

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. XLI November, 1958 No. 10

Thanksgiving

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." - Ephesians 5:20.

GIVING THANKS" is translated from one Greek word which means "to be grateful," and implies the thought of having grateful affection and memory.

The philosopher, Aristotle, when asked, "What dost soonest grow old?" replied, "Thanks"; thus chiding men on how quickly they forget benefits at first gratefully received. Remembering the one leper out of the ten healed who returned to give thanks to Jesus, the history of natural and spiritual Israel, and our own failures, we are led to say that unthankfulness is one of the most common of sins.

The worldly are not now on trial for life, and their unthankfulness is winked at (Acts 17:30); but Christians are held responsible for their knowledge and opportunities, and their characters are injured if they fail to be thankful and fail to speak and live their thanks.

THE EVILS OF THANKLESSNESS

The depravity of the human race is caused by unthankfulness, caused in turn by a lack of understanding and a foolish heart. This condition was to be specially noticeable in the last days.- Rom. 1:21, 29-31; 2 Tim. 3:1, 2.

Unthankfulness in typical Israel brought chastening and all of that nation's woes, and ended in the "seven times" of trouble. This was the reason for their final removal from favor, pronounced by Jesus in his memorable words: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." - Matt. 23:37-39; Lev. 26:14-18.

Since all things that happened to natural Israel were types of spiritual Israel's experiences (1 Cor. 10:1-11), their unthankfulness, carelessness, waywardness, disbelief, cruelty to the Prophets and to Jesus, woes, chastening, and removal from favor, were to caution Christians against following such a course, and to warn each of us by their bad example, that many who enter the narrow way will follow a wayward path. This indeed has been the history of the Church even as with natural Israel. As their leaders were "blind leaders of the blind," so sorrowfully we admit, it has been, and still is with the Church. Some of Israel entered into Canaan, although upon the "fattest of them" and "the chosen men of Israel, the wrath of God came and slew and smote them down" because they "believed not for his wondrous works," and "trusted not in his salvation," and did not have "the praises of the Lord" in their mouths and lives. Only when the Lord "slew them, then they sought him; and they returned and inquired early after God." (Psa. 78:4, 22, 29-34.) We marvel at the speed and degree that some who know the Truth lose that knowledge and spirit, and lose their love for their brethren. Can it be that this happening to Israel was especially typical of present Truth people? -- that unless we thankfully and gladly receive God's gifts, we will not only lose the gifts but all hope of eternal life?

THE BENEFITS OF THANKSGIVING

Students of the mind classify men into introverts, who look and live inwardly, and extroverts, whose thoughts and interests are on things around and outside them. The introvert says, "The world owes me a living," and greedily takes all he can grasp. If he notices the needs of others or things to be done, he says, "Let some one else do it." He is not the thankful type nor likely to appreciate benefits from God or man. The extrovert "Looks not . . . on his own things, but . . . also on the things of others." (Phil. 2:4.) He is the burden bearer, and the one given to charitable works. Fortunately none are one hundred per cent introverts or extroverts, otherwise the one would acquire everything and the other would be destitute. Christians have both these tendencies within them, the one to combat and the other to temper with the spirit of a sound mind. However, Christians can safely cultivate their charitable tendencies, being promised if they "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these things [food, clothing, and bodily well-being] shall be added unto you." - Matt. 6:33.

If one is heedless and inattentive, he will not be thankful. He must "incline his ear" and "apply his heart" in order to "understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity: yea, every good path," including the path of thanksgiving. He must say: "My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord. Then one can say, "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being." - Prov. 2:1, 2, 9; Psa. 104:33, 34.

All around us are things for which we should be thankful. The recurring days and nights, summer, fall, winter, and spring, pass unnoticed unless we consider these blessings and appreciate them. Recently in a magazine article an engineer gave his reasons for belief in God as an intelligent being. He stated among other things that if the earth were but a little nearer or further from the sun, and if the days were of different length and were not followed by nights of average equal length, vegetable and animal life would cease from the earth. Such changes of distance from the sun could occur through a change in speed of the earth's revolution and length of day through change in rotation, yet they never vary, so that men can calculate the sunrise, sunset, and seasons, and the yield of planting. The natural laws designed by our Heavenly Father and executed by Jesus in his pre-human state are responsible for these wise and permanent arrangements, yet how few ever think of this, much less give thanks to God through Jesus for the sunrise or the advent of winter. When it rains, adverse comment is so common that James Whitcomb Riley wrote:

"It hain't no use to grumble and complain;

It's just as cheap and easy to rejoice;
When God sorts out the weather and sends rain,
Why, rain's my choice."

One of the ancients said, "He that falsely denies the reception of a benefit, and he that passes it as unnoticed, and he that doth not repay it, is ungrateful; but most ungrateful of all is he that forgets a benefit."

The song, "Count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord hath done," is but a carrying out in our meter of the Hebrew poems of praise as the writer reveled in the recount of God's blessings to Israel. - Psa. 78:11-42; Psa. 107.

Let us listen to David's methods of giving thanks: "I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works." "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." "My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches." (Psa. 143:5; 103:2; 63:5, 6.) He continually reminded himself to thank the Lord and *not* to forget his benefits; he determinedly thought of all God's works; he stayed awake nights meditating; was made joyful and burst forth in praise (thanks) to God.

Unbelievers claim there is no God because there is so much trouble in the world. In this men do not properly appraise their benefits, and offset their troubles therewith. David says, "I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people . . . and the nations. For thy mercy is great above the heavens; and thy truth unto the clouds." "Remember his marvelous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth." (Psa. 108:3, 4; 105:5.) He is eloquent as he remembers God's mercy in the heavens: faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds; righteousness like great mountains; judgments are a great deep; preserveth man and beast; thoughts are precious; sum of them is great; more in number than the sands of the sea. "The Lord is good to all; his tender mercies are over all his works." "The Lord daily loadeth us with benefits." (Psa. 36:5, 6, 7; Psa. 139:17, 18; Psa. 145:9; Psa. 68:19.) How differently everything looks when we have an appreciation of God's goodness and know the Truth, the sum of God's thoughts, the Plan of the Ages, his mercy in sending Jesus to die, his marvelous works in arranging for Jesus -- one man to be the ransom for all of Adam's race.

If we correctly value God's benefits, we will say with David: God's blessings are as numerous as the sands of the seashore. They are as valuable as a gold mine; they are as precious as pearls, diamonds, and gems. Let us always confess our appreciation of God's mercy and goodness to us and all men. Let us realize that if we could "always" offer our thanks, our words would not be enough to fully express the value of God's blessings to us, nor their vastness, nor their great number.

To be thankful we must accept God's benefits gladly and willingly. St. Peter refused to have Jesus wash his feet until he was told, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." (John 13:8.) Natural Israel remained in the wilderness forty years because they would not accept God's power to give them Canaan. How alike are our wanderings in this wilderness of sin, making as little progress as the Israelites wandering back and forth over the same ground. How often we are brought to the border of our promised land and through fear of our giants turn and run back towards the flesh-pots of Egypt. All of Palestine was promised to the Jews, but after the death of all the adults who left Egypt, except Caleb and Joshua, those who had grown up in the wilderness went in, but in spite of Jericho's walls falling at the trumpet's blast and God's other mighty works, they possessed only a small portion of the land. All they stepped on was to be theirs, but they became tired, and left the Philistines and others in the land and these harassed and degraded Israel

throughout her entire history. How well this pictures that if unthankful, we do not slay our bad habits and earthly ways, which like the Canaanites are natural to our fallen human natures and must be dispossessed before our new nature, the Christian spirit, can occupy our whole being.

