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Parables of the Kingdom

"He spake many things unto them in parables." - Matthew 13:3.

IN the following paragraphs I plan to talk to you for a while on that little group of parables recorded in the 13th chapter of Matthew. These parables are seven in number and, for reasons which will appear as we proceed, are very generally termed "The Parables of the Kingdom."

They were spoken by the Master in Galilee and, if I understand them correctly, they contain not only an abundant supply of general ethical instruction, practical applications of the principles of truth and righteousness to one's every-day life teaching which mankind in general could and would appreciate-but they were uttered also for another purpose, namely, to forewarn his followers of, and thus to forearm them against, the dangers which would *be* their continual portion throughout the entire Gospel Age.. The primary purpose of these parables, in my view, was prediction -- not *general ethical* teaching for the *masses* of mankind, but *special, prophetic* instruction for his *footstep followers*. Here, in these parables, the Master, for the benefit of those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, and for them only, foretells things to come. He foreshadows the varying conditions which would obtain throughout the Gospel Age, between his first and second advents. He unfolds the conditions under which those who shall hereafter reign with him, would be developed and fitted for so high and honorable a calling. And what he foretells for these is not exactly a bed of roses! For them, to use a phrase of Churchill's, he predicts nothing but "blood, sweat, and tears." And the main lesson of these parables, the one which underlies them all, Was the identical lesson which the risen, ascended, and glorified Lord, confirmed from heaven some sixty years later when, to the beloved Apostle John, he sent his angel with a seven-fold message to the Church-which John has recorded for us in chapters 2 and 3 of the Book of Revelation.

And what was that main lesson? It was this: That whatever may be the glories of the Age to come, the Church, during the Gospel Age, would be continually liable to become clogged and corrupted by admixtures of evil; that it would be interpenetrated, surrounded, and even altogether concealed, by a far greater multitude, who would profess to belong to it, while being, in reality, the children of the Wicked One.

Now the whole of this great mixed multitude of Christendom, is, for the time being, called the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of the Heavens, because it would hold within it -- and so entangled that none but God could separate them, the true heirs of the Kingdom. Hence each of the seven parables appears to portray some characteristic of the nominal church especially prominent at a particular time. And these parables seem to be arranged in chronological order; for, to pass by details which I hope to touch on a little later, they begin with the sowing, or first preaching of the Word of the Kingdom, and end with separation of good and evil at the close of the Age. Let us now proceed to examine them separately.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

First comes the great Parable of the Sower. In the "Herald" for February 1954, this parable was discussed at some length. For this reason I will not linger on it now, except to remind you that there has never been any other method of becoming an heir of the Kingdom, but in this one way, namely, by acceptance of the Kingdom message -with all that that implies of repentance, faith, and consecration *to* the Lord, even unto death. From the chronological viewpoint, it is not difficult to see that this "First of the Kingdom Parables" had reference to the earliest stage of the Church's history, when first our Lord, and then his chosen Apostles, began to preach repentance and the Gospel of the Kingdom. (Matt. 4:17, 23.) In general, it covered the Ephesus epoch of Church history -- the Apostolic Age.

THE PARABLE OF THE TARES

Next in order comes the Parable of the Tares. Here, too, there is a sower of good seed, but he is followed by an enemy who sows tares amongst the wheat. This parable, like the preceding one, is interpreted by our Lord himself, who explains that the enemy who sowed the tares is the Devil. However, the meaning of the seed is not the same as in the first parable.* It *no* longer signifies doctrine-the pure message or Word of God respecting the Kingdom.. Instead, it represents people. Not the seed sown, but the crop resulting from the sowing, is in evidence here. The good seed are the children of the Kingdom; that is to say, the effect of the message in the hearts of those who receive it, would be to transform their hearts and lives, and thus make them heirs.

* This point is discussed at some length in the "Question Box" in the June 1950 "Herald," page 94.

"The tares are the children of the Wicked One. Tares are people who are not really Christians, whatever they may profess, but who mingle with Christians, and who, whether by deliberate intention or otherwise, further the deep-laid and sinister designs of the Adversary, by spreading corruption in doctrine, or conduct, or both.

Many such men crept into the Church even in the Apostolic Age, but it is in the second and third centuries, in the Age of Pagan persecution, when the primitive purity of the Church began to decline -- it is here that we find the most complete proof of our Lord's unerring ability to forecast coming events. It is the Smyrna epoch that is to be seen here.. During that Smyrna period, multitudes of grievous wolves entered stealthily into the fold not sparing the flock, just as St. Paul said would be the case after his departure, and many more arose, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Everywhere the Church became corrupt, and the effect, or influence, of this over-sowing of the wheat-field with tares, has continued, even to the end of the Age, that is to say, even to our own times.

THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

There is a well-known saying, "One thing leads to another." Notice this principle of cause and effect, running through all these parables. Mark how the over-sowing of wheat with tares in the second epoch of the Church's history, was that which led to the conditions which characterized the third epoch, the Pergamos period, as unfolded by our Lord in the third parable, that of the Mustard Seed.

To begin with, the Mustard is a plant which, strictly speaking, is not a tree at all. It is properly classified as a pot-herb or a garden-vegetable. Nevertheless, in this parable, as also often in

nature, it actually does grow into a tree. There is evidently something wrong here for, from the account of creation in Genesis, we have learned that God would have every seed to develop after its kind.

In becoming a tree, the mustard plant throws out great branches. And as a result, note what happens. The birds of the air which, in the first parable, sought to devour the good seed, are now able to come and lodge in its branches!

What is the prominent characteristic of this Pergamos epoch, paralleled here in the Parable of the Mustard Seed? Ah! it is the epoch characterized by a further decline into worldliness. The Paganism of the Smyrna period has not been able to entirely obliterate the heirs of the Kingdom, notwithstanding its fierce onslaughts, so the Adversary tries another method.. Under his malign influence Christianity is adopted by the Emperor and his successors.

Now, as every one knows, a ship is safe as long as it is in the ocean; but as soon as the ocean gets into the ship, the ship is in real danger. And precisely *that is* what was taking place.

The grain of mustard seed represented the principles of the Church as they were sown by Christ; the description of its unnatural growth from an herb to a tree-signified that those principles would be abandoned as the Gospel Age rolled on; a prediction by our Lord which was very manifestly fulfilled. The wheat field of the first parable has become, in this third epoch of the Church, the Pergamos period, almost, but thank God not quite, a tare field. Christ's Kingdom, which the great Head of the Church, when he witnessed his good confession before Pilate, declared was "not of this world" is now seen by him, in this third parable, as having become a vast world kingdom!

THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN HIDDEN IN THE MEAL

The fourth parable, that of a woman who hid leaven in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened, shows the result of this rank, worldly prosperity of the Church. It becomes completely corrupted in life and doctrine.

The interpretation of this fourth parable depends, of course, on the meaning to be given to leaven. I am aware that it is quite generally taught throughout Christendom that leaven signifies the gradual penetration and influence of the Gospel message, which shall eventuate in the complete transformation of the whole world of mankind.

