

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. XLIII May, 1960 No. 5

The Prophet Who Disobeyed

"He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." - 1 John 2:17.

THOUGH our subject would seem to refer to Jonah, it is not of the son of Amittai that we write. Instead, it is of one who remains nameless to this day -- one whose tragic fate illustrates the terrible exactness of obedience demanded by Divine commands. Let us ponder well the moral of this strange story, for we also have to do with Him "with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," and who has said, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." - James 1:17; Hebrews 10:38.

It all happened twenty-eight centuries ago as recorded in 1 Kings 13. On this memorable day, Jeroboam, king of the ten tribes recently separated from the house of David, was present in Bethel, the southern border town of his new domain. With him were gathered the chiefs of the families and the elders of the tribes. It was an important occasion, for Jeroboam was about to inaugurate a new national worship. If by that day's *successful* ceremonial he could engraft the new ritual upon the religious feelings of the people, his throne would be safe for himself and his dynasty. Thus, so soon after attaining to the throne, had he set himself to keep it by his own subtlety, in utter disregard for the injunctions of the God of Israel. Forgotten now were the words of Ahijah the Shilonite who, when Jeroboam was still but Solomon's servant, had met him with the startling message that God would rend from the house of David in the days of the king's son, ten of the twelve tribes and give them as a kingdom to him. What a clear reading of all his secret thoughts had been the words "Thou shalt reign according to *all thy soul desireth*, and shalt be king over Israel." - 1 Kings 11:37.

Long had he conspired and long had he dreamed. Now here was unexpected higher sanction for his dark ambition. Into what a flame must such an announcement have stirred up his spirit. Perhaps its very turbulence dimmed the warning in the prophet's succeeding words: -- "It shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that which is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, that I will

be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel unto thee." - 1 Kings 11:38.

Once ascended to the throne, the heart of the successful conspirator had darkened with fear that if God's altar at Jerusalem continued to be the focus of national worship, and the yearly gathering place for the great feasts by all the males of his kingdom, the throne of Judah would supplant their unnatural affections for the throne of Samaria. He brooded: "Then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their Lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again unto Rehoboam" (1 Kings 12:27). He resolved upon a remedy learned in his Egyptian sojourn, while a fugitive from the suspicious Solomon. The great impersonal Deity could, he reasoned, be worshiped acceptably not at one altar alone, or only under one form. Discerning the sensuous tendency of his people, he boldly resolved to reproduce among them the sacred emblems of the invisible God which he had seen so deeply revered in Egypt, and he therefore set up at Dan and at Bethel, two golden calves. Tenderness for his people's need was the great motive he assigned for this spiritual revolution: "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (1 Kings 12:28). He further made a house of High places, multiplied beyond precedent the crowd of sacrificing priests from amongst the basest people, and then appointed two great festival days to rival those which were kept in the old capital.

On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, "the day which he had devised out of his own heart," all the magnificent ritual of the new temple was complete, and the great national worship was to be commenced. The King had come down from his distant capital to attend the festival and to take part with his own royal hand in the service -to offer upon the altar and to burn incense. This was no doubt to add to the magnificent impressiveness of the scene, and to remove from his people's minds any lingering recollections of the great Solomon's dedication festival of the temple on Mount Moriah.

What a scene must have been presented on this momentous occasion! The king arrayed in all his finery; the band of servile courtiers eager to show their approval; the new priesthood fiercely zealous in the assertion of their spiritual preeminence; and in the background the assenting crowd, pleased with their monarch's care, and rejoicing in the promise of an external worship which met the longings of their carnal hearts.

THE UNBIDDEN PRESENCE

Was there no voice to protest this dishonoring of their fathers' jealous God-none to recall the holy associations which hung around Bethel and made it so preeminently a hallowed spot? Here 'and there, perhaps, a saddened countenance spoke of the inward struggle of conflicting emotions, but none dared to oppose that fierce and strong-willed monarch.

