. In other words, the holy spirit is not poured out upon the world of mankind, but merely upon the Lord's servants and hand-maidens. It is an anointing for these, and upon these, evidencing to them that they have been begotten again, to the new nature, and making them light-bearers for the benefit of others-burning and shining lights, sympathetic and helpful lights, "that they might show forth the praises of him who bath called them out of darkness into the marvelous light."

### **"THE LIGHT SHINETH IN DARKNESS"**

While keeping the lamp trimmed and burning -- while seeking to glorify God as burning and shining lights in the world, we must not forget that the Bible assures us that we shall be no more successful in converting the world than was our Master. His great light shone in darkness, "and the darkness comprehended it not." And the religionists of his day instigated his crucifixion. The Master's prophecy concerning his followers will prove true to the end of the Age. The darkness hateth the light. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you"; "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." - 1 John 3:13; John 15:18. - *Reprints*, pp. R4813, R4967.

## **MANNA TEXT DECEMBER 15 -- PSALM 23:1**

*"The Lord is my Shepherd."*

The Lord's sheep, abiding in perfection of relationship with him, will lack nothing. Their every need will be supplied. This may not mean greater earthly wealth or name or fame or luxury. The Lord's sheep are new creatures, spirit beings, who are temporarily dwelling in the flesh like other people, but who really are waiting for their change, to be completed by a share in the first resurrection. The Lord's blessings to natural Israel were earthly blessings, supplying their every earthly need; but his blessings to spiritual Israel are spiritual favors. "No good thing will he withhold" from these -- yea, even chastisements and sorrowful experiences that may be necessary for their spiritual development. The Psalm assures us that, as the Lord's sheep, we shall be provided with green pastures and the cool, refreshing waters of truth. Moreover, while thus being spiritually fed and refreshed, we shall have the peace of God, as is implied in the suggestion that the sheep will lie down in the green pastures.

### **THE CHURCH'S 'BETTER TABLE**

He is now leading his sheep of this Gospel Age -- the Church, the Body of Christ. By and by he will lead the world, during his Millennial Kingdom, as he declared, "Other sheep I have, that are not of this fold; them also must I bring ... and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd." - John 10:16.

"Oh, sometimes the shadows are deep,  
And rough seems the path to the goal!"

... That will not be true in the future; for no enemies nor anything to hurt or injure shall then be permitted. (Isaiah 11:9.) But how true it is that the Lord's consecrated people, even when misunderstood, misrepresented, defamed, and opposed, are still privileged to feast at the Lord's table! The table represents God's provisions for their needs -- the promises of God.

### **"MY CUP RUNNETH OVER"**

The word cup is used in the Scriptures to represent a draft, sometimes sweet, sometimes bitter, sometimes both. The intimation is that the Lord's cup signifies bitter experiences and trials in the present time; as Jesus said, "The cup which my Father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it?" And this was the cup-his cup-which he offered to his disciples and which we, in becoming his disciples, propose to share with him, and which is symbolically represented in the communion cup. - 1 Cor. 10:15-17.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." How precious the thought God's goodness, God's mercy, with all those who are truly his in Christ -- following us day by day, moment by moment, and according to the Scriptures making all things work together for our good! Then the grand finale is signified, "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever"-in the heavenly house, of which the Redeemer said, "In my Father's house are many mansions;

I go to prepare a place for you," and "I will come again and receive you unto myself." Then at his second coming, with our glorious change, we shall enter the Father's house in the fullest sense of the word, on the spirit plane, which flesh and blood does not inherit. *Reprints, p. 5654.*

## **MANNA TEXT DECEMBER 22 -- 2 TIMOTHY 2:21**

*"If a man therefore purge himself, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."*

It is important to notice that this instruction is given, not to the world, but to the Church-to those who are believers in Christ and who are consecrated to him and desirous of being used in his service.

. . . Let as many, therefore, as would be honored and used of the Master now and hereafter-as many as have this hope in them-seek to purify themselves, to purge out the old leaven of sin. In the language of another forceful illustration, let us endeavor to war a good warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil. And be assured that in these duties we have the work of a lifetime; and even at its close we will still find the necessity for the robe of Christ's righteousness to cover the remaining deformities of our character.

While the purging here spoken of refers to the general cleansing from all sin and uncleanness, the Apostle had special reference on that occasion to purging from a disposition to hearken to -the false doctrines of those who would subvert the faith of the Church. His counsel is to avoid foolish questions and strife about words to no profit: To shun profane and vain babblings which increase only unto more ungodliness, which savor more of bombast and self-exaltation than of truth and godliness, and, on the contrary, to study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. - 2 Tim. 2:15.

### **"STUDY TO SHOW THYSELF APPROVED"**

Study the Word. Study yourself that you may become well acquainted with yourself-that you may know your talents for service and in what direction they lie, and your weak points and how they maybe guarded against; that you may know both your abilities and your shortcomings. Then study to avoid, error and to shun all foolish questions and profane and vain babblings. Remember that only the foundation of God standeth sure, and that all other foundations are worthless and all other theories must come to naught. But, "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." - 2 Tim. 2:19.