However, against this view must be urged, besides many other objections, this most important one, namely, that, if adopted, it would give a meaning to the word "leaven" directly opposite to the meaning invariably assigned to it elsewhere in the Scriptures.

Comparing scripture with scripture, which is the only proper method of interpreting difficult texts, it seems clear that this parable of the leaven, symbolizes the apostate church, which did corrupt the earth with her fornications (Rev. 19:2), and does not symbolize true Christianity transforming the whole earth by the Gospel.

And if this is so, if the fourth parable signifies the corruption of the whole nominal church by the leaven of Paganized Christianity, then history has provided a perfect confirmation of the prophetic forecast of our Lord; for as with the fourth message to the Church in Revelation, that to Thyatira, so here, in the fourth parable, the rise of Romanism and of the Anti-Christ comes plainly into view. As in the one, a woman is seen, hiding leaven in the meal, so in the other, is pictured that woman Jezebel teaching and seducing Christ's followers to commit fornication and

to eat things sacrificed to idols or, in plain English, the Papacy, disseminating false doctrine in the Church, adulterated its worship with pagan rites and ceremonies.

We have now reached the end of the series of parables delivered to the multitudes gathered near the Sea of Galilee. If we glance back once more at the disclosures made therein respecting the nature and growth of the Kingdom of Heaven, they arrange themselves in the following order:

The first and second parables, "The Sower" and "The Tares" set forth the manner in which the Kingdom of Heaven was even then being founded by our Lord, and the obstacles it must encounter. The sphere from which both parables are taken is well suited to bring out the radical distinction between the manner in which *this* Kingdom was to be founded, and the manner in which all other kingdoms are established. *They* were in every case founded by the sword; *this one*, by the Word. Not force, but persuasion, was to be the weapon. Accordingly there is placed before the minds of the disciples, not a warrior hastening to battle, but a farmer, sowing seed. The field is the world -- the world of human hearts, and the seed is the Word of the Kingdom. It is good seed and, therefore, it ought to be welcome; but there are serious obstacles in the way.

The first parable set forth the obstacles encountered in the soil itself. Some of the soil is hard, some shallow, some over-charged with other things. Only the good soil yields a satisfactory crop.

There are, however, other obstacles than those found in the nature of the soil. There is the diligence of the enemy, and the impossibility of getting rid of those who have come under his influence, as set forth in the second parable -the Parable of the Tares.

The third and fourth parables, those of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven, continue to indicate the trend which this evil influence will take.

We have seen, too, that these four parables parallel in their teaching, that of the first four messages to the Churches in the Revelation. And we have had little difficulty in tracing a chronological fulfillment. The Parable of the Sower and the message to Ephesus represented the Apostolic Age; the Parable of the Tares and the message to Smyrna found their fulfillment in the decline from the primitive purity of the Church

which came about as the result of the pagan persecutions; the Parable of the Mustard Seed coincided with the message to Pergamos, when the Church joined hands with the world in the Age of Constantine and his successors; and the Parable of the Leaven hidden in the three measures of meal found confirmation in the message to Thyatira, and chronological fulfillment in the rise of Romanism and the Antichrist.

The four parables we have been considering were uttered, as already noted, in the presence of the multitude. There is now a pause in our Lord's discourse. (He leaves the multitude, enters the house, and the remaining three parables are spoken to the disciples alone.

(To be concluded in March issue)

- P. L. Read.

Half Hour Meditations on Romans

No. 12

From you sounded out the word of the Lord. -- 1 Thess. 1:8

GRACE to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." Such was the sweet benediction with which the Apostle closed his address in Rom. 1:7. To those among the beloved ones of God in Rome who were acquainted with the Old Testament writings. It must have sounded as an echo of those comforting words with which Aaron had been instructed to bless Israel: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be *gracious* unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee *peace*" (Num. 6:24-26). The music of those old time words has now mellowed; the awful majesty on high has been revealed by Jesus to be none other than our Father, from whose bosom the Only begotten One came forth.

He has revealed that *grace* and *peace* will be multiplied toward us; yea, eternal life itself, as by faith we become ever better acquainted with the Father and himself (2 Pet. 1:2; John 17:3; John 1:18).

May grace, the active, redeeming love of God in Christ toward us, and peace, the sense of "profound calm and inward quiet which is communicated to the heart by the possession of reconciliation," be our blessed portion as we attend to the further words of our inspired guide.

First, I Thank My God

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that often times I purposed to come unto you (but we let hitherto), that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also (Rom. 1:8-15).

"After greeting the believers at Rome, Paul declares his deep and long cherished interest in them." The address considered in our last Meditation "had drawn a sort of official bond" between himself and them, which he feels the need of turning into a "heart relation." "Many thoughts arise one after another in his mind. He tells us the first but does not arrange the others in order. He pours forth all in one full stream of thought and feeling. Paul's first thought here, as in nearly all his epistles, is gratitude." "He has blessed the Roman Christians in the name of the Lord. Now he hastens to tell them how he blessed God for them and how full his heart is of them. The Gospel is warm all through with life and love; this great message of doctrine and precept is poured from a fountain full of personal affection."

It is probable that it did not occur to "our beloved Brother Paul" that in addition to the purpose he had in mind, he was here furnishing the church with a sublime illustration of "love rejoicing with

the truth" (1 Cor. 13:6, *margin*).

Yet was not such the case? Here were a group of Christians whose faith had come about independently from his labors. Does he rejoice the less because he had had no part in it? No indeed! He rejoices the more, for to him it is an indication that God is working not only through himself but through other. The feeling he displays is there fore one of thankfulness that in his great mission of spreading the joyful tidings God has provided help from sources unknown to him. "It has sometimes struck us as being one of the saddest fruits of schism in the church, that it has begotten a kind of covetous ness of truth and love. Christians hold their favorite doctrines as a sort of spiritual monopoly; loving truth for the distinction it may give to them, as the miser loves his gold instead of loving it for the blessing and joy it may bring to others when imparted. To find the highest help in communion we must be willing to give all we have without stint and to take from all who have acquired any riches of truth however remote and out of ecclesiastical fellowship with us they may be." Ah! Paul, once again, we thank God for you and for giving us this lesson in love -- all unconsciously perhaps though none the less effectively. God help us ever thus to rejoice with the truth *wherever found*.

My God

"My God; a phrase used in the New Testament only by St. Paul, except that one utterance of *Eli, Eli* by his dying Savior. It is the expression of an indescribable appropriation and reverent intimacy. The believer grudges his God to none; he rejoices with great joy over every soul that finds its wealth in him.

But at the center of all joy and love is this -- *my* God; Christ Jesus *my* Lord; who loved *me* and gave himself for *me*. Is it selfish? Nay, it is the language of a personality where Christ has dethroned self in his own favor. There reigns now the highest happiness, the happiness that animates and maintains a self forgetful love of all. This holy intimacy, with its action in thanks and petition is all the while *through Jesus Christ* The man knows God as my God and deals with him as such, never out of that beloved Son who is equally one with the believer and with the Father, no alien medium but the living point of unity."

Your Faith Is Spoken Of

"Your faith" says another "not your verbal disputations, nor your questionings, nor your syllogisms."