None? Hold -- for even as the king raises his arm to burn incense on the altar, an unbidden presence presumptuously intrudes itself within the inmost circle of attendants! His garb, still dust laden from his hasty and long journey, bespeaks him a prophet of Judah. The dark heart of the anxious king must have throbbed as this unlooked-for figure broke upon its consciousness. Thus suddenly, long ago, had such a one stood beside him as he walked the highway of Jerusalem, had taken up the thread of his inmost thoughts, and forecast for him the strange future of his life. With what message had this stranger come today -for good or for evil; to bless or to curse? Let his message be what it might, would he be so angry as to dare the monarch to his face? The eyes of the two men met, and we almost sense the deep hush which must have spread itself as a silence of

hearts over the multitude around. Who was the stranger; why had he come; what was he about to do? The moment was charged with expectancy!

There was no sign of fear upon the Prophet's brow. Slowly, deliberately, and as one speaking in the ears of all - a sentence terrible to hear-the denunciation was spoken. To the king, as though he were unworthy to receive it, no word was uttered. To the altar alone he addressed his words: "O altar, upon thee shall a prince of the house of Judah offer the priests of the high places which burn incense upon thee. This is the sign which the Lord hath spoken: Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out."

The stunning message! How crushing to the usurper's scheme at the very moment of its perfecting! Here, a prince of the enemy house of Judah to stand and burn the bodies of the priests of his new institution, to the power of whom he looked as the prolongers of the majesty of his royal race! Here, on the very altar whereon he would consecrate his line, here should be the uttermost abomination of Hinnom, even the burning of the bones of the dead!

The king's fury rose in his face and his wrath broke forth sharp and sudden: "Lay hold on him!"

It was the action of a moment; but even as it was wrought, it was avenged. His hand which he had put forth against God's messenger withered instantly; while the altar of incense -that too quivered beneath the word of power, so that it rent asunder and the ashes on it were poured forth. The strong man of the earth had dared lift himself against the Power above, and it had shivered him to powder.

The trembling king directs a plea for mercy to the calm serene Prophet still standing beside the altar. The prayer of God's servant restores the hand, and it becomes as it was before. Humbled by the judgment, the monarch importunes him to share his hospitality and to receive of his bounty, but "the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place; for so was it charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that, thou camest." He turns away, the awe-stricken beholders part before him, and the dramatic scene ends.

How our admiration and respect go out to this nameless prophet, so fearless, so courageous, so zealous for the Lord! What calmness and fortitude; what a magnificent triumph-spurning reward as he had ignored threatening. Loyal in his obedience, even in the face of death, his Lord had stood by him and delivered him. What a noble example of fidelity to all who would serve the Lord. We are drawn to him in the bonds of fellowship, recognizing in him a kindred spirit. If only our story could end on this scene! But alas, there is a sequel to be told, and the mere reading of the account leaves one's heart heavy.

NE'ER THINK THE VICTORY WON

We know not the Prophet's thoughts as he left the evil town. Were they all thankfulness and gratitude for Divine deliverance? Or was there that sinking of the spirit, that reaction which sometimes follows a victorious struggle? Was there a feeling of human triumph? Conflicting emotions were probably struggling within him, struggling dangerously, and could he but have read them aright, they would have foreboded to him the sadness of the future. Into the bright web of his noble daring and high-souled triumph were being woven in colors of blood, lessons of self-distrust, of the need of continual watchfulness and of the need of perseverance.

We trace his subsequent course. Having left the city, instead of pressing forward at any cost from the idol's home, he sits down beneath a wayside tree; the first dangerous sign of yielding to temptation. The great burden which had been laid upon his soul having been lifted, his wearied body and spirit seek rest. And what is wrong in that? Ah -- but for that rest he might have triumphed to the end. But for that lingering by the way, the tempter, the old prophet of Bethel, might not have overtaken him and plied him with the falsehood which led to his tragic downfall.

