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The Giver and His Gift

"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." - 2 Corinthians 9:15.

WITH the Christmas season approaching, it is inevitable that the mind should be occupied with thoughts concerning gifts. Sad it is to note that in recent years the seasonal habit of gift-making has become increasingly commercialized, and in many cases is prompted by a sense of duty rather than a spontaneous desire to give. Yet there are many who find joy in their giving, spending time and thought in seeking to provide gifts which will bring pleasure and gladness to those who receive them. The Apostle Paul when writing to the elders of Ephesus, exhorted them to "remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35), and that is the experience of all whose gifts are prompted by a sincere desire to help and assist others, and to bring joy into their lives. Neither the Lord Jesus nor Paul was thinking of the Christmas season as these words were uttered, but sought to encourage that spirit of giving which should animate every day of our lives. What a different world it would be if that spirit were not laid aside with the passing of Christmas!

THE FATHER AND THE SON

In this meditation attention is drawn to the most wonderful and costly Gift that has ever been made, and to the Giver-the only One who could provide such a gift. Every gift received in the spirit of true appreciation and gratitude should direct the mind to the giver. The purpose of God's revelation to us through his Word is that there might be a response of love to him; the Gift he has provided is in order that all might be restored to the harmony and peace with God which has been broken by sin and disobedience. It is important, therefore, that students of God's Word should never become so absorbed in the plans and purposes of God that he himself comes to occupy a secondary place in their considerations. "Thanks be unto God" should be the uppermost sentiment of the heart, and all other gifts should call to mind "his unspeakable Gift." Every feature of the Divine Plan must find its center in God's great Gift; every consideration of his Word should direct the mind to the Giver and his Gift. How easy it is, alas, to become so engrossed in the details of God's Plan, that the Source and Fountain recede into the background of our consideration.

Is not this the cause of many of the difficulties which have beset the professed people of God through the centuries? Are we more interested in "the Plan" than in the One who has made it possible? In our witness for the Lord among men, do we emphasize this Gift of God as we ought? Paul, in his inspiring discourses, when declaring "the whole counsel of God," never failed to focus the attention of his hearers upon the great Architect, and the means he had selected for the fulfillment of his designs. Step by step he leads his audiences to Jesus-the Savior of men -and through him to God himself. Hear him in Athens-"Him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, . . . he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." (Acts 17:23, 24, 31.) Likewise Peter, in his Pentecostal discourse: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you," etc. (Acts 2:22.) The Apostle John, and Stephen also, direct the thoughts to the living God and his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ! If such is the purpose and end of all our study of God's Word, and of our fellowship and work for God, then we are blessed indeed, for we have made contact with The Living Word.

GOD'S PRIOR GIFTS TO MEN

In the beginning, at the time of man's creation, God planted for him a garden, designed to satisfy all the senses of his perfect humanity, and entrusted to him the dominion of earth. He gave to him a companion to satisfy his need for fellowship, and in order that he who was created "in the image of God" might also experience the joys of giving and reciprocation. None of these things could man have provided for himself, and to none of them could he lay claim as of right-they were God's gifts to men.

Lack of gratitude to God for these precious gifts was the cause of man's disobedience and disloyalty, just as it was the spirit of unthankfulness which caused the fall of Lucifer, Morning Star who became the embodiment of all that is selfish and contrary to the spirit of giving. Since that time the history of the world has been a long, dark record of sorrow and misery because men have sought to get rather than give. The prevailing spirit in the world has been one of selfishness and greed-men and nations, parties and organizations, have been governed by self-interest; hence come wars and fightings, strife and misery.

For 4,000 years mankind trod a downward path. With few exceptions the hearts of men were filled with base ingratitude; they lived in open rebellion against their Creator. How terrible is the word picture portrayed by the Apostle Paul in the opening chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, in which he describes the awful condition to which man had fallen! "When they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful." (Rom. 1:21.) How base a thing is ingratitude, and how terrible when it is directed against God! But had mankind anything to be thankful for? In this same chapter the Apostle writes: "That which may be known of God is manifest to them, for God hath shown it unto them." (Rom. 1:19.) Although in justice he pronounced a sentence of death upon the race, still he provided the means by which the few short years of life might be sustained. Seed-time and harvest have never failed in spite of the sin and wickedness of men. Although in the wisdom and goodness of God, man has had to labor and toil, and to collect the produce of the earth "by the sweat of his brow," yet it has been God who gives the increase. Still men have refused to acknowledge him, who "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust." (Matt. 5:45.) Yes, men have much to be thankful for even in this sin-cursed earth, but the many gifts of God are mostly taken for granted, or attributed to causes which ignore the Creator, the giver of all good gifts.

WHAT MOTIVES ACTUATE OUR GIVING?

The spirit of God and of the Lord Jesus, must be developed now by those who are to bestow the gift of life in the Kingdom! Is it surprising that Jesus taught his disciples: "Love your enemies, and pray for them which persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven"? How hopeless would be our outlook if God had bestowed the gift of his Son only upon the good! "There is none righteous, no not one." *"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."* But *"thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!"*

Yet how many professing Christians there are who enclose themselves within a creedal wall and bestow all their love upon those inside! How easy to develop an attitude of mind which may not find expression in words, but which is indifferent, cold, and unloving toward those who may not see "eye to eye." *"If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?"* -Matt. 5:46, 47.

GOD'S INEXPRESSIBLE GIFT

After 4,000 years of rebellion and ingratitude, God sent his greatest gift. The Apostle Paul, that master of the superlative, finds it difficult to express the magnitude of this gift of God. So great was it, so costly and so precious -- so vast were to be the consequences of this gift that he is unable to find a word which fits the occasion. No other man reached the heights of Christian experience as did the writer of the Epistles to the Corinthians, yet, in spite of all his eloquence and learning he finds that there are limits to human expression; that words can never adequately convey the wonder and majesty of God's dealings with men.

In the context of the text which forms the subject of this meditation, the Apostle thinks of the gifts he is collecting from many churches in order to relieve the dire distress of the brethren at Jerusalem. He thinks of the sacrifices involved, and indicates the trend of his thought as he writes of the Churches of Macedonia: *"How that, in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves; praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift."* (2 Cor. 8:2-4.) He then anticipates the liberality and bounty of the Corinthian brethren to be offered ungrudgingly and cheerfully; but great and noble as were these gifts, how could they compare with God's gift! The Sacrifice-who can measure; the bounty and liberality -who can express! *"Not grudgingly or of necessity"*-no, indeed-the gift of God was freely given. No wonder Paul cannot find words which are adequate, and so -- *"Thanks be unto God for his inexpressible gift."*

DO OUR HEARTS RESPOND?

Do we feel this about God's gift? Does it mean to us all that it meant to Paul; stirring us in our innermost being as we think upon this revelation of God and on the immensity of the gift? Here was no "duty gift"-*"not of necessity"* -- no, it was the manifestation of God's great love. More than that, it revealed the intensity and depth of his love for a sinful race. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son."* (John 3:16.) That is how much he loved-his most precious possession freely given for the world!

