

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## "Going to the Father" A New Year Meditation

LIFE is a journey. Each New Year another milestone is passed. Journey's end for us, as for Jesus, is the Father. No less than five times our Lord says, "I go to the Father." (John 14:12, 28; 16:10, 16, 28.) He also tells us, "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:1-3), so that we also are going to the Father. The going of Jesus to the Father was a crisis at the end of a long process. Because of sin he had left the Father, and all his earthly life was a journey back home to God. "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father." - John 16:28.

Separated from the Father by reason of sin, God's prodigal world are in the far country. Redeemed by Christ, God has provided for them two ways back. Now it is the Narrow Way, and in the Age to come it will be the Highway. Those who in this Age say, like the prodigal son in the parable, "I will arise and go to my father," are directed to the way that Jesus himself took. As illustrated in the typical tabernacle, that way is represented in the progression from outside the camp, through the camp and the court to the Holy and Most Holy. The consummation in the Most Holy can be attained only by the experiences represented in the previous stages. Concerning Jesus himself we read that he learned obedience by the things which he suffered, and that he was made perfect through sufferings. (Heb. 5:8; 2:11.) How much more, then, must this be true of those who are called to follow in his steps. The distance separating us from the Father is not measured in terms of time or space, but in likeness to himself. Summing up the essence of the whole sermon on the mount, our Lord exhorts as the goal that is set before us: "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." God's design for his Church is that they shall be his Divine Family, dwelling in the closest possible proximity to him. The Father himself has undertaken to child-train us that we might be fitted for occupying such an inconceivably high position. How much training in culture, refinement, education, and etiquette, a poor beggar boy would require before being fitted to move in the highest circles of human society. How much more the sinful sons of men before they could be sons of God, fitted to dwell in the Father's most holy presence. That we be conformed to the image of his Son is God's standard for us.

Since God is love, the journey to the Father is, in the last analysis, measured in terms of our attainments in love. This implies that not only is our going to the Father a process, but that also his coming to us is likewise a process. The prodigal son did not have to wait till he reached his

father's house before he met his father. "When he was yet a long way off, his father saw him, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Likewise does the Father come to us, for "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him." (1 John 4:16.) The progressive development in love means the progressive development of the indwelling presence of the Father. For this we express the inward yearning of our hearts when we sing: "Nearer, my God to thee, nearer to thee! E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me."

## A PROCESS AND A CRISIS

This New Year may be one of many which we have passed into in the process of going to the Father, but the crisis of passing beyond the veil into his immediate presence will occupy the briefest possible period of time. Paul's words are (1 Cor. 15:51, 52): "Behold I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

We cross the threshold of another year accompanied by signs so increasingly ominous that men's hearts are beginning to fail them for fear. The Bible teaching is clear that before the Kingdom is established there must come first a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. It is generally accepted that the Church, counted worthy to escape, will all be taken away before the deluge is let loose upon the earth. What if this should happen in the New Year? We cannot say this is impossible, for the flash point in the extremely critical condition of world tension could be reached at any moment. As for the Church, our Lord expressly declares that we shall not know beforehand when the end of her course on earth shall be reached and all the members then living shall be glorified together. Older readers will remember our expectations of this for 1910 and again for 1914 and later dates. This knowledge of the time when they would collectively reach the end of the way was purposely withheld from the Church throughout the whole of the Gospel Age in order that each successive generation should have the inspiration of the hope of the Lord's coming for them in their day.

Not very long ago I received a letter, an extract from which reads: "Mum and I have been busy planning our summer holidays and now we are all fixed up for two weeks in Norway in June. We are both very thrilled and have been poring over travel books." Is this not very suggestive of the position in which we find ourselves? "All fixed up, thrilled: poring over travel books." They had never been to Norway before, yet had you asked them, they could have given you glowing accounts of what they expected to see. We are all fixed up for going to the Father, possibly very soon. We are thrilled at the prospect. If some sympathetic friend aware of our hopes should inquire concerning them, have we been consulting any travel books so that we could convey any idea of our expectations?

But where shall we find the information? Paul, we recall, was caught away to the third heaven. Reading the account in 2 Corinthians 12:4, we learn that he heard unspeakable words which it was not lawful (*Diaglott*: possible) to utter. Think of the difficulty a person with sight would have in trying to convey to people born blind what a world of light and color is, and we can see probably what was in Paul's mind.

The Apostle, however, does not leave the matter here. He tells of another line of approach in 2 Corinthians 4:17, 18. We might call it spiritual clairvoyance, whereby the unseen can be seen, through the medium of the seen. "For our light afflictions which are but for a moment, worketh .for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, *while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen*: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." In this wonderful paradox, Paul tells us that the temporal can be a medium for revealing the eternal: a window not *at* but *through* which we look: a mirror into which we gaze, not to see what is inherent in it, but what it reflects. This principle is recognized in the oft quoted lines: "Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God."

## **NATURES DISTINCT**

I remember the thrill that I experienced when I read for the first time many years ago, the chapter on "Natures Distinct" in the First Volume of *Scripture Studies*. As illustrated so beautifully in the diagram on page 176, God has his family on different levels of being. The highest is the Divine, the lowest the human, with the angels a little above the human. We have no clear knowledge regarding planes of being, if any, between the angelic and the Divine, which are left unspecified in the diagram. Man was God's youngest child, and what a wonderful birthday present he inherited in a body so fearfully and wonderfully made and so perfectly articulated to his home in this world of wonders represented in Eden, that it left nothing to be desired. God's gifts being perfect, it is impossible for man to imagine anything better than a perfect body in perfect earthly surroundings. Made in God's image, perfect man reflected the glory of God, and in his perfect Edenic home was mirrored heaven. Called to experience a change of nature from the lowest to the highest, we find it impossible to think and speak of heaven except in terms of earth.

An illustration may help us here. Let these various planes of being be represented in a four-floor block of flats. Any building, to be stable, must conform throughout all floors to the design of the ground foundation plan, the walls being carried right through all floors to the top. In God's building, of course, the foundation is at the top in heaven, and the principle operating is the one stated to Moses: "See thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." - Heb. 8:5.

The Divine is the pattern, therefore, for all the floor levels. God's design is to give to all his family, whatever the plane of being, as much of the Divine as it is possible for them to contain. It is not that the lower planes in the nature of things cannot imagine anything better than each possesses; it is that nothing better is possible. Their limited capacity is filled to the brim so that they experience heaven where they are. When restored to perfection, mankind will have heaven upon earth.

## **ALL NATURES IN PARALLEL**

God's desire being to give all his children the maximum of that which he himself enjoys, it follows that, as illustrated in the foundation walls running through all floors, the various natures would be in parallel with the Divine. This is illustrated in the common possession of the mental and moral image of God. Both angels and men possess like qualities of heart and mind, reason, memory, and will. It would be a reasonable inference that in body and environment there would also be a parallel, though of necessity this would be beyond the comprehension of the lower except by analogy.

A question sometimes asked is if we shall know and recognize each other beyond the veil, just as we do now by our bodily appearance. The answer is that the personality and the body cannot be divorced from each other. Our bodies are peculiarly our own as are our personalities. So much is this true, that among all the countless millions of mankind there are no two finger-prints alike. In our resurrection and change both appear simultaneously. To their own generation the Apostles James and John, Paul and Peter, and all the other saints will be as clearly recognized as they were on earth. It will be similarly true with all the generations of the Church right down to our own day.