What strange characters are found in this story! This old prophet had once been visited by the visions of the Most High, but something within had arisen to dull the receptive ear and dumb the prophetic voice. Further compliance with evil was manifested by his refraining from protesting, and his continuing to reside in Bethel, now that it had become the House of Idols instead of the House of God. It is not difficult to trace the inducement which led to the utterance of that lie. Painfully conscious of the fading away of his prophetic power, what might it not effect in raising his reputation among his townsmen if the nameless prophet whose fame was ringing in the town, should be known to have been his guest. This condescension by a brother in the great company of prophets would still his own uneasy conscience and restore his waned influence. So his scheme was laid and he set out to overtake his victim and bring him back. That halt under the wayside oak enabled him to fulfill his purpose. Feigning, as such men learn to feign, what once had been real to him, and utterly careless of the sin and shame and ruin that might result, he appeals with strong entreaty to the young prophet's lower nature. The man of God is weary and faint, the midday sun hot and scorching, Judea is distant, and present rest and refreshment are needful. And furthermore, the Lord has reversed his command!

In the unguardedness of spirit which is so often bred of recent success, and with something of the dangerous triumph of a great temptation mastered, and therefore of the right to some self-allowance earned, the young prophet falters and falls. He who had received his command direct from God, suffered it to be overborne by the word of a man. Returning, he ate of the forbidden bread and drank of the forbidden water. How often thus have "old" prophets counseling ease, destroyed the self-denying zeal of "younger" spirits. And how doubly strange that such are sometimes used of God to speak forth his wrath. For the voice of condemnation awakes the dormant power, the old prophet speaks, and the sentencer is sentenced, and the judge is judged.

Once again the man of God sets out. Perhaps the voice of judgment had awakened his slumbering conscience. His re-departure from Bethel bespoke an awakened faithfulness. Bowed, humbled, penitent, ashamed, he tracked the new path appointed for him. He was in God's hands -- let him do as seemeth him good. The path leads by the mouth of a woody defile. From it comes a terrible roar, followed by the whirlwind spring of the avenger of disobedience. Stamping unmistakably the character of judgment upon the whole act, the lion spares the ass, his natural prey, and as though witnessing against the man of Judah, crouches beside his lifeless form, to the amazement and fear of all who pass by.

MY SOUL, BE ON THY GUARD

We turn sadly from the further details in the holy record to consider the lesson of this strange experience. But first and above all, let us take heed lest in our finite judgment we mistakenly react to this incident as did David in the death of Uzzah. (See 2 Samuel 6:6-8.) The lesson of the nameless prophet teaches the glory and risk of being the servant of the Lord. How terrible the risk of even the slightest deviation from his expressed commands! Think of Moses, of Balaam, of Saul -- one misstep and its inevitable consequence. Moses lost his heart's desire, Balaam his life, Saul his kingdom. Their previous faithfulness availed not to stem the judgment. "The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression. . . . Neither

shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth. ... If he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it" (Ezek. 33:12, 13). Here we have plainly shown the Divine immutability.

But if God be a strict exactor of obedience and swift to punish, he is also wonderfully bountiful in his reward for faithfulness. There is goodness as well as severity in his dealings. Behold, for his perfect obedience, the exaltation of our Master who, "being found in fashion as a man, emptied himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:8-11). The way of the cross was hard and the cup overflowed but "the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Therefore he "endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2). We rejoice in his wonderful obedience, and with all God's holy ones proclaim, "Worthy is the Lamb."

Brethren, how stands the matter with us; we who have made a "covenant by sacrifice" to do his will who has said: "I am Jehovah, I change not"? Are we always mindful of the wise man's admonition: "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God... Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. . . . When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay" (Eccl. 5:1-5). "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Having put our hands to the plow, shall we turn back? Herein lies our test -- the test of complete obedience to the Divine will. Thus only can we "*keep* ourselves in the love of God." And though the way be hard and our infirmities many, he has graciously made all provision through the precious merit in Christ. We have his promise: "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness." Paul assures us: "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." And again: "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Therefore heed well the lessons of this sad story in 1 Kings 13. The broken life, the dishonored end, the strange sepulcher, the place among the catalogue of heroes, but the hero's name withheld, the escutcheon taken down, and the banner removed--all speak alike the undying lesson of not fainting in the battle, of not coming short in the trial; all echo the mingled threat and promise of the grand apocalyptic words, "Be thou faithful *unto death*, and I will give thee the crown of life!"