Need we wonder at the angelic message and the praises which were sung to God over the hills around Bethlehem! "And the angel said . . . 'Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord' . . . And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward

men." God's gift to men! (Luke 2:10, 11, 13, 14.) Can we join with Paul in the spirit of that chorus -- "Thanks be unto God for his inexpressible gift"?

GOD'S GIFT MUST BE PERSONALLY RECEIVED

To Paul, however, this was not only God's gift to mankind;-it was *God's gift to Paul!* To know that "the man Christ Jesus, gave himself a Ransom for all" is academic; to know him as *your* Savior, as God's gift to *you*, is experimental. How many there are who know him as a historical Savior, but how necessary to know him as a personal Savior! This vital contrast is emphasized by the Lord himself: "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world"; "the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (John 6:33, 51); that is one aspect of the matter, but hear him further: "*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life.*" (John 6:53-54.) There is the difference between "Recognition" and "Appropriation."

To the great Apostle Paul God's gift was personal to himself. It meant so much to him. It had brought to him forgiveness-life, peace, joy, and hope. Would any of these blessings have been possible without God's gift to Paul? Consider his earlier struggles as he sought by works of the flesh to gain the favor and blessing of God. Unable to do the things that he would, he cries out in his wretchedness: "*Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" Then comes the outburst of triumph: "*I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" (Rom. 7:24-25.) Yes, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift"! It had brought deliverance *to him*; it had brought forgiveness of sins *to him*; it had brought peace *to him*.

O the wretchedness of an experience in which these things are not true! "Cursed by God's law"; in bondage to sin and death; sinners, condemned in the sight of God; alienated from him by wicked works! How dark the condition of mind that is unenlightened by God's holy spirit, with no understanding of his ways-denied the privilege of "sonship" and joint-heirship with Jesus Christ, or a present inheritance of being "alive unto God." No hope, no joy, and no promise of eternal life! How dark the picture!-a picture of despair and hopelessness! Praise God, that need not be our experience, for the blessings mentioned above (and many more beside) may be ours by appropriation, even as they belonged to Paul. Is it asked: How can this be? We reply: There is but the one way, the way expressed in that short phrase so beloved by the great Apostle -- "*through Jesus Christ our Lord*" -- the "*unspeakable gift*" of God.

God's gift of his only begotten Son has meant these things to us. No wonder the angel spoke of "*good tidings of great joy.*" "What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:31, 32.) Yes, "freely he gives us all things," for this has been made possible on the basis of his "unspeakable gift."

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

As this meditation comes to a close, we do well to remember that prominent amongst the gifts vouchsafed to us is that of the Holy Spirit: "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13.) However, not all God's gifts are bestowed irrespective of the desires of his creatures. There must be a "hunger and thirst after righteousness" -a sincere desire in the heart for a closer communion and fellowship with God. "*Ask* and it shall be given to you; *seek*, and ye shall find; *knock*, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that

seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." (Luke 11:9-10.) This is not an experience which was completed at the commencement of the Christian walk. How important that our *daily* prayer shall be to be "*filled* with the Spirit" -- to be "*led* by the Spirit" -- to be *controlled* by the Spirit. But it is God's gift, and what a gift!

It gives access into the Divine family; it brings into fellowship with God and his Son. It enlightens our minds concerning the secrets of God which involve our participation with Christ in God's New Creation, the greatest of all his mighty works.

WHAT IS JESUS TO YOU?

God's unspeakable gift! God gave him to be a Savior, but that must not exhaust God's gift to us in Jesus. Alas, that to so many he is little more than a Savior! Wonderful as that is, God's gift is far, far more than a Savior who was born into the world, who lived and died nearly 2,000 years ago. In the Lord Jesus Christ, God gives to us the gift of a friend-"a friend that sticketh closer than a brother"-a friend who loves us in our bad moments as well as in our good-a friend who is unfailing and true-a friend in the dark days as well as in the light. "*A friend loveth at all times.*" (Prov. 17: 17), and *he is such a friend.* That brings a privilege and a responsibility. "*A man that hath friends must show himself friendly.*" (Prov. 18:24.) Harken to the words of Jesus: "*Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.*" (John 15:14.) "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

God has provided in Jesus Christ a *forerunner* and an *example* that we might know how to walk pleasing to him day by day; how to respond to the varying experiences of life in a world of sin and enmity against God. God has provided a "sympathetic High Priest" who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" -- one who was "tempted in all points like as we are." Through him we approach "boldly unto the throne of grace" and "obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:15, 16.) In Christ Jesus God has provided an advocate-one who can plead for us and through whose pleading we receive forgiveness of sins. Such are some of the things that God's gift means to us.

"Jesus, my Shepherd, Savior, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest, and King,
My heart in gratitude ascends;
Accept the praise I bring."

And, can we forget that most intimate relationship, the most sacred of all -- God's gift! Christ is our heavenly *Bridegroom!* "*No man cometh unto me, except the Father which sent me draw him.*" (John 6:44.) "*Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it.*" (Eph. 5:25.) "*For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great secret: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.*" - Eph. 5:31, 32.

What shall be our response to all this? Is there *a way* in which we can make known to God our gratitude for this inexpressible gift to us? Is there anything we can offer? Yes-praise God, there is one thing which will delight his heart more than anything else. The Apostle tells us what this is in Rom. 12:1, 2: "*Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God, your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.*"

- Edwin Allbon, Eng.

Half Hour Meditations on Romans

No. 37

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith operating in us by love. -- Gal. 5:6, Diaglott

IN Rom. 3:21 we saw the Apostle asserting that "his" Gospel of faith righteousness was "witnessed by the Law and the Prophets." In the last five verses of chapter 3, we saw him demonstrating this assertion to be true by reference to the general tenor and spirit of the Old Testament. Not content with so general a proof, he proceeded to cite a particular instance, and in order that the argument might be decisive he appealed at once to the case of Abraham himself. In the first eight verses of chapter 4, we saw him demonstrating that Abraham was justified (declared righteous), not on account of works of law he performed but solely on account of the fact that God, out of his sheer benevolence, had reckoned his faith to him for righteousness. In the verses we now consider (Rom. 4:9-12), the Apostle proceeds to show that Abraham was justified not only by faith but by faith alone.

Abraham Justified by Faith Alone

Cometh this blessedness [this imputation of righteousness without works (Rom. 4:6); this forgiveness of iniquities, this covering of sins (Rom. 4:7); this non imputation of sin (Rom. 4:8) upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. -- Rom. 4:9, Authorized and Am. R. V.

