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"Redeeming the Time" A New Year Meditation

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." - Psalm 90:12.

IN the December Herald we raised our Ebenezer, pausing at the close of the year to praise the way he had led us day by day. Now we set our faces toward the road which lies ahead. We are nearing the Homeland, and the road before us is not nearly so long as the road behind. Indeed, the end of the road is almost in view! If the great Apostle Paul was able to declare: *"Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand,"* what shall be said when all the prophecies have found their focus at the point of time in which we are privileged to live? How urgent and full of meaning is the exhortation: *"Walk in wisdom . . . REDEEMING THE TIME"* (Col. 4:5); *"See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, REDEEMING THE TIME, because the days are evil."* (Eph. 5:16.) In the two foregoing quotations "Redeeming the time" is associated with the need for wisdom. Wisdom describes "the right use of knowledge," and directs that an understanding and knowledge of "the times and seasons" shall urge us to the most effective use of the time remaining to us. Let us not spend our time in vain regrets for lost opportunities and for misspent time in the past. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive". Rather shall we render thanks to the heavenly Father that he has brought us on to the road marked "Henceforth," short though it may be, and appropriate to ourselves the words of the Apostle James -- *"If any of you lack Wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."* -- James 1:5.

The *Analytical Concordance* (Prof. Young) defines the Greek word translated "redeeming" in the above quotations from Colossians and Ephesians as, "to acquire out of the forum." Dr. Strong supplies the meaning as, "to buy up, i.e. ransom; to rescue from loss (improve opportunity)." There must be sacrifice; cost is involved if we are to "rescue from loss" the time which can be used in the service of God. The child of God has but a few short years at most in which to be conformed to the image and likeness of his dear Son, during which 'the affections must be weaned from all that is earthly. *"We are his {God's} workmanship";* it is he *"who has begun the good work in us"* and will complete it; but he has called us to be co-workers with him. He has not

placed upon us a responsibility we cannot fulfill, nevertheless it *is* a task which requires all our effort and every moment of our consecrated life. *How MUCH TIME ARE WE PREPARED To PUT INTO IT?* The Christian life, more than any other vocation is "a full-time job," requiring every moment of every twenty-four hours of every day. The intensity of our love for God; the strength of our determination to do his will; our love for the heavenly Bridegroom, and our desire to "enter with him to the Marriage" -- all are determined by our use of the time which has been placed in our charge.

"REDEEMING THE TIME, BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL"

There is a sense of urgency in those words of the Apostle, yet how appropriate in these closing days of this dispensation. These are "evil days"; evil because there are so many delusions and deceptions in the world, and so many "harmless pastimes" to occupy time and attention and to sap spiritual vitality. Do not we need to, ask ourselves repeatedly whether "*all* our days and *all* our hours" are being spent in accordance with the will of God? Daily work and nightly sleep occupy a large part of every twenty-four hours, yet even these can be used either to help or hinder our Christian walk. But what about the time over which we have some measure of control? That "social hour" -- the time we spend reading "that book" or the newspaper, listening to the radio, or looking at the television? Do we question whether these are conducive to our Christian development? It may be "just for a few minutes," and "quite harmless," but do they accord with the exhortation to "redeem the time," to "buy back" the moments? Failure to attain to the "prize of the High Calling of God" will be the responsibility of one person only -- OURSELF. The commandments of God are his enablings, for he has promised to provide every need, to strengthen in weakness; but of us it is expected that everything we have shall be put into this greatest of all enterprises. And is that not what we promised to do when we surrendered our lives to God? Henceforth we would "live, and speak, and toil for him."

How then shall we use the moments, the hours and the days which our Father may mercifully loan to us during 1958? Shall we linger along the road marked "Henceforth," or shall we "run with patience the race set before us"? Shall we give to God the time we can spare, or shall we "redeem the time"? Let us in the remaining portion of this meditation be devoted *to* a consideration of the things which are essential to the growth and development of every true child of God.

PRAYER

The first and most important essential in the Christian life is *prayer*.

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air."

How often that has been said, and how true it is; but "*how much time do I devote each day to prayer and communion at the throne of grace?*" One thing is certain -- unless prayer *has* priority in the life, the hope to be "partakers of the Divine nature" can never be realized. In the world in which we live, it is "a bit of a rush" in the morning, and at night there is tiredness and inability to concentrate, but the habit of frequent and regular prayer *must* be cultivated. Are we spending more time with our friends than with our heavenly Father? The Lord Jesus spent much time in prayer and communion with his Father; he found it necessary that "the soul's sincere desire" should find expression in secret and intimate communion with God. "WHEN YOU PRAY" said Jesus, "*go into your own room, and shut the door, and pray to your Father who is unseen, and your Father who sees what is secret will reward you.*" -- Matt. 6:6.

How reassuring to know that our swift petitions to God are always heard, when we are faced with a sudden assault from our Adversary, or with the need for a swift decision, "His EAR IS EVER OPEN TO OUR CRY." But, for every child of God there must be those deliberate "prayer sessions," times of quiet and unhurried communion, when the heart's devotion to God is poured out, when we can tell him of our love and of our inmost longings to know and to do his will. Such sessions need *time* and preparation in order that there might be a right attitude of heart and mind in our approach to "THE KING OF KINGS" at the Throne of Grace. O how needful is

preparation for a reverent approach to God! Yet how frequently we rush into his presence, hastily utter our requests, and rush away! Our time is "so fully occupied"; hence the necessity to "*redeem the time,*" to buy up the moments, to sacrifice time spent on less important matters, to put "*first things first.*"

Is it hard to pray? Like so much else, effort and determination are required to cultivate the habit of prayer, yet with sincere desire and perseverance it will become a joy to be anticipated, to leave the world with its turmoil and care, and to shut ourselves away to "where none but God can hear." "They that *wait upon the Lord* shall renew their strength." Prayer should embrace every aspect and activity of the life -- little thing And -- big things . "In *everything*, by prayer and supplication . . . let your requests be made known unto God." (Phil. 4:6.) It has been truly said that "If there be anything in our lives that cannot be prayed about, we *may* be quite sure that that thing has no business to be there at all." Therefore, *time* for prayer is as essential as the air we breathe. To be spiritually healthy we *must* find time for prayer.. Let it be regular, a specified time each day, a season set apart as a time to meet and talk with God, for any time" so frequently becomes "no time." Shall this be our resolve for 1958?

STUDY AND MEDITATION

Hardly less important than prayer is the need for study and meditation. If prayer is "the Christian's native air," the Word of God is his meat and drink, and *time* must be found for "our daily bread." *Time* to eat is essential to physical well-being. Jesus said: "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God*" (Luke 4:4.) Are we sometimes "too 'busy to eat'?" Are we so "cumbered with much serving" in the things of earth, or even in things which concern the Lord, his Truth and the brethren, that we find no time for quiet study and meditation? Much of the usefulness of prayer is lost when there is a failure to apply oneself to the study of our Father's Word. It is in and through His Word that the answers to many prayers are to be found.

To Timothy Paul wrote: "STUDY to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15.) To read the Bible brings much blessing, but is not enough. To listen to the Word of God being expounded is not sufficient to maintain spiritual health and strength. There must be *study*. Of the Bereans of old it was written: (1) "*They received the word with all readiness of mind,*" that is, they gladly heard God's Good News. (2) "*They searched the Scriptures,*" but even more than that (3) "*They searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*" (Acts 17:11.) "*They searched the Scriptures daily*" -- in those days of toil and slavery, that required *time* each day, a season set apart for the Word of God! How necessary for them to "redeem the time"; how necessary -- for Gods people today to cut off the less essential things!