The principle of the indivisibility of the ego or personality and the body is illustrated in the angels who materialized in Old Testament times and also in our Lord during the forty days prior to his ascension. The angel Gabriel would look like Gabriel just as our Lord in the upper room looked

like our Lord. And because the planes of being are in parallel, like the various floors in our illustration, the angels who materialized, such as Gabriel and the three who appeared to Abraham, of whom one was probably our Lord, all appeared to be quite at home in the earthly surroundings.

### **AT HOME ON ANY PLANE OF BEING**

Reverting again to our illustration of the block of flats, let us suppose that the ground floor was occupied by a working class family: the floor above by a family belonging to the middle or professional class, and the very top floor by a family with aristocratic connections, moving in top society circles. All these keep themselves by themselves, and their apartments are furnished in accordance with their respective positions on the social scale. Should the occasion arise and members of one family be invited to any of the other flats, they would have no difficulty in finding their way about, as the general layout of the apartments was just the same as their own. The lowest, however, invited to the highest would have very much to see and admire in the luxurious furnishings and all the evidences of refinement and culture, education, and taste associated with the highest and best in the strata of human society. And so it would be with the Church and their resurrection and change. So it was with the angels in their occasional visits to this earth, when it was evident that they were at home in their surroundings, though going to a lower level. Water is found in three forms: a liquid, a solid as in ice, and an invisible vapor as in steam. In all three forms it is the same chemical substance known as H<sub>2</sub>O. The transition is effected very simply by a change of temperature. Raise this, and the ice turns to water. Continue the process, and water turns to steam. Just so will it be when we experience our change of nature, and personality and body are raised from the lowest to the highest.

### **RESURRECTION -- A BIRTH**

Continuing this New Year meditation, not only may we see the unseen in the parallels of God's birthday present to man in his body, so fearfully and wonderfully made, and in the world of wonders, his home, to which it is so perfectly articulated, but also in the various circles of human life in which man has lived and moved. The Bible speaks of the resurrection and change of the Church as a new birth. Jesus is referred to as the first-born from the dead (Rev. 1:5), and Paul speaks of himself as having seen the Lord as one born out of due time. (1 Cor. 15:8.) Taking the human life into which we are born as a medium for seeing the unseen, we note that it revolves in three comprehensive circles so far as the people of God are concerned. These are (1) the circle of family life (2) the circle of Church life (3) the circle of social contacts outside of the family and the Church. Space permits only the briefest outline of these, leaving it to your sanctified imagination to fill in and expand the wonderful details.

### **THE CIRCLE OF FAMILY LIFE**

In the round of human family life *there* are the child's earliest conscious impressions of his environment: his sense of wonder at all he sees and hears: his endless questions. Later in his ability to read, his right of entrance into the enchanted land of the world of books. And gradually and imperceptibly the child grows up. Both to parent and child, childhood is a sweet experience. How often does old age look back upon it with a sense of wistfulness.

In the Divine family this most happy stage will always exist. We shall always be as children to our Heavenly Father, never losing the sense of wonder, never ceasing to ask questions, under his tender care and tuition ever extending the frontiers of our knowledge of him and taking in ever more of the illimitable unknown.

In a large family, it frequently happens that there is such a disparity between the eldest and the youngest that in point of age and experience they could be parent and child. Jesus is our elder brother, not ashamed to call us brethren. (Heb. 2:11.) But as the only begotten of the Father, with him from the beginning, the Lord will always be infinitely far above us. Just as he walked and talked with the disciples of old as they trod the Galilean hills or walked by the lake imparting to them the knowledge of the Kingdom, so will he walk and talk with us unfolding the wonderful secrets of things from the beginning through the untold and unimaginable aions of time occupied by the process of bringing into being all things in heaven and in earth.

Besides being our elder brother, our Lord bears towards his Church the more tender relationship of bridegroom to bride. We are so like little children as he himself calls us, in comparison with him, that it requires the two human types to cover the relationship which will exist eternally between Christ and his Church. Love stories and fairy tales have a universal appeal, but the very best is as nothing compared with this love story, and the grand climax in love stories when the principals get married and live happy ever after will have a fulfillment in the case of Christ and the Church in a glory as far above its earthly type as the sun at noonday is to the light of a candle.

### **THE CIRCLE OF CHURCH LIFE**

How very sweet and precious to us is the fellowship of kindred minds so like to that above. As we have assembled in larger or smaller gatherings and particularly at conventions, how often have we felt as if they were days of heaven upon earth. But here our bodies get tired, our minds fatigued, and our memories prove but leaky vessels. But what must it be to be in the General Assembly and all subsequent glorious gatherings! Think of being addressed by the Apostles and outstanding saints from their day onward, and above and behind all to listen to our Father himself and our Lord! And as for the praise, what must the grand Hallelujah choruses voiced by so vastly more than a thousand tongues be like.

Then there is not only the collective but the individual fellowship. At conventions how very enjoyable to meet brethren from a distance and compare notes on our varying experiences. But think how gathered over there, will be our brethren from every period in Church history since Pentecost and from *every* kindred and tongue and people and nation. How wonderful to get to know them all. Then we have the experience here of fellowship together in the Lord's service. This too will have a parallel, for the promise to the overcomers is that they will sit with the Lord on his throne. With God, exaltation to authority and power is not for honor but for service. For a thousand years the Church will be serving in the glorious work of restitution. What a transporting prospect this is! Then in the ages to come, still continuing to serve with Jesus in the affairs of the inconceivably great universe of universes of God, what a fellowship we shall enjoy!

### **THE CIRCLE OF OUTSIDE SOCIAL CONTACTS**

In human life beyond the circle of family and Church life we have social contacts. In parallel, the Bible introduces us to some of the angels such as Gabriel, those who appeared to Abraham and to Daniel, the bright throng who were in attendance at our Lord's birth and those who appeared at his resurrection. It tells us also that the number of angels assembled round the throne (Rev. 5:11) was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands. It also seems clear that each child of God has a guardian angel deputed to take care of him. How wonderful to get to know him and also every other member of these vast heavenly hosts. But not only all these contacts with the family of God in Heaven, but also the twenty thousand million of the family of God on earth. If a thing of beauty is a joy forever, what shall we say of the priceless treasure of the love of a friend

and brother. How cumulatively and incalculably rich, therefore, in the true wealth of love and friendship shall we become in getting to know and love every member of the family of God in heaven and on earth throughout the years of eternity.

## **CONCLUSION**

Passing the threshold of another year, how thrilling is the prospect! What if the long period of the process of going to the Father with regard to the Church collectively should be completed this New Year and the crisis of going to him in a moment in the twinkling of an eye should be our blessed experience. In view of our Lord's warning ever to be watching because we shall not know in advance and that the moment will arrive in such an hour as we think not, shall we not march forward inspired by the hope that at last the long, long trial of the Church of God on earth is nearing its end?

- A. D. Kirkwood, Scot.

## **Half Hour Meditations on Romans**

### **No. 18**

*"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" -- Isa. 53:6*

IN OUR previous meditations we have seen that the Apostles theme is summarized in verses 16 and 17 of chapter 1 (Rom. 1:16-17): "For I am not ashamed of the Good News.

It is Gods power which is at work for the salvation of every one who believes -- the Jew first, and then the Gentile. For in the Good News a righteousness which comes from God is being revealed, depending on faith and tending to produce faith" (Weymouth).