In light of Gen. 15:6 (so forcefully presented by the Apostle in the preceding passage) a Jewish opponent could not dispute the fact that Abraham was justified by faith. But he would advance the argument that Abraham's case was not in point so far as Gentiles were concerned. It merely illustrated the way the Jews (the circumcision) were to secure justification. Such an objection (doubtless urged many times by opponents of St. Paul's Gospel) has been well expressed by another: You speak of the justifications of David and Abraham. "But David was a child of the covenant of circumcision and Abraham was the father of that covenant. Do not their justifications speak only to those who stand within that charmed circle? Was not Abraham justified by faith *plus* circumcision? Did not the faith act only because he was already one of the privileged?"

If this contention were true, then those who remained uncircumcised would remain ineligible for faith justification and consequently ineligible for the salvation unto which the "righteousness of [or from] God" was designed to lead (Rom. 1:16). But the Apostle has said (Rom. 3:22) that "his" Gospel is "unto all" men and "upon all" believers, irrespective of any other distinction whatsoever. In the matter of justification by faith there is "no difference" between the circumcised and the uncircumcised; and before he has finished he will have not only asserted this to be the case but will have demonstrated it beyond all question.

Abraham Reckoned Righteous Before Circumcision Was Instituted

The point of the Apostle's question here is unmistakable: "Abraham, it is true, was circumcised; but at what time? -- before his justification or after? Not before but long after. Abraham had faith counted to him for righteousness fourteen years (at least) before he was circumcised, even reckoning from the time to which the passage quoted in Rom. 4:3 refers. He was a believer some

considerable time before that period. The Apostle mentions as the effect and evidence of his faith his leaving his native land and going out, on the footing of the Divine promise, into the place which he should afterward receive for an inheritance, not knowing whither he went (Heb 11:6).

But even the time referred to in the third verse was fourteen years previous to his circumcision. The Apostle seems to have selected Gen. 15:6 because then the first express declaration of Abraham's faith being imputed to him for righteousness was made. It preceded Sarah's giving him Hagar and could not, therefore, be much less than a year before the birth of Ishmael; for aught that appears to the contrary, it might be much more (Gen. 16:3). And we know that Ishmael was thirteen years old at the time circumcision was instituted and first practiced (Gen. 17:25).

"Circumcision, therefore, seeing it took place so long after his justification could have nothing to do with the ground of it, since a cause cannot follow its effect.

From Abraham's being justified when in uncircumcision it is obvious *first* that as circumcision was not (in whole or in part) the ground of *his* acceptance with God, it cannot be a solid foundation of hope to others. Dependence upon it, in this view, must be vain, springing from ignorance and misconception. *Secondly*, it is obvious that uncircumcision is no *hindrance* to the justification of *any*. As Abraham was justified when in uncircumcision an uncircumcised Gentile may now be justified in the same way with Abraham. His justification being the pattern of the way in which God justifies the ungodly in every age. They who are of faith, whether Jews or Gentiles, are blessed with believing Abraham (Gal. 3:9; *Weymouth*).

Circumcision Is a Sign of the Abrahamic Covenant

"What, then, it may be asked did Abraham derive from circumcision? What was the meaning and design of the rite? This inquiry the Apostle answers in verses eleven and twelve."

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

In instituting circumcision God said to Abraham, "It shall be a *token* of the covenant betwixt me and you" (Gen. 17:11). In the *Septuagint*, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, this word "token" is the same as is here in Rom. 4:11 translated "sign." Other covenants had been ratified by signs. For example, God set the rainbow in the sky as a *sign* or *token* of his covenant that the waters should not again become a flood so as to destroy all flesh (Gen. 9:6-17). In every case the matter of importance of course is the covenant itself, not its sign or token. Rainbows in themselves are powerless to prevent destructive floods. Their usefulness consists in reminding us of the covenant of our powerful and faithful God.

So with circumcision; it was not the reality but a sign or token of the reality. And what was the reality of which circumcision was the sign? We answer, in the language of the scripture just quoted: "The covenant betwixt me and you," that is to say the covenant between God and Abraham (usually referred to as the Abrahamic Covenant, into which we shall shortly have occasion to inquire more particularly) we may here state is briefly summarized in the statement that in Abraham and in his Seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:17, 18; 26:4).

Circumcision Is Also a Seal of the Righteousness of Faith

Circumcision, then, was intended as a sign of token of the Abrahamic Covenant. But the Apostle speaks of it additionally as a "seal": "a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he [Abraham] had while he was in uncircumcision." Circumcision, then, did not *confer* this blessing; what it did was to *confirm* it. It did not *convey* a standing of righteousness before God but *bore witness* to the righteousness already reckoned.

Quoting from an able writer: "In no dispensation do rites bestow anything; they are the shadow, not the substance; they are a seal. But the seal is worthless apart from the matter or from the document that it attests. The Jew had torn off the seal from the covenant and then vainly boasted of this meaningless imprint."

A seal of the righteousness reckoned to him on account of his faith! What can this righteousness mean but that circumcision of heart enjoined on Israel again and again in the Old Testament: circumcision which the martyr Stephen testified they were (as a nation) yet without. "And Jehovah thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live" (Deut. 30:6). "O stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always fight against the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, you also do" (Acts 7:51). [See also Deut. 10:12-16; Jer. 4:4.] To this heart circumcision St. Paul has already referred (Rom. 2:25-29), considered in Meditations No. 23. There he shows that the mark in the flesh is merely intended as the seal of a proper heart condition. "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Of Whom Is Abraham "Father"? And Who Are They Who Are Rightly Called His "Sons"?

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the Apostle also draws our attention in these verses to the wisdom displayed by God in arranging the institution of circumcision so that it should occur several years subsequent to the counting of Abraham's faith to him for righteousness. This was by no means accidental but a part of a deep design. It was to the end "in order that" Abraham might be "the father of all them that believe" whether Jews or Gentiles. The sign of circumcision given to him as a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision made him eminently fitted to be a "father" to the uncircumcised believer; while possessing the sign of circumcision made it possible for him to be also the "father" of Jewish believers. The word here translated "father" designates an exemplar, a representative, a pattern, a leading and eminent example others may copy. Thus we read of Jabal as being the "father" of such as dwell in tents and have cattle (Gen. 4:20), and in the next verse his brother Jubal is mentioned as the "father" of such as handle the harp and pipe. Satan is spoken of by Jesus as the "father" of wicked Jews (John 8:38). Conversely we see that it is not sufficient to be born in the physical line of descent from Abraham to be considered a "child" or "son" of Abraham. Only "Israelites indeed" are considered worthy of the title of a "son" of Abraham (John 1:47). Thus our Lord denied this title to Jews who had proved themselves unworthy of it.

Their circumcision meant nothing to him in the absence of the real circumcision of heart which should have characterized them. "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham" (John 8:39). Note also the sublime remark of our Lord on witnessing the faith of Zacchaeus, as evidenced by his works: "Behold Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and

if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold. Jesus said unto him: To day is salvation come to this house, *forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.*" That is to say, forasmuch as he is not only of the circumcision but is treading in the track of the faith of Abraham and is therefore worthy to be called one of his sons (Luke 19:8, 9). In full harmony with this expression of our Lord, the Apostle reasons: "Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham" (Gal. 3:7 [*Am. R. V.J*]).