THANKFUL WORDS AND DEEDS

Have we not all been disappointed when after having done a good turn to some one, he took it as a matter of course and gave us no thanks? Such experiences show us how disappointed God is in us when we do not give thanks to him and remember his benefits. It is not enough therefore that we notice benefits, remember them afterward, appreciate their value and accept them gladly. We must say something about it both to God and to men. Of this the Psalmist says: "I will magnify God with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or a bullock that hath horns and hoofs." (Psa. 69:30, 31.) David knew that typical offerings of the Jewish tabernacle and temple were pictures of better sacrifices of Jesus and the Church in the Gospel Age. (Psa. 40:6-8; Heb. 10:410; Heb. 13:10-13.) Hosea (Hos. 14:2) urged Israel to ask God to take away their iniquity and receive them graciously, "so will we render the calves of our lips." In Hebrews (Heb. 13:15) thanksgiving is called "the sacrifice of praise and the fruit of our lips."

It is a small enough offering for us to spend a few of our breaths, of which God gives us seventeen each minute, in giving thanks. If speaking thanks were all we could do, it would scarcely be a sacrifice, but benefits not only call for spoken, but also acts of thanksgiving, for we will want to repay God's kindness with our service. The sweet singer of Israel asks: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits to me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people." (Psa. 116:12, 13.) The same thought is in Hebrews (Heb. 6:7, 8) which, as in the parable of the sower (Matt. 13:3-8; 18-23), compares our hearts to soil which is plowed, harrowed, sown, and watered. Good soil gives grain, vegetables, and fruits to those who dress it, and it is blessed with further cultivation and rain for further fruitage. The bad soil, which yields weeds, will receive no more care, but instead fire will burn off the thorns and briars.

We cannot draw the comparison of our hearts with good soil too far, because God is the husbandman (1 Cor. 3:9), and we cannot repay him for his labor in cultivating our hearts, and his great gifts of Jesus, the truth, his mercy, and his holy spirit. Soil multiplies the seed in manifold measure, and furnishes a living to the farmer. God has no need, and when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants. (Luke 17:10.) We cannot by our small earthly gifts add to God's great wealth, for he is a spirit. Nor by our praise can we increase God's reputation in the universe, nor can we vindicate his name on earth except by our finally becoming overcomers and thus proving that God's grace is sufficient to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil.

"Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion" (Psa. 65:1), would mean that the Christ resurrected in the divine nature, and having taken up the scepter of the Millennial Kingdom, will bring real praise to God's name. (2 Pet. 1:4; Rev. 11:17; 1 Cor. 6:2.) As we seek now for some way of showing our thanksgiving to God, and realizing we cannot do for him directly, we are led to watch Jesus' life and words. We find he has covered this in the parable of the sheep and goats. Those represented by the sheep are givers of thanks; they give meat, drink, hospitality, and clothing to the needy; they visit the sick and those in prison. "And the King shall say unto them ... Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." The wise man also knew that "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth to the Lord; and that which he hath given he will pay him again." (Matt. 25:33-40; Prov. 19:17.) In Hebrews (Heb. 6:10) the writer states that the fruitage desired from our hearts and lives is the ministering to God's saints, that such work, if a labor of love for God, he will not be so unrighteous as to forget.

THANKSGIVING ALWAYS, FOR ALL THINGS

At first it seems St. Paul is exaggerating when he exhorts us to give thanks always, but understanding that a grateful heart is referred to, as well as speaking our thanks and the living of a life of thanksgiving, we are enabled to see that this is but another way of stating that our consecration is to be continuous -- a life of thanks to God.

Nearly every one will agree that we should be thankful for the good things God gives us, but it requires more faith and discernment to be thankful for trials, chastenings, rebukes, illness, rebuffs, slander, hatred, and all the things most people classify as being "bad." Christians should "know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose," that "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby"; that "It is better to go to the house of mourning than ... to the house of feasting . . . for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better." (Rom. 8:28; Heb. 2:11; Eccl. 7:2, 3.) Thus we are advised to look at the future effect of "bad" happenings and accept them as from our heavenly Father, neither esteeming them too lightly (despise them), nor allowing ourselves to be crushed by ("faint" under) such experiences.

The command "Giving thanks . . . for all things" in our text, therefore, is to be taken literally even though our thanks are sometimes given through tears.

"For every hill I've had to climb,
For every stone that bruised my feet,
For all the blood and sweat and grime,
For blinding storms and burning heat,
My heart sings but a grateful song
These were the things that made me strong.

"For all the heartaches and the tears,
For all the anguish and the pain,
For gloomy days and fruitless years,
And for the hopes that lived in vain,
I do give thanks, for now I know
These were the things that helped me grow!"

TO WHOM SHOULD WE GIVE THANKS?

Christians know that "Every good and perfect gift ... cometh down from the Father of Lights," that "There is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things and we by him." - James 1:17; 1 Cor. 8:6.

Giving thanks to God through Jesus, is the start of a blessed cycle, which increases our blessings more and more as we practice this grace. The well known eulogy of "Mercy" by Portia might quite as well have been said of Thanksgiving: "Its quality is not strained; it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath; it is twice blessed; it blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

Thanks to God should not prevent our giving thanks to one another. In fact, if we are not thankful to the human giver, how can we be thankful to the heavenly?

THANKSGIVING DAY

We are glad that in the United States one day, usually the last Thursday in November, is set aside for praise and thanksgiving to God. Christians should celebrate this day, but in addition one's whole year and lifetime should be a Thanksgiving day. True thanksgiving by the world must await the Millennial Age of visitation, and this will be their first real Thanksgiving Day. (2 Peter 3:8; 1 Peter 2:12.) Then the Christ will teach the nations the blessings of thanksgiving, and its action on their hearts and lives will be the same as that on the Church in this Age. Each prayer of thanks will be followed by more benefits, and in the willing and obedient will be followed by more thanksgiving and helping of their neighbors; and as they advance from grace to grace, God's perfect law will be written in their hearts and minds, and perfection progress in their bodies. In the Millennial Age the judgments of the Lord will be abroad in the land, and the Lord will answer while they yet call. Then giving thanks always for all things will not be hard, because with the fulfillment of the Vision, faith will be replaced by sight. - Isa. 26:9; 65:24; Hab. 2:3; Rom. 8:24, 25.

Now it requires faith for us to give thanks, and at times we find it necessary to encourage ourselves with the exhortation, "Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance." (Psa. 42:5.) Let each of us, knowing the rewards of thankfulness and the blessedness it gives our lives, strive more to yield the sacrifice of praise continually.

"With this blessed hope before us,
Let no harp remain unstrung;
Let the mighty ransomed chorus
Onward roll from tongue to tongue.

"Christ is come,
Christ, the blessed Prince of Peace."

- B. F. Hollister.

Half Hour Meditations on Romans

No. 36

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand unto Abraham (Gal. 3:8; Am. R. V.).