Ere we leave this matchless theme and proceed with the Apostle to its masterly unfolding, which occupies the entire remaining chapters of the Epistle (with the exception of his conclusion in Rom. 15:14 to Rom. 16:27), we must not fail to mark his quotation from Hab 2:4, "as it is written, The just [righteous] shall live by faith." So convinced is he of the essential unity that prevails between the Old Testament writings and the Gospel he has been commissioned to preach, he cannot announce it without quoting from the Old Testament a passage in its support. This good news from God, revealing to believers salvation resulting from a righteousness arising from faith ("not by works of righteousness which we have done" [Titus 3:5]), far from being a repudiation of the old covenant is in fulfillment of its vital principle: "For the words of Habakkuk may be interpreted to express the central spirit of the Old Testament the righteous shall live by faith. "

### **The Just Shall Live By Faith**

This quotation from Habakkuk appears three times in the New Testament. Here the emphasis is on righteousness as contrasted with unrighteousness. In Gal. 3:11 the emphasis is on faith as contrasted with works, while in Heb 10:38 it is on life, faith being shown to be the principle and power of true life.

Indeed, as more than one expositor has noted, this phrase from Habakkuk may be said to sum up the entire Epistle and suggests the following outline:

*Hab 2:4*

*Romans*

"The righteous" . . . . . Rom. 1:17 - Rom. 3:20

"by faith" . . . . . Rom. 3:21 - Rom. 5:21

"shall live" . . . . . Rom. 6:1 - Rom. 16:26

In the first section (Rom. 1:17 - Rom. 3:20) the Apostles line of argument is very simple. He elucidates four plain propositions:

(1) Apart from a faith righteousness the Gentiles are without hope (Rom. 1:18-32).

(2) So also are the Jews (Rom. 2:1-29).

(3) The advantages possessed by the Jew do not exempt him from punishment (Rom. 3:1-8).

And (4) the above three propositions are in harmony with Old Testament scriptures (Rom. 3:9-20).

It is clear that from Rom. 1:18 to the end of chapter 1, St. Paul is describing the miserable state of the *Gentile* world. From the beginning of chapter 2 he addresses a personage who very severely judges the Gentile abominations just described by Paul and who evidently represents a wholly different portion of mankind. At Rom. 1:17 he apostrophizes this personage by his name: the *Jew*. And he demonstrates to him that he also is under the burden of wrath.

According to Pauls usual style, Rom. 1:18 contains a summary of all the ideas developed in the following verses. The study of this one verse, therefore, will prove to be an analysis of the whole passage: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18).

"The transition from Rom. 1:17-18 by *for* can only be this: There is a *revelation of righteousness* by the Gospel, because there is a *revelation of wrath* on the whole world. The former is necessary to *save the world* from the consequences of the latter. From the notion of *wrath*, when it is applied to God, we must of course remove all that pollutes human wrath, personal resentment, the moral perturbation which gives to the manifestation of indignation the character of revenge. In God, who is the living *Good*, wrath appears as the holy disapprobation of evil and the firm resolve to destroy it. But it is false to say, as is often done, that this Divine emotion applies only to the evil and not to the evil doer. In measure as the latter ceases to oppose the evil and voluntarily identifies himself with it, he himself becomes the object of wrath and all its consequences." ("Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" [Eph 5:6].)

"This manifestation proceeds from *heaven*. *Heaven* here does not denote the atmospheric or stellar heaven; the term is the emblematic expression for the invisible residence of God, the seat of perfect order. From it emanates every manifestation of righteousness on the earth and every victorious struggle of good against evil. The visible heavens: the regularity of the motion of the stars, the lifelike and pure luster of their fires, this whole spectacle has always been to the consciousness of man the sensible representation of *Divine order*. It is from this feeling that the prodigal son exclaims: Father, I have sinned *against heaven* in thy sight. Heaven in this sense is



thus the avenger of all sacred feelings that are outraged; it is as such that it is mentioned here."

### **Ungodliness and Unrighteousness**

Here are two views of sin: *ungodliness* or want of respect for God and *unrighteousness* or offenses against our fellow men. Every sin deserves both of these names. But in some the *ungodliness* is most conspicuous and in others the *unrighteousness*.

*Another, writing on these words, makes the following luminous comment: "Awful opposites to the two great commandments of the Law."*

### **The Truth Suppressed**

*The Apostle tells us that the wrath of anger of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. What is the truth to which the Apostle here makes reference and what does the expression "hold the truth" signify? I answer: the truth referred to is the knowledge of God as communicated to the human conscience. This is explained by the Apostle in Rom. 1:19-20. The meaning of the verb here translated "hold" must be determined by the context. In some passages the evident meaning is "to hold fast" (as for example 1 Co. 15:2): "By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory [if ye hold fast] what I preached unto you." Or again, Luke 8:15: "That on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it [hold it fast], and bring forth fruit with patience." But the word cannot be understood in this sense in the passage before us. "They who hold the truth in unrighteousness, do not hold it for the sake of keeping it in possession, as an article which they valued, and therefore were desirous of retaining in safe and cherished custody." They hold it down or suppress it.*

This is its signification in other scriptures (as for example 2 Thess. 2:6, 7): "And now ye know what withholdeth [holds back, holds down, or suppresses] that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [holds back, holds down, or suppresses] will let [hold back, hold down, or suppress] until he be taken out of the way." Here the Apostle alludes to the Roman power "that so confined Anti-christ, as to keep him back -- so that he came not out into full manifestation."

It is in this second sense that men hold the truth in unrighteousness. St. Paul proves in Rom. 1:19 that the Gentiles had the truth; namely that which may be known of God. This truth was given them to mold their thought and life. They preferred unrighteousness and thus held back or held down the truth.

### **The Worlds Present Accountability**

It is essential to a clear understanding of what the Apostle would teach us in the passage before us that we recognize the sin against which the wrath of God is revealed from heaven to be something very different from ignorance or weakness or inherited blemishes.

When we come to the consideration of chapter five we shall see the Apostle doing full justice to the fact that it was "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." In that chapter he does not deny but is at pains to affirm that it was "by one mans disobedience many were made sinners." Certainly then in the passage before us he is not to be understood as contradicting his argument of chapter five. Neither here nor elsewhere does he teach that Adams descendants are

individually responsible for the tendency toward sin, which he created in himself and in his unborn race when from the depths of his freedom of choice he drew the decision to act contrary to the command of his Creator. But while none of our race can do perfectly, they could do a great deal better than they do, and it is in proportion as each individual voluntarily resigns himself to the inherited tendency to evil and does not combat it that he becomes personally responsible and a fit subject of the wrath or anger of God.

### Review

Briefly reviewing what we have seen in our analysis of this verse (Rom. 1:18), we have found it to contain three principal ideas:

(1) The Gentiles knew the truth.

(2) They repelled it.

(3) For this sin the wrath of God is displayed against them. The *truth* is explained in Rom. 1:19-20; it is God's revelation to the conscience of the Gentiles.

The notion: *to repress* the truth, is explained in verses Rom. 1:21-23 (and Rom. 1:25); these are the voluntary errors of paganism.

The idea of the *revelation of Divine wrath* is developed in Rom. 1:24-27; these are the unnatural enormities to which God has given up the Gentiles and by which he has avenged his outraged honor.