Faith Without Works Is Dead

It is worthy of notice that the Apostle does not say that Abraham is the "father" of those who merely acquiesce in the doctrinal viewpoint he held. Faith in St. Paul's life and teaching is much more than a mere mental agreement as to the philosophy concerning God, his attributes, plans, and purposes. The Apostle is speaking of those who "walk" in the steps of Abraham's faith (Rom. 4:12). Scholars tell us that the word here translated "walk" is a military term, meaning to "march in file." The picture before the Apostles mind seems to be that of an army whose weapons are not carnal marching in file. First there comes before his mind the noble *career* of Abraham. In its general course and in its crises his career gave ample evidence of the faith in God within Abraham's heart, which *actuated* that career. Next he envisions a host of others with similar careers; not similar in details (for in detail they differ widely) but similar in the respect that they result from the same motive. They are animated by the same mainspring; they give evidence that faith in God has been that which has directed their course. Marching in file in the track of that faith which Abraham had before he was circumcised; this is their characteristic. And of such the Apostle writes: Abraham is their "father"; to them as to him righteousness shall also be reckoned.

Mere profession of faith unaccompanied by "works of faith" is worthless (as stressed in James 2:20). A man *believes* a thing when he *acts* as if it were true. If he fails to so act, instead of producing the evidence that his faith is real he manifests on the contrary that his faith is dead, no matter what his professions may be. Because Abraham's faith was evidenced by his conduct "therefore" it was reckoned unto him for righteousness (Rom. 4:22). How eloquently Zacchaeus course in life attested his faith! Half of his goods to the poor! Reparation of wrong to the extent of fourfold! Small wonder that our Lord recognized him as a "son of Abraham," as one who was marching in file in the track of that faith which Abraham had while as yet uncircumcised.

-- P. L. Read

Israel Today

In the November Herald, pages 152, 153 we published a report of his impressions on returning to the Holy Land, written from Jerusalem October 1, by Brother Casimir Lanowick, Editor of Jews in the News. Since then, a second report has reached us, which we are glad to share with our readers.

In a covering letter, after speaking of Israel as "the land where past and present meet," Brother Lanowick cites Deut. 11:12:

"A land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end' of the year." - Ed. Com.

Jerusalem, October 17, 1958

Israel, on the basis of this Scripture, can still be called the Holy Land, or God's country -- a term which is frequently applied to beautiful portions of the earth. It is still a "good land" as is evidenced by its productivity today, in spite of the centuries of erosion and neglect.

Something that convinces a student of prophecy that the eyes of the Lord are still upon this land "from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year" is the spirit that permeates the air in the Land of Promise-a spirit unlike that found elsewhere. Many journalists and non-believers endeavor to interpret this by describing it as a dynamic spirit, a progressive spirit, etc., but we are of the conviction that it is the power, influence or spirit of God that is working in this country at present, conditioning the minds and hearts of the people for the great blessings yet to come.-Isaiah 32:15.

A couple of days ago we were given official invitations to attend the cornerstone laying ceremony for Israel's new Knesset (parliament) building, which is to be located on the crest of a gentle rise in western Jerusalem, adjacent to the President's Park in what is called "The Kirya," commanding a superb view in all four directions. Here, in the presence of the Prime Minister of Israel, as well as the President, the Cabinet members and members of the parliament, religious notables, the diplomatic corps, and many other important personages, including several members of the famous Rothschild family, we witnessed an impressive event that truly gave one the goose-pimple feeling. Undoubtedly, this was the most significant ceremony of its kind that has taken place in Israel since the cornerstone of the Hebrew University on Mt. Scopus was laid forty years ago.

As we stood in the bright sunshine, surrounded by a couple thousand people, many thoughts came to mind. On the Foundation Scroll, which was signed by all the important leaders in the Jewish State and then encased in the cornerstone, were recorded some beautifully expressed statements. The concluding words were:

"May this house be built and may it be a blessing and a glory in the mouths of all men, by giving the people righteous laws and judgments which will show the way to the love of man, to loyalty to the homeland, and everlasting peace.-'For from Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.'"

Mrs. de Rothschild then gave the chief address of the afternoon, closing her remarks by saying,

"As I lay the first stone of the Knesset, let us turn to God and pray that 'Thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day (2 Chronicles 6:20).,"

Meditating upon the beautiful multimillion-dollar edifice that will soon be constructed to house Israel's parliament (made possible, by the way, by the generosity of the late James A. de Rothschild), our thoughts carried us to the time when the judges of Israel will be restored. (Isaiah 1:26-27) And it may well be that the divinely-appointed earthly administrators of the Kingdom arrangement will convene in that magnificent legislative structure.

As this dramatic ceremony ended, impressed with the spirit of the occasion and the splendid panoramic view of Jerusalem and the hills of Judea, we could not help but reflect upon the much greater Cornerstone prophesied in Isaiah 28:16:

"Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation ... "

It will be of special interest to the brethren to know that the gleaming white stone used for the corner of the new Knesset was hewn from a quarry in Galilee.

THE HOUSE OF CORNELIUS

This brief account pretty well emphasizes how the past and present, as well as Israel's future, blend in the Land of Promise today. Simultaneous with the presence in the country of several members of the Rothschild family, further developments of vital interest are shaping up. More of the wealth of this renowned banking family will be used to advance the upbuilding of Israel. THE JERUSALEM POST reports that Caesarea, the seaport built by Herod in honor of Augustus Caesar, and the starting point of the uprising against Rome in the year 66 A.D., is to be rebuilt on the initiative of the House of Rothschild.

On a 7,500-acre site along the Mediterranean Coast will arise a new city, encircling the ancient ruins. The plan is to establish light industry and workshops, as well as middle-class housing estates, and to develop the tourist industry by building luxury villas for wealthy foreigners who, when they visit Israel, will have a second home in Caesarea and therefore remain in the country longer. The archeological sites will be restored. Grounds and facilities are to be provided along the beach for student groups from abroad who cannot afford to stay in expensive hotels. However, Baron Edmond de Rothschild envisages the construction of a beach hotel as well.

Yes, this is all to take place in Caesarea, where Cornelius, the Roman centurion, and his entire household, were enlightened with a vision of the Kingdom, and upon whom the spirit of God descended-in the city where the Gospel message first went to the Gentiles. (Acts 10.) It is interesting to note that the press, reports the development of Caesarea as being considered more of a "sentimental" project, for the Baron's uncle James and grandfather Edmond had always had an interest in this place. This leaves one to surmise as to what stimulated their special interest in the ancient, demolished site.