We pray that our appreciation of God's purposes might become more clear; the answer can come only through God's Word. It is our prayer that we might know his will for us; it is revealed in his Word. Never a day should pass without some time spent with God's Holy Word; upon it depends our growth in grace and knowledge. This then is a habit which must be cultivated and will require sacrifice and perseverance. Hear the words of Jeremiah, the Prophet -- "*Thy words were found, AND I DID EAT THEM; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.*" (Jer. 15:46.) Such is the testimony of all who have developed the habit of private study with God's Word. A great musician once testified that if he ceased his practice of music for one day, he became conscious of his loss of skill; if for two days, his friends became aware of it; and if for three days he neglected his hours of practice, the public would know it. There is a parable for the Lord's people.

FELLOWSHIP

The third essential to spiritual development is fellowship. To many, there is something more congenial about this aspect: it brings us into contact with others whom we can see and with whom we can speak. Yet true Christian fellowship can be only on the basis of what has taken place behind the closed doors of private prayer and study. Fellowship is "a sharing together." The Greek word, "*koinonia*," is translated variously: communication, communion, contribution, distribution, fellowship, to communicate. Each of those words suggest the thought of *giving out* rather than of merely receiving. To "give out," communicate, contribute, or distribute, there must be a "taking in"; hence the need and importance of previous prayer and study. "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and in gathering with the people of God, whether in "ones or twos," or in conventions and larger gatherings, there should be the intention to give. By giving we receive. That is fellowship.

But *true* fellowship demands that we shall "redeem the time." Our Adversary is expert at finding "harmless" occupations which so fill the time that fellowship is restricted. All need exhortation -- -- the strongest with the weakest of saints; so much in the circumstances and conditions of life today tend to drag us down to "the lower levels." *"Let us hold the Hope we avow without wavering; . . . and let us consider how to stir one another to love and good deeds. NOT CEASING TO MEET TOGETHER, as is the habit of some, but admonishing one another -- ALL THE MORE So, as you see the Day drawing near."* (Heb. 10:23-25 Moffatt.) Another rendering of the foregoing quotation is -- *"By observing one another, let us arouse ourselves to rival one another's love and good deeds."*

What a happy rivalry that is! *"Let us not neglect meeting together as some do, but let us encourage one another, ALL THE MORE as you can see the great Day is coming nearer."* Are you "isolated" and unable to gather with others in true fellowship? Then neglect not that fellowship through "the written word"; the Lord will richly bless your correspondence with others.

SERVICE

One further necessity remains for those who would "redeem the time." Food and air alone will not produce a healthy human frame; neither will prayer, study, and fellowship of themselves result in a healthy "new creation." The athlete is particular about the air he breathes and the food he eats, but if he would pass "the winning post" he must also find time for exercise. If those who run in the race for the High Calling of God, would reach the goal there must also be activity and service. If fellowship and service are to be acceptable to God and profitable to those we serve, it can be only on the basis of the unseen "prayer -- life" and time spent in private study and meditation. They are the outward expressions of an inward experience. By prayer and study, the will of God is learned; by fellowship and service, the revealed will of God is worked out in the character and toward those about us. Fellowship and service without prayer and meditation on God's Word will result in an exercise of "zeal, not according to knowledge." Prayer and study without fellowship and service will result in "spiritual pride." Thus each must find its proper and essential place in the life of every true Christian.

There are two kinds of service which should engage the time of those who would seek to obtain the "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." (1) That which concerns our individual lives, involving the discipline of self and the subjection of our whole being, even the thoughts of the mind, to the will of God. The will of God dictates that the desires of the flesh must be "crucified," and the affections "set" on things above. The "New Creation" can be fed only on spiritual things;

fleshly appetite can be mortified only by ceasing to gratify earthly desires. How deliberate and persistent is the effort required! (2) The more positive aspect of service is manifested in the "laying down of our lives for the brethren," and in the proclamation of the Gospel message to those about us. A true appreciation of God's great and loving provision for men will so fill the heart that our great desire will be to tell it forth to others. All are not called to prominent service, and it is not the quantity and prominence of service which receives God's approval and blessing. The "cup of cold water" is of great value in his sight. A word spoken for the Lord; a letter of encouragement and cheer; a visit to some lonely brother or sister in Christ; and sometimes, perhaps just a word of prayer for another -- all these are forms of service pleasing to our Father, yet, how sweet is the savour if it represents the doing *with our might* what our hands have found to do, and if our service, whether small or large, is rendered, not during the "time we have to spare," but in the time we have bought or redeemed. Yes, we must *make time* for the things which are vital to our spiritual welfare and eternal destiny.

Our meditation draws to a close. At the entrance to another year we have together searched our hearts. *Is there room for some improvement?* How deep is the longing to share with our glorified Lord in the work of blessing "all the families of the earth," and to "see him face to face"? The use of our time from henceforth will decide the answer. Dearly beloved, *the time is short*. Let us offer the prayer of Moses: "*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*" - Psalm 90:12.

- *Edwin Allbon*, Eng.

Half Hour Meditations on Romans

*Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins . -- 1 John 3:5
To bring in everlasting righteousness. -- Dan. 9:24*

WITH the twentieth verse of chapter 3, the Apostle, we have seen, brought to a close his long argument in proof of the worlds need of salvation. The next section extends from Rom. 3:21 to Rom. 5:11. Therein is expounded Gods provision to meet the great need of mankind. The Apostle has shown that the great need of the world, both of Jew and Gentile, is righteousness and that so far from their attaining righteousness by keeping the requirements of law, the moral law possessed by Gentiles only reveals their sinfulness while that same moral law, as expressed in the written law given to Israel, similarly condemns the Jews -- *for by law (moral law, of course, not ceremonial law) is knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20).*

Mans Extremity Gods Opportunity

In this section, Rom. 3:21 to Rom. 5:11, mans extremity is shown to be Gods opportunity. The age old question, "How can man be just [righteous] with God" (Job 9:2, R. V.)? is answered. God himself has revealed the way -- the only way -- in which this can be. It is a way of faith -- a righteousness (or justification) by faith.

In the exposition of this section three principal ideas are developed: (1) The great fact of history by which justification (or righteousness) by faith is made available for mankind, namely, the ransom sacrifice of Jesus (Rom. 3:21-26); (2) This, Gods method of justifying mankind, is not out of harmony with the Law, but as the case of Abraham proves, is in agreement with and is attested by it (Rom. 3:27-Rom. 4:25); (3) Man, justified by faith, has a well grounded hope, not for the present only but for all the future, including the final judgment (Rom. 5:1-11).

The careful student will have already noted that verse 21 of chapter 3 (Rom. 3:21) is directly connected in sense with the seventeenth verse of chapter 1. "In the interval from Rom. 1:18-Rom. 3:20, the Apostle has shown that the wrath of God rests on mankind, whence it follows that if the world is not to perish, a Divine manifestation of an opposite kind, and able to overcome the first, is indispensable. It is this new revelation which forms the subject of the following passage." It is interesting, too, to observe "how rigorously the Apostle adheres to order in his work."

Our readers will remember that when, in chapter 1, he discussed the failure of the Gentiles, he stated in condensed form, in verse 18 (Rom. 1:18), all of the ideas developed in the remaining verses of that chapter. They will remember, also, that on turning to a discussion of the Jews, he condensed the theme of chapter 2 in its first two verses. Now, once more, in the passage before us, we find a similar procedure obtaining. Verses 21 and 22 (Rom. 3:21-22) contain the theme of the six verses 21-26 as well as of the whole section (Rom. 3:21-Rom. 5:11). "Rom. 3:23 once more sums up the thought of the preceding section (Rom. 1:18-3:20); and verses Rom. 3:24-26 are the development of the subject, the exposition of the new way of justification."

But Now

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets (Rom. 3:21)."