All the notions of Rom. 1:18 are thus resumed and developed in their logical order, Rom. 1:19-27; such is the first cycle (*ungodliness*). They are resumed and developed a second time in the same order but under another aspect (unrighteousness) in verses 28-32. Finally it seems that St. Paul regards the monstrous degradation of pagan populations, which he describes in Rom. 1:24-27 and Rom. 1:29-32, not as a purely natural consequence of their sin but as a solemn intervention of God's justice in the history of mankind, an intervention which he designates by the term *to give over*.

The word translated *gave them up* "does not signify that God *impelled* them to evil to punish the evil they had already committed. The holiness of God is opposed to such a sense and *to give over* is not to *impel*.

*On the other hand, it is impossible to stop short at the idea of a simple permission [and to understand the Apostle to mean that] God let them give themselves over to evil. God was not purely passive in the terrible development of Gentile corruption. [Is it asked:] Wherein did his action consist? [We answer:] he positively withdrew his hand; he ceased to hold the boat as it was dragged by the current of the river. This is the meaning of the term used by the Apostle: He suffered the Gentiles to walk in their own way (Acts 14:16) . . . . It is not a case of simple abstention, it is the positive withdrawal of a force."*

## Conclusion

Since this revolting and melancholy picture of the Gentile world presented by the Apostle was a true representation, all must admit that the Apostle has established his proposition that apart from a faith righteousness (justification by faith) the Gentiles are without hope. "It will be remembered that in these charges the Apostle speaks of the enlightened and refined nations of antiquity; and especially that he speaks of the Romans at the very height of their power, intelligence, and splendor. The experiment whether man could save himself by his own works had been fairly made. After all that their greatest philosophers could do, this was the result; and it is clear that there was need of some better plan than this.

More profound . . . philosophers than had arisen, the pagan world could not hope to see; more refinement and civilization than then existed, the world could not expect to behold under heathenism. At this time, when the experiment had been made for four thousand years and when the inefficacy of all human means (even under the most favorable circumstances) to reform mankind had been tried, the *Gospel* was preached to men. It disclosed *another* plan; and its effects were seen at once throughout the most abandoned states and cities of the ancient world." As the Apostle in another place said: "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ . . . *knowing . . . how ye turned to God from idols*" (1 Thess. 1:2, 3, 9).

-- P. L. Read

## "Men Ought Always to Pray "

*(Continued from last issue.)*

*"And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint". - Luke 18:1.*

TWO further incidents in this wonderful record must be noted in this endeavor to stress the vital importance and necessity of the prayer-life in our individual experiences and in our fellowship together. In Acts 10 is the story of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, in which it will be noticed not only how God answers prayer, but also how he is able and pleased to use those who are diligent in prayer. That which pleased the Lord concerning Cornelius was that he was *"a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms liberally to the people, AND PRAYED CONSTANTLY TO GOD."* (Acts 10:2.) It was *while he was praying* that the angel of God appeared to him with the words: *"YOUR PRAYERS and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God."* (Acts 10:4.) It was *prayer* which prepared him for the message God had for him. God's messages will come to us clearly and unmistakably if we will "constantly" pray to God, our Father. *"I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house,"* said Cornelius, *"and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel, saying, 'Cornelius, YOUR PRAYER HAS BEEN HEARD.'"* (Acts 10:30-31.) Truly, God does hear and answer prayer! Concerning Peter also, he who was to open the door to the Gentiles, it is recorded in Acts 10:9 that he "went up on the housetop to pray about the sixth hour." It was at that time, *the time of prayer*, that he received the wondrous vision which prepared him as God's channel to answer the prayer of Cornelius. Dear fellow-brethren, if we would be effectively used by God for the proclamation of his message and for the comfort of his people, we must be men and women of prayer; we must see to it that prayer occupies a very prominent place in our lives. Deliberately, and determinedly we must set aside each day, a special season for prayer and communion with God. What great blessing came to Cornelius, because he was a man of prayer! How greatly Peter was used because he also was a man of prayer!

One further incident will suffice to stress the importance of this subject, though by no means the last in the record of the early Church. It is found in the 12th chapter of "The Acts." Peter was in grave trouble. James, the brother of John, had been slain by Herod, and because this gave pleasure to the Jews, the King proceeded to arrest Peter and cast him into prison, doubtless with the intention that he should meet a similar fate as his fellow-Apostle James. It was during "the days of unleavened bread," that is, during the seven days of the Passover season, after which Herod intended to bring Peter before the people. Quite possibly the King had learned of the incident recorded in chapter 5, when in some strange way the Apostles had been released from prison, and he was determined that this should not happen again. Peter was therefore delivered up to four squads of soldiers, sixteen in all, who would see to it that Peter was not left alone for a single moment. Four soldiers would be on duty at one time; Peter chained between two of them, while two others would guard the door of his cell-surely a hopeless situation! Hopeless indeed, except that something else was happening outside the prison, something of which Herod had not the slightest knowledge, and in any case would have been helpless to prevent. *"So Peter was kept in prison; BUT EARNEST PRAYER FOR HIM WAS MADE TO GOD BY THE CHURCH."* (Acts 12:5, R.S.V.) *"Prayer was made without ceasing of the Church."* (A.V.) What a Prayer-meeting that was, and what prayers must have ascended to heaven -- *prayers that work miracles!* Importunate prayers! Prayers for a brother in trouble! For several days the brethren had been *praying-and nothing had happened!* Subsequent events suggest that some had lost hope, but there was at least one who continued to pray "in faith believing."

"Unanswered yet? But you are not unheeded;  
The promises of God *forever* stand;  
To Him our days and years alike are equal,  
*Have faith in God!* It is your Lord's command.  
Hold on to Jacob's angel, and your prayer  
Shall bring a blessing down, sometime, somewhere.

"Unanswered yet? Nay, do not say unanswered;  
Perhaps your part *is* not yet *wholly* done.  
The work began when first your prayer was uttered;  
And God will finish what He hath begun.  
Keep incense burning at the shrine of prayer,  
And *glory* shall descend, sometime, somewhere.

"Unanswered yet? Faith cannot be unanswered;  
Her feet are firmly planted on the Rock.  
Amid the wildest storms she stands undaunted,  
Nor quails before the loudest thunder shock.  
She knows *Omnipotence* hath heard her prayer,  
And cries, 'IT SHALL BE DONE, sometime, somewhere!'"

### **"BUT PRAYER WAS MADE"**

Unceasingly the brethren prayed through days and nights, and but a few hours were left before Peter would be brought forth and slain before the people! How great must have been the test for the praying brethren-and for Peter. Yet Luke is able to write: "*And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.*" (Acts 12:6.) The *R.S.V.* is more graphic and realistic: "THE VERY NIGHT WHEN HEROD WAS ABOUT TO BRING HIM OUT, *Peter was sleeping between two soldiers.*" One wonders how many of us would be sleeping, the night before our execution! Peter was at peace, and dare we say that the prayers of the brethren had nothing to do with that? "Let us pray for one another." So soundly and peacefully was Peter sleeping that the bright light which shone into his cell did not awake him, and the angel of the Lord "smote Peter on the side." "*Arise up quickly. AND HIS CHAINS FELL OFF from his hands.*"

If the Lord commands, he removes the chains which would prevent! Without undue haste or panic, Peter put on his sandals, threw his outer garment around him (how careful was "the angel of the Lord" for Peter's comfort!), and followed the angel past the first guard, on, past the second guard, and up to the great iron prison-gate. Peter thought it was a dream. He saw the heavy gate silently open, and following the angel through, he passed along one street and then found himself alone. What was happening during all this time? *Prayers* were ascending to God on Peter's behalf -- real *prayer*, agonizing prayer, *insistent* prayer!