THE Apostle has demonstrated that the general tenor and spirit of the Old Testament harmonizes with his Gospel of faith righteousness (Rom. 3:27-31). One thing more remains for him to do in this connection -- he will call on "the Law and the Prophets" to complete their witness (Rom. 3:21) by furnishing an instance in which justification is shown in the Old Testament, no less than in his Gospel, to be "by faith apart from works of law" (Rom. 3:28). And that the testimony may be conclusive, he passes by numerous less prominent heroes of faith (Heb. 11) and appeals at once to the case of Abraham, the illustrious "father" of the Jewish nation. If it can be shown that Abraham was justified by faith and by faith alone, "his" Gospel is established. On the other hand if it should appear that Abraham was justified by some works of his own or even by a combination of faith and works of law, that would demonstrate the fallacy of the Apostles

doctrine.

Abraham -- the Friend of God

As we enter upon the study of Romans 4, it is not difficult to realize that "the Jewish disputant is pre sent still to the Apostles thought. It could not be otherwise in this argument. No question was more pressing than that of acceptance with God. And St. Paul had not only in his Christian Apostleship debated that problem countless times with rabbinic combatants, he had himself been a rabbi and knew by experience alike the misgivings of the rabbinites conscience and the subterfuges of his reasoning.

"So now there arises before him the great name of Abraham as a familiar watchword of the controversy of acceptance. He has been contending for an absolutely inclusive verdict of *guilty* against man, against every man. He has been with all his might shutting the doors of thought against human boasting, against the least claim of man to have merited his acceptance. Can he carry this principle into quite impartial issues? Can he, a Jew in presence of Jews, apply it without apology, without reserve, to Abraham -- the Friend of God himself? What will he say to that majestic example of man? His name itself sounds like a claim to almost worship. As he moves across the scene of Genesis, we (even we Gentiles) rise up as it were in reverent homage, honoring this figure at once so real and so near to the ideal: walk ing with God himself in a personal intercourse so habitual, so tranquil, so congenial. Is this a name to becloud with the assertion that here, as everywhere, acceptance was hopeless but for the clemency of God, *gift wise, without deeds of law*? Was not at least Abraham accepted because he was morally worthy of acceptance? And if Abraham then surely, in abstract possibility, others also. There must be a group of men, small or large, or at least one man who can boast of his peace with God.

"On the other hand if with Abraham it was not thus then the inference is easy to all other men. Who but he is called the Friend (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8)? Moses himself, the almost deified Lawgiver, is but the servant: trusted, intimate, honored in a sublime degree by his eternal Master. But he is never called the Friend. That peculiar title seems to preclude altogether the question of legal acceptance. Who thinks of his friend as one whose relation to him needs to be good in law at all? The friend stands as it were behind law or above it in respect of his fellow. He holds a relation implying personal sympathies, identity of interests, contact of thought and will, not an anxious previous settlement of claims and remission of liabilities. If then the Friend of the Eternal Judge proves, nevertheless, to have needed justification and to have received it by the channel not of his personal worth but of the grace of God, there will be little hesitation about other men's need, and the way by which alone other men shall find it met."

Abraham Justified by Faith Alone

In the first eight verses of the chapter (Rom. 4:1-8) the Apostle proves that Abraham was justified by faith and in verses 9 to 12 that he was justified by faith alone.

These twelve verses form the first part of the chapter.

"In the second, Rom. 4:13-16, he supports his argument by the fact that the inheritance of the world, promised to the patriarch and his posterity, was conferred on him independent of his observance of the law. The third part, Rom. 4:17-22, proves that that very posterity to whom this heritage was to belong was a fruit of faith. In the fourth and last part, Rom. 4:23-25, this case is applied to believers of the present. Thus *righteousness, inheritance, posterity*, every thing, Abraham received by faith; and it will be even so with us if we believe like him."

The chapter begins with the question:

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? -- Rom. 4:1

Some difference exists in the text of the various manuscripts with regard to the Greek word translated "hath found." Some place it at the end, as in the Authorized Version quoted above; some place it after the word "father," as in the American Revised Version which reads: "What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, hath found according to the flesh?" Some omit it entirely, as in the Diaglott translation: "What, then, shall we say of Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh?"

Notwithstanding this slight obscurity in the text, the main thought of the question is clear. It is not a question as to *what* Abraham had found. There was no doubt in the mind of the Apostle or his readers as to that. Abraham, they were assured, had found righteousness or justification. The sole question was *how* had he found it. Had he found it on the grounds of faith alone or in some other way?

Had Abraham Grounds to Glory Before God?

The Apostle continues:

For if Abraham were justified by words, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. -- Rom. 4:2-3.*

* In the Greek "believed" is emphasized.

How shall we understand the words "but not before God"? Some have supposed that the meaning of the Apostle is that even though justified by words, Abraham would still not have had grounds for exulting before God. Of course in an important sense this is true, for there are no moral creatures anywhere who could attain to any moral excellence apart from the grace of the Almighty God. Even his angels in heaven who have never fallen, he charges with folly (*frailty*: liability to error [Samuel Cox] Job 4:18).

But the glorying of which the Apostle is speaking, the glory which his Jewish opponents would understand him to mean, is that which would have been legitimate in the case of Adam had he not sinned and in the case of the angels who have never sinned.

Would not Abraham in fact have grounds for *such* exultation even in the presence of God himself if he had earned his justification: if he had been justified by works, if he had rendered perfect obedience to laws every requirement? Whether or not he would have indulged in the act of glorying is beside the question.

He most assuredly would have had grounds for so doing had he been justified by works. We must therefore look in another direction for an understanding of the Apostles words "but not before God."

This phrase is what is termed an "elliptical expression." We believe it can be understood best by supplying the ellipsis [or missing words] in the following manner: "*But [Abraham has] not [whereof to glory] before God.*" With these missing words supplied, the context might be paraphrased thus: If

Abraham were justified by works he had whereof to glory. But the truth is that Abraham hath not where of to glory before God, however much he might have to glory before men. In that well known passage of scripture, Gen. 15:6, which speaks of the way in which Abraham was justified, we find nothing what ever about works but faith alone is mentioned: "Abraham *believed* God," that is to say relied on Gods faithfulness. This, his faith, the simply taking God at his word, was placed to Abraham's credit for righteousness.

Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. -- Rom. 4:4-5.

Here the Apostle draws an illustration from the domain of common life. To the hired workman who has performed his task his pay is not a matter of generosity on the part of his employer but a matter of justice. His employer is under obligation to pay him the stipulated wages as a *debt*. But according to the Genesis account, Abraham was not treated on this footing; he is therefore not one who has fulfilled his task. The same result is possible from the parallel and opposite standpoint: *to him that worketh not*, whatever is reckoned must be reckoned of grace, not of debt. This is precisely the manner, according to Moses, in which righteousness was reckoned to Abraham: out of Gods sheer generosity, because he chose to regard Abraham's faith. Therefore, it is seen again that Abraham is not one who fulfilled his task; he is not declared righteous on that account.

Him that Justifieth the Ungodly

There would be nothing remarkable if the Scriptures had stated that God would declare the righteous righteous; indeed we would have had difficulty in understanding how he could consistently do anything else. But the miracle of grace lies in his having found a way to declare the ungodly righteous.

But the word "ungodly" is a word "intense and dark; it means not the sinner only but the open, defiant sinner." Is it to be understood here as having special reference to Abraham? We scarcely think so. Of course, it would be true even of Abraham potentially, for the heart is deceitful above all things. But it is the class to which Abraham and all who are justified by faith belong, rather than Abraham particularly, that the Apostle has in mind in introducing this word into the discussion. The strong word "ungodly" has more than likely been suggested to his mind by the quotation which he is about to make from Psa. 32:1. "St. Paul is ready now with a conspicuous example of the justification of one who was truly at one miserable period, by his own fault, an ungodly one.