The word translated "But" is strongly adversative; it contrasts the revelation of righteousness with that of wrath." The wrath of God is revealed from heaven (1:18), but now the righteousness (by

faith) of (or from) God is manifested (Rom. 3:21). "We notice how completely different in tone from the preceding section is the section before us. A moment ago we heard, and our conscience re echoed within us, the thunders of the Law. Suddenly in the midst of our self condemnation the cheerful voice of the Gospel gladdens our ears."

The word translated "now" has been understood by some to have a logical rather than a temporal import.

"Instead of understanding it as having *reference to* that fullness of the time which, in the ongoing of the ages, had just been reached," they suppose it to have the logical meaning, which it must be admitted it frequently has in the New Testament (as for example, "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" [Rom. 7:17; "Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you? [1 Cor. 14:6]). Thus understood the word would mean "The situation being such." But while we fully agree that the Apostle is contrasting the condemnation pronounced by law (Rom. 3:20) and the new righteousness acquired without the law (Rom. 3:21), yet this does not prevent us from understanding the word "now" to mean "at this time," that is to say, under the Gospel or New Testament dispensation. This, the temporal, is its usual import; as for example "The mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is manifest" (Rom. 16:25, 26). This meaning, moreover, is in harmony with the context: "to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness" -- Rom. 3:26.

Apart from Law

Gods righteousness has been manifested, says the Apostle, apart from law. In the Authorized Version the phrase is rendered "without the law," but the Greek does not indicate the article "the," and scholars tell us that the phrase is better translated "without law" or "apart from law."

"The law referred to is not merely the law of nature possessed by the Gentiles. Nor is it merely the Jewish law. It is that same law which is spoken of in the preceding verse -- through which is knowledge of sin, and by obedience to the works of which no flesh shall be justified." It is the moral law of God which apprises man of his duty, "whether as explicitly revealed in words to the Jews, or as implicitly without words to the Gentiles all the world over. Such appears to be the reference of the Apostle."

Again the phrase "without law" or "apart from law" instead of being affixed is, in the Greek, *prefixed to the affirmation, and is so translated in the Revised Version, Emphatic Diaglott, etc.* Rotherham, for example, translates the passage thus: "but, now, apart from law, a righteousness of God has been manifested." His translation, which is of special value in indicating where the emphasis should be placed, underscores the words "a righteousness of God" but doubly underscores the phrase "now, apart from law."

As Morrison observes: "This position of the phrase, in the foreground of the affirmation, shows, moreover, that it is intended to bear the burden of a special emphasis. In enunciation it should be betoned. For there is an antithetic reference to the statement of the preceding verse in relation to the moral law: by works of law there shall nobody be justified before God; for through law is recognition of sin. But though it is thus in vain for unrighteous men to have recourse to law (the moral law) in order to obtain justification, still their case is not hopeless. Justification may be obtained in another way. But now, apart from law, Gods righteousness has been manifested. "

The Righteousness of God

The expression "righteousness of God" in Rom. 3:21, is one we have already met (Rom. 1:17). The meaning here is the same. In neither place would the phrase appear to denote an attribute of God, but in both the reference seems to be to a righteousness having God for its author, a righteousness which may become, yea, is destined by the favor of God to be come an attribute of man, a righteousness of or from God.

Since we have discussed this phrase at some length in the exposition of Rom. 1:17, we will not duplicate the matter here. Those who so desire may review the subject in "Meditations No. 15," HERALD, August September, 1956.

Again, the word "is manifested" reminds us of the word "is revealed" in Rom. 1:17. We read there that Gods righteousness if being revealed in the Gospel. Some suppose "that the Apostle had the same idea present to his mind in writing verse 21, chapter 3 (Rom. 3:21), and that he, consequently, means that the righteousness has been manifested in the Gospel. So undoubtedly it has, secondarily. Primarily, it was manifested in the career of Christ Jesus: in the events, inner and outer, of his life and death; in what he voluntarily did and voluntarily endured. These events constitute the subject matter of the Gospel; and in them there was exhibited to view the righteousness wrought out and brought in by Christ. Gods righteousness for unrighteous men was, in these events, manifested in actual fact. It had indeed been promised afore (see Rom. 1:2). But though promised, it was a mystery in some respects, kept secret since the world began. It could be only dimly seen. It was obscure. It was veiled. But now it is made manifest. In our authorized English Version the verb is rendered is manifested. . . . But the perfect tense represents the manifestation as a completed historical fact. Such an idea is peculiarly appropriate, when we regard the manifestation as accomplished in the life and death of the Savior. In the expression, again, is revealed as occurring in Rom. 1:17, the present tense as appropriately represents the continuous disclosure which is afforded in the enduring and indeed everlasting Gospel."

Being Witnessed by the Law and the Prophets

From the fact that this righteousness for unrighteous men is apart from moral law it must not be supposed that it is in contradiction to the Old Testament revelation. On the contrary it is witnessed by the Law and the Prophets. By the expression "the Law and the Prophets" we are evidently to understand the Old Testament scriptures, "the Law" in this case referring to the Pentateuch and "the Prophets" to the remainder of the Old Testament (including the Psalms).

"It is, of course, impossible for us to know what were the particular testimonies which elicited his special attention as his mind flashingly traversed the contents of the Law and the prophets. We need not doubt that he thought of Abraham when he glanced at the Law, for he dwells upon his case in relation to evangelical righteousness in the fourth chapter of this Epistle. We may rest assured too that in turning to the prophets he thought of what David says in the thirty second psalm, for he quotes from that psalm in the same fourth chapter. He would also think of the testimony from Habakkuk, quoted in Rom. 1:17, which is indeed the Old Testament fountain head of the Apostles phase of the New Testament theology. And we may reasonably suppose that his mind took a birds eye view of all the prominent passages, both in the Law and the Prophets, in which the propitiation of the Messiah or the salvation bound up in that propitiation is referred to. For in all these glorious passages, the one great and glorious idea is either explicitly exhibited or implicitly suggested, that justification (unattainable as it is through the personal righteousness of unrighteous men) is attainable through that work of the Savior which is, in one of the most gracious of its phases, Gods righteousness for the unrighteous. We know that the Apostle was

familiar with such passages.

On another occasion we read that he expounded to the Roman Jews and testified the Kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses, and out of the Prophets, from morning till evening (Acts 28:23). In this matter he looked as through the eyes of Christ himself, who, beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, expounded unto his disciples in all the scriptures the things concerning himself (Luke 24:27). These are the things, said he, which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which are written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me (Luke 24:44). And Peter saw as Paul saw. To Christ, says he, give all the Prophets wit nests, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. "(Acts 10:43).

- P. L. Read

"When Ye Come Together"

An Exhortation to Consistency in the Christian profession, based on 1 Cor. 11:18.

THE "coming together" for fellowship of the Corinthian Church was the occasion, very frequently, for the most disorderly conduct and unseemly behavior. But even so, they were perhaps but little worse than other congregations. Only, in their case, we are treated to an eye -- witness view by one who had their best interests at heart. One commentator has called this Corinthian Church "the Church with the lid off," because in St. Paul's letter to this Church, its congregation stands stripped of all their personal pretensions, only their repulsive realities remain. Sectarian divisions had separated them. Personal disputes, which found their way before the heathen magistrates had arisen in their midst.

The spirit of true devotion is a state of heart and mind difficult to apprehend at all times -- among any people; and we need not wonder that the brethren of Corinth (that most carnal and commercial city of ancient Greece) failed so grievously to attain thereunto.

Even in our own times, among Bible respecting peoples, and after nineteen centuries of Christian influence, it is a frame of heart and mind most difficult to apprehend. When our little companies "come together" to the appointed place, there are very many factors that may block the way of approach to the holiest things. If a "comer" thereunto has the "artistic gift," heightened at times with a sense of the lofty and sublime, yet finds in his "coming" that he is ushered into a bare room, unadorned, and without softened lights, the chord of true reverence may, for him, be hard to strike. Or if another of cultured refinement himself, hears ill-chosen words spoken in rough husky tones, it may be a thing impossible for him to respond becomingly in reverential praise. Who of us in these Christian lands knows not the power of some stately church to subdue the soul, or of the throb of some deep -- toned harmonies to hush the senses, and make one step more lightly to some quiet seat, and there lay one's inner self prostrate before the Lofty and the Divine?