Such a wonderful experience as this may bring forth the remark-"How unusual!" Unusual perhaps in its detail, but not peculiar to Peter in its principles. *Prayer* has broken off many chains; *prayer* has opened many prison gates! If you have not done so, try it and prove in your own experience the wonder of prayer. Not only our own prayers, but the prayers of others on our behalf will work miracles, but *it will only solve difficulties we cannot solve ourselves*. God does for his people what they cannot do for themselves! That does not mean that we should do anything apart from God, for the Lord would have us to be dependent upon him for everything. As with the Lord

Jesus, so must it be with his followers -- "*I can of mine own self do nothing*" (John 5:30); but the faculties and powers given to us by God, he expects his people to use while acknowledging him in all our ways and not trusting to our own imperfect judgment. *God* broke the chains from Peter's hands, but Peter must gird himself. "The angel of the Lord" took him past the sentries and through the iron gates of the prison -- that which he could never have done himself -- and then left him. "When they had passed the first and second guard, they came to the iron gates leading into the city. It opened to them of its own accord, and they went out and passed on through one street; *and immediately the angel left him.*" - Acts 12:10.

During all this time the brethren had been praying for Peter, not only as individuals, but as a company gathered together in earnest supplication. Dare we say that those prayers had nothing to do with Peter's deliverance? It was Peter's desire that James should be informed of this wonderful deliverance. (See Acts 12:17.) Was this in the Apostle's mind as he wrote those words in his epistle: "*The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*"? (James 5:16.) How forceful are the words of the R.S.V.: "The prayer of a righteous man *has great power in its effects*"; or of the *Diaglott*: "The earnest supplication of a righteous man -- is *very powerful*." Yes, there is *power in prayer*; it was the secret of our Lord's strength and power; it explains the power which was so manifest in the Apostles, in Stephen, the first Christian martyr, and in the lives of the brethren in the early Church. *Is that same power manifest in our lives, and in our fellowship?* It can be, it will be, it cannot be otherwise if only we will pray as Jesus taught us to pray; as the Apostles continually exhorted us to pray, and as the brethren of the early Church prayed.

Peter at last realized that he was alone. The record says: "*And when Peter was come to himself . . .*" How true to life is this experience! While passing through a special experience in our lives, sometimes it has been difficult to grasp the full significance of the Lord's dealings with us, but we have come safely through, like Peter, we have come to ourselves and are able to testify as he did: "*Now I am sure that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me.*" (Acts 12:11, R.S.V.) Peter then made his own way to the house of Mary, the mother of Mark, where doubtless it was his intention to join the brethren in prayer and thanksgiving to God for his deliverance. Luke records that many brethren were assembled there-and what were *they* doing? *It was a prayer meeting! "Many were gathered together PRAYING."* - Acts 12:12.

"Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged;  
Take it to the Lord *in prayer.*"

### **"WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED TOGETHER"**

What a wonderful example is this of real fellowship-brethren sharing together in a common sorrow; *praying* TOGETHER for Peter, and for grace and strength that they might follow his example of faithful witnessing and endurance.

"We SHARE our mutual woes,  
Our mutual burdens bear;  
And often for each other flows  
The sympathizing tear."

It is good that we should do this, not only in the privacy of our homes, but like those early Christians, *together*, in times of joy, in times of sorrow, and in frequent petition for a greater indwelling of the holy spirit.

Having reached the house, Peter knocked at the door, and a young maiden named Rhoda inquired who was there. Some renderings suggest that Rhoda was a servant-girl, but however that may be, she was possessed of a simple faith and trust which contrasted with the doubt and precise reasoning of many of the assembled brethren. Even at this last hour, in a situation apparently hopeless, she seems to have continued to believe that *God does hear and answer prayer!* The record states that she was excited and glad when she heard Peter's voice; so thrilled with the wonder of answered prayer that Peter was left standing at the unopened door while Rhoda returned to inform the others of the glad news. They thought she was mad and had seen a vision! *"As soon as she recognized Peter's voice, instead of opening the door, she ran inside from sheer joy and announced that Peter was standing in front of the porch."* Is it not possible to sense the note of triumph in her voice? *"You are mad," they said. But she insisted it was true. 'It is his angel,' they said. BUT PETER KEPT ON KNOCKING, and when they opened the door, they were amazed to see him."* (Acts 12:15-16.) Oh for the simple, trusting faith of Rhoda; she did not need to *see* Peter, she had heard his voice, and coupled it with her prayers, and believed. She was not "amazed" and "astonished" -- *"she constantly affirmed that it was"* Peter, while the others were doubtful until they *saw* him, and then were astonished!

Are there not lessons for the people of God in these brief records of the early Church? Do they not teach us that *prayer* must occupy a prominent place in our Christian walk if we would have the power of God operating in our lives, if we would have God's peace in the most bitter and trying experiences; if we would be courageous in our witness for the Lord in spite of opposition and persecution, and if we would experience true joy in the darkest hours. May we, like those brethren of old, frequently *"pray for one another," and with one another*. Let us "pray without ceasing"; let us pray "in faith believing."

"LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY."

- Edwin Allbon, Eng.

## The Completeness of the Body

THE Church is the "one body" of Christ, and all Christians are individual members of that body. No one liveth to himself, no one dieth to himself; when one member suffers all members suffer with it. It is one of the sins of a self-sufficient age to deny the unity and completeness of Christ's body, and to set up tests of unity other than those which he has appointed. In the natural body each member united with the head has vital union with every other member connected with the same head. The basis of true Christian unity is union with Jesus Christ who is the head of the body. Men lay down as the basis of their unity, union with some human leader through the doctrines which he has proclaimed or the forms which he has instituted. They are united by external observances, by laws, forms, rites, and bands. Their union is the union staves in a barrel; Christ's union is the union of branches in a vine. Their union is that of bones in a skeleton, joined and wired together, but destitute of vital energy; the union of Christ and his people is the union of the members of a body, joined together by those ligaments which every joint supplieth, and pervaded by the energy of a common life. The unity which Christ inaugurated embraces the whole family of God. It includes every man who has vital connection with the great head of the Church. Men's schemes are too narrow for this, and include only those persons who coincide in opinions, who agree in forms, who are trimmed according to a certain pattern, or shaped in conformity to certain human standards. Christ bids us to receive one another as he has received us. The fact that we have passed from death unto life, and we are united to Christ the living head, is proof that we are united to his people. If our fellowship is with the Father and with the Son Jesus Christ, it is also with one another. Men, however, restrict their fellowship; and hence, while Christ's Church is inclusive and wide reaching, their churches are narrow, and shut out more Christians than they shut in. The results of this are grievous to God's people who are thus excluded from union with saints, but still more grievous to those who exclude them. How often we see churches crippled and helpless for lack of the labor and sympathy of Christian brethren who stand by their side ready and willing to be helpers in their toils, but are excluded by some party Shibboleth, or by some unscriptural name or form. How often we see men shut away from their proper field of Christian effort, simply because they cannot accept the unscriptural statements and arrangements, which men presume to impose before they receive them to their fellowship. Men toil in weariness, and bring themselves to the borders of the grave, that they may do work which others would willingly and wisely do, who are not permitted to participate in the labor. Thus men virtually say to God's children: "You may be members of Christ's body, but we have no need of you or your services."