In a Reuters dispatch from Milan, it has been learned that an Italian archeological expedition is planned for April of next year to bring to light ruins of Caesarea, once seat of the Roman governor of Judea. An exploratory mission reported that prospects for systematic digging were favorable and that the Israel Government welcomed the project. Who knows, maybe the actual House of Cornelius will be uncovered, with some pertinent documentary evidence.

THEY DIG UP THE PAST

The 14th Conference of the Israel Exploration (archeological) Society, members of which are referred to as "the Explorers" and, in a more humorous vein sometimes spoken of as "the sand-sifters," heard some most interesting observations propounded by a number of its distinguished professors. For instance, Prof. Y. Tishbi, of the Hebrew University, described Safad's (where the Conference was held) great spiritual influence on Judaism. Safad, along with Tiberius, Hebron, and Jerusalem, form the four holy cities to the devout Orthodox Jews. He said that *the traditional belief that the Messiah was likely to appear in Galilee led many to settle there.*

Throughout the centuries this area was heavily populated with Jews, both before and after Christ.

The extensive archeological discoveries made in Israel in recent years have led Prof. William F. Albright, probably the foremost Biblical archeologist of our time, to declare:

"Of all sciences, the two making the most progress today are nuclear physics and Palestinian archeology."

GROWING PROMINENCE OF THE BIBLE IN ISRAEL LIFE

The importance of the study of the Bible in Israel and the fact that it was a basic part of the curriculum in the schools, was stressed by Mr. Shalman Shazar, Chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive, in an address before the Bible Conference which took place in Jerusalem. Mr. Shazar pointed out that every child in Israel was given a ' thorough grounding in the Bible and stated that even those in Israel *who* did not consider themselves observant recognized the Bible as a religious document.

To follow up this appraisal, we would like to quote Dr. Nahum Goldmann, President of the World Jewish Congress and of the World Zionist Organization, who recently highlighted the significant influence of the Land of the Bible on its young people, by saying:

"Past generations of Jews were more preoccupied with the Talmud and Talmudic literature than with the Bible. To Israel's children, even those wholly devoid of religious sentiment, the Bible has become a subject of profoundest interest and greatest fascination, . . . as if the many generations of the Dispersion had been an interlude, to be forgotten if it cannot be erased."

On the basis of this, we can be confident that all augurs well for the young generation, that is being steeped not so much in the traditions of the elders as in the basic tenets of Scripture.

It was said in ancient time, "As the king, so the people," and undoubtedly the present state of mind of the Israeli can be, to a good degree, traced back to the fathers of this modern nation-men like David Ben-Gurion who pioneered in the redemption of the land. He has made some remarkable addresses of late and this one that we wish to quote will convey the spirit in which he speaks to the people:

"I believe implicitly that now that we are no longer subordinate to strangers and compelled to adapt ourselves to the ways of other countries, we shall indeed become a model people in the moral and intellectual sense, and Israel will be a light to the nations . . .

"There are richer, larger, and more comfortable countries than Israel, but this is the country in which the Jewish people grew and its character was molded, the country in which it produced its immortal creations which have become part of the heritage of the human race . . .

"The zenith of Jewish creativity is the Messianic vision, the redemption for the nation and for all humanity, which brings to the world tidings of peace, justice and mercy, on which the hopes of humanity depend, and without which all scientific and technical achievements may bring misfortune to the human race and destruction to the world.

"It is not the purpose of the State of Israel to merely add one more *state* to the many that already exist or may yet be created; Israel is the bearer of the historic and spiritual ideals with which the Jewish people have been imbued since its beginnings, ideals which have been given supreme and external expression in the Book of Books, in the immortal message of Israel's prophets."

In another speech that the Prime Minister of Israel delivered, at a dinner in honor of the House of Rothschild, at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, Mr. David Ben-Gurion observed that although the Jews are "a democratic and egalitarian people," they have monarchistic leanings. In recent generations the Jewish masses of Eastern Europe felt justly proud that there was a Jewish dynasty in Western Europe called the House of Rothschild. "This popular instinct was not mistaken," he added, "for it is one of the most remarkable things in our history."

Truly, these monarchistic leanings will find full expression when the Jewish Messiah is recognized by the nation as a whole and Jesus of Nazareth is hailed by them as King of the Jews.

"With What Measure Ye Mete"

*"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged;
and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." - Matt. 7:1, 2*

IF the man in the street did but grasp the import of these words, they would revolutionize his life. He, of course, doesn't believe them. Most people who do something wrong, entertain the hope that they can avoid paying the penalty. If they have injured another, they hope the injured party will forgive them, or at least be powerless to take revenge. Better still, they hope their misdeed will never come to light.

This is true of "the man in the street." How is it with us? Do *we* really believe this statement of our Lord? Of course, we mentally assent to its truth. But to "believe" a thing, in the Scriptural sense, is to *act as if it were true*. Do we always act as though we were thoroughly convinced that with what measure we mete, it shall-shall, not maybe measured to us again? Yet what psychologists term the law of retribution, here enunciated by our Lord, is as sure and certain as the law of gravity.

No one ever supposes that the law of gravity has been repealed, or is likely to be. People know it to, be a Cosmic Law, inevitable, inescapable, and they shape their lives, accordingly. The law of retribution is also a Cosmic Law. There is no such thing as escaping it. Only the Divine Architect could repeal or suspend its operation, and nowhere in the Scriptures does he give us the slightest hint that he intends to do so. On the contrary, the Apostle declares "God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6:7.) It has been truly said:

"Sow a thought, reap an act;
Sow an act, reap a habit;
Sow a habit, reap a character;
Sow a character, reap a destiny."

As a hymn-writer has suggested

"Sow flowers, and flowers will follow
You whithersoever you go;
Sow weeds, and of weeds reap a harvest;
You'll reap whatsoever you sow."

This does not mean that every man is to reap, *in the present life*, everything he sows. *That* was the doctrine once held by Job, but which, through his experience of unmerited suffering, he learned could not be true.* While even in this life, men do, as a rule, get what they deserve, this is not true, absolutely. And even to this general rule there are many exceptions. In the brief span of our earthly lives, the law of retribution lacks sufficient scope to operate to its proper and complete issues.

* See the Question Box -- July, August-September Heralds.

But, if we catch the Master's thought correctly, his words do mean that some where or other, some time or other, in this life or the next, our actions will be measured back to us -- grain for grain. If I have practiced deceit, I myself will be deceived. Unkindness to another on my part will be repaid in kind. Every time I neglect a duty, evade my responsibility, misuse my authority over some one, I may be certain that some where, some time, I shall receive the due reward of my deeds -- possibly in this life, but if not, then certainly in the next. This is the law of the universe, the law of God -- a law more sure than that of the Medes and Persians.

However, while those disposed to evil may come to recognize it as a *Law*, those who have the mind of the Master, know it to be also a *Gospel* -- *the* Gospel of Retribution. And what a wonderful Gospel it is, when seen in its proper light! All we have to do, if we desire lenient judgment for ourselves, is to judge others leniently; if we wish for ourselves "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over," we have but to give this to others, and it shall be given us.