- *W. J. Siekman*

Wise Counsel from a Faithful Pastor

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage," - Gal. 5:1.

FROM time to time the question is raised: Would it not be possible to formulate a list of elementary, fundamental truths, the acceptance of which would be all that was necessary to enable followers of the Master to attain and enjoy Christian liberty, unity, and fellowship? To such a question I reply:

It surely is possible. As a matter of fact it has been done for us. The list was compiled many years ago, and consists of seven foundation truths of our "most holy faith." A wise and faithful Pastor furnished this list, and did so, I am persuaded, under the guidance of the holy spirit of God. These seven vital truths are grouped together by none other than the great Apostle to the Gentiles himself, in Ephesians 4:2-6, as follows:

"One body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Here the Apostle mentions:

1. The Author of unity-"One God and Father."
2. The Center of unity-"There is one Lord."
3. The Door of unity-"There is one baptism."
4. The Kinship of unity-"There is one body."
5. The Nature of unity-"There is one spirit."
6. The Goal of unity-"There is one hope of your calling."
7. The Creed of unity-"There is one faith."

WHAT IS THE "ONE FAITH"?

What is the "one faith" mentioned as item 7 in the list? Ah! it is here, very often, that our wily adversary is successful in ensnaring those not on the alert. All the more important that we should be, as was the case with Jesus, of "quick understanding" in the reverence of Jehovah; that we should be fully informed as to just what the faith is, quick to detect the counterfeit from the true. What, then, is the "one faith"? Let a wise and faithful Pastor, who labored long and earnestly in our own times, make reply. I quote:

"The one faith, which all should hold, was a very simple one; one so simple that all, the learned and the unlearned alike, could grasp it and comprehend it, and be *fully persuaded* in their own minds' concerning it. It was not a dose of incongruous mysteries, inconsistent with themselves and inharmonious with reason as well as with the Bible, to be swallowed by the ignorant with credulity, and by the learned with hypocritical mental reservations. But it was so simple, so clear, so reasonable, that *any* and every honest follower of Christ could be *fully persuaded in his own mind* regarding its truth. What is this *one* faith? The basis of it is stated by Paul, thus: 'I delivered unto you *first* of all, that which I also received [first of all as a foundation truth or doctrine, upon and in harmony with which all other doctrines must be built), how that *Christ died for our sins*, according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.' (1 Cor. 15:3, 4.) 'There is *one God* and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.'-1 Tim. 2:5, 6.

"This, in a word, confesses sin and utter helplessness; it acknowledges God's loving plan for our redemption; it owns that our Lord's death was our ransom price; and that forgiveness (justification),

and reconciliation to God, and the restitution of believers, come as a result of *faith* in this Redeemer, when in due time that plan is made known to each and all.

"These brief statements contain the whole Gospel, in the same sense that an acorn contains an oak tree. Without this Gospel kernel, the true Gospel can never be possessed; hence *this must be insisted* on as a test of Christian fellowship. This must be received, else the Gospel is not received. When it is received, the Gospel is received....

A PERFECT BASIS OF UNION

"This true Gospel, this simple faith, easily understood and confessed by the weakest babe in Christ, must also be, and always, and equally the faith of the most developed sons of God. *This* one faith (and not the endless ramifications and details of faith which lead out from it) Paul placed as a standard or test of all claiming the name Christian. All the consecrated who agreed on this one standard, or foundation truth, Paul counted as in and of the one Church. While each member was to grow in, grace, knowledge, and love, there would always be harmony and oneness in the faith and fellowship of the Church, if all growth were kept in line and harmony with this foundation truth.