Church authorities have traded on this fact in human responsiveness, and have built their stately piles accordingly. But in a cold, bare room, or in some public hall, devoted, at other times, to secular uses, it is not an easy thing at any time to respond from the "depths."

Our sense of worship has suffered, perhaps, too often from these things, while our attitude towards such occasions may have become merely casual -- just a case of being "there"; just a matter of being one of a company possessing mutual views, and for whom there is some degree of pleasure in hearing or exchanging those views. Or it could be the case that the subject for consideration has become well-trodden ground, and we may feel ourselves so well rooted therein, that it fails to arouse enthusiastic gratitude to God, and we would be under no sense of loss had we not been present at the gathering.

It needs here no emphasis to say, both first and last, that our "coming together in the church" should be to worship God. Never should it be to while an hour away, nor yet to be entertained by lofty phrase or cultured utterance. Nor should it be a time exclusively set apart for intensive study, or analytical research. Nor yet should it be an occasion given over to harmonic or melodic song. It is no sin to tell the story of Love Divine in words of rare charm or satisfying beauty, nor yet to find "heart's delight" in the cultured voice as it sets forth the loftier things. Nor is it a crime to analyze the subject with minute care, or make our definitions with exactitude. Indeed, it should be to our mutual pleasure, not less than to our common profit, so to do. The story of Divine Love is worthy, at all times, of our best endeavor. But these things, at their best, are matters of only secondary import -- a noble means to a worthier end, and should ever be seen in such light.

Jesus has promised to be in the midst wheresoever his consecrated saints have "come together in the church." His presence alters everything. It makes the place of meeting the very vestibule of heaven itself; the ante -- room of the very Presence -- chamber of God, in spite of the bare coldness of the room. To the alert and hungry heart, the realization of his presence by the power of the Holy Spirit, can mean so much more than lofty dome or intoned chant, or cultured voice; it can subdue that heart to rest, and hush it down in reverence more than all other things beside.

And, standing thus in the midst, He waits for the upward reaching of his consecrated follower; and then, within the quiet of that hallowed atmosphere, though words be few, or unspoken altogether, Communion is experienced. The yearning spirit, rising from this world of sense, meets and unites with his, and we feel ourselves encouraged and enriched. We take from him new strength and satisfaction for our needs; he takes from us our sacrifice of praise, and presents it enriched with his own righteousness to him who dwells in Light unapproachable.

How grievously we often seem to fall short of this "other-worldly" contact in our seasons of "coming together." How easy it is to fail to sense the atmosphere which his Presence brings; how lightly we seem to gravitate to earthly things, and mar the hallowed influence proceeding from the "Sanctifier" himself. It needs but little more than the thrust and parry of the "keen debate"; the too keen intensity of question and reply, then as the passions rise, and the "intellect" takes control, a canopy of earth -- born things spreads itself above the scene, and (if we take not care) the link between is snapped, and communion with him is at an end. Thenceforth the "study" may proceed, but the worship may be at an end; the discussion may be prolonged, but the "Communion" may have ceased. We may, to our best understanding, have defended our abstract truth, but our very exuberance may have dammed the flow of living truth. We may have stood defensively for "it" but have overlooked our need for *him*. We may have called upon our memories in defending or defining long -- established doctrine, and have forgotten that our needs can be supplied by him alone. In the "study" atmosphere one may, by long experience, become established; but in the atmosphere of "Communion" the memories are of the heart.

Thus we may "come together in one place," but oh! how diverse the results. One may come and find communion with his Lord, another may come and find communion only with his brethren!

Experience and observation over many years prove that statement true; broken and ruptured fellowship in many lands is all the evidence, we need in support thereof!

If, on the other hand, we have learned the secret of "finding him" behind and above every gathering, then we shall find that lovely thoughts and well chosen words will add fragrance to the atmosphere, and bring enchantment to the "inner man," and make the occasion sweet as an oasis on a desert road.

A story is told of two brethren who met in a city street. The previous night had been "the Meeting Night." One had been present, the other had not. "Well, brother," said the absent one, "how did the meeting go; did you get any new thought?"

"Indeed, yes," the other replied. "I learned that my Lord was present there with us in that cold, dark hall, and for me, it altered everything. It transformed everything. The hymns we sang were hymns of praise to *him*. The prayers we said and sanctioned with our 'Amen' were raised to *him* and to the Father."

"You learned the Lord was there? Why, of course! that is what the promise says, isn't it? You know -- where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst."

"Yes," was the reply, "but those words came alive last night. It is a living text, and a living thought to me now. It was 'new' to have it come alive that way. That thought gripped me all through the night; it is with me all through today; I can't forget it now."

Good would it be for every one if this thought could come alive every time we "come together" in the Church! Every word would be spoken as under his eye; every word would be heard as though from his lips, and that would alter everything.

But there is more to be said. This ability to see and sense the Blessed One at all such times is part and parcel of a larger thing. It is only when this sensitivity is part of the whole life that it becomes easy and natural when in the Church. To those who cultivate and practice the Presence of the Lord everywhere, all the time, this is the obvious thing when the hour of fellowship arrives. It is not for them an experience that needs to be conjured up, by effort of the will, but is one that rises spontaneously out of a life of unbroken Companionship, by day and night, with the dearest Object of the desire.

- *Bible Study Monthly*, Eng.

Christ in My Heart

My heart is like a little house,
Where Christ can dwell within;
If I but be a humble girl,
And let Him cleanse my sin.

He helps me with my troubles,
And comforts me in woe;
He makes me feel so very good,
My heart doth love Him so.

-- *Rhoda Moyle. (10 years of age)*

"The Upper Room"

*"And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us." --
Mark 14:15.*

IN John 13 to 17 we have five whole chapters devoted to an account of the wonderful evening the Lord spent with his disciples in that Upper Room. How incalculable would have been our loss without this window into the heart of Jesus and the Heavenly Father. But just because it is so fully recorded and consists, not of a continuous and connected discourse, but of reports of parts of conversations, it is difficult for us to form a clear and connected picture of all that was said. An illustration may help us here. In the process of weaving cloth, the pattern is generally formed by the use of differently colored threads. Suppose there were five, say red, white, blue, green, and yellow. While each thread is carried right through from end to end of the fabric, it only appears intermittently to conform with the design of the pattern. So it is with this wonderful evening's conversation. It was a farewell meeting, and we can clearly trace five lines of thought running through the mind of our Lord associated with such an occasion, appearing intermittently but all conforming to the "farewell" pattern.

After an absence of thirty three and a half years from "His Father's House of Light, His glory circled throne," he was leaving earthly night and going Home. He was, however, leaving behind him his beloved disciples, and his heart yearned over them. They were only about to commence that journey to the Father which he was ending, and this evening was to prepare and fortify them for the separation, and through them the whole Church of God right down to our day. How fervently can every child of God return thanks for this most precious of all the precious portions of the Divine Word.

We cannot read John 13 to 17 without the feeling that we are on holy ground; that we are in the sanctuary of God. With what reverence and awe did the typical priest enter into the typical sanctuary. Passing from the Court into the Holy, he found himself in the very audience chamber of the Most High God, the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity. In the light of the seven golden candlesticks he would find on either side of him were walls of gold, and above, behind, and in front of him were the sacred curtains of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen. With the gold there were thus five colors in the materials of the sacred sanctuary. In a remarkable way these correspond with the five lines of thought running through John 13 to 17 revealed by the recurrent use of five key words. Not only so, but as we hope to show, they are given in exactly the natural order. The first is the word "Father," which occurs no less than fifty times, a proportion of one in every three verses. With this line of thought we naturally associate the gold of the sanctuary. The next four colors are placed in order for us, being always described as blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen. This, as we shall see, is their natural order.