The Covering of David's Sins

"Thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme (2 Sam. 12:14). He had done so indeed. The faithful photography of the Scriptures shows us David, the chosen, the faithful, the man of spiritual experiences acting out his lustful look in adultery. He half covered his adultery with the most base of constructive murders and then, for long months, refused to repent. Yet was David justified: I have sinned against the Lord; The Lord also hath put away thy sin. He turned from his awfully ruined self to God, and *at once* he received remission. Then and to the last he was chastised. But he was then and there unreservedly justified with a justification which made him sing a loud beatitude."

"Just as David too speaks his felicitation of the man (and it was himself) to whom God reckons righteousness irrespective of works: Happy they whose iniquities have been remitted, and whose sins have been covered; . . . Happy the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin (Psa. 32:1, 2)." -- Rom. 4:6-8

"Wonderful words in the context of the experience out of which they spring! A human soul which has greatly transgressed, knows it well, and knows too that to the end it will suffer a sore discipline

because of it, for example and humiliation. Nevertheless it knows its pardon and knows it as a happiness indescribable. The iniquity has been lifted; the sin has been covered, has been struck out of the book of reckoning written by the Judge. The penitent will never forgive himself; in this very psalm he tears from his sin all the covering woven by his own heart. But his God has given him remission, has reckoned him as one who has not sinned, so far as access to him and peace with him are in question. And so his song of shame and penitence begins with a beatitude and ends with a cry of joy."

We need not suppose that David here "plays the part of a *second* example side by side with Abraham. The position of Abraham is unique, and Paul will return to it after this short interruption. He merely adduces a saying of David, the inspired singer, which seems to him to complete the testimony of Moses about Abraham."

Imputed Righteousness

We pause here to notice the word "counted." It is a translation of the Greek word *logizomai*, which occurs eleven times in this chapter. (Rom. 4:3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 23, and 24.) In the *American Revised Version* this Greek word is uniformly rendered in this chapter "reckoned," but the *Authorized Version* employs three different words, count, reckon, and impute to render the same Greek word and thus tends to obscure the clearness and force of the argument. What is the meaning of this word and of the corresponding Hebrew word from which the term "imputed righteousness" is derived? Scholars tell us that while the primitive meaning is to reckon, whether the estimate be true or false, the secondary and usual sense is to reckon to a person what is not strictly his.

Thus Eli reckoned Hannah to be drunken from the motion of her lips in prayer when she was really sober (1 Sam. 1:13).

-- P. L. Read

Israel Today

Many of our readers are acquainted with Brother Casimir Lanowick, Editor of Jews in the News. He is presently on an extended visit to the Holy Land and, at our request, has been good enough to send us his impressions in the following report. - Ed. Com.

Jerusalem, October 1, 1958

In God's providence Elva and I set foot upon the Land of Promise on August 21, for the third time in the last eight years. As the "T. S. S. Olympia" docked in the port of Haifa in the early morning hours, we were once again thrilled by viewing Mt. Carmel, where Elijah carried on centuries ago.

We are located in a southern suburb of the Holy City called Talpioth. Just a mile directly to the south of us is Ramat Rachel, the Hill of Rachel, from where one gets a splendid panoramic view of Bethlehem. Calvary is just a few miles to the north of us. We are therefore frequently reminded of the birth and death of our dear Redeemer.

Yes, here we are in the troubled Middle East, but as we mingle with the people in Israel we find that the usual calm prevails-the Israeli going about their business, integrating newcomers, building, redeeming the land, etc., with no apparent outward concern or fear. To the north of Israel in Lebanon the U. S. Marines are stationed, endeavoring to maintain order. To the east of

Israel, in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, British troops are poised to prevent the overthrow of the monarchy. And then to the southwest of the Israel frontier, in Egyptian territory, the U. N. forces are camped, to insure peaceful conditions along the border. Since the Sinai Campaign two years ago, Israel has been comparatively free of incidents along its boundaries.

Our first impressions after a three year absence from the Land of the Bible were of the great physical changes that have occurred. In fulfillment of Amos 9:14, Isaiah 61:4, Ezekiel 36:10 and 33, etc., the cities are rapidly being rebuilt and expanded. The progress is truly breathtaking. We are able to compare Israel as it was in 1950, when we first visited here, with what it is today.

For instance, in Jerusalem many splendid public buildings are gracing the hills of Judea. On a high plateau in the suburb of Givat Ram the new Hebrew University campus is becoming an impressive sight, with over twenty buildings completed and a huge library now being constructed which will be one of the finest in the world. Already one million volumes are on hand to help fill the shelves of this repository of writings on human thought and endeavor. And then there is the new Williams Planetarium on the grounds, which King David would have thoroughly enjoyed. - Psalm 8:3, 4.

An immense international convention auditorium has been put up nearby. Just a few days ago the new Rubin Academy of Music was dedicated here, containing many studios, an auditorium for recitals, etc. On the outskirts of the City of Peace we are beholding the rising of Hadassah Hospital, which is being constructed at the cost of \$10,000,000 by this women's Zionist organization of America named after Queen Esther. It will be more than just a hospital, as there will be a nurses training school and somewhat of a medical college in conjunction with the operation of this institution of healing.

The imposing Supreme Religious Center that was formally opened recently is another of the numerous edifices that are giving Jerusalem quite a face lifting. Then there is ultra-modern Kings Hotel that has opened its doors to accommodating the thousands of tourists who are visiting this country during the 10th Anniversary Year, and last but not least the Holy Land Hotel has been added to the growing number of beautiful hostleries in the Holy City. It will help you to picture the restored City of David to know that its buildings are constructed almost entirely of the cream-colored, rose-tinted stone quarried in the hills of Judea. Soon work will be started on the new multi-million-dollar parliament building here.

To a student of prophecy who is thoroughly aware of the fact that Jerusalem will become the capital of the world, these present-day developments are most significant and thrilling. Any number of scriptures come to mind, such as Isaiah 62:6, 7; Psalm 147:2, Psalm 137:5, 6; Psalm 68:29, etc.

When we visited Ashkelon we saw the words of Zephaniah 2:7 engraved on the cornerstone of the new City Center. All around are hundreds of dwellings that have been constructed since the State of Israel was established. A short distance to the north of Ashkelon, at the Biblical city of Ashdod, a half-billion dollar seaport is in the planning stage. In Tel Aviv, the New York City of this nation, the first supermarket of the country has opened its doors, carrying 3500 different food items and household needs. And so the signs of progress are to be noted everywhere.

The two oil-producing fields in the southern part of the land are taking care of over ten per cent of Israel's needs at present, but the world's foremost geologists who have visited Israel declare that there is much more oil to be found here. With the passing of time it will no doubt be discovered, and thus the significance of Ezekiel 38:12 looms on the horizon.

Right now we are thoroughly enjoying the fruit of the vine. Any number of varieties of grapes are grown here and we find that they are not only large but very delicious, so we can understand why the "spies" brought this fruit back to the camp of Israel as an evidence of the productivity of the land that they were destined to possess. - Numbers 13: 17-24.