The Apostle has taught us that no member of the body can be spared from its place and its proper work, without serious injury. No man can separate himself from the body of Christ without harm; nor can any portion of Christians separate themselves from others who love the Lord, or exclude other Christians from their fellowship, without doing themselves great injury.

The union of true Christians springs from a higher than human source; and their adaption to each other for mutual helpfulness is so complete and perfect that any separation must work harm both to those who cause it and to those who endure it. The feet may say, We are strong, we have no need of the eyes, we carry the body, and the eyes are mere useless gazers. But when the eyes are gone, and the feet are groping and floundering in the ditch, the folly of this decision is most manifest. So whenever any of the Lord's children in their inexperience and self-sufficiency think themselves able to dispense with the presence, the service, and the loving fellowship of others of the children of the Lord, they may find sooner or later, by their weakness, inefficiency, and a thousand calamities and troubles that may come upon them, they have overestimated their own powers, and have put away from them those members which God hath set in the body, that they



might abide together in the unity of love and in mutual helpfulness. All down through the age comes our Savior's parting prayer for his disciples, that "they all may be one," and the hearts of the truly regenerate yearn and long for this unity. Deeper than the names and forms and creeds of men, throbs that inward, divine and universal life which Christ imparted, and which makes his children *one*.

- *Selected.*

## **"Parables of the Kingdom"**

Early in the 13th chapter of Matthew (Ver. 3) we are reminded that Jesus "spake many things unto them in parables." There follows immediately the first of seven parables in this chapter which are so interrelated that they are quite logically referred to as "Parables of the Kingdom."

Careful study suggests that the primary purpose of this group was prediction-the Master's own forecast of the events to take place between his first and second advents. Moreover, as we listen to him enlightening his early followers (and us) on the history and hardships of the Gospel Age, then commencing, it becomes apparent that there is a close chronological parallel between these seven parables and the messages to the seven Churches which John has recorded in chapters 2 and 3 of The Revelation.

To develop this relationship in a step by step manner, we have prepared a 20-page booklet titled *Parables of the Kingdom*. This will be the same pocket and purse size as our other recent booklets, which have met with general favor for personal use and for distribution to friends. A copy of *Parables of the Kingdom* will be sent by first class mail to each "Herald" subscriber, without charge, the early part of January. Additional copies will be supplied free on request.

## **A Song Celebrating the King's Marriage** **A Meditation on the Forty-fifth Psalm**

*"My heart is inditing a good matter." - Psalm 45:1.*

THIS Psalm was undoubtedly composed to celebrate the marriage of a Jewish king with a royal bride, the bride being apparently of foreign birth. This was evidently its primary purpose and application. However, as we read and study it, we shall see that the Psalm is Messianic in character and that much of the language employed transcends the circumstances of any earthly monarch's marriage.

Verse one reads: "My heart is inditing a good matter; I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer."

Whoever it was that wrote this Psalm feels very strongly that his subject is great. He says his heart is "inditing" a good matter; the margin reads "bubbleth"; other translations read "boils," "overfloweth." Such is the condition of his heart. The word occurs only here according to the scholars.

### **SURPASSING EXCELLENCE OF THE KING**

Next he addresses the king about whose marriage the Psalm or poem is written. Verse two: "Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee for ever."

First the King's beauty is mentioned; then his persuasive eloquence. An able commentator has remarked that it is more kingly for kings to win their subjects' hearts by gracious words than to rule them by brute force. Concerning Messiah, the true King, we read that men wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth (Luke 4:22) for never man spake like this man (John 7:46). Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17). To him Jehovah gave the tongue of the learned that he might know how to speak a word in season -that he might know how to sustain with words them that are weary (Isa. 50:4).

The Psalmist continues, Psa. 45:3-7:

"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh,  
O most mighty,  
With thy glory and thy majesty.  
And in thy majesty ride prosperously  
Because of truth and meekness and righteousness;  
And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.  
Thine arrows are sharp  
In the heart of the King's enemies;  
Whereby the people fall under thee.  
Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;  
The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.  
Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness;  
Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee  
With the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

Yes -- King Messiah is not only fair to look at, and gracious of speech, but he is mighty in battle. However, he does not engage in war for the purposes usually underlying warfare -- to acquire more territory, or commercial supremacy, or personal aggrandizement, or glittering renown, but in behalf of truth and meekness and righteousness. Truth and meekness and righteousness have been humiliated in his kingdom and for *this* cause he takes his sword.

### **"LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED INIQUITY"**

In connection with verses 6 and 7 we note the passage in Hebrews 1:8, 9:

"But unto the Son he saith, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy Kingdom. Thou has loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.'"

These words of the inspired New Testament writer settle forever the fact that this Psalm is Messianic in character, for he quotes these verses as distinctly referring to the Son (our Lord Jesus). He is endeavoring to show the superiority of Christ to the angels, both in nature and in office. In proof of that superiority he quotes from a number of old Testament passages, among them being this very Psalm, as an evidence, which the Hebrews to whom he wrote would not dispute, of Christ's supremacy, and the righteous and endless character of his reign.

Turning again to the Psalm, verses 8 and 9, we see our King pictured once more, not now clad in armor but in marriage robes:

"All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia. Out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

"Kings' daughters were among thy honorable women; upon thy right hand did stand the Queen in gold of Ophir. "

### **"A KING SHALL REIGN IN RIGHTEOUSNESS"**

It is difficult to read this description of the King in this Psalm, as one possessing more than human grace and beauty, as a victorious warrior, as a righteous sovereign, as a bridegroom arrayed for his approaching marriage and surrounded by the praises of an exultant people, without recalling the vision recorded in the Book of Revelation, chapter 19, of one who is declared to be the King of kings and Lord of lords, who is all, King and Warrior and Bridegroom. We quote Rev. 19:11, 15, 16:

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

"And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, *King of kings, and Lord of lords.*"

Also Rev. 19:1, 6-7:

"And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God;

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

### **THE BRIDE "ALL GLORIOUS"**

Returning now to the Psalm, we find the poet turns from the King to address the Bride. Let us read the 10th, 11th and 12th verses (Psa. 45:10-12):

"Hearken, O daughter, and consid.r, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him. And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favor."

For so kingly a bridegroom, as Messiah has been described in Psa. 45:2-8, where shall a fitting bride be found? Surely she, too, must be of exalted character and great spiritual loveliness, queenly in rank -- that is to say, the daughter of a king - and queenly in the purity and excellency of her spirit.

Such is her description here, and the language employed by the Psalmist can be truly applicable only to the Church in glory.

He says her appearance is "all glorious," her clothing of "wrought gold" and that she is to be brought to the King "in raiment of needlework." In the Book of Revelation 19:8, we read:

"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

Note also, in this connection, the words of Eph. 5:25-27:

"Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it . . . that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

In the *Diaglott*, the rendering of Eph. 5:27 is: "That he might place the Congregation [the Church] by his side, glorious." In other words, when Christ (the King) who is our Life, shall appear, then we also shall appear, with him in glory (Col. 3:4).

After addressing the Queen in the words of Psa. 45:10, 11-12, the Psalmist apparently waits while all eyes turn in her direction. According to *Rotherham*, Psa. 45:13, 14, 15 may be understood as being exclamations of admiration on her splendid appearance. She is seen within the palace, at her King-Bridegroom's right hand, his Queen. And the first wondering exclamation on beholding her is "All-glorious!" Then, as the Divine Fatherhood of the Ecclesia is discovered, a second

acclaim is heard: "Daughter of a king!" We quote these three verses from *Rotherham's* translation:

"All glorious! daughter of a king!  
"Pearls in chequer work of gold her clothing!