1. GOLD -- THE FATHER

We can but faintly understand the love that existed between our Lord and the Father. It was infinite. Compared with the greatest human love, it was as the vast ocean to the little pools left fringing it at low tide. As his only begotten Son, Jehovah possessed the Logos "in the beginning," before anything was made that has been made. Separated from the Father during the whole course of his pilgrimage in the flesh, at last the time had come for him to go home. Well did Jesus know that the way was by Gethsemane and Calvary, and he would commence to tread it that very night, but this is totally eclipsed by the thought that he was going to the Father. His eyes were fixed, not on the dark and dreadful valley that yawned at his feet, but at the bright radiance of the Father's

face on the sunlit slopes beyond. Repeatedly the Lord had told his disciples that he was leaving them and by what a terrible way, but so full were they of thoughts of the near establishment of an earthly kingdom that they could not take it in. Thomas spoke for them all when he said, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest and how can we know the way?" (John 14:5.) This evening, pressing home the truth, Jesus five times tells them plainly, "I go to the Father." (1) John 14:12: "Greater works than these shall ye do for I go to the Father." (2) John 14:28: "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father." (3) John 16:10: The Comforter would "reprove the world ... of righteousness, because I go to my Father." (4) John 16:16: "A little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father." (5) John 16:28: "I leave the world, and go to the Father."

This evening's conversation gives us a cross section of our Lord's mind and heart. It reveals how completely devoid he was of that self consciousness which is so apt to trouble us, and correspondingly, how completely, simply, and sublimely God -- conscious he ever was in every circumstance. The keynote of his whole earthly life was, "I and the Father are one." But all this is recorded, not solely to acquaint us with the absolute unity and infinite love existing between the Father and the Son, and the wonderful home there was awaiting our Lord in the Father's immediate presence. The Church had a vital concern in all this. They were to be not lookers -- on, but partakers of these glorious things. Called to travel by the same road as their Lord, they were to reach the same glory at the end, experiencing meantime the wonderful love and fellowship with the Father which Jesus himself had enjoyed. It was to be not only "I and the Father are one," but "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." (John 17:21.) Journey's end for us, as for our Lord, is the Father. Like him, we too are on a pilgrimage. If questioned, "Whither, pilgrims, are you going?" individually we reply in the words of Jesus, "I go to the Father."

Every gathering of the Lord's people where Jesus is in the midst, is an "Upper Room" experience. Have we sometimes wondered, if he were to make himself visible and be present with us, as in that first "Upper Room" on the evening of the day of his resurrection, what the Lord would speak about? The answer is, just along the lines of those five principles represented in the colors of the sanctuary, the first of which is gold, directing our attention to the first key word, "The Father." In terms suited to our need in this our day and generation, he would speak to us about the Father, just as invisibly present he does by means of the Holy Spirit, bringing to our remembrance all that the Father was to him, and all that he should be to us in him. Through the operation of the spirit he recalls to us that our fellowship with one another is "like to that above" only because "our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:3.) What a privilege, honor, and blessing to be admitted to such a circle of friendship! Little wonder that John exclaims, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

2. BLUE -- "THE HOLY SPIRIT"

Although the key word "spirit" occurs only eight times, the whole of the evening's conversation is impregnated with the idea. So much is this the case, that it might be called the Charter of the Holy Spirit. The reason for this is that the Holy Spirit was taking over in the Lord's bodily absence, all that he had been to the disciples when in the flesh. Thus Jesus identifies himself with the Holy Spirit, saying in John 16:7: "It is expedient for you that I go away. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come." Then in John 14:18 he says: "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." Thus, after the Father, the next dominant note is the Spirit, representing the Lord's invisible presence with the Church to the end of the Age.

But why should we associate this with the color "Blue"? When two who love each other dearly have to part for a long, indefinite period, how fervently they tell each other that though absent in body they will be with each other in spirit, dwelling in each other's minds and hearts. That their love will remain true and constant, and absence will but make the heart grow fonder. Amongst all the colors, there seems to be a recognized natural association between *blue* and constancy, truth, and faithfulness.

Most prominent at this farewell meeting when Jesus was going away, was the thought that though he would be absent in body, he would be with them by means of the Spirit and that as his love for them would be constant, so should they remain faithful and true in their love for him. No child of God is without proof in himself of Christ's indwelling presence by means of the Holy Spirit. To him "Closer is he than breathing, nearer than hands or feet." "Before thou tallest, I will answer thee; and while thou art yet speaking, I will hear" has been his experience time and time again.

In our "Upper Room" meetings with Jesus in the midst, were he to make himself visibly present as at that first Upper Room, next to the theme of the Father, would be this of the constancy of his abiding presence by means of the Holy Spirit. Invisibly present, he does likewise, recalling to our remembrance such Scriptures as Revelation 1:12-16, the vision of the Son of Man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, representing his unseen presence with and care for his Church throughout every period of the Gospel Age, right down to and including our own. He would direct our minds to the parallel between the coming of the Holy Spirit upon himself at Jordan and upon the Church at Pentecost, and how in this also we are sharers of his experiences. Driven by the Spirit into the wilderness for forty days, hitherto hidden things in the Scriptures became luminous, and it became plain that only by the sufferings of Christ could there come the glory to follow in the Kingdom so eagerly anticipated. Passing from the court of the Levite, he entered the sanctuary of the sacrificing priest. There the heavenly things were revealed by the Holy Spirit to him as they have been to us following in his steps. The Lord would impress upon us that in like manner as he was, we are to be led by the Spirit into all truth concerning our sanctification and our service.

Every consecrated Christian readily acknowledges that the Holy Spirit is the channel to him of every spiritual blessing. Yet it must be as readily admitted that it is here where we all come short. Our Lord's life is our pattern. What the Father was to him, we have seen, he is to us in him. In the same way, what the Spirit was to our Lord, is to be our standard as to what it is to be to us.

So completely spirit filled and spirit possessed was he that he could say, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." The words he spoke, the works he did, were not his but the Father's, who dwelt in him. So absolute was his identification with the Father that he could say, "I and the Father are one." Amazing grace, this is to be realized in us, in him; for our Lord actually prays that we might be one with the Heavenly Father and himself, as they were one with each other.

Having been predestinated to be conformed to the image of "his Son" (Rom. 8:29), the practical issue for all who consider themselves as having been called of God, is the question as to how this work of transformation is progressing. It is essential that each keeps before him for continual reference the standard set by God for him in Christ. Not by self effort, but by self surrender to the power of the Spirit of God, and faith to believe and receive it in its fulness, will the wondrous change be accomplished. It will be a transformation from what we were to what we are, and from what we are to what we shall be. We cannot love to order. Love begets love. We love because he first loved us. Therefore, the simple process as described by Paul in 2 Corinthians 3:18 is: "But we all, with unveiled face, receiving and reflecting the glory of the Lord, are changed into the

same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." - *Rotherham and King James Version*.

3. PURPLE -- LOVE

After the blue of the spirit of faithfulness, comes the royal purple of love. The key word of love occurs no less than thirty three times. This purple thread of love naturally takes its prominent place in the pattern of a "Farewell" meeting. No matter how undemonstrative in their love two who love each other dearly may have been, when it comes to a prolonged period of separation from each other, every barrier of reserve goes down and their deep and tender love is revealed. Our Lord never at any time tried to conceal his emotions. His perfect nature was keenly sensitive, and never was he stoical. But on this night, when it came to the final parting with his disciples, in look, word, and action, his heart overflowed with tenderness. In wonder we look on at the demonstration of such deep and tender love for a group of men who would have been generally regarded as very ordinary. They had nothing to recommend them in the way of appearance, education, culture, or refinement. Instead, they were in the main, ignorant and unlearned, inconsiderate, quarrelsome, careful about place and precedence, in short, pretty much like ourselves, apart from the grace of God. That night not one of them was humble enough to wash the feet of the others, even though it may have meant not doing it for the Lord.