MEASURING WHEAT

This theme, "The Law and the Gospel of Retribution," is one which we can only touch on now. Perhaps we may have an opportunity to return to it on another occasion. In the space remaining to us, we invite your attention to an interesting description of the strange scene which formed the background of these words of our Lord. The description is given by James Neil, who resided in Jerusalem for three years, May 1871 to May 1874. We quote:

"Another sight that arrested my attention in Jerusalem was the measuring of wheat or barley.... Each year in July or August all the dwellers in Eastern cities have to buy sufficient wheat to last them for a twelvemonth. When it is brought to the purchaser's door, a professional measurer invariably attends to find out and certify the true contents of each sack, who acts as a kind of impartial umpire between the buyer and the seller. He uses a wooden measure, like our own

bushel measure but not so deep, called a *timneh*. He seats himself cross-legged on the ground, and, upon the grain being turned out in a heap before him, begins to scoop it into the *timneh* with his hands. Next, he seizes the measure, when it is partly full, and gives it two or three swift half-turns as it stands on the ground, thus shaking it together and so making it occupy a smaller space. He again scoops in more wheat and repeats the shaking as before, and does so again and again until the measure is filled up to the brim. This done, he presses upon it all over with the out-stretched palms of his hands, using the whole weight of his body so as to pack it still more closely. Then, out of the center of the pressed surface, he removes some of its contents, and makes a small hollow. He is about to erect a building on the top, and very naturally digs a foundation. With more handfuls of wheat he now raises a cone above the *timneh*. With much skilfulness he carries this cone up to a great height, until no more grain can possibly be piled on its steep sides and that which he adds begins to run down and flow over. Upon this, the interesting and elaborate process is complete, the measure is regarded as of full weight and is handed over to the buyer. Wheat is always meted out in this way, and is quoted in the market at so much per *timneh*. I have been at great pains to find out the exact contents, by weight, of the Palestine measure. The experiment I caused to be made was with wheat of the best quality. I found that a *timneh* of such filled up to the brim, unshaken and unpressed and without the cone, weighs just thirty-seven pounds, and with the cone just forty-four pounds. When, however, shaken together, pressed down, and, flowing over in the manner I have described, it holds forty-eight pounds. "Give," said our blessed Lord, in graphic and vivid allusion to this professional measuring, "and it shall be given to you; *good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over*, shall they give into your bosom [that is, into the capacious natural breast-pocket formed by that part of the loose Eastern *kamise*, or shirt, which is above the girdle]; for with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." (Luke 6:38; see also Matt. 7:2; Mark 4:24) Observe, there is no less than eleven pounds difference in weight between a measure filled to the brim, as we fill it here, and one such as I have described, filled according to the bountiful method of Bible lands, when it is "pressed down, shaken together, running over." In this way 30 per cent is added to its value! This is, indeed, good interest for our money, but thus liberally shall those be rewarded who have learned to imitate the example of their God and his Son -- who, blessed be his name, gave his own life -- in the divine art of generous giving."

- P. L. Read

"The Music of the Rest"

"In the grand oratorios of life
God writes us unexpected rests!
These break the rush, the strain,
the storm, the strife,
And are our surely needful tests!"

- *Poems of Dawn*, page 192.

SPEED seems to be the keynote of the 20th century world. It is possible to crowd as much into one day as our grandparents did in a week. Swift travel and labor-saving equipment have brought this about. It is so easy to be caught up in the modern whirl, packing so much into one day of even Christian activity, as leaves no room for Christ. The reminder to pause, to rest, to listen, to take stock, is sometimes as necessary to us in the busy round as a halt sign at a busy road crossing. That STOP! WAIT! LOOK! signal, which in the business world safeguards life, has its equivalent protection in the life of the spirit.

"BEHOLD I STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK"

Jesus often knocks for admission. The knock may not always be heard above the busy clamor of thought and activity. There is so much to think about, so much to do, the attention becomes so involved that we may be out of hearing range, or the friendly rap registers no response. In a busy household on a busy day, visitors are rarely welcome. A knock at the door is more likely to prove an irritable interruption. Not many go to the door in a state of joyous expectancy, hoping it will be some treasured friend, in whose society they can relax, listen, and be refreshed, who is always heartily welcome and for whose presence every chore is gladly abandoned.

Yet Jesus is such a visitor. "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." - Rev. 3:20.

He gave us to understand that the necessary thing is food for the spirit more than a busy round of activity that leaves no time to rest, to sit, awhile with him and listen to what he has to say. The busy Marthas, rushing around on their various errands, filling up a program crammed with busyness, feeling the strain of their activities, are admirable people. The world would be lost without them. The quiet, contemplative, dreaming Marys give to it its beauty, its other-world visions, but it needs the bustling Marthas to organize and translate them into action and reality.

Since nature has mixed the elements so well in most of us, it becomes increasingly needful to listen for that knock upon the door of the heart that we may be better informed when to be up and doing, what to be doing and when to keep quiet, to rest and take in new strength. For that is the purpose of the rest, the reason for the Master's knock on the door.

On those crowded days when work piles up so that we seem to be outpaced with it, when we are behind schedule before we have started, when any delay or hindrance or accident is likely to find us underneath the load, fretted, frustrated, and limp, that is the time when Jesus knocks. You protest you are too busy, you haven't time to stop; you have so much to do. Your works are of the most unselfish order, but the Master says: "I have spread the meal, cease your labors. Come and sup with me and I with you."

A ready response to that gracious call brings its own reward. The door that shuts out the crowded day, that calls a halt to the busy program, shuts in "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." - Phil. 4:7.

How refreshing is that short rest! That brief pause for quiet thought, a reassessment of our situation, a reappraisal of our liabilities and assets, the reassurance of the promise: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." - 2 Cor. 12:9.

It may be only a few minutes, but spent in the presence of the Lord it changes the tenor and tone of the day. From frenzied haste to calm leisured action, from snapping strain to sunny ease, the day rolls out unwrinkled, successful, and satisfying. We have supped with him and he with us, and how immensely invigorating and sustaining has been the brief visit, the heavenly intercourse with the Unseen Guest.

"The way is sometimes weary
To yonder nearing clime,
But a little talk with Jesus
Hath helped me many a time.
The more I come to know Him,
And all His grace explore,
It sets me ever longing
To know Him more and more."

- *Poems of Dawn*, page 99.

In the Gospel by John, chapter 21, verses 1 to 13 (John 21:1-13), there is an incident recorded in the post-resurrection ministry of our Lord that is full of instruction for us in these latter days. The appearances of the risen Lord had become fewer. Weary of waiting the active Peter announced, "I go a fishing." Ready to follow his lead, the other disciples went along with him. They fished all night but caught nothing. It was a vain labor. When morning dawned, a stranger stood on the shore and called out to them: "Children, have ye any meat?"