And if any man desire honor from God, let him not fail to seek it in God's appointed way -- along the pathway of humility; for the Lord giveth his favors to the humble. If you would be a vessel fit for the Master's use and a vessel of honor, humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and he will exalt you in due time. Do not be in a hurry about it either; but whatever thy hand findeth -to do, do it with thy might, beginning and ever continuing to cleanse your earthen vessel, that it may be fit for the Master's use. - *Reprints* pp. R3096, R3097.

## The Question Box

*"And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." - Matt. 27:52, 53.*

*In the August-September "Herald," page 127, we stated our inability to answer a question raised on the text cited foregoing, and mentioned that the best explanation that had come to our attention was the one given in R2811. One of our associates, in a recent letter, discusses these verses in some detail, and submits two other possible explanations, which we are glad to share with our readers. - Ed. Com.*

With reference to the question concerning Matthew 27:52-53 in the August-September "Herald," I would like to submit a reasonable explanation. Sometime ago, I was re-reading *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ*, by Lew Wallace. Part of the narrative deals with the mother and sister of Judah Ben-Hur, who were imprisoned for eight years, and who, on release, were found to have contracted leprosy during their imprisonment. The writer then describes the kind of living death to which, according to the custom of those days, they were doomed. Quoting first from the *Talmud* as follows:

"These four are accounted as dead-the blind, the leper, the poor, and the childless,"

he continues"

"that is, to be a leper was to be treated as dead -- to be excluded from the city as a corpse; to be spoken to by the best beloved and most loving only at a distance; to dwell with none but lepers; to be utterly unprivileged; to be denied the rites of the Temple and the synagogue; to go about in rent garments and with covered mouth, except when crying, 'Unclean, unclean!'; to find home in the wilderness *or in abandoned tombs*; to become a materialized specter of Hinnom and Gehenna; to be at all times less a living offense to others than a breathing torment to self; afraid to die, yet without hope except in death."

Some of the alternative explanations are offered in the "Bible Study Monthly" for Oct.-Nov., page 108.

The author describes the scene after the two women have joined the lepers and found refuge in a deserted tomb, thus:

"The lepers were accustomed of mornings to come down from their sepulchral abodes in the hill, and take a supply of water for the day from the well En-rogel. ... the tenantry of the hill began to appear and move about the doors of their tombs." - Book 6, chapters 2 and 5.

The above led me to look more closely at the words "saint" and "sleep," as found in Matthew 27:52. To students of the Bible "saint" should present no difficulty, for it is well-known to mean "set apart or "separated." Even the word "holy," translated from the same Greek word, "*hagios*," strictly means, "set apart" or "separated"; though in the New Testament, the context usually shows a separation to God and his service.

I found that the word used for "sleep" is also used for a natural sleep, as in Matthew 28:13; Luke 22:45; John 11:12; Acts 12:6; and even when used to describe death, it retains the idea of sleep with expectation of awakening, as in John 11:11; 1 Cor. 15:20, 51; 1 Thess. 4:14. The word is



translated "dead" only once. (1 Cor. 7:39.) There is another word for natural sleep, but this particular one seems to include the idea of "lying down in sleep." - *Young*.

I also noted that the record mentions two earthquakes; one on the day of the crucifixion, and another when the stone was rolled away., (Matt. 27:54; Matt. 28:2.) The "saints" are said to appear in the streets of Jerusalem after the resurrection;-after the second earthquake.

There seems to me, then, two possible explanations of Matthew 27:52, 53:

(1) Taking the word "sleeping" as meaning the state of death, we may conclude that these lepers, separated and set apart and now existing in the tombs, were reckoned as dead. These "dead" came out of their tombs, forgot their usual precautions and fled for safety into the city.

(2) Taking the word "sleep" as meaning natural sleep, and using "having been asleep" as in the *Diaglott* word for word translation, we may imagine that the early morning earthquake roused the dwellers in the tombs from their sleep, and some of them wandered into the city before they had been fully awakened. We must not forget that all were ill, and therefore not as mentally alert as well persons. We read that in the first earthquake, "the earth trembled, the rocks were *rent*, the tombs were opened" -- a truly frightening experience to those dwelling in them; and the author of *Ben-Hur* says, "afraid to die." The words following, in Matthew 27:52, would seem to result from the second earthquake which occurred when most, if not all, would be "lying down in sleep." To be suddenly roused out of sleep by a repetition of the terrifying experience of less than three days before, would certainly cause a panic amongst these wretched sufferers.

The fact that these verses seem to be genuine would lead one to suppose that they were included in the record for a purpose. Might it not be to emphasize the tremendous effect caused by the death of our Lord-darkness, rent veil, earthquake, lepers in the city? And might it not also be a symbol of the terrible sin perpetrated *within* the city? (Acts 4:27 - *Diaglott, Weymouth, Moffatt, Concordant, "in this city,"*)

- *Eva Lightfoot*, England.

## Recently Deceased

Sr. E. Acketley, London, Eng. (June).

Sr. M. A. Baker, Rogue River, Ore. (Sept.).

Sr. N. Essam, Kettering, Eng. (Aug.).

Bro. Fred P. Greiner, Port Ewen, N. Y. (Oct.).

Sr. T. Hutehins, N. Hollywood, Cal. (Oct.).

Bro. George A. Sacks, Topeka, Kans. (Sept.).