"What increases Paul's joy is that not only do they believe themselves but their faith the report of which is spread everywhere, opens a way for the Gospel to other countries." "Go where he will in Asia, in Macedonia, in Achaia, in Illyricum, he meets believing strangers from Rome, with spiritual news from the Capital, announcing, with a glad solemnity, that at the great center of this world the things eternal are proving their power, and that the Roman mission is remarkable for its strength and simplicity of faith, its humble reliance on the Lord Jesus Christ, and loving allegiance to him." "Such faith must surely have made itself known by works of faith." Happy, happy Christians, those in Rome to whom Paul wrote. What a glow of holy joy must have been theirs as they listened to these high praises from an inspired Apostles pen! It must have been to them as a fore taste of that "Well done" only the Master can say; that "Well done" he will yet say to those who over come at last.

Giving Praise Worthily

Another lesson we may learn from the Apostle ere we leave this passage is the propriety of speaking a word of commendation when it is merited. The impression obtains in some quarters that no matter how much we may feel another has merited our love and esteem we should never make any such admission in his presence. To do so, it is held, might have the effect of making him heady, and thus our well intentioned words might prove to be a snare. We would agree that idle words of flattery uttered in insincerity might so prove, but sincere words of appreciation kindly expressed to those who merit them can only inspire to still nobler achievement. One of the deepest thinkers this world has ever produced, whose writings show a remarkable understanding of and deep reverence for the Word of God, once wrote: "You may sum the duty of your life in the giving of praise worthily and being yourselves worthy of it."

Pauls Prayer Life

"For God is my witness . . . that without ceasing I make mention of you . . . in my prayers." A few paragraphs back we noted the fact that the faith of these Christians in Rome had come about independently from Paul's labors, and we observed the joy he experienced in their faith, notwithstanding the fact that he had had no part in it. But in another sense from the once we were then considering, Paul had had a very real part in it. He had been "co operating by prayer" (2 Cor. 1:11, *Diaglott*). Usually the first conception one gets of St. Paul is that of a man of almost ceaseless *activity* in the service of the Lord; of one whose first inquiry was "Lord, what wilt thou have me to *do*?" of one who "*labored* more abundantly than they all." But when we reflect upon the quality of those labors, it becomes at once apparent that they must have been after all merely the out ward manifestation of a hidden life of prayer, of which only God was witness. Small wonder that when he heard the report of their faith spreading everywhere, he "first" thanked God. Such a report was Gods answer to his own prayers.

"The prayers of St. Paul are a study by themselves.

See his own accounts of them to the Corinthians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, the Thessalonians, and Philemon. Observe their topic; it is almost the growth of grace in the saints, to the Masters glory. Observe now still more their manner; the frequency, the diligence, the resolution that grapples, wrestles with the difficulties of prayer so that in Col. 2:1 he calls prayer simply a great wrestling. Learn here how to deal with God for those for whom you work, shepherd of souls, messenger of the Word, Christian man or woman who in any way is called to help other hearts in Christ." "It was a remark of General Gordons that it makes a great difference in our feeling towards a stranger if before we meet him we have prayed for him. And we may with equal truth say that it makes a great difference in the feelings of others towards us if they have reason to believe that we have prayed for them."

God . . . Whom I Serve

Scholars tell us that the Greek word here translated "serve" contains at once the thought of adoration and obedience and suggests not ordinary but priestly service. Indeed, Weymouths translation reads: "God . . . to whom I render priestly and spiritual service." We shall meet the word again more than once in this epistle and have opportunity of noting from the con texts this very evident meaning, particularly in that much loved 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).

Your rational religious service (Diaglott); that is to say "service which rationally corresponds to the moral premises contained in the faith you profess." This priestly service Paul renders to God, he says, "in the gospel of his Son": in its furtherance, its proclamation, its propagation. Frequently he speaks of the Gospel in this sense: "But ye know the proof of him (Timotheus), that, as a son with the father, he had served with me in the gospel" (Phil. 2:22). More over, St. Paul serves God in that glorious ministry "in his spirit." The service of the ancient priests might be only outward and mechanical. The preaching of the Gospel was a sacrifice offered to God by Paul with his whole love, will, and mind. "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

If the Lord Will

Careful for nothing, persevering in prayer, a lively sense of gratitude at all times welling up in his heart, the Apostle makes his requests known unto God. "In this case his prayers have a very definite direction: he is requesting, if somehow, now at length my way shall be opened, in the will of God, to come to you. It is a quite simple, quite natural petition. His inward harmony with the Lords will never excludes the formation and expression of such requests with the reverent if of submissive reserve. The indifference of mystic pietism, which at least discourages articulate contingent petitions, is unknown to the Apostles; in everything, with thanksgiving, they make their requests known unto God. And they find such expression harmonized in a holy experience with a profound rest *within* this will, this sweet, beloved will of God. In the will of God implies submission.

But submission did not prevent earnest, persevering prayer. Paul had a will of his own; and his will was to go to Rome. As yet, Gods will was unknown. And Paul will not act till it becomes evident that what he desires is also the will of God. He also remembers that the opening of a way for him, depends not upon circumstances but upon God." "Little did he here foresee *how* his way would be opened; that it would lie through the tumult in the temple, the prisons of Jerusalem and Caesarea and the cyclone of the Adrian sea. He had in view a missionary journey to Spain, in which Rome was to be taken by the way.

"So God grants prayer, but in his love
Makes ways and times his own. "
That I May Impart to You Some Spiritual Gift

"His heart yearns for this Roman visit. We may almost render the Greek of the next clause, *For I am homesick for a sight of you*; he uses the word by which elsewhere he describes Philipian Epaphroditus longing to be back at Philippi (Phil. 2:26), and again his own longing to see the son of his heart, Timotheus (2 Tim. 1:4). Such is the Gospel that its family affection throws the light of home on even un known regions where dwell the brethren. In this case the longing love however has a purpose most practical: *that I may impart to you some spiritual gift of grace, with a view to your establishment* . The word rendered gift of grace is used in some places with a certain special reference to the mysterious Tongues, Interpretations, and Prophecies given in the primeval churches (see especially 1 Cor. 12:4, 9, 28, 30, 31).

And we gather from the Acts and the Epistles that these grants were not . . . made where an Apostle was not there to lay on his hands. But it is not likely that this is the import of this present passage. Elsewhere in the Epistle the word is used with its largest and deepest reference (Rom. 5:15; 5:16; 6:23): Gods gift of blessing in Christ. The only passage that at all looks the other way is Rom. 12:6; that pas sage implies that the Romans *already* possessed the wonder working gifts.

Here then, so we take it, he means that he pines to convey to them as his Lords messenger some new development of spiritual light and joy; to expound the Way to them more perfectly; to open up to them such fuller and deeper in sights into the riches of Christ that they, better using their possession of the Lord, might as it were gain new possessions in him and stand more boldly on the glorious certainties they held."