Yet Jesus loved them with a tender, caressing, mother-love, calling them little children. And so we read (John 13:1, 3-5): "When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end." "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and was going to God" -- did what? Ask them to acknowledge his greatness and do him reverence? What follows made such an indelible impression on the mind of John that though it happened about seventy years before, it was as vivid as if it had been yesterday. Note the way he tells us about it, giving every detail, as if actually witnessing the scene again with his mind's eye. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands and that he was come from God, and was going to God, he riseth from the supper." John sees himself and all the others watching in dead silence to see what the Lord is going to do. In shame and amazement they watch "every" movement of what follows. "He riseth from the supper -- and laid aside his garments -- and took a towel and girded himself." Surely *he* was not going to wash *their* feet! "After that he poureth water into a basin -- and began to wash the disciples' feet -- and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded."

Verily, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end. What the Lord did for the disciples then, is what he would do in parallel circumstances for us today. Truly there is no love like the love of Jesus. Little wonder that Paul prays (Eph. 3:19) that we might be granted the spiritual insight "to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." These wonderful chapters John 13 to 17, however, provide not only a window into the heart of Jesus, but also a window into the heart of the Father with regard to his love for his children. Like the love of the Lord, it reveals a love passing all understanding. Ponder deeply the significance of these words of our Lord to us, John 15:9: "*As* the Father hath loved me, *so* have I loved you: continue ye in my love." John 16:27: "The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me." John 17:23: "I in them and thou in me: that they may be made perfect in one: and that the world *may* know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." John 17:26: "And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love *wherewith thou halt loved me* may be in them, and I in them."

In this royal purple of love so prominent in the fabric of this wonderful evening's conversation, there is not only the love of the Lord and the love of the Father, but our answering love for them. This love is begotten and developed by the consideration and experience of their love for us. It is to be demonstrated, not by emotion or sentimentality, but by the practical quality of obedience. Obedience is at once the test and the expression of love. This our Lord makes very clear: John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." John 14:23: "If a man love me, he will keep my words." He makes special mention of a new commandment: John 13:34, 35: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; *as I* have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Here we have a very simple gauge whereby we *may* test and measure the strength of our love for the Lord. In 1 John 3:16 it is stated as our bounden duty that "because he laid down his life for us, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren," in whom he is represented, and thus for him. It is a searching standard of judgment that "inasmuch as ye have done it [or failed to do it] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it [or failed to do it] unto me." (Matt. 25:44,45.) We live in an age of large scale advertising. Every professing Christian has here the privilege of advertising the greatest thing in the world in the greatest possible way: the love of Christ, by practical demonstration.

This love for one another is emphasized by our Lord, not only for our own sakes and his satisfaction, but because of its tremendous importance to the success of his mission of salvation. The Church's Divine commission was: "Ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1: 8.) This witness was to be not only by their lips, but by their lives. What if they had failed, and the light of the Gospel had been quenched in darkness? Impossible, you say. Yes, impossible, but only because of God's pre -- vision, provision, and protection. Jesus prophesied that the gates of hell should not prevail against his Church. Ever since its inception, it has been the target for Satan's unceasing and relentless attacks. By every possible means of craft and cruelty, he has tried to quench the light of the Gospel. His strategy has been consistent from the beginning and continues in our own day and generation. It is first to deceive; then to defile; then to divide; and thus to destroy. May we all be on the alert that he may get no footing in our midst by seeing to it that our *every* gathering together is *unto the Lord*, in an "Upper-Room" experience, because we have Jesus himself in the midst.

"O! fill our hearts with heavenly love,
And may we at its impulse move,
That all around may clearly see
That we have been, dear Lord, with Thee."

(Continued in next issue)

- A. D. Kirkwood, Scot.

Fellowship Through the Mails

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

Again we take this means of expressing thanks to our many friends for their messages of encouragement and cheer, sent us throughout the past year. The assurance that we are being constantly remembered at the throne of heavenly grace is most strengthening to our faith. These messages are all very welcome, even though we are not always able to give as extended or as prompt replies as we could wish. When time does permit such replies, far from considering it a burden, we esteem it a privilege to minister a word of good cheer to weary fellow -- travelers -- "a cup of cold water" in the name of the Lord.

Below are extracts from letters of general interest, which we are glad to share with you in these *pages*. --
Directors and Editors.

It was a great pleasure to read in the [November] "Herald" an account of your visit to this country. I appreciated so much the visit you and Sister Read paid me personally, especially so, as it was unexpected. (Brother Hudson had said that while Brother Muir would come, you would not be able.) It was an added pleasure to see Brother and Sister Cedric and Dorothy Smith again.

-- *Fred Stratton*, 115 Edinburgh Street,
Swindon, Wilts., England

(Brother Stratton has been bedridden for many years and, therefore, gets much of his fellowship "through the mails." He is always glad to hear from any of the friends, and usually manages to reply. *Ed. Com.*)

For a long time we have wanted a booklet written especially for the Jews with no mention of Christ (which is an affront to them). Casimir Lanowick showed us your little booklet "The Place of Israel in the Plan of God" by P. L. Read. We should like about 75 copies for distribution at our Convention.

Do you think P. L. Read could address our group some time?
-- *Mrs. James Dean*, Tenn.

Many thanks for the album of records. It was good to hear Brother John's voice again. How clearly it is reproduced.

The booklet "The Place of Israel in the Plan of God" is very good indeed, and provides an opening to pass on the answer to the problems in the Near East, so much before the minds of all in these days.
-- *W. R. Walton*, Eng.

Have been getting the "Herald" now for about six months. It has been meat and drink to my soul.
-- *Louis F. Wiebrecht*, Michigan

I purchased a book at a rummage sale, called "*The Divine Plan of the Ages*." It is very good; it surely unravels the Word of God so one can understand it. I see in the back of the book that you have a journal called, "The Herald of Christ's Kingdom." Would you please send me a *copy*. Will send an offering later.
-- *Mrs. R. L. Carpenter*, Pa.

I am enclosing a dollar for my 1958 Herald subscription, and thought I would tell you how much peace and comfort I got from an article by Brother Blackburn in the November issue, "Debtors to His Marvelous Grace." It impressed me so forcibly that I marked it in ink to be read daily, so that I might absorb some of its spirit. . . . I hope all your readers get the lift that I do from your "Herald."
-- *Mrs. Elsie Anderson*, Pa.

Thank you very much for the album of records by Brother John Read. The voice, tone, words and music are so faithfully and clearly reproduced, the singer might be in the room. One song which will be a favorite is "When Comes the Sunshine," and another is "Great is Thy Faithfulness." There is something rather haunting about both words and tune, and it seems to us they reveal something of the singer.
-- *Mr. and Mrs. F. Shuttleworth*, Scot.

Please send me a dozen copies of the booklet "Parables of the Kingdom," as the members of our Class wish to study same.
- *Mrs. A. Coulson*, Eng.

I am writing on behalf of the Youth for Truth Public Witness Committee, of which I am a member. Could you send us a few thousand assorted tracts. We have already passed out approximately one thousand, and plan to distribute ten thousand before the year is ended, if we can get them.
-- *Larry Urban*, Ill.

Enclosed is a check for ten dollars which we would like to donate to the Pastoral Bible Institute to show our appreciation for the tracts which we received so promptly. We hope to use them to the best possible advantage, in serving our Lord.

-- *Larry Urban*, Ill.