"On tapestry of divers colors is she conducted to the King; virgins in her train her companions are brought to her, with gladness and exulting are they conducted to her, brought into the King's palace to her."

Once more the Psalmist is the speaker, and ere the King finally disappears in his palace and the Queen is conducted to him, followed by her companions, the Psalmist addresses both King and Queen, congratulating them and expressing hopes as to the issue of the marriage. These words appear in the last two verses of the Psalm, 16 and 17 (Psa. 45:16-17), and read as follows:

"Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.

"I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations; therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

These last two verses have perplexed scholars for centuries. Many of them, not seeing the special salvation of the Church as distinct from that of the world, offer only confusing comments.

Some get a little nearer the truth, suggesting that the words appear to Israel only, there is yet a blessed future awaiting mankind also under the gracious government of *Immanuel*; that one of the effects of the completed work of Christ will be to place the saved nations of the eternal Kingdom in a restored paradise, completely delivered from the tempter, and so established in righteousness that the Holy One can take up his abode among them for ever. 'He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.'

"The salvation of the Church of this dispensation is not the whole result of the death of Christ. There is to be in addition the establishment for ever of a Kingdom of God, in which his will shall be as fully done by men on earth as it is now done by angels in heaven. The consummation, for which we daily pray, is destined to come at last; and holy and happy service, without a flaw and without an interruption, is yet to be rendered to God, not merely by the glorified saints of the New Jerusalem, but by redeemed nations on the earth, who walk for ever in the light of the celestial city."

These and other writers, then, saw clearly that Christ and his Church, the Second Adam and his Bride, were to be blessed with "children," some of whom they may make "princes in all the earth." But how are these children to be "instead of thy fathers"? Only in the writings of our late beloved pastor, Brother Russell, have we found any satisfactory answer to this riddle of the centuries. "The fathers," as he observes in his luminous exposition of this passage, *Scripture Studies Vol. V*, pages E142, E143, was the honored title applied to the patriarchs, prophets, and founders of the nation, and it was a title that would be especially applicable to such as were in the kingly line from which Messiah was to come. But these "fathers" of the nation had *no life* in the true sense of that word; they were all members of the death-condemned race. "And when Jesus took hold upon our humanity, and became identified with the seed of Abraham and of David, and accomplished the work of redemption, it applied not only to the world in general," (as Guinness

has so ably presented in the previous paragraph) "but as well to these, his progenitors according to the flesh.... Hence, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David

and all the Prophets, and all the remainder of the world, must receive future and everlasting life from Christ, or not at all." He will be the "Everlasting Father" and together with his glorified Church will accomplish the world's regeneration, the regeneration of "the fathers" included. These "fathers" will thus become the "children." With what intense delight will Christ and his Church establish them as "princes in all the earth"!

### **Behold the Bridegroom**

"Our lamps are trimmed and burning,  
Our robes are white and clean.  
We've tarried for the Bridegroom,  
And now we'll enter in.  
We know we've nothing worthy  
That we can call our own --  
The light, the oil, the robes we wear,  
Are all from him alone.

"We see the marriage splendor,  
Within the open door,  
We know that those who enter  
Are blest forevermore;  
We see our King more lovely  
Than all the sons of men;  
We haste because that door, once shut,  
Will never ope again.

"Behold, behold, the Bridegroom,  
And all may enter in,  
Whose lamps are trimmed and burning,  
Whose robes are white and clean."

- *P. L. Read*

- Herald, June 1944

## The Question Box

**Phil. 3:20-21; James 1:25; Matt. 10:28**

Question:

Will you please explain Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

Answer:

This passage has been generally misunderstood to teach that our human bodies are vile things, but that, in the Lord's due time they are to undergo a miraculous change, becoming like the glorified body of Christ.

It is true that we, the Church, if faithful, are to be made like our Lord (1 John 3:2), but that thought is not under discussion in Phil. 3:20, 21. Here, as in all true Scripture study, we must first satisfy ourselves that we have a correct translation, and then study it in the light of its context. A preferred translation is given in the American Revised Version:

"For our citizenship [margin: commonwealth] is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself."

In studying this text in relation to its context two points are at once apparent: (1) The word "body" is in the singular, not the plural, and (2) the Apostle is contrasting, not the body of one member of the Church on earth with the body that member will have in heaven, but the status of Christ's Body (the Church) on earth with its status when the Lord returns for her.

St. Paul's general line of argument seems clear: In the company of professing Christ followers there are two main groups -- the true and the false. They are easily distinguished, not by slight differences of viewpoint on some "hard to be understood" points of doctrine on which even inspired Apostles differed (2 Pet. 3:16), but by the general tenor of their lives. The false are described as of earthly mind -- who live as enemies of the cross of Christ. (Phil. 3:18-19.) The true are not to be content with merely adding to their store of knowledge, but, as Moffatt's choice translation puts it, "We must let our steps be guided by such truth as we have attained." (Phil. 3:16.) This must be true both of the mature and the immature. (Phil. 3:15.)

It is mandatory in the Christian experience that each fresh item of truth understood be promptly put into practice. At once it is to have its place in "guiding the steps." This principle was so elementary with Paul that he could, in all humility, consistently urge upon the brethren not merely that they pay attention to his teaching, but that they copy him-and even were to take note of those who lived by the example he set. - Phil. 3:17-18, *Moffatt*.

Then comes the great contrast, which we may well believe was ever present to his mind-the state of humiliation in which the true Church, the Body of Christ, was to complete its course, and the state of glory to which she would be changed. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. 3:4.) "Then," as Brother Russell has so well expressed it, "the Church shall in reality be a glorious body, a body suitable in every way for the

high position she shall fill as the Bride of Christ-the companion of the Son of God for all eternity, his joint-heir in all things, and his efficient and thoroughly capable co-worker in the great mission to which Jehovah hath appointed the ChristHead and Body-Bridegroom and Bride. Together they shall constitute the great Prophet, Priest, and King whom Jehovah hath anointed; and their glory shall appear to all intelligent creatures in heaven and *earth*." - *Reprints*, p. R1102.

*Question:*

In James 1:25 we read of "the perfect law of liberty." The language here employed seems contradictory. On the one hand "law" is defined as a rule of action prescribed by authority. "Liberty," on the other hand, suggests freedom from restraint. What has "law" to do with "liberty?" Do they not mutually exclude each other?

*Answer:*

At first glance it would seem so. Closer study, however, discloses that while the terms are self-contradictory, the statement itself gives expression to a remarkable truth. Other instances of this paradoxical form of expression may be found in the New Testament. To mention but one, we quote 2 Cor. 6:9-10: "As unknown and yet well known: as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, and yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

Here the Apostle likens himself to the son of a millionaire, not yet in possession of his future inheritance, but nevertheless able to draw on the infinite resources of his Father. From one point of view he had nothing, yet, since Jehovah himself was his portion, did not the Apostle truly possess all things? No doubt from one standpoint he was poor; yet who could appraise his value to the Church, and how rich he has made us by the lavish manner in which he spent and was himself spent in the service of the Master and in the service of us all.