He that Watereth Shall Be Watered Also Himself

"And this [their strengthening] was to be done ministerially, not magisterially. For he goes on to say that the longed for visit would be his gain as well as theirs; that is, *with a view to my concurrent encouragement among you, by our mutual faith, yours and mine together*. Shall we call this a sentence of fine tact, beautifully conciliatory and endearing? Yes, but it is also perfectly sincere. True tact is only the skill of sympathetic love, not the less genuine in its thought because that thought seeks to please and win. He is glad to show himself as his disciples brotherly friend; but then he first is such and enjoys the character and has continually found and felt his own soul made strong and glad by the witness to the Lord that far less gifted believers bore as he and they talked together.

Does not every true teacher know this in his own experience. If we are not merely lecturers on Christianity but witnesses for Christ, we know what it is to hail with deep thanksgivings the encouragement we have had from the lips of those who perhaps believed long after we did and have been far less advantaged outwardly that we have been. . . . Mutual faith, the pregnant phrase of the Apostle, faith residing in each of both parties and owned by each to the other is a might power for Christian encouragement still."

Commenting on this passage another remarks: "Is not the strengthening of others the means of encouraging himself? One shares in the strength which he imparts. The Apostle seems to say that there is in his desire as much holy selfishness as holy zeal. The substitution of the word *encouragement* [AV "comfort"] in speaking of Paul for that of *strengthen* [AV "established"] in speaking of them is significant.

In Paul's case the only thing in question is his subjective feeling, which might be a little depressed and would receive a new impulse from the success of his work among them. Compare Acts 28:15: When Paul say [the brethren] he thanked God, and took courage. . . . It is because they live in this common atmosphere of one and the same faith that they can act and react spiritually, he on them and they on him.

What dignity, tact, and grace in these words. The Apostle at once transforms the active part he is obliged to ascribe to himself in the first place into a receptive part. So he ends with the notion which unites these two points of view: reciprocity in the possession of a common moral life!"

That I Might Have Some Fruit

"His readers might ask with some reason how it happened that Paul, having been an apostle for more than twenty years, had not yet found time to come and preach the good news in the Capital of the world." He therefore explains: "Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that often times I purposed to come unto you (but was let hitherto), that I might have some fruit among you also" (Rom. 1:13). In this verse Paul passes "from the spiritual good that he has always desired to do among the believers of Rome to the extension of their church, to which he hopes he may contribute." "He cannot help" giving more and yet more intimation of his loving gravitation towards them; nor yet of his gracious avarice for fruit, result, harvest, and vintage for Christ in the way of helping on Romans, Asiatics, Macedonians, and Achaians to live a fuller life in him. This we may infer from the whole Epistle would be the chief kind of fruit in his view at Rome. But not only this. We shall see him at once go on to anticipate an evangelistic work at Rome, a speaking of the Gospel Message where there would be a temptation to be ashamed of it. Edification of believers may be his main aim, but conversion of pagan souls to God can not possibly be dissociated from it."

"Let his work at Corinth and Ephesus be remembered. Why should he not accomplish a similar work at Rome? . . . This is what he calls *gathering some fruit*. The phrase is as modest as possible. At Corinth and Ephesus he gathered full harvests. At Rome, where the church already exists, he will merely add some hands full of ears to the sheaves already reaped by others."

"In passing we see with instruction that St. Paul made many plans that came to nothing. He tells us this without apology or misgiving. He claims accordingly no such practical omniscience, actual or possible, as would make his resolutions and forecasts infallible.

Tacitly, at least, he wrote *If the Lord will*, across them all, unless indeed there came a case where (as when he was guided out of Asia to Macedonia [Acts 16:6 10]) direct intimation was given him: abnormal, supernatural, quite *ab extra*, that such and not such was to be his path."

The Glorious Gospel . . . Committed to My Trust

"But now, he is not only homesick for Rome with a yearning love, he feels his obligation to Rome with a wakeful conscience. *Alike to Greeks and to Barbarians, to wise men and to unthinking I am in debt*. Mankind is on his heart in the sorts and differences of its culture. On the one hand were *the Greeks*: the peoples possessed in the popular meaning of the word then what we now call classical civilization, including Greek and Roman. An inner circle of these were the wise, the literati, the readers, writers, thinkers in the curriculum of those literatures and philosophies. On the other hand were *the Barbarians*": tongues and tribes outside the Hellenic pale -- Pisidian, Pamphylian, Galatian, Illyrian, and we know not who besides. Then among them or any where there were *the unthinking*: the numberless masses whom the educated despise or forget as utterly untrained in the schools, unversed in the great topics of man and the world -- the people of the field, the market, and the kitchen. To the Apostle, because to his Lord, all these were now impartially his claimants, his creditors. He *owed them* the Gospel that had been trusted to him for them. Naturally his will might be repelled alike by the frown or smile of the Greek and by the coarse earthiness of the Barbarian.

But supernaturally, in Christ, he loved both and scrupulously remembered his duty to both. Such is the true missionary spirit still, in whatever region, under whatever conditions. The Christian man and the Christian church delivered from the world is yet its debtor. Woe is to him, to it, if that debt is not paid, if that Gospel is hidden in a napkin."

I Am Ready

"Thus he is ready, and more than ready, to pay his debt to Rome. "So [to render literally] what relates to me is eager, to you too, to the men in Rome, to preach the Gospel. What relates to me has an emphasis on me as if to say that the hindrance, whatever it is, is not in him but around him. The doors have been shut but the man stands behind them in act to pass in when he may.

"His eagerness is no light heartedness, no carelessness of when or where. This wonderful missionary is too sensitive to facts and ideas, too rich in imagination not to feel the peculiar, nay, the awful greatness of a summons to Rome. He understands culture too well not to feel its possible obstacles. He has seen too much of both the real grandeur and the harsh force of the imperial power in its extension not to feel a genuine awe as he thinks of meeting that power at its gigantic Center. There is in him that which fears Rome. But he is therefore the very man to go there, for he understands the magnitude of the occasion and he will the more deeply retire upon his Lord for peace and power."

-- *P. L. Read*

Horace E. Hollister Finishes His Course

Early on the morning of December 6th at Albuquerque, New Mexico, Brother Horace laid down his "travel-stained garments," as Brother John T. Read so touchingly sang during the funeral held in Chicago. Brother Percy L. Read had charge of the service, assisted by Brothers Paul E. Thomson, William J. Siekman and John T. Read, all associated in the ministry of the Pastoral Bible Institute, with which Brother Horace had been identified for many years. The stirring remarks made by these old associates were testimony to the devotion and faithfulness of their much beloved brother. Many great and precious promises were quoted, which they confidently believed were applicable to and attained unto by the departed one. These solemn yet joyful words caused one -standing by his bier to renew his consecration and determination to likewise pursue the course leading to our eternal home, "where the surges cease to roll." Many tributes were received, especially from ecclesias where he had served as an elder.

Throughout his long life in "Present Truth," Brother Horace had served devotedly as a "pastor and teacher." Seemingly this pattern was set for his future activities in the Church, when in November, 47 years ago, Brother Russell wrote: "I could wish . . . Brother Horace could give his entire time to the Harvest Work. I do not forget, however, that he is very useful, and I might almost say, necessary, to the [local] Church. . . ." Thereafter the interests of the Lord, the Truth, and the Brethren constituted the dominating and directing influence in his life. Where circumstances directed his path, he served: from St. Louis to Rockford, to Dayton, to New York, back to St. Louis, to Chicago, and finally to Albuquerque.