Yesterday we obtained a copy of your most excellent journal and a few of your small booklets from Sister Mary Zolynski of Syracuse. We have found them most delightful in their presentation of Divine truth. We would like to subscribe to the "Herald." Also we would like the two volumes "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" and the volume "Daniel the Beloved of Jehovah"; also the booklets on "Our Lord's Return" and "Hell."

-- *Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Carpenter, N. Y.*

It was my intention to beat Waterloo to see you *away* on the boat train and to bid you farewell and Godspeed. That, however, was prevented by attendance at the funeral of Brother Robert MacFarlane of the Central London Class who was present at your last meeting with us. Brother Lodge and I were asked to conduct the service.

-- *George H. Jennings, Eng.*

We had a very encouraging time with Brother Siekman. He was a great help to the brethren in the Midlands, and the reports we have from elsewhere are all the same. Please give our warm Christian love to Brothers John T. Read and Paul E. Thomson.

-- *W. R. Walton, Eng.*

The album of songs by Brother John Read, were received last week, and have been enjoyed over and over again already. Reception is fine on our player -- he could be present in the room with us. This is especially so if we look at the fine picture on the front of the album.

Thanks again for locating a new copy of *Rotherham* for us. It has not yet arrived, but no doubt it will shortly.

-- *Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Cowling, Eng.*

Just to make it a matter of record, I am writing to apprise you of the fact that our Ecclesia is desirous of having the visits of the brethren from time to time as they are routed in our vicinity. Their visits have proved a great blessing to us.

-- *Mrs. Ed. Conrad, Wis.*

I have just been reading a copy of a little booklet published by your Institute entitled "The Place of Israel in the Plan of God." Would it be possible for you to send me two or three copies for distribution. I shall be pleased to meet any charge. I should also be pleased to receive some details of the other teachings of your Institute, and to know your views on other Bible matters.

-- *C. J. Webb, Can.*

As another year draws to a close, we are thrilled with the prospect that we shall soon see our Savior face to face, and be made like him. All else pales into insignificance as we ponder this event.

We have thoroughly enjoyed the wonderful articles in the "Herald," the past year. We go back and read the older issues of many years ago and receive great comfort and encouragement. May the Lord richly bless you and guide you in the coming year and always, unto the end.

We are enclosing \$1.00 for which please renew our subscription to the "Herald." Continue the two copies if possible.

-- *Mr. and Mrs. Wm. H. Geisinger, Pa.*

Your discourse on the "Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard" (which, as you know, we took on our tape recording equipment) has been heard twice by a young Christian friend of mine who is studying for the ministry. When he came back to hear it the second time, he brought his notebook with him.

The three albums of Pastoral Records, the supply of booklets, and the copy of *Rotherham* all arrived safely. Thank you very much for all of these. They will be of great help to me in spreading the Good News. Already I have passed on some of your booklets to several interested friends, including the two with whom you were speaking after one of your discourses.

-- *Victor McIlveen, North Ireland*

Dear Friends:

I wish to renew my subscription for the "Herald," which expires soon. After all these years (since December 1918), I do not want to miss this year which may be the last for me, as I am now 92. I have received great help from the "Herald."

Occasionally you have reprinted an article that Brother Blackburn wrote. In the last issue was the one by him, "True Christian Character." Some years ago his article on "The Vision Glorious" appeared. I have never forgotten it. Why not reprint it?

-- *Mrs. E. S. Miller, Mass.*

From: The Secretary's Desk
To: The Pastor of a Church in the Middle West

Coming now to the various points of doctrine which you discuss in your letter: As I have pondered your remarks I have felt that we are very much at one in intention, in aim, in purpose, namely, to follow in the footsteps of the Master to the best of our ability. We are, however, very far apart in our understanding, of many Scriptures. Just how to reconcile our conflicting views I am puzzled to know; perhaps I might be permitted to ask a few questions here. For example:

(1) You object to the "emphasis on the Second Coming" which you find in our "Pre -- Millennial literature." Is not this same emphasis to be found in the New Testament?

If we are to judge the importance of a doctrine by the proportionate space and prominence given to it in the New Testament, then it would seem that this theme of Christ's Second Advent could not be too strongly emphasized in our thinking and preaching, as it is second to none in the claim which, in the New Testament, it makes upon our consideration.

At the end of this letter I have listed a few New Testament Scriptures (many others might be cited) which make direct reference to our Lord's Second Advent. It is remarkable how "that blessed hope" seems to fit every circumstance of life.

(2) What, in your opinion, is the purpose of our Lord's Second Advent? My own thought, as you know, is that he comes to bless, to usher in the "times of restitution" spoken by the mouth of *all* God's holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:20, 21.) If, as seems from your letter to be the case, you hold the opposite view, namely, that he comes to destroy this planet, etc., what makes you think that your view magnifies God's love, and mine his wrath and vengeance?

(3) In your closing paragraph you remark: "We are at that season when the promise of 'glad tidings of great joy which shall be for *all people*' was given." To this I most heartily assent. But why try to harmonize this glorious promise with doctrines which teach just the opposite? The great majority of the "all people" mentioned, have gone into their graves without so much as having heard the name of Jesus. Most, if not all, of the Churches teach that they have gone to a burning fiery hell. Is this your thought? If so, then the Scriptures would have more truthfully read: "Bad tidings of great misery which shall be to most people."

(4) Again, your last sentence reads: "And may we all look up with hope for a better day." That is exactly the proper thought. As a matter of fact, that is precisely the theme of the pamphlet I sent you, captioned, "The World of Tomorrow," which you are "not able to accept." That better day *will* come -- -- in God's due time. Far from denying it, I gladly affirm it. Moreover I gladly join with you, both in laboring for it, and in praying for it, even as our Lord taught us: "Occupy *till I come*." (Luke 19:13.) "After this manner therefore pray ye . . . *Thy Kingdom come*." (Matt. 6:10.) But I do not think that the Kingdom will come without the King. You evidently think otherwise. Perhaps *you* know of a Scripture which supports your view, which has escaped my attention. If so, I would be interested to know it.

**A FEW NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES
HAVING REFERENCE TO OUR LORD'S SECOND ADVENT**

You are a Christian Pastor. Note the reward held out to such as are diligent in caring for the flock: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly . . . *and when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*" -1 Pet. 5:4.

As a Christian Pastor St. Paul's charge to Timothy will be of special interest: "That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, *until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" - 1 Tim. 6:14.

Is holy living urged upon us all? Note the inspiring motive thereto: "That, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, *looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*" -- Titus 2:13.

Are we bidden to eat the bread and drink the cup, in remembrance of our Lord and to show forth his death? It is only "*Till He come.*" - 1 Cor. 11:26.

It was with approval that St. Paul wrote of the Christians in Thessalonica: "Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, *and to wait for his Son from heaven.*" - 1 Thess. 1:9-10.

What if we who are much occupied with looking up, eager to "come behind in no gift, *waiting for the coming of the Lord,*" (1 Cor. 1:7) should sometimes be stigmatized as stargazers and impracticable dreamers? This need not discourage us, for, as the writer to the Hebrews exhorts: "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. *For yet a little while and he that shall come will come and will not tarry.*" -- Heb. 10:35-37.

Is it difficult to be patient under trial? Not if we keep in mind the admonition of St. James: 'Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts, *for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*" -- James 5:8.

Sincerely your brother in his love and truth,

- P. L. Read,

Is Israel Emerging from Hell?

About a year ago we published a booklet* bearing this caption. Evidently a copy has come to the attention of the Editor of *"Words of Life,"* for in its October issue the following kindly review appears:

IS ISRAEL EMERGING FROM HELL?

A short time ago a tract came into my hands bearing this striking title. With many Christians it would create an atmosphere of mystery, and perhaps cause criticism and resentment. As a matter of fact we consider it to be most opportune, for it touches a subject that should be topical now, and that will gain in interest and importance in what we believe to be the not too distant future.