"Here was a perfect basis of union, which allowed for all the various stages of individual *development in the truth*, and which most effectually guarded against errors. For if this simple creed were today made the standard by which all doctrines should be tested, it would speedily lead to the discarding of every error, and to the true union of the Church in the 'one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.'

"The endeavor to compel all men to think alike on all subjects, culminated in the great apostasy and the development of the great Papal system; and thereby the 'gospel,' the 'one faith,' which Paul and the other Apostles set forth, was lost -- buried under the mass of uninspired decrees of popes and councils. The *union* of the early Church, based upon the simple Gospel and *bound only by love*, gave place to the bondage of the Church of Rome -- a slavery of God's children, from the degradation of which multitudes are still weak and suffering.

THE TRUE BIBLE STUDENT'S PLACE

"The Reformation movement of the sixteenth century came as an effort to regain liberty of conscience; but, deluded by the idea of an *elaborate creed*, insisted upon for so many centuries, the reformers and their followers formed other systems of bondage very similar to that of Papacy, though slight modifications gave liberty to fuller ideas on some subjects. And so it has been ever since: each new reform movement has made the failure of attempting to make a creed just large enough for its prime movers."
- *Reprints* R1572.

One very subtle device of these latter days is to *profess* that a large measure of liberty may properly enough be enjoyed by those members of an ecclesia who are not elders but that such liberty must be denied those members who are elders. This leaven has permeated many Classes of Bible Students in recent years. For this reason we reprint again a paragraph from the "Wise Counsel" of February. Therein it will be noted that not only the place of the true Bible Student, but that of the true *teacher* is clearly indicated:

"The true teacher's place, and the true Bible student's place, is outside of all human bondage, free to examine and feed upon a portions of the good Word of God, and untrammelled to follow the Lamb whithersoever he leads." - S.S. Vol. III, p. C145.

- *P. L. Read.*

Notes on Chronology

IN A. recent *Herald** an article was published, captioned "*The Last Warning Bell.*" This article included an extract from *The Approaching End of the Age*, by H. G. Guinness, dealing with the period of 400 years of affliction and bondage which God had predicted to Abram would befall his seed. (Gen. 15:13; Acts 7:6.) Therein it was noted that, for this 400-year period "there was a wide choice of possible commencing epochs, and that [before it came to an end] it was easy to select a wrong one." After noting that the event proved that the real starting point was from the time when Isaac was five years old, Guinness added: "To this day it is a matter of conjecture what the event was which marked that year, though there is little doubt that it was the casting out of the bondwoman and her son, on the occasion of the mocking of the heir of promise by the natural seed."

* August-September, 1959, page 119.

Most scholars accept this conclusion, although some question it on the grounds that the mocking of Isaac by Ishmael, took place when Isaac was weaned (Gen. 21:8-10), and that this must have occurred long before he was five. However, another writer, James Neil,** after making favorable reference to *The Approaching End of the Age*, offers an enlightening comment on this point. In his work, *Palestine Explored*, he says: "These statements [by Guinness] are no doubt correct, but they contain what at first sight appears to the Western reader a grave difficulty. The mocking of the promised seed took place at the feast when Isaac was weaned. That he should have been five years old on the day that he was weaned seems unaccountable to us, but constitutes no difficulty whatever in Palestine. It is in perfect keeping with the practice of the East at the present day. Under the circumstances of his being a remarkable, long waited-for, and only child, it is rather to have been expected than otherwise, that Sarah's son should have reached his fourth or fifth year before he was entirely taken from the breast. Infants are seldom, if ever, weaned amongst the *fellahheen*, or villagers, under two years of age.

** James Neil was an Anglican minister who enjoyed an official residence at Jerusalem, as Chaplain to the Bishop for three years, May 1871-May 1874. He wrote extensively on the land, language, customs, and manners of Palestine.