It was a common custom in that land for some hungry wayfarer to hail a fishing boat in the hope of getting some fish from the catch to make himself a meal. The form of the stranger could scarcely be discerned in the early light of day, and his salutation was one in common usage. Unaware of his identity, they sent back one word across the gray waters, "No!"

They did not trouble to explain or apologize for their lack of food, or try to hide or check their disappointment, the frayed patience of cold, wet, tired, hungry men who had toiled all night and caught nothing. It was a blunt, disgruntled, and unfriendly "No" which reached the stranger. But an answer came back that probably made Peter and John look at each other-an unspoken thought between them. "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find."

Past experience had taught them the lesson of obedience. They cast the net as instructed and found it so full they could scarcely pull it to the shore.

What a scene was that in the early morning with the sun shedding his first beams on the quiet coast! Peter stopping only to put on his fisherman's coat and girdle, springs into the sea, forgetful of all but haste to reach the feet of his Lord. Slowly, the others pull for the beach with the heavily laden net. There, to greet the eyes of tired, hungry men, a fire burned, fish cooking upon it and

bread beside it. The Master had made for them a meal, but that it shall not be a one-sided affair he bids them bring their share to it of the fish they have caught.

Peter, who now has the impetuous strength to haul up the full net single handed, landed the catch. They counted them, marveling that the net had not broken with the weight of them.

The Master waits to warm and feed them, to converse with them. There is no reprimand, no question, only the invitation: "Come and dine." Without a word they gather round him, each busy with his thoughts. He took fish and bread and gave to each of them. What would *we* give to have been there, to have shared in that meal, prepared and served by the risen Savior in a continuation of his ministry to men?

The privilege is ours still. He still calls across the tumult of our hours, when tired, frustrated, and empty, we occupy the time with a busy getting and doing which adds little or nothing to the spiritual treasure we bear in these earthen vessels. "Tis not thy work the Master wants, but thee."

"Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." - Luke 12:37.

He has prepared for *us* a feast. He invites *us* to take time to sup with him, to rest with him in sweet and holy fellowship. None can rest with him, without bearing about with them the evidences of this lofty companionship. In the home, in the meeting room, in the place of business, in the various social contacts, there comes a touch of grace received from him. To be often with him, to admire him, to love him, to be served and sustained by him, is to be transformed into his likeness little by little. It is to receive from him a radiant sanity as well as the power of a fuller, richer ministry.

"WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING"

With Christ in the boat the storm became a calm. With Christ on the shore, his counsel filled the net. With his spirit within the inner chamber of the heart each day becomes a triumph.

Courage crowds out care, and glorified common sense directs the duties, trims the tasks, and slows down the hurried pace. Love that empties itself in service dominates all human contacts. Courtesy, kindness, compassion, and sympathy; calm strength which lifts life's load with ease, which takes in its stride its numerous changes these are some of the outer evidences of the inner rest with him who said: "Take my yoke upon you... my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." - Matthew 11:29, 30.

"How much we need that pause, that rest,
That converse with the Unseen Guest."

- *F. A. Shuttleworth, Scot.*

The Question Box

On the back page of each issue of "The Herald," under the caption "To us the Scriptures Clearly Teach," reference is made to the special hope of the Church, which is distinguished from that of the world. Below are presented inspired answers to a number of questions directly bearing on these resurrection hopes, grouped for that purpose by Charles T. Russell, in 1895. - Ed. Com.

Question. Are the promises to the saints of the Gospel Age heavenly or earthly promises?

Answer. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." We are "partakers of the heavenly calling." - 1 Cor. 15:49; 2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 3:1; 6:4; Phil. 3:14; Eph. 2:6, 7; 2 Thess. 1:11, 12; 2 Tim. 1:9, 10.

Question. Will the elect Church, the "overcomers," the "saints," continue to be human beings, "of the earth earthy?"

Answer. "God hath given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might become partakers of the *divine nature*" - "new creatures." - 2 Pet. 1:4; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 8:17, 18.

Question. When will the full *change* (begun in us by a change of heart, called the begetting of the spirit) be completed?-When shall we be made like Christ our Lord?

Answer. "We [saints] shall all be *changed*." ... "The dead [saints] shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be *changed*. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye . . . this mortal shall put on immortality." "Sown a natural [animal] body, it is raised a spiritual body." "Thus is *the* [special] resurrection of *the* [special, elect] dead." - 1 Cor. 15:50-53, 42-44; Phil. 3:10.

Question. Are full recompenses, either rewards or punishments, to be expected before the resurrection?

Answer. "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." - Luke 14:14; Rev. 11:18; Matt. 16:27.

Question. What is the hope held out for all except the elect Church of the Gospel Age?

Answer. "The whole [human] creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God [the saints]." Then shall follow "times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began," in which "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" through the elect "seed" of Abraham. - Rom. 8:22, 19; Acts 3:19, 21; Gal. 3:16, 29.

Question. Are the dead conscious or unconscious?

Answer. "The dead know not anything." - Eccl. 9:5; Psa. 146:4; Isa. 38:18, 19.

Question. Have the departed saints been praising the Lord all along during the past ages?

Answer. "The dead praise not the Lord." - Psa. 115:17; Eccl. 9:6; Psa. 6:5.

Question. Did the prophets receive their reward at death, or was it reserved in God's plan to be given them at the beginning of the Millennium, the Age of judgment?

Answer. "The time of the *dead*, that they should be *judged*, and that thou shouldst GIVE REWARD unto thy servants the PROPHETS," is at the beginning of the sounding of the last trumpet, the seventh trumpet, at the end of the Gospel Age. - Rev. 11:15, 18; Psa. 17:15.

Question Were the apostles promised translation to heaven at death?

Answer. "As I said to the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot come; so now I say TO You [apostles]." - John 13:33.

Question. Should the saints of the Gospel Age, except such as are now living, expect to be crowned at death?

Answer. "When the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." - 1 Pet. 5:4; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 1:4, 5.

Question. Did the Apostles expect glory at death, or at the second coming of Christ?

Answer. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, *then* shall ye also appear with him in glory." - Col. 3:4; 1 John 3:2.

Question. Were the saints to "*shine*" in death?

Answer. "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, ... and they that be wise shall *shine* as the brightness of the firmament [as the sun]." - Dan. 12:2, 3; Matt. 13:40, 43.

Question. Did our Lord promise to receive his saints at death or at his second coming?

Answer. "*I will* come again and receive you unto myself." - John 14:3; Rom. 8:23.

Question. Were the Ancient Worthies rewarded at death?

Answer. "These all died in faith, *not* having received the promise; . . . that they without us should not be made perfect." - Heb. 11:13, 39, 40.

Question. David was one of the holy prophets: Was he rewarded by being taken to heaven?

Answer. "David is not ascended into the heavens." - Acts. 2:34.

Question. How many had gone to heaven up to the time of our Lord's ascension?