HIS FINAL TESTIMONY

One afternoon, two or three days before Brother Horace's departure from this life, he was sitting with two of his brothers. He appeared uneasy and Brother William asked him if he wanted to retire. "No," said he, "I want a Bible." Surprised, but delighted, we handed him a Bible and listened. He turned to the 11th chapter of St. Luke, which records what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer. Since suffering a second "stroke" and other complications, he spoke with great difficulty. His sentences were somewhat broken and abbreviated. This was to be no ordinary preachment, but a personal testimony.

Introducing his remarks he quoted from the parallel passage in Matthew 6: " 'Enter into thy closet and shut thy door.' This prayer was not primarily for public use, but for saints; hence: ' . . . say, *Our Father* which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name' -- thy personality be hallowed. 'Thy kingdom come' -- thy sovereignty. 'Thy will be done' -- accomplished through the reign of Christ -- taking the place of Satan's kingdom. 'Give us day by day our daily bread'-our portion, this day, for the Church." Brother William inquired, "Do you mean our portion of life's experience, physical and spiritual food, joys and suffering -- everything?" "Yes," said he, "everything." " 'Forgive us our debts as we [have] forgiven our debtors.'-Connect the parable of the two debtors: One owed a million dollars, the other only seven.(Matt. 18:23-3;5.) 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil' -- He leadeth his sheep; and so, lead us away from, rather than into, temptation of the Evil One."

It seemed clear to both his hearers that these comments were not merely an exegesis, but a personal testimony of Horace's attitude before his Father in heaven: complete submission and desire to have God's will fully accomplished in him and by whatever experiences God saw best to fit him to stand in his presence.

- *Robert R. Hollister.*

"For all the saints, who from their labors rest,
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,
Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blessed,
Alleluia! Alleluia!"

Fellowship and Eldership

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the holy spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God." - Acts 20:28.

The following article appeared first in the "Herald" for November 1940. On request it was reprinted in August 1946. Today, a number of our younger brethren, to whose attention it has only recently come, have urged us to reprint it again. In the belief that its counsel is timely, we are glad to comply with this request. Ed. Com.

WITH THE world passing through the long predicted "time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation," and with many of our brethren engulfed therein, it is not without considerable diffidence that we venture to occupy space in this journal for a discussion of such elementary matters as those reflected in the caption of this article. There are, however, sufficient indications in our correspondence and personal visits with the brethren to make it clear that the topic will prove timely to many, and we trust its consideration here, at this time, will not be without some measure of profit to all our readers.

Two questions will be considered in the following order:

- (1) The basis of our fellowship as brethren, and
- (2) The qualifications and ministry of elders.

Under the second heading we hope to offer a few remarks with reference to the three doctrines now being made tests of eldership by many of the ecclesias, namely:

- (1) The Covenants
- (2) The Sin-offering, and
- (3) Our Lord's Second Presence.

We had hoped to consider also a third main subject, namely, "The True Principle of Christian Liberty," but space will not permit, so it must wait for another occasion.

As we take up the consideration of these questions, it is hardly necessary to remind ourselves of the fact that the spirit in which we attempt their solution is all-important. Not only must we see to it that no root of bitterness or feeling of ill will towards any one is permitted to dwell in our hearts, but, in addition to a large measure of Christian love for each other, and a disposition to be "easy-entreated" along any proper, that is to say, scriptural lines, we should each have a very definite conviction of our own insufficiency and be seeking from above that wisdom which in ourselves we lack, but which to all men, and therefore to us, God has promised to give liberally, without chiding us for being so needy and without impoverishing Himself one iota.

Fellowship With the Brethren

First, then, let us consider the basis of our fellowship as brethren. This is very simply told. It consists in a belief in the existence of the one only true God, and in a firm conviction that Christ Jesus is His Son, and that, after laying down His life as a ransom for us, He was raised from the dead by the Father's power. It consists further of a confession that this risen Jesus has become our Lord; that is to say, He has been entreated by us each individually, and has graciously consented to exercise lordship of our life; and finally, it consists in an outward manner of life which makes it plain that these beliefs and confessions are not false but are the sincere sentiment of our hearts. To quote the language of the inspired apostle: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord [that is to say, as thy Lord, no matter who else rejects Him], and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:9, 10.) This is our own glad confession of faith, and all who share it we rejoice to recognize as brethren; and it is an honor and satisfaction to us to have the assurance that they, on their part, hold a reciprocal sentiment of brotherly interest in us, and that, regardless of whatever other affiliations, if any, which one or another of us may have, we are nevertheless able to meet, able to worship, to praise, to pray, to fellowship **whole-heartedly** with each other on this common ground of consecration to our heavenly Father and His dear Son, remembering that One is our Master, even Christ, and that all we are brethren.

All Elders Are Not Teachers

We pass, now, to our second main question, which takes up and discusses the qualifications and ministry of elders.

From time to time we meet with friends who seem to be under the impression that all elders should possess the qualifications of a teacher. The Scriptures, however, do not support this view. Neither did Brother Russell. The Apostle Paul, in Ephesians 4:11, 12, after telling us that when our Lord ascended on high, He led captivity captive and received gifts for men, goes on to enumerate these gifts. "He," that is, our Lord, "gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors, and some teachers."

Commenting on this passage, Brother Russell wrote: "All who attend to the spiritual ministries of the truth are properly described by the term 'elders,' whether otherwise they are doing the service of an apostle, or prophet [that is to say, public speaker], or evangelist, or pastor, or teacher. To fill any of these positions of service properly, one must be recognized as an elder in the Church." -S. S. 6 : F243, F244.

Again, on this same matter, he wrote: "As elders of the Church are all overseers, . . . so also each, according to his talent and ability, might serve the flock, one as an evangelist, whose qualifications fitted him and those conditions permitted him to go about preaching the truth to beginners. . . another serving the flock as a pastor (or shepherd) because of special qualifications of a social kind, enabling him to look after the interests of the Lord's people personally, individually,-visiting them at their homes," etc. " 'Prophets' [that is, public speakers] also had their special qualifications for service."

Again, in another place he wrote: "Others of the elders, perhaps not so apt to teach [note the expression carefully], may be just in their element in prayer and testimony meetings, which should be a feature amongst the various gatherings of the Lord's people. He who finds himself possessed of a good talent of exhorting should exercise that talent rather than let it lie dormant while

endeavoring to exercise a talent which he does not possess in any special degree. The apostle says, 'He that exhorteth, let him wait on exhortation,' that is, let him give his ability and service in that direction; 'him that teacheth' [that is, who has a talent for exposition, for making the truth plain], 'let him give attention to teaching.' "

While we are on this point, it maybe well to distinguish "clearness in the truth" from "aptness to teach." One might be very clear in the truth, himself, and yet possess little or no ability to impart his knowledge to others. Another, not nearly so well informed, might be very apt to teach to others the little he does know.