Israel is quickly becoming self-sufficient in the production of fruits and vegetables as well as grain. Grapes, melons, oranges, lemons, grapefruit, bananas, pomegranates, dates, figs and strawberries are already to be had in abundance. Thousands of acres of wheat, rye, oats and barley are seen growing in the formerly desolate northern Negev. A sight that is hard to forget is corn growing side by side with bananas. The restoration of Israel's agricultural production calls to mind Ezekiel 36:30, Amos 9:14, Joel 2:21-26, etc. In a year or two Israel will be self-sufficient in

its cotton yield -- there will be no further need to import raw materials for the textile mills of the country. Truly this is a good land, as the Lord stated in the days of Moses when the children of Israel were instructed to occupy it. - Deuteronomy 8:7-9.

Considerable headway has been made in exploiting the mineral wealth also. Thousands upon thousands of tons of potash and phosphates are being extracted from the Dead Sea and the craters of the Negev. The Timna copper works near Elath on the Gulf of Akaba of the Red Sea are now operating once again -- at the site of Solomon's copper mines. Millions of dollars have been poured into a modern smelter here. The iron deposits discovered at Manara in the Galilee region will also be exploited in the near future. This brings to mind the same prophetic passage in Deuteronomy 8:9, cited above.

The physical aspects of developments here naturally strike one first-and they are outstanding. But there is another work going on that is of a quieter nature yet of even greater import, and that is the change of heart that is taking place among the people who have been regathered here from the four corners of the earth. Two days before we arrived in the country the finals of the International Bible Quiz were held. We arrived just in time to read the newspaper reports and to hear the Israeli enthusiastically talking about this contest. Contestants came from fourteen countries.

Virtually the whole nation was seated by their radios listening to the questions. Mr. David Ben-Gurion, the Prime Minister, hailed this as the most important event of the 10th Anniversary Year celebrations. By the way, the winner was an Israeli, Amos Hakham, whose last name means "scholar" or "the wise."

Not many months ago the Israel Society for Biblical Research held its annual national conference and the subject of their discussions was "The Return to Zion and the Redemption of Israel." The books that were analyzed were Ezra and Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, and the Chapters of Consolation in the other books of the Bible. The Conference was attended by scholars, teachers, and thinkers interested in the Bible. During the first two days of the Conference a special postmark reading, "A People Studies the Bible," was used by the post office.

Right now the archeologists are assembled at Safad in the Galilee region for their annual gathering, and again the Bible will loom paramount in the discussions. All these events are given great coverage by the newspapers in Israel. The attention of the Jews here is constantly being called to the Book of Books. As this report is being written, today's *Jerusalem Post* lies before us and a special article reads, "New Finds at Hazor." The article goes on to explain the discoveries made at this city, whose gates were built by Solomon under a special tax levy, according to the Bible. (1 Kings 9:15.) Another article is entitled, "Decade of Digging," the subcaption reading,

"Archeologists Bring Israel's History to Light." In other words, the stones are crying out, all declaring the authenticity of the Bible, confirming in the minds of the Israeli the historical accuracy of the Scriptures. Thus, a growing reverence for the Word of God with the passing of days.

When the State of Israel was established in 1948 there was a flood-tide of immigration. The 650,000 Jews who already dwelt in the land were overwhelmed with the Herculean task of integrating the newcomers, who arrived penniless. The prime concern was to properly house and feed all these people and give them employment. The load was almost crushing. This huge influx of immigration continued for several years. The minds of the people here naturally were occupied almost wholly with material matters -- it could not have been otherwise under the circumstances.

In the past few years, however, immigration has fallen off. Last year about 80,000 Jews settled here as new citizens. This respite has permitted the nation to catch up on building and has given a release from the strain that they worked under for so long. The result is that more attention can be devoted to spiritual matters by the inhabitants of the Land.

In our contacts here we have already been favorably impressed by the state of mind of the Israeli--the spirit of inquiry that exists. For instance, we met a young lady with whom we had become acquainted in 1955, when we were here last. She was impressed by our confidence in Israel's future and asked us to make a jotting of all the prophetic scriptures that foretell the grand outcome of events here. In a discussion with an editor of a Christian publication that is issued in Jerusalem we were told that among Government officials there are believers in Jesus' Messiahship. The former Chief Rabbi of Bulgaria continues to publicly conduct meetings unmolested in spite of his open confession and belief in Jesus the Messiah. We have just met a believing Jewess who is not affiliated with any church or mission, and there are a number of other such believers in the country whom we have met in the past. In the months to come we will endeavor to relay to the friends the extent of this movement towards the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah.

Something that should no doubt be emphasized in connection with the attitude of the people in Israel, as contrasted with the Jews of the dispersion, is the fact that here they are not on the defensive--they do not have their guard up as when they were in exile. A Gentile coming into their midst in the Land of Israel is in the minority--the Jews are the majority. That alone creates a change in attitude. The fear that plagued the Jews in various foreign lands does not exist here. This must be understood to appreciate the difference between the Israelis and the Jews in New York, London, Toronto, etc.

Any one who spends some weeks in this country will be impressed by the spirit of friendship that prevails. It is so easy to engage the man on the street in a conversation. Soon you will probably be invited to his home for "tea." Another most favorable impression is the very evident lack of hatred on the part of the Israeli toward the Arabs. You will mingle with hundreds of Jews in Israel and not hear a word spoken against Israel's hostile neighbors. This is indeed a very good omen. The principle of loving one's enemies that Christians are enjoined to follow seemingly is in operation here among Jacob's posterity.

It is now Succoth, the Feast of Tabernacles, and we are reminded of the words in the closing chapter of the prophecy of Zechariah:

"And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

"And it shall be that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.

"And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain, there shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." - Zechariah 14:16-19.

Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?

*"Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you,
that God should raise the dead?" - Acts 26:8.*

THE caption of this article is the title of a book by Oscar Cullmann, published a few years ago by The Epworth Press. According to the author, it "is the translation of a study already published in Switzerland, of which a summary has appeared in various French periodicals."

In his preface, the author goes on to say, "No other publication of mine has provoked such enthusiasm or such violent hostility.... My critics belong to the most varied camps."

This criticism, he indicates, is due to "the contrast, which, out of concern for the truth, I have found it necessary to draw between the courageous and joyful primitive Christian hope of the resurrection of the dead and the serene philosophic expectation of the survival of the immortal soul." This contrast, however, he insists, is to be seen between the teaching of the New Testament and that of Plato. There is, he says, "no reason for denying a radical difference between the Christian expectation of the resurrection of the dead and the Greek belief in the immortality of the soul. . . . The fact that later Christianity effected a link between the two beliefs, and that today the ordinary Christian simply confuses them, has not persuaded me to be silent about what I, in common with most exegetes, regard as true; and all the more so, since the link established between the expectation of the 'resurrection of the dead' and the belief in 'the immortality of the soul,' is not in fact a link at all, but renunciation of one in favor of the other."

We congratulate Brother Cullmann on his decision not to be silent on a matter of such importance, and trust that the Lord will supply him with the necessary grace to continue witnessing faithfully to this fundamental tenet of the Christian faith. Would that others might follow his example.

Regular readers of this journal are informed as to our own views. However, in view of the fact that in recent months, our Subscription List has been substantially increased, we take pleasure in submitting below a number of paragraphs on this and related subjects, condensed from an article written by Charles T. Russell, in 1895 - seventy-three years ago.

WHAT IS THE SOUL?