So it is with this peculiar expression, "the perfect law of liberty." It is a paradox. Let us examine it. It can be best understood perhaps by means of an illustration. Here, let us say, is a boy to whom has been given an untrained dog. The dog is totally unacquainted with the boy. It is taken out into the fields when, without the least warning, it breaks loose from the boy and scampers away, paying no heed whatever to the boy's whistles and calls. Here we have an illustration of liberty without law.

Eventually the dog is recaptured and placed on the end of a chain. Thereafter, whenever the boy and the dog go out for a walk, the dog is always on the end of a chain. He is allowed no freedom. This illustrates law without liberty.

During this period of law without liberty, however, the boy is teaching the dog to love and respect him. No one is allowed to feed the dog except the boy. The boy speaks encouraging words to him when he is well-behaved; scolds him at other times. The day comes at last when they go out together to the same fields as they went on their first walk. The chain is removed, and again the dog scampers off. The boy whistles and what happens? The dog gladly heeds the call of his master and scampers back. The chain of steel is no longer there. Another one, however, has taken its place -- an even stronger one. It is the cord of love and understanding woven during the training period. Here is an illustration of the law of liberty.

So long as the dog remained untrained, he was unfit for the law of liberty. Law without liberty, as illustrated in the chain, must be his only portion. From this homely illustration we believe it will be apparent that the perfect law of liberty mentioned by the Apostle James is for the well



disposed only; that is to say, it is applicable, at the present time, only to members of the new creation-the little flock. Others are still under the Mosaic Law, as servants, not fit for "the liberty wherewith Christ makes free" the sons, or else they are under the condemnation of the original law, the condemnation of death.

Before these, Jews and Gentiles alike, will be fit for the perfect law of liberty, they must be placed under the rule of a rod of iron, for a thousand years. During that time they will be shepherded by Christ and his Church, who will administer the laws of the Kingdom with justice tempered with mercy.

Not until the close of the Millennial Age, when the willful evil-doers shall have been cut off in the Second Death, will the race, proved perfect and fully in accord with the divine standard, be put under the perfect law of liberty -- love and its golden rule.

*Question:*

Will you please explain Matthew 10:28, where we read:

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

'If we are a soul and do not possess a soul, how are we to understand the use of "body" and "soul" in this Scripture?

*Answer:*

For a proper understanding of this text we must first ascertain the Bible answer to the question: "What is man?"

There are two general views on this subject which, while each contains elements of truth, are, on the whole, misleading. One is the so-called orthodox view; the other, the so-called scientific view. Neither represents the Bible viewpoint, and those who hold either are thereby prevented from securing the benefit which the Bible teaching would have on their hearts and lives.

The position of orthodox theology, briefly stated, is that man is a composite being of three parts -- body, spirit, and soul. The body, it is believed, is born after the usual manner of animal birth, except that at the time of birth God interposes and, in some inscrutable manner, implants in the body a spirit and a soul which, being parts of God himself, are indestructible, and therefore can never die. These two parts, spirit and soul, orthodoxy is unable to separate and distinguish, and hence uses the terms interchangeably.

Scientists answer the question, "What is man?" by stating that man is an animal of the highest type yet developed. They offer no suggestion as to a future life for any individual, but, believing they can trace an evolutionary development of mankind in past ages, are disposed to the view that the race may by natural processes (and apart from the power and purpose of a personal God) yet be developed into a superior condition to that of the present.

The Bible answer to the question recognizes man as composed of two elements, body and spirit. By body is meant the physical organism; by spirit, the animating power -- the breath of life. The union of these two elements produces the man himself, the sentient being -- the soul. As we read in Gen. 2:7: "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

It is the teaching of the Bible that when the spirit is separated from the body, the man (that is to say, the sentient being, the soul) ceases to exist. To quote from James 2:6: "The body without [or apart from] the spirit is dead." According to the Bible, any hope of a future life for an individual man who has died must lie in the power and purpose of God. The Gospel undertakes to prove that God has both the power and the purpose to accomplish a resurrection for all, and that everlasting life will be offered to all on certain conditions-either in this Age or in the Age to come.

The Greek word twice rendered "soul" in our text is "*psyche*." It is frequently translated "life" and indeed is so translated a little later in this same discourse of our Lord. "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. 10:39.) This variation in translation has served to confuse, creating the impression that "life" is one thing and "soul" another, and that a man might lose his life without losing his soul. Such confusion is particularly noticeable in Mark 8:35-37: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

In this passage the word "*psyche*" is twice translated "life" and twice "soul." Had the word been uniformly translated the truth would not have been obscured.

In the light of the foregoing discussion let us return to Matthew 10:28. What does our Lord mean when he says: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul?" Does he mean that when the body is killed there is a mysterious, invisible something called a soul, which men are not able to kill, and which, therefore, escapes death at their hands and continues to live on-apart from the body? Such is the orthodox view, which, as we have indicated, we cannot share. But even those who hold it should be on guard against embracing the further error of supposing that such an escaped soul is possessed of the quality of immortality -deathlessness. The closing words of this very verse make that plain. They speak of one (God himself) who has the power to destroy both soul and body.

But, if the orthodox view be wrong, what is the proper one? I answer: Our Lord well knew that when men killed the body, they then and there destroyed also the present life, the soul, the sentient being. He was not denying this obvious fact. The disciples, however, had hope of a future life-a life beyond the power of the killer to harm, much less to destroy. This hope of life came to them through the Gospel -- came as the result of the redemption provided by God himself, through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus. This hope of a future life was shortly to be confirmed to them by our Lord's resurrection from the dead. Because he lived *they* would have grounds for believing that they, too, would live.

The present life they would lose, whether men killed their body or not -- they would lose it in old age if not sooner. But their future life-their prospect for eternity-this lay in the power of God. He it is, then, and not men, whom they should fear.

Benj. Wilson, in the *Emphatic Diaglott* translation, by using the word "life" and by supplying the word "future" has given us what we cannot but believe is the true meaning of our Lord's words. We close this discussion by quoting his translation, which reads as follows:

"Be not afraid of those who kill the body, but cannot destroy the (future) life; but rather fear him who can utterly destroy both life and body in Gehenna."

- P. L. Read

## The Year Before Us

Standing at the portal of the opening year,  
Words of comfort meet us, hushing every fear;  
Spoken through the silence by our Father's voice,  
Tender, strong and faithful, making us rejoice.  
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;  
For His Word shall never, never pass away.

"I, the Lord, am with thee, be thou not afraid;  
I will help and strengthen, be thou not dismayed.  
Yea, I will uphold thee with Mine own right hand;  
Thou art called and chosen in my sight to stand."  
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;  
For Word shall never, never pass away.

For the year before us, oh, what rich supplies!  
For the poor and needy, living streams shall rise;  
For the sad and mournful, shall His grace abound;  
For the faint and feeble, perfect strength be found.  
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;  
For His Word shall never, never pass away.

He will never fail us, He will not forsake;  
His eternal covenant He will never break;  
Resting on His promise, what have we to fear?  
God is all-sufficient for the coming year.  
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;  
For His Word shall never, never pass away.

*- Frances R. Havergal*

## Recently Deceased

Sr. Anna L. Apps, Vancouver, B.C. - (Aug.)  
Sr. Susanna S. Kerney, Dayton, O. - (Nov.)  
Bro. John B. Kozarina, Chicago, Ill. - (Nov.)  
Bro. Michael Rybacki, Cicero, Ill. - (Nov.)