An Elder's Primary Qualifications

The primary qualifications of an elder, which Brother Russell calls an elder's "real" qualifications (S. S. 6: F247), are: "that he be sound on the basic doctrines of the Gospel, namely, the atonement, that is, redemption through the precious blood of Christ, and full consecration to Him, His message, His brethren, His service."

We can easily see why these are his real qualifications when we stop to consider the grand objective which the elder should have always in mind, in his ministry, whether it be a ministry of exhorting, public speaking, teaching, or some other form of service. And what is that grand objective? Again we quote our late, beloved Pastor in his advice to elders (Reprints, R4346). To **them** he says, "Remember that the principal thing is love in all; and, while not neglecting doctrines, give special heed to the development of the Lord's spirit amongst the various members of His body, that they may become 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.'"

Here, in this quotation, we see that Brother Russell did not overlook doctrines, 'but gave first place to the principal thing, namely, love.

An Elder Who is a Teacher

In another passage (Reprints, R4503) he considers the special qualifications of an elder who is a teacher. "Of course," says Brother Russell, "a teacher should be apt to teach; he should have the natural faculty or ability to make plain matters which he understands. Still more important is it that if he have the ability to teach, he shall be clear in the truth, and so the truth, not error, may be set forth with clearness. Humility and piety should be considered **paramount and primary** qualifications for eldership. However able a teacher, **however** doctrinally clear, no one is properly fitted for this position except he have humility and piety, and unless his words, **and deeds** have manifested his love for the brethren. For, as the Scriptures set forth, these are qualities of great value in God's sight." (Bold face is ours.)

Is an Agreement With Pastor Russell's Views on "The Covenants," the "Sin-offering," and the "Second Presence" an Essential Qualification for Eldership?

It may be, however, that some of our readers are disposed to say: "We would agree very well with what has been said in this discussion, insofar as fellowshipping another as a brother is concerned, but when it comes to electing him as an elder, should we not expect him to measure up to certain doctrinal standards, over and above, the basic, fundamental doctrines of faith and consecration? There are three particular doctrines in the teachings of Brother Russell to which, it seems to us, a brother should subscribe before he should be considered qualified, doctrinally, to serve as an elder, namely, (1) the Covenants, (2) the Sin-offering, (3) the Presence of the Lord. In attaching

this importance to these three doctrines we are supported by Brother Russell himself, are we not, both in his teaching and practice?"

That question, we think, is a proper one, so let us give it some consideration here. In the first place, we would ask our questioners: "Are you quite sure that Brother Russell approved this position in his teaching?" To our mind the contrary is true. Let us read his exact words from R5968. He is discussing this very matter of why elders should be carefully chosen. After speaking of the Apostle Paul's zeal in proclaiming the good tidings, he says:

"This should be the spirit [that is to say, this zealous spirit of St. Paul should be the spirit] not only of the pilgrims, of the elders of the Church of Christ, but the spirit of every member of it for in a large sense each one of us is privileged to be a minister, or servant, in writing the message of God's grace in the hearts of others. But let us not forget that we shall not know how to write in the hearts of others what we have not already had written in our own hearts. Hence the propriety of great caution in the choosing of elders -- to find those who already have the writing of the Lord in their hearts, and who therefore will be competent assistants, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for the writing of the Lord's character-likeness in the hearts of the younger brethren. And what is the message, what is the epistle, that is written in our hearts by the Holy Spirit through various agencies? Is it the knowledge of Chronology? Is it the unraveling of types and shadows? Is it the cracking of hard theological nuts in respect to differently understood passages of Scripture? Is it the knowledge of the history of the Jews, the history of the world, the history of the Church? Is it the understanding and appreciation of the different covenants, past, present, and to come? No, it is none of these. All of these subjects have more or less of value, and are more or less used of the Lord in connection with this writing that is to be done in the hearts of His people. But writing the epistle of Christ is different--the writing, the tracing of the character likeness of the Master in the hearts of His people His meekness, His gentleness, His patience, His long-suffering, His brotherly-kindness, His love, His joy, His peace. . . With these characteristics of the Master deeply engraved upon our hearts, we shall be granted an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.' - 2 Pet. 1:8,11."

Now in this passage Brother Russell specifically mentions the Covenants, past, present, and future. He mentions also types and shadows, in which, of course, would be included his understanding of the Sin-offering. He does not specifically refer to the Second Presence of Christ, but he does refer to Chronology, which is one of the chief helps we have in determining the due time for our Lord to be present. He thus, in effect, mentions all three of these much-discussed doctrines. He has not forgotten them or overlooked them but holds them up to our view for the deliberate purpose of contrasting them with the all-important writing of the Lord's character likeness in our hearts. He says the message that is to be written in our hearts which will produce this character-likeness is "none of these." Moreover, this was his word at the end of his ministry, after all the bitter, controversial years had passed. It appears as his last word on the subject, just before he died, in the October 1, 1916 issue of the journal he edited for so long.

What Was Brother Russell's Practice?

But the question is still only half answered. As stated it read: "In attaching this importance to these three doctrines we are supported by Brother Russell himself, are we not, both in his teaching and practice?"

We think we have shown that this position is not supported by Brother Russell in his **teachings**. But some one may still have difficulty in harmonizing this with Brother Russell's **practice**. The question may present itself: "Is it not a fact that during those controversial years many did actual-

ly separate from Brother Russell on account of those very doctrines, especially that of the Sin offering?

Again we must answer: No, that is not true. There was, of course, a separation at that time. That is a matter of history. And many have supposed that it was because of doctrinal differences. But, dear brethren, where the spirit of Christ, the spirit of 'brotherly love, prevails, people do not separate for any reason. Doctrinal differences, except on the fundamental items of our faith, have never in themselves brought about a division, and they did not do so then. Bitterness of spirit, manifested by some, but not by all, on 'both sides of that controversy, brought about the separation which' took place. There was no need for any one to separate from Brother Russell on account of a different understanding of the Sin-offering type. Nor was any pilgrim brother retired from the ministry on that account. Not only so, but many who stayed with Brother Russell erred as much on the subject as those who left him. Note his words, in R5285, where, in discussing this point, he says: "In our judgment many err in attaching too much value to the Church's sacrifice; whereas other dear brethren err, we think, in that they do not see any value in the Church's sacrifice, nor that she is permitted a share in the Master's sacrifice at all. To us this seems like the swing of the pendulum from one extreme to the other; whereas our view lies in the center, as we have stated the matter in our several publications. If, after fully considering these matters, a class finds that it cannot agree, and would make better progress as two classes, we would concur in that conclusion as a wise one, as much as we would deplore the necessity of a' division. Such a separation would not necessarily alienate either class from the Lord's people, nor from the Society, because both acknowledge Jesus as their Redeemer, and both acknowledge that His blood is primarily efficacious."

Let us apply these words to any given case. Here is a class, we will say, which, much as Brother Russell deplores it, separates on these issues. What course does Brother Russell pursue? Does he say: "I'll serve the one, and not the other"? Does he say: "I'll find out which of them seems to be closest to my view, and serve it, forsaking the other"? No, indeed! He says their separation from each other will not necessarily separate either from the Society; which, since he controlled all of the Society's property and activities, was his modest way of speaking of himself. If one or both classes became alienated from him, is it not clear that, whatever the reasons given, the true cause was something else and not these doctrinal matters themselves?