* This booklet was published as a sequel to an earlier one bearing the title "The Place of Israel in the Plan of God." Both booklets are still available, free on request.

Israel in Hell! In what sense can this be considered as a Biblical subject? The answer we would give is that given by the writer of the tract; it is based upon our Lord's parable concerning the "Rich Man and Lazarus" as recorded in Luke 16. We shall not have space to offer a full interpretation of the parable, but we may be permitted to give a few pointers in the hope that they may stimulate further study. The first challenge met with comes from those who deny that it is a parable, and upon it base the God-dishonoring dogma of eternal conscious punishment. Others not so self-confident will probably meet us thus fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy concerning them. It was because the Pharisees and scribes murmured at our Lord's reception of the publicans and sinners that the parables of Luke 15 were spoken in rebuke. The typical Pharisee is seen in the elder brother of the parable of the Prodigal Son. Possessing all the riches of the father's house and home, he failed to appreciate the grace shown to his repentant brother. Steeped in the pride of his own self -- righteous ness he had no feeling for the need of others. The Pharisees had a rich ancestry, but their claim of descent from Abraham had become of little worth. John the Baptist warned them:

"Begin not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

The parables of the "Prodigal Son," and the "Rich Man and Lazarus" have the same principal features: there is a father and two sons in each, but with what contrasting results! The prodigal and Lazarus are received into Abraham's bosom in a restored relationship. The elder brother and the rich man are left outside. The clothing of the rich man, purple and fine linen, very fitly represents the nation called to be a kingdom to which was attached the priesthood. It was to these people that our Lord said, with the question: But is it a parable? That, then, is the point first to be considered. By the former class it is claimed not to be a parable, because our Lord does not introduce it as such. The fact that he said "There was a rich man," is taken to prove it to be a literal historical happening indicative of the doom of all who die outside of Christ. Against this theory we would point out that there is no parabolic pointer in the case of the "unjust steward," or of the "prodigal son," and yet we invariably hear them referred to as parables. A factor of considerable importance is to ascertain to whom the parable is addressed. This is easy to do for in Luke 16:14, we read:

"And the Pharisees also who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him."

The words that follow are addressed directly to them (see Luke 16:15), and so were the parables recorded in Luke 15 (see Luke 15:3). Is it possible, then, to discover his method of addressing this critical section of the Jewish community? We think it is, quite definitely. Turning to Matthew 13, we read:

"All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables: and without a parable spake he not unto them." -- Matt. 13:34.

They were part of the "way side" hearers of whom our Lord remarked:

"They seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand."

"The publicans and harlots go into the Kingdom of God before *you*" and to whom he warned, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." This we know has actually happened and the nation was dispersed, and the city, Jerusalem, destroyed in the year 70 A.D.

But what has all this to do with the "Hell" included in the title? The word so translated is *hades*, and this is never referred to as the place of ultimate torment. "Hades" means the hidden, covered, and unseen: it certainly does not represent a place of torment before judgment takes place, and, incidentally, neither does "Abraham's bosom" represent a state of eternal bliss before the resurrection takes place. As a nation, Israel has been scattered: lost among the nations, suffering persecution, martyrdom, and wholesale destruction for nearly 2000 years. Hitler's lethal chambers destroyed more than six million during the last tragic war. No appeal to "Father Abraham" could appease their tragic plight. The very recognition of that relationship added to the bitterness evinced against them.

It is only since the year 1917 that their right to the land of promise has been acknowledged, and only of more recent date have they been acclaimed a nation and given possession of a portion of their promised possessions.

Yes! Israel is emerging from their *hades*' experiences. Further troubles await them, Jacob's trouble, while in the land in a state of unbelief. But the promise still holds good --

"All Israel shall be saved."

Today the people are being restored: the land is being replenished: its vast wealth is being discovered, and Palestine is becoming the envy of her neighbors. It is to a nation that has been prepared through the judgments it has endured, that the Lord will return., to establish his kingdom and reign of righteousness and peace.

The resuscitation of Israel is a sign that the end of the present Age is at hand.

-- *Words of Life*, Eng.

Sholem Asch

The year just ended saw the passing, at the age of 76, of the Jewish poet, Sholem Asch. In "An appreciation" of him, appearing in the Autumn issue of "The Hebrew Christian," H. L. Ellison remarks that, when Asch passed away "we lost not merely the greatest living Yiddish author but also a very great man."

"Having grown up in Czarist Russia," comments Agnes Waldstein, in the September issue of "Jerusalem," "Asch, following in the footsteps of Tolstoi, originally wrote about social problems in the small Jewish towns there, and of Russia at large. Later on he emigrated to America, and his books treat of similar problems in the United States."

"The Gentile world really became aware of him," says Ellison, "when *The Nazarene* appeared in 1939. The Yiddish circles of New York never forgave him for this book, and as far as I know it has never appeared in its original Yiddish. The charges of apostasy [from Judaism] grew stronger with the appearance of *The Apostle* (1944) and *Mary* (1949), and they were but little influenced by the appearance of *Moses* in 1952 and the reissue in an enlarged form of *Salvation* in the following year. Sholem Asch tried to explain his position in *My Personal Faith* (1942), but unfortunately this, perhaps his most important work from a spiritual standpoint, has been largely ignored by both Jew and Christian... .

"It is unfortunate that the orthodox Jew was too busy trying to repudiate him, and the Christian to claim him, for them really to try to understand where he stood. *My Personal Faith* shows him as a man with a living link with God and a deeper respect for Jesus of Nazareth than is felt by many who call themselves Christians. . . . On the one hand his respect for Jesus was so great that he probably accepted virtually all that the Gospels said about him. On the other hand he could not understand the apparent contradiction between our Lord's message and that of the Old Testament revelation. As a result Jesus became for him the Messiah of the Gentiles, and he clearly hints that when he comes again the Jew will then be able to accept him as Messiah too.

"Something more must be added. In confidence he allowed a statement to be circulated to a restricted group from which it seems probable that had he lived in the first century he would have been a member of the Christian Church. He had, however, found the recasting of New Testament teaching in a Greek mold in the great creedal statements of the Universal Church an obstacle he could not surmount. It is probably fair to say that at heart he was a Christian, but he would never have satisfied the doctrinal requirements of the average denomination."

In other words, to quote again from Agnes Waldstein, Asch was "free from theological prejudices," and because of this, his books "show the believing Christian an 'original Christianity' that is able to help him find his way back to the sources of his faith. . . . He wanted his people to turn back to God and acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah; to embrace that original Christianity which had sprung from Judaism, - - *without considering its historical -- ecclesiastical developments.*" (italics ours)

"We should thank God," concludes Ellison, "for the part played by Sholem Asch in preparing his people to accept Jesus as Messiah. We should also pay rather more attention to his writings than most of us have done, to discover what were the -- real obstacles to a full acceptance of Christ, for we need not doubt that they are shared by others in whom a similar spirit dwells."

Our readers need not look further "to discover what were the real obstacles" that hindered, but evidently did not prevent, Sholem Asch from "full acceptance of Christ." Those obstacles were "the great creedal statements of the Universal Church." If it be "fair to say that at heart he was a Christian," it must be that, finding these creeds impossible to surmount, he bypassed them, as so many others of us have learned to do.

-- P. L. Read.

Recently Deceased

Sr. M. Brook, Providence, R. L -- (Oct.)
Sr. Lula Brooks, Erie, Pa. -- (Nov.)
Sr. B. Harrison, Cairo, Ga. -- (Aug.) '
Sr. N. F. Jolly, Memphis, Tenn. -- (Nov.)
Sr. A. Lilljedahl, Lynn, Mass. -- (Aug.)
Bro. John Rutherford, Blaby, Eng. -- (Nov.)