Answer. "*No* man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man." - John 3:13.

Question. Can he who created man destroy him? Can the soul be destroyed by its Creator?

Answer. "Fear him who is able to *destroy* both soul and body in Gehenna [the Second Death]." "He spared not their souls from death." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." - Matt. 10:28; Psa. 78:50; Ezek. 18:4, 20; Psa. 22:29; Joshua 10:35; Isa. 38:17; Psa. 56:13; 30:3; 119:175; Matt. 26:38; Isa. 53:10, 12.

Question. How great importance did the Apostle Paul attach to the doctrine of the resurrection?

Answer. "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is not Christ risen. . . . Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are *perished*." - 1 Cor. 15:13-18.

Question. Are the unjust now being tormented in some unknown hell? or do they always meet the *full* penalty of their unrighteousness in the present life?

Answer. "The Lord knoweth how to preserve the unjust unto the day of judgment [the Millennial day] to be punished." - 2 Pet. 2:9; Job 21:30.

Question. What will be the end of those who when tried are found incorrigible, willfully wicked?

Answer. They shall "go away into a cutting off from life," "be punished with everlasting destruction [a destruction which will never be terminated by a resurrection];" for still "The wages of sin is death," "the second death;" and still the gift of God, eternal life, is to be had only in Christ. "He that hath the Son bath life;" he that bath not the Son shall not receive that gift. - Rom. 6:23; Rev. 20:14, 15; Matt. 25:46; 1 John 5:12; 2 Thess. 1:9.

Report of British Pilgrim Trip

The winds and the waves were under complete control on the journey eastward which carried me for my fourth visit to the British Isles; and I therefore arrived much refreshed in body and spirit-the latter because of delightful associates on the ship-one of the smaller and slower ones.

Brothers Quennell and Bodle met me on arrival and took me to the home of the former; and that was truly *my home* for the next three weeks. From it usually two auto loads went daily for one or more meetings. Most of these were at what Americans would call moderate distances, but about as far away as was feasible for a return at a reasonable hour. There were three meetings at which I did not serve-twice hearing Brother Norman Woodworth in addresses to the friends, and once when a local brother gave a public address. Also I merely participated with the rest of the brethren in the Monday evening Bible studies.

From the Warrington district I was taken south to the farm home of the Aliens who both provided for my temporal comfort and supplied transportation to Classes within reach, just as Brother and Sister Quennell had done, and as Brother and Sister Leslie Shephard did later.

There were three conventions, the first at London, two days; the second, Maranatha, a week; and the final one, at Rugby, was a Home Gathering-the English name for one day conventions. The spirit at all of these was very encouraging. It was gratifying also to find nowhere any who were not holding to the two doctrines that Brother Russell so faithfully pointed out to us as the "*foundation*," therefore, the essential doctrines. *Scripture Studies, Vol. VI, page 240.*

The kindnesses of the friends were too numerous to mention. The brethren of our country who have visited Great Britain, including Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, as I did, will know without my telling them how generous the friends there are. But probably none of them had experienced such solicitude as I did, for my age had been noised abroad, and the feeling prevailed that a ride on a bus or train would be too much for me; and that the brother who still is able without undue fatigue to give two discourses a day, should not be called on for more than one. In some cases I learned of this misunderstanding in time to have the privilege of a larger service, but in some instances apparently on this score entirely missed visits to certain Classes. In this as in all things else one can be sure that no blessing was missed that the Lord had planned for us.

The brethren who are receiving that excellent British paper, *The Bible Study Monthly*, will be glad to hear that I found its Editor, Brother Hudson, holding up wonderfully under the strenuous life it requires of him. Also I was privileged to see, and in most instances to visit, the brethren our readers are familiar with either through their writings for "The Herald" or pilgrimages in the States. Time had accomplished some of its unwelcome work on most of them, but they were reasonably well meeting its onslaughts.

Doctrinally and spiritually conditions in those Isles are much the same as over here, sometimes more, sometimes - less stress on various differences of viewpoint; but I can testify to a general possession of the "wisdom from above" that Brother Wilson's *Diaglott* says is "easily persuaded"-if it is a Scriptural teaching of which one wishes to persuade them. As it is among us, some are still listening to the "*imaginings*" Brother Paul was "*casting down.*"

Personally I came away much refreshed, and trust some little of blessing was left with the dear friends of a nation that pioneered in much that prepared the way for the revival of truth in our

midst. The softening influence of the rigors of war is still present. Perhaps the Lord was preparing those brethren for a higher place than we who have suffered so little can hope to attain.

Returning, a capacity load on the Queen Elizabeth, one of the largest of the ocean palaces plowing the waves today, gave less opportunity for profitable contacts, and with a somewhat agitated sea, provided much less refreshment.

The following Scriptures were suggested to accompany the message of love from the Classes whose names precede the texts:

Manchester - Hebrews 13:20, 21: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Phil. 1:9-11: "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." Mal. 3:16, 17: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared, the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

Liverpool - Ruth 2:12: "The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust."

Wallasey - John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Phil. 4:19: "But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Warrington - Deut. 4:7: "For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?" 1 Cor. 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Dewsbury - 1 Cor. 15:58: as in the latter text above.

Pengam - 1 Tim. 1:17: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Llanelly - Num. 6:24-26: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." Psa. 122:1: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

Cardiff - Jude 24, 25: "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." 1 Peter 1:3-7: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last

time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Phil. 1:2-6: "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the Gospel, from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Yeovil - 2 Thess. 1:11: "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power."

Windsor - Jude 24, 25; Phil. 1:6: as quoted above.

Maranatha Conference - Eph. 4:15, 16: "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Psa. 37:3-7: "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass." 2 Thess. 2:16, 17: "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work." 1 Thess. 5:23: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Luton - 1 Peter 1:7: As quoted above.

Peterborough-Lincoln - 1 Peter 1:35: As quoted above.

Nottingham - Heb. 13:20: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Rugby Home Gathering - John 16: 27: "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God."

May the blessing of the Lord be with our dear brethren as they continue their journey to the Heavenly City. What a joy it will be to meet each other face to face in the presence of the Lord!

"Now the God of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all."

- *Paul E. Thomson*

Recently Deceased

Bro. Wm. Bollen, Vancouver, B.C. - (Nov.)
Bro. Wm. Cawthron, Montreal, Que. - (Oct.)
Bro. Dymura, Holyoke, Mass. - (Oct.)
Bro. Larry J. Galecki, Milwaukee, Wis. - (Oct.)
Sr. Clara H. Jordan, Pittsburgh, Pa. - (Oct.)
Bro. Geo. Matthews, Vancouver, B.C. - (Nov.)
Bro. J. K. Morgan, Hayes, La. - (Oct.)
Sr. Alice Osolypski, Chicopee, Mass. - (Oct.)
Sr. M. A. Thomson, San Francisco, Cal. - (Nov.)