We trust it has been made clear to any who may have had some question in their minds on the subject, that these three doctrines were not suggested by Brother Russell as tests of eldership in the ecclesias, nor were they considered by him as proper tests to apply to a brother who was a candidate for the pilgrim ministry.

So far as the writer of this article is concerned, he has yet to see -or hear anything which appeals to him to be better supported than the exposition of these subjects given by Brother Russell. But this writer does not think they should 'be made tests of fellowship or of eldership. Nor do the other members of our Editorial Committee, or of our Board of Directors, or the brethren engaged in our pilgrim ministry. Nor did Brother Russell, as we understand his writings. Brother Russell also continued a brother in the pilgrim service who had a decidedly different view from his own on the Anti-Christ-see Reprints, R5865-R5867. Similarly with the question of "That Servant." It is our belief that 'brethren who are elders, as well as brethren who are not, should be free to believe whatever interpretation of the Matthew 24th passage appeals to them as being best supported. Some of the brethren associated in our ministry believe the reference is to Brother Russell, while others do not. No test is made, however, on the subject, and this seems to us the better way.

The Word of God Alone Must Decide Every Matter

In presenting the foregoing discussion for your consideration, we have quoted repeatedly and at length from the writings of our late, beloved Pastor. We have felt quite safe in doing this because our readers, for the most part, constitute a group of people whom we have every reason to believe hold him and his ministry in the same precious memory as we do ourselves. But neither writer nor readers should be satisfied with anything less than a "Thus saith the Lord" on all questions relating to our faith and practice. Nor, we are sure, would Brother Russell approve anything less. We dare not close this discussion, therefore, without reminding both you and ourselves that the qualifications of an elder are quite simply set forth in the Scriptures, in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-11, and 1 Peter 5:1-3, and that any brother, or organization of brethren, of any ecclesia, that lays down qualifications different from or additional to those given in these inspired writings, is adding to or taking from God's Word. The infallible Word of God, the holy Scriptures, and these alone, are to constitute the test that must decide every matter for the Christian who is free indeed. Any set- of doctrines imposed on a church or imposed by a church, no matter how apparently well-meant, actually take away from an appeal to Scripture, becoming themselves the only permissible appeal. If there should be error in such a creed, that error will have to be maintained as carefully as the truth which may be in it. If there be defect in the creed, the Scriptures cannot be allowed to even supplement it. They are thus completely displaced from their rightful supremacy over men.

If we look back over history, -from the great Reformation onward, we will discover that every revival of a study of God's Word, every earnest effort at evangelizing, every effort put forth to draw and unite true Christians in the bonds of brotherly love, has, when persevered in, had the effect of breaking down the 'barriers of sectarianism-and of liberating the people of God; but alas, history and experience show that the imitation class, the tare element, is always found wherever there are true wheat, and out of such bold moves for Christian liberty and freedom there almost invariably develops a new sect, which becomes dominated 'by the same partisan spirit of bondage, resulting again in the taking away of personal liberties in Christ. These reform movements have originated, generally, outside denominationalism. The most important movement of this kind since the great Reformation, has occurred in this present, the Laodicean, period under the leadership of our late Pastor Russell, but like all the other movements of the past, it ended in sectarianism; and having accomplished its purpose, the usual testings and siftings have come. They are present today in still more subtle forms. (He that readeth, let him understand.) These tests are designed of the Lord, at least in one particular, to manifest those who possess the Philadelphian spirit of brotherly love, and loyalty to Christ and His Word.

To sum up what we have said on the qualifications and ministry of elders, then, we would say:

- (1) Brethren maybe-satisfactory elders who are not teachers.
- (2) Clearness, in the truth is one thing, but agreement with any particular view of a scriptural proposition which may be differently understood is quite another.
- (3) Clearness in the truth is one thing; aptness to teach is another.
- (4) Both these latter qualifications are important, but are not the most important.
- (5) The chief question to be determined concerning a brother who is a nominee for elder and who is sound on the basic doctrines of faith and consecration is: Is his character and disposition such that the effect of his ministry will be to develop in our hearts a greater character-likeness to the

Master? Will his ministry tend to make us more like our Lord? If he should be taken from us, will we be able to look back over his labors in our midst and say, "Thank God, we were privileged to have him here. We have grown a little meeker than we were, since we learned to know him. We are more gentle than we used to be, because of his gracious example. His word of cheerful exhortation, his encouraging testimony in the mid-week meetings, his loving sympathy and noble support in times of difficulty, his helpful word in our studies, his promptness to confess error when mistaken, his willingness to admit wrong when overtaken, as he sometimes was, in a fault - - if that is what we can confidently expect from his share in the oversight of our ecclesia, he shall have our vote, and not only our vote but our wholehearted, loyal support, even if his views on some matters which, while important, do not seem to us essential, differ materially from ours. On the other hand, if he lacked these qualifications and it was quite evident he was not striving to attain them, we would not vote for him no matter how well he agreed with us in matters of doctrine.

In conclusion we commend our readers, as we commend ourselves, to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build us up and to give us an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. - Acts 20:32.

- P. L. Read.

Ebenezer

"He who hath helped thee hitherto
Will help thee all thy journey through."

The Weekly Prayer, Praise; and Testimony Meeting

"We went ... where prayer was wont to be made." - Acts 18:13.

New subscribers are invited to write us for a free copy of the July 1955 "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 FEBRUARY 2 - ROMANS 8:13

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die."

These words, addressed by the Apostle to the consecrated Christians living at Rome, are equally applicable to Christian people living all down through the Age. The terms all during the Gospel dispensation are the same. They have not changed, and will not change. The agreement of our consecration is that we will make a full surrender of ourselves as human beings, that we will give up our earthly rights and privileges, as we have control of these. It includes still more than this. It includes the giving up of our hopes as members of the world of mankind.

We surrender these for the hope which the Church is granted, not the hope of human perfection, but the hope of being accounted worthy to attain, with the Master, to glory, honor, and immortality-the divine nature.

These are merely hopes, merely prospects. We do not see the glorious things themselves. We merely have the Lord's Word respecting them. These begotten of the holy spirit are called new creatures. And these new creatures are to live, not after the flesh, but after the spirit. That is to say, they are not to obey the dictates of the flesh, but those of the holy spirit of God.

NO SECOND PROBATION FOR THE CHURCH

There is in our text no intimation of a second probation for any of those addressed. These words were spoken to those who in the present existence are on trial for life. The Apostle does not say, If ye live after the flesh ye will lose the prize now offered, but ye will have another trial for life later on. His words speak of a present probation, the issue of which will be life or death. Nor is the Apostle here discussing the terms of salvation by the exercise of faith in the atoning blood of Christ. All this is taken for granted. He is speaking here, not of what we believe, but solely of how we are to live.