According to the inspired record of man's creation, found in Genesis 2:7, we learn that the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed [Heb. *blew*] into his nostrils the breath [Heb. *wind*] of life [Heb. "lives," plural -- *ie.*, such as was common to all living animals]; and man became a living soul [i.e., a sentient being]."

The body was formed first, but it was not a man. It had eyes, but saw nothing; ears, but heard nothing; a mouth, but spoke nothing; a tongue, but no taste; nostrils, but no sense of smell; a heart, but it pulsated not; blood, but it was cold, lifeless; lungs, but they moved not. It was not a man, but a corpse, an inanimate body.

The second step in making man was to give vitality to the properly "formed" and in every way prepared body; and this is described by the words "blew into his nostrils the breath of life." When a healthy person has been drowned and animation is wholly suspended, resuscitation has, it is

said, been effected by working the arms and thus the lungs as a bellows, and gradually establishing the breath in the nostrils. In Adam's case it, of course, required no labored effort on the part of the Creator to cause the perfect organism which he had made to breathe the life-giving oxygen of the atmosphere.

As the vitalizing breath entered, the lungs expanded, the blood corpuscles were oxygenized and passed to the heart, whose valves in turn propelled it to every part of the body, awakening all the prepared, but hitherto dormant, nerves to sensation and energy. In an instant the energy reached the brain, and thought, perception, reasoning, looking, touching, smelling, feeling, and tasting commenced. That which was a lifeless human organism had become a man, a sentient being: the "living soul" condition mentioned in the text had been reached. In other words, the term "living soul" means neither more nor less than the term "sentient being" or "being capable of sensation, perception." Moreover, even though Adam was perfect in his organism, it was necessary for him to *sustain* life by partaking of the fruits of the trees of life. And when he sinned, God drove him from the garden, "lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree [plural, *trees* or *grove*] of life, and eat, and *live forever* [i.e., by eating continuously]" (Gen. 3:22).

Our Redeemer "poured out his soul [being] unto death," he made "his soul [being] an offering for sin" (Isa. 53:12, 10); and it was the *souls* of Adam and his posterity that he thus bought with his precious blood - by making his soul (being) an offering for sin. Consequently, it is the souls that are to be awakened, resurrected - not the bodies, which are buried and which go to dust.

Here is another common error - many suppose that the bodies buried are to be restored atom for atom, but, on the contrary, the Apostle declares, "Thou sowest [in death] not that body which shall be." In the resurrection God will give to each person (to each soul or sentient being) such a body as he pleases (1 Cor. 15:37, 38).

As the bringing together of an organism and the breath of life produced a sentient being or soul, so the dissolution of these, from any cause, puts an end to sentient being-stopping thoughts and feelings of every kind. The soul or sentient being ceases; the body returns to dust as it was; while the spirit or breath of life returns to God, who imparted it to Adam, and to his race through him (Eccl. 12:7). It returns to God in the sense that it is no longer amenable to human control, as in procreation, and can never be recovered except by divine power. Recognizing this fact, the Lord's instructed ones commit their hope of future life by resurrection to the Father and to Christ, his now exalted representative (Luke 23:46; Acts 7:59). So, then, if God had made no provision for man's ransom and for a resurrection, death would be the end of all hope for humanity (1 Cor. 15:14-18).

But God has thus made provision for our re-living; and ever since he made known his gracious plan, those who speak and write intelligently upon the subject (for instance, the inspired Scripture writers) as if by common consent, speak of the unconscious interim between death and the resurrection morning as a "*sleep*." Indeed, the illustration is an excellent one; for the dead will be totally unconscious of the lapse of time, and the moment of awakening will seem to them like the next moment after the moment of their dissolution. For instance, we read that speaking of Lazarus' death our Lord said, "Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth*, I go that I may *awake him out of sleep*." Afterward, because the disciples were slow to comprehend, he said, "Lazarus is dead" (John 11:14). Were the theory of consciousness in death correct, is it not remarkable that Lazarus gave no account of his experience during those four days? None will claim that he was in a "hell" of torment, for our Lord calls him his "friend"; and for the same reason if he had been in heavenly bliss our Lord would not have called him from it, for that would be an unfriendly act. But as our

Lord expressed it, Lazarus *slept*, and he awakened him to life, to consciousness, to sentient being, and that as a favor greatly appreciated by Lazarus and his friends.

The thought pervades the Scriptures, that we are now in the Night as compared with the Morning of the resurrection. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psa. 30:5).

The Apostles also frequently used this appropriate, hopeful, and peaceful figure of speech. For instance, Luke says of Stephen, the first martyr, "*he fell asleep*"; and in recording Paul's speech at Antioch he used the same expression, "David . . . *fell on sleep*" (Acts 7:60; 13:36). Peter uses the same expression, saying (2 Pet. 3:4), "the fathers *fell asleep*." And Paul used it time and again, as the following quotations show:

"If her husband be dead [Greek, *fall asleep*]" (1 Cor. 7:39).

"The greater part remain unto this present, but some are *fallen asleep*" (1 Cor. 15:6).

"If there be no resurrection, . . . then they also which are *fallen asleep* in Christ are perished" (1 Cor. 15:13-18).

"Christ is risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that *slept*" (1 Cor. 15:20).

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all *sleep*" (1 Cor. 15:51).

"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which *are asleep*" (1 Thess. 4:13).

"Them [that] *sleep* in Jesus, will God bring [from, the dead] with [by] him" (1 Thess. 4:14).

When the Kingdom, the resurrection time, comes, "we who are alive and remain unto the *presence* of the Lord shall not *precede* them that *are asleep*" (1 Thess. 4:15).

They "fell asleep" in peace, to await the Lord's day-the Day of Christ, the Millennial Day -fully "persuaded that he [Christ] is able to keep that which they committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12). This same thought runs through the Old Testament as well-from the time that God first preached to Abraham the Gospel of a resurrection. The expression, "He slept with his fathers," is very common in the Old Testament. But Job puts the matter in very forcible language, saying, "O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be [over] past!" (Job 14:13). The present dying time is the time of God's wrath - the curse of death being upon all, because *of* the original transgression. However, in due time the curse will be lifted and a blessing will come through the Redeemer to all the families of the earth; and so Job continues: "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come; [then] thou shalt call (John 5:25) and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands" (Job. 14:14, 15). And we of the New Testament times read our Lord's response, "all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God [calling them to awake and come to a full knowledge of God and to a full opportunity of everlasting life]" (John 5:25, 28).

BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT

That the terms body, soul, and spirit are not identical and interchangeable as many assume is shown in the use of all three terms by the Apostle (1 Thess. 5:23), when he writes, "I pray God [that] your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless, unto the coming of the Lord Jesus

Christ." This prayer must be understood to apply to the Church as a whole - the elect Church whose names are written in heaven. The true *spirit* has been preserved in the little flock. Its *body* is discernible today also, notwithstanding the multitudes of tares that would hide as well as choke it. And its *soul*, its activity, its intelligence, its sentient being, is in evidence everywhere, lifting up the standard for the people -- the cross, the ransom.

In no other way could we apply the Apostle's words; for, however much people may differ respecting the preservation of the individual spirits and souls of God's people, all will agree that their bodies have *not been preserved*, but have returned to dust, like those of others.