It is therefore logically manifest, even if the Apostle had not so declared, that if we, consecrated believers, turn back again to live after the flesh, we shall die; that for us to be carnally minded is death, while to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

In the difficult course before us, and in view of all the dangers that beset us, the pitfalls laid for our feet, the weakness of our own unaided efforts, how blessed is the promise of our Father in Heaven to give the holy spirit to them that ask him; how precious the assurance that if we are filled with the spirit, we shall not fulfill the desires of the flesh, but shall be enabled to mortify the deeds of the body that we may live! How necessary it is to live very near to the fountain of all grace, to pray without ceasing and to watch with perseverance! - *Reprints*, pp. R5269, R5806, R5807.

MANNA TEXT FEBRUARY 9 - PSALMS 116:7

"Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

"We which have believed do enter into rest." (Heb. 4:3.) The Apostle here tells us what to do in order to avail ourselves of that which God has already provided for us. He shows us that God made promises to Abraham, and these were reiterated to Isaac and to Jacob. The promises were great and precious.

Abraham believed the message and was glad. He rested. He did not need to know then about the Lord Jesus or the plan of salvation.

He had full rest in fully believing God; and so did as many of his posterity as exercised the same faith as Abraham. They had a rest of faith in these things that God had *Lot* yet accomplished.

INCREASING LIGHT AND GREATER TESTS

Coming down to our own Age, we see that a greater light, a greater privilege, has brought greater tests of faith in many respects. So the eye of faith today is able to grasp God's purposes in a fuller way than did Abraham. Yet we do not know that our faith is any greater than his. Abraham had full faith, full confidence in God, and no one could have more than this.

REST PROPORTIONATE TO FAITH

In Scriptural usage the word believe implies much more than merely to acknowledge a fact or a truth. One might have an intellectual belief in these promised blessings without entering into the rest mentioned in our text. To the extent that the individual recognizes those facts, accepts them, and acts upon them, to that extent he enters into rest. If he believes partially, he rests in that proportion; if he believes perfectly, he has perfect rest, and will show his faith by his works. All who truly believe will accept such an offer and will enter into rest by faith.

HEART CONFIDENCE ESSENTIAL

"With the heart man believeth," and not merely with the head. It is not a mere intellectual belief. When we accept the Gospel as a fact, and enter fully into it, we begin at once to have a measure of this rest; and as we learn by our experiences how true the Lord is to all his promises to us, the rest becomes more deep and abiding. The belief was at first a full belief in the message of God; but as we grow in grace and in the knowledge of God, the more firm and established does our faith become, and our rest is proportionate. - *Reprints, p. R5433.*

MANNA TEXT FEBRUARY 16, - 2 COR. 6:8, 3.

"Through honor and dishonor, through evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; ... giving no offense in anything, that the ministry be not blamed."

The deliberateness of divine providence often astounds us. Our lives are so brief, our limitations so many, that any plans we may have must be pushed to completion as rapidly as we are able. But not so with- the Almighty, who is "from everlasting to everlasting God." He has unlimited time at his disposal, and accordingly is working out his sovereign will with great deliberation. It is a

comfort to his people to be assured that he knows the end from the beginning, and is working all things according to the counsel of his own will. Bible students are being blessed in proportion as they are learning that the divine will is always a good will-just, wise, and loving.

God's dealings with Moses illustrate the general principles of his dealings with all those of whom he would make special servants prepared for special services. Our Lord Jesus in the heavenly courts testified his loyalty and fidelity to the Almighty. As a means toward his further exaltation the opportunity was given him of becoming the Savior of mankind, and thus of carrying out the divine program. He gladly responded, therefore God highly exalted him "far above angels, principalities, and powers, and every name that is named." - Phil. 2:9-11; Ephes. 1:20-23; 1 Pet. 3:22.

Similarly, God during this Gospel Age is calling out of the world a saintly company, a little flock, to be associated with Jesus in his great work of the future. Those responsive to this special invitation are required to demonstrate their loyalty to God, "through evil report and through good report-as deceivers and yet true." At times these saintly ones have even been branded, as was St. Paul, "the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things." - 1 Cor. 4:13; 2 Cor. 6:8.

"As deceivers, and yet true." On many occasions the great Apostle Paul was dishonored; at other times he was honored. He had evil reports spread abroad concerning him as well as good reports. He was considered a deceiver by many who professed to be the people of God.

All who serve the Lord, whether publicly or privately, are ministers, and should endeavor to live so true a life, so honorable a life, that even though they may be called deceivers, nevertheless others will take note of their exemplary walk. Each should try to live in so inoffensive a manner that the world will call it good, proper living. Live above reproach. Give no just cause for offense. This is the Apostle's thought, that we should not give any one just reason to be offended at, *us*. - *Reprints, pp. R5251, R5252, R5773, R5774.*

The Question Box

Question:

Please explain this text: "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." - Matt. 10:16.

Answer:

As the context shows, these words were spoken by our Lord to his twelve Apostles and constituted part of his commission to them. The word "apostle" means "one sent forth." Christ himself was *the* Apostle -- the Apostle and High Priest of our profession (Heb. 3:1) -the one sent forth by God. And these twelve were his apostles -- chosen and sent forth by him. "Behold I send you forth [the "I" is emphasized] as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

They themselves, if they continued in his ministry and spirit, could not and would not bite and devour. Their apostolic mission had no wolfish element in it. But they themselves would be persecuted. As sheep in the midst of wolves they would be exposed to the malice of many who would be both able and eager to bite and devour. Because of this, "therefore," they were to be, or to become, "wise as serpents."

The word translated "wise" in our Authorized Version is translated "prudent" by Rotherham. In the Diaglott it is "sagacious." It does not refer to intellectual 'or ethical wisdom, but rather denotes prudence in regard to one's own safety. It refers to the serpent's real or reputed wariness or sagacity *in relation to danger*. Commenting on this passage Matthew Henry has observed: "They were to be not as foxes, whose cunning is to deceive others; but wary as serpents whose policy is only to defend themselves, and to shift for their own safety." "In the cause of Christ," this writer adds, "we must be wise not to pull trouble upon our- own heads."

The word "harmless has the significance of "purity," of being "unmixed," "unadulterated," and hence "without guile." While he wished them to become, in time of need, *wary* as serpents, he did not wish them to become wily, or insincere. They were to be genuine throughout, as unwily as doves. Their character was to be as Dr. Morrison puts it, "a beautiful mixture of wariness and guilelessness."

Our Lord's "therefore must not be overlooked. It is dependent upon the emphatic "I" of the first clause: "It is I who send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; become ye *therefore*, as becometh apostles charged with my commission, wary, but qualify that wariness by dovelike guilelessness. The presence of the wolves demands that ye be wary; the fact that ye are my apostles demands that ye be guileless."

We are not apostles, yet nevertheless we represent, in our lesser service, the Lord's cause in the earth today. As such the text applies to each of us. "Be ye therefore, wary as serpents, guileless as doves."

- P. L. Read.

Recently Deceased

Sr. Carl Aronson, Minneapolis, Minn. (Dec.).

Sr. Eda Cheugh, Columbus, O. (Dec.).

Sr. P. R. Clauson, Madison, Wis. (Dec.).

Bro. E. W. Keib, Pittsburgh, Pa. (Dec.).

Sr. I. I. Margeson, Westwood, Mass. (Dec.).

Bro. Johan Wyndelts, Dallas, Tex. (Dec.).