"ALL LIVE UNTO HIM"

Our Lord in contradicting the Sadducees (who denied that there would be a resurrection or any future life) said that the *resurrection* (and hence a future life) was proved by the fact that God, in speaking to Moses, declared himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Luke 20:37, 38). Our Lord suggests that this of itself is a proof "that the dead are [to be] raised," because God would surely not refer thus to beings totally blotted out of existence. Our Lord then shows that God's plan for a resurrection is fixed, and that those whom men call "dead" "all live unto Him." God's Word, therefore, speaks of them as "asleep" and not as destroyed. In saying, "I am the God of Abraham," etc., he speaks not only of things past as still present, but also of things to come as if already come to pass (Rom. 4:17).

Prepared for Service

"Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." - Matt. 11:28

LAST month in considering this subject, we recalled the story of the Maestro and the young girl who began with a lovely, but untrained, voice and who, under his skilful tutoring, became a great artist, delighting her audiences. We reflected, too, that from this story it was possible to trace a similarity in the methods of Christ, the great Master, in the training of saints for his service. We paused long enough to note the lessons in it for those just starting in the Christian way, reserving until now the lessons in it for those nearing the journey's end.

Suppose now, we are of those who have passed through long years of training in the school of Christ, and are about to engage in some service for our brethren, a service once very dear to our heart. It is the work for which, in our early and idealistic years, we longed, the task we coveted, the privilege we esteemed precious, the exercising of which we felt would be the crowning joy of existence.

How is it with us today? The years have fled with their varying experiences. We have been thwarted, checked, disappointed, perhaps also disillusioned and disheartened. Most important, we have lost all sense of sureness of ourselves. No longer are we confident that we are capable of doing the task at last assigned to us; or that any good will result from it.

THE EXAMPLE OF MOSES

From the natural viewpoint, any enterprise begun in such a frame of mind, is hardly likely to meet with much success. However, consider the case of Moses. At forty years of age he aspired to deliver his brethren from Egyptian bondage. His zeal and sympathies were warm and strong. It seemed the very time to do something, so he struck a blow for their liberty. But his effort was premature. He was discomfited and fled. He needed training in the ways of God. For forty years God schooled his spirit, and fitted him for the great task he had to do in the solitude of the wilderness and the simplicity of the shepherd's life. When at last the time arrived for God to bid him go forth, we find him excusing himself. "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh? ... I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue." - Exod. 3:11; 4:10.

Moses had lost his former self-confidence. No longer the proud, headstrong, learned son of the Egyptian court, but the meek, unassuming shepherd of Midian, happy in his obscurity, willing that any should perform this once coveted mission of deliverance rather than himself. Previously he had believed the people would welcome a deliverer. Now he had been disillusioned. Now he says: "But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee." - Exod. 4:1.

In this was he not typical of many of God's people? When we are eager to go, God holds us back. When we would be content to stay and browse quietly, letting the world receive a message of deliverance from other lips, if indeed it would welcome any message, he drives us forth. Nervous, unsure of ourselves, uncertain of others, we go forward reluctantly, where once we would have rushed with eager and undisciplined haste. Yet how wise is God's hand in this, our training period. Once we would have gone in our own strength, robbing God of his glory, taking honors which belong to Christ. Now we dare not step forth except "I AM hath sent me," -- except we

have the very sign within us, God's spirit witnessing with our spirit, that he will go with us. -
Exod. 3:3.

WRITTEN FOR OUR LEARNING

The Bible stories of God's ancient people are written for our learning. Their experiences are our experiences. It is only when we have ceased to rely upon ourselves that we are fit for the Master's use. When we can go forth confident in him, in his power and spirit, ready to glorify him, knowing ourselves to be nothing, and at best but unprofitable servants -- only then are we ready for service.

"Without Me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5.) Christ said this to his disciples then. He says it to us today. It is only when we "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession" (Heb. 3:1) - - only when we earnestly look "unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith" (Heb. 12:2), that we can go forward with confidence, to win men to him. So long as Peter kept his eyes upon Christ, he could walk upon the uncertain deep. When he looked at himself, he began to sink. (Matt. 14:29, 30.) They who would labor for Christ must do so in his strength and in his way, under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, if they are ever to accomplish any real and lasting good.

Contrasts (between the methods of the unbelieving, self-confident world, and the believing, God-confiding heart) are to be seen in the diverse attitudes of David and Goliath. The Philistine giant, boastful, arrogant warrior, fully accoutred with sword, spear and javelin, came forth, roaring hatred and curses, fully confident in his own brute strength to accomplish the downfall of Israel's champion. Young David, slight, armed only with pebbles from the brook, rung the giant's death knell with those thrilling words "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts." (1 Sam. 17:45.) Confident in God, seeking his honor, skilled by long practice in his shepherd life, his stone sped unerringly to its mark. Once more God was glorified by one who sought His honor among men. (1 Sam. 2:30.) Nor did David go unhonored. "Them that honor me I will honor." God gave him the neck of Israel's enemy; and a beloved friend into the bargain.-1 Sam. 18:1.

David must have had great joy that day and for long afterwards. Christ also had joy in his service, a joy which is shared by all who serve him. (John 15:11.) Only those who have experienced the joys, of service, the joys of fellowship with God and with Christ, are able to appreciate this. It makes all other things of trifling worth, all trials and difficulties but "light afflictions," not worthy to be compared with joys yet to be revealed to those that love God.

OUR CONTINUING NEED

When the servant of God is launched upon his career of usefulness, there is still constant need to watch and pray. Self dies hard. We are reckoned dead, hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:1-3); but again and again the spirit of willfulness, the hard core of rebellion, tends to arise, to precipitate us into some rash episode which is not God's way. A garden may be weeded very thoroughly, but if it is to be kept in order, we are constantly going round with basket and hoe lifting out new growths. The richer and more fertile the *soil*, the quicker the weeds appear and flourish. The garden of the heart needs the same vigilant care. The richer it becomes in grace, truth, and holiness, the more does self in various forms try to push its way in, to lay claim to some of the goodness there. The saint of God will realize more deeply as life goes on, the need for watchfulness over the heart-life. It is the neglect of the beginnings of thoughts, motives, lack of prayer, which eventually brings blight and desolation.

"NE'ER THINK THE VICTORY WON"

The attainment of a position is one thing; the keeping of it another. A boatman pulling against the stream cannot relax for a moment without being swept backwards from his course. The Christian also pulls against the stream of natural inclination and ambition. There can be no standing still. We are either going forward or backward, for the spirit is contrary to the flesh. Having once triumphed in the games, the athlete must still keep up his spartan training if he wishes for further success. So with the Christian, the servant of God and of men-the true minister of Christ. "Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price." (1 Cor. 6:19, 20.) We cannot "cease from mental strife." The warfare between the flesh and the spirit goes on unceasingly all our days.

Always there is the need for self-examination, for self-conquest, for self-emptying, that more of the love of Christ, may fill the earthen vessel to flow out again to others. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4:7) -- the treasure of the spirit in its weak vase of clay.

Even Moses, despite his greatness and his meekness, after all his long preparation and previous successes, forgot God at the waters of Meribah, when, with (it might seem) pardonable vexation of spirit, he smote the rock twice, exclaiming: "Hear now, ye rebels; must *we* fetch you water out of this rock?" - Num. 20:10.

Moses had a trying time with that stiff-necked, discontented, half-believing flock of Israel. They were, however, typical of human nature, and Moses was like ourselves. How easily we become exasperated by the stupidity, the ignorance, the inconsistency of those about *us*. How soon we can forget God and talk in terms of I, me, and mine, when word or deed jars the spirit, or wounds that supposedly-dead self.

Self, thou mocker! None feign death *so* well as thee! How soon the seeming dead self flames into life, if crossed, disparaged, offended, disregarded, ridiculed or evilly spoken of!

Patient silence is the standard-the lesson. In Christ we have both standard and lesson. "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." -1 Peter 2:23.

AMBASSADORS OF CHRIST

Christ is Master and Teacher. He set the example. (1 Peter 2:21.) He holds the lesson there for us to learn. How slowly we learn it. If we could always bear in mind that we have been chosen and fitted to be the ambassadors of Christ (2 Cor. 5:20), what a dignity it would lend to our position among worldly men and women! What a transforming power it would be to our character! What assistance it would lend in the battle between good and evil, between self and the will of the spirit!

As ambassadors of Christ-representatives of his Kingdom-we should feel the weight of our responsibilities, keeping in mind the words of the Apostle: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." - Col. 3:17.

The singer of our story achieved her greatest triumphs with the help and encouragement of the Maestro. He was honored in her success. Between Christ and those who seek to serve him there exists a similar oneness of purpose and honor. As we draw the attention of others to our Lord, the true and living way, something of his reflected radiance will be seen in us.

TODAY'S OPPORTUNITY

Never in human history have thoughtful men and women needed a message of hope, instruction and assurance, as they need it now-as they are going to need it in the troubled years ahead. Great evils threaten our social order. Fear, distress, and perplexity are apparent in the councils of men. Questions are asked which require plain, straightforward answers. In every great crisis in human affairs, God has had his message ready, and his messengers prepared to deliver it, whether men turn deaf or attentive ears to its wholesome advice.

In spite of the rising tide of infidelity, the crippling effects of materialism, the alluring charms of pleasure, luxury, and ease, there are still those who refuse to bow the knee to Mammon, or swing their censers before any other altar than that of the Almighty Ruler of the Universe.

They are waiting for the Voice -- the Voice of the Spirit, clarion clear above earth's clanking strifes, and the vain confusion of tongues; the Voice speaking as of old, with confidence, authority, and with knowledge, in triumphant faith, in quenchless love, and in wholesome sanity to man. Even now they strain eyes and ears through the gathering gloom, "and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?" - Rom. 10:14-16.

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation." - Isa. 52:7.

To you whose hearts burn within you, who can say in this hour of desperate need, "Here am I, send me," (Isaiah 6:8); to you who are ready to spend and be spent in the service of the King of kings, not counting the cost, but giving all freely and gladly in defense of his cause; to you comes his assurance of unfailing friendship, of strength sufficient for every need, of deep inward joy which nothing can destroy, of labors blest, of toil rewarded, of victory won, -- and in the end an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

- *F. A. Shuttleworth, Scot.*

The Question Box

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." - Dan. 12:1.

AT the close of our discussion last month, we noted that the deliverance of Israel, Daniel's people, due to occur *during the period* when Michael stands up, had not yet taken place, but that it was scheduled by God to be accomplished *subsequent to the deliverance of the Church*. Ours is to be the First or Chief Resurrection. The deliverance of Daniel's people does not take place until the faithful overcomers of the Gospel Age Church have all completed their course with joy, and are with their Lord and like him. Such is the clear teaching of the Scripture. To this St. Paul refers in his matchless Epistle to the Romans, referring to it as a secret which he was then expounding: "I would not have you ignorant brethren . . . that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written: There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." - Rom. 11:25, 26.

Question No. 5:

The Michael of Daniel 12:1 is evidently the same being who is called Michael in Daniel 10:13 and 10:21. Is he also the archangel mentioned in Jude 9?

Answer:

Yes -- that is our understanding. The term "archangel" signifies "head or chief angel." The Scriptures speak of only one archangel.* When, in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, St. Paul tells us that Christ is to raise the dead, he says it will be "with the voice of the archangel." Our Lord says that "the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God." (John 5:25.) His voice and the voice of the archangel would thus appear to be identical.

The question has been asked whether Heb. 1:13 may not be in conflict with this view. In that Scripture, it will be recalled, the inspired writer asks: "To which of the angels said he [God] at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" The form of this question implies a negative answer: "God so spoke unto none of them." However, while this is true of angels, it by no means follows that God did not thus address the mighty archangel-the Only begotten of the Father.

*The idea that there are seven archangels is based on a statement in the Old Testament Apocrypha (Tobias 12:15), which reads: "I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven, who stand before the Lord."

Question No. 6:

Is the unnamed being, mentioned in Daniel 10:5, 6, Michael, Gabriel, or another spirit-being?

Answer:

As was suggested in our answer to Question No. 3, we think the angel of Daniel 10:5, 6 is the same as the one who in Dan. 8:16 and Dan. 9:21 is named Gabriel. If our thought be correct, Gabriel, the angel who stands in the presence of God (Luke 1:19) has a very special mission, namely, that of announcing the good tidings concerning the coming Messiah. This he certainly did at our Lord's First Advent. (Luke 1:26.) And this seems to be his occupation in the Book of

Daniel. The visions he unfolds, while full of many details, never lose sight of this main objective- the First and Second Advents of our Lord.

In chapter 8 the vision which Gabriel was to "make this man understand" (Dan. 8:16) was a piece of history leading Daniel on from the time in which he then lived (3rd year of Belshazzar, verse 1) down through the remainder of the Babylonian Empire into the Medo-Persian Empire, and on to that of Greece -- and even on beyond Alexander the Great. But this vision of chapter 8 was merely preparatory to the vision of chapter 9. Here, when Gabriel returned to Daniel again to give him "skill and understanding" (Dan. 9:21, 22), it was in connection with the seventy weeks which led up to and even beyond the First Advent.

When, therefore, in chapters 10-12, we find the story resumed by an unnamed angel, and the revelations of chapters 8 and 9 continued way beyond the First Advent, down through the Gospel Age even unto and beyond the Second Advent, as we surely do, the conviction is strong with us that it is Gabriel once again, and none other, whose privilege it is to complete the grand story, the earlier part of which he had so nobly told.

Question No. 7:

Is the Michael mentioned in Revelation 12:7 the same as the one mentioned in Daniel 12:1?

Answer:

The Michael referred to in Daniel 12:1 is a literal spirit-being. This is not so in Revelation 12:7. Here Michael is as much a symbol as are all the other symbols mentioned. For example, the woman is a symbol, so also is the dragon, his tail, the stars, etc. This being true it follows that Michael, too, is a symbol. Only confusion of- thinking would result if we attempted to understand this passage to teach the result of a battle between *a symbolic* dragon and *a literal* archangel.

- P. L. Read.

Recently Deceased

Sr. Alice M. Barentzen, Gardiner, Me. - (Sept.)

Sr. Olga Bohlin, Providence, R.I. - (Sept.)

Bro. I. W. Broome, Lubbock, Texas - (Sept.)

Bro. H. Brown, Regina, Sask. - (Sept.)

Sr. Vora Burpee, Somerville, Mass. - (Sept.)

Bro. Alvin F. Lange, Milwaukee, Wis. - (Oct.)

Bro. S. G. Pappas, Chicago, Ill. - (May)

Bro. Chas. F. Wagner, Lancaster, Pa. - (Sept.)