"These facts are really important as rendering intelligible the early history of little Samuel. Her child was granted to Hannah at a time when she was hopelessly barren, in answer to special prayer, and she had dedicated him before his birth to the Lord by a solemn vow, in which she declared she would 'give him unto Jehovah all the days of his life.' When he was born Hannah determined that it would be lawful for her to keep him until he was weaned, and doubtless, like all the women of Palestine at the present day, believed that the longer she could nurse him the stronger and better he would become. She, therefore, proposed to stay at home, and not accompany her husband on his yearly pilgrimage to Shiloh until the child was taken from the breast, and 'then,' she said, 'I will bring him that he may appear before Jehovah, and abide there for ever.' This decision thoroughly approved itself to her affectionate husband. Elkanah said to her: 'Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only Jehovah establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him.' (1 Sam. 1:21-23.) How many yearly festivals passed by before that event we are not told; but, from what has been said above, we cannot doubt that according to every usage and feeling of the East at the present day, little Samuel was not weaned until he was from three to five years of age, and therefore quite old

enough to be left by himself with the aged high priest, and to enter at once upon some childish service in the sanctuary. Doubtless when the infant Moses was so providentially restored to his mother she kept him at the breast much as Hannah kept Samuel, if only that she might have her child under her own care as long as possible.

"Everything, too, in the account in Genesis of the circumstances of Isaac's weaning would seem to point to this remarkable child of promise as also having been nursed by his mother for several years. - Gen. 21:8-10.

"A similar explanation is necessary if we are to attach any distinct or literal meaning to the words of Isaiah --

'Whom doth he teach knowledge?
And whom doth he make to understand instruction?
Those weaned from the milk,
Those withdrawn from the breasts.'
- Isaiah 28:9.

"Children as soon as they are weaned amongst us could not "understand instruction," but in Palestine weaning takes place at an age when they can begin to be taught knowledge. Almost all Eastern boys can both speak and understand what is spoken to them when first 'withdrawn from the breasts.' It is indeed a tender age at which to begin, but one that no wise parent will allow to pass by unimproved.

"Again, our blessed Lord's quotation, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise,' - Matthew 21:16, quoted from Psalm 8:2, Septuagint Version, viewed thus, becomes capable of a literal sense.

"If we consider a comparison used by the Psalmist in this light, we shall see in it a new power and beauty. The words to which I allude, attributed in the heading of the Psalm to David, are those in which he declares:

'I have calmed and quieted my soul,
Like a child that is weaned by his mother,
My soul within me is even as a weaned child.'
- Psalm 131:2.

"The man after God's own heart is speaking of his conscious humility. He has but just before declared that his heart: is not haughty, neither has he exercised himself in great matters. In contrast to such proud bearing, his spirit, he tells us, is meek and gentle, like that of a young child of three years of age. To us the idea of a weaned child conveys only the thought of helpless and unintelligent infancy, and would, therefore, have no force in this connection. But, viewed in the above light David's words are full of significant meaning."

- P. L. Read.

Fervent in Spirit, Serving the Lord

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." - Phil. 1:27.

IT WILL help in the appreciation of these words of solicitude, if we first refresh our memory of Paul's interest in and love for the Philippian Ecclesia. The providential founding of that Church is recorded in Acts 16; but it was more than local -- it was in fact the beginning of the Gospel message and work in Europe. The Apostle had usually toured in his evangelistic work as he felt called upon, or as agreed among the apostles, but now there was to be a change. (The relevant verses, [Acts 16:6-16], should be read; and in fact, the whole Book of Acts is encouraging reading for every Christian.) We read that he purposed to preach the Word in Asia (Asia Minor to us), but the Spirit forbade it; then he assayed to go into Bithynia, but again the Spirit suffered them not.

A CALL FROM MACEDONIA

How the Spirit hindered his projected mission is not recorded, but Paul was not dismayed by this prevention. Moving on without hindrance he came to the seaport of Troas, very near to Europe. He may have wondered why he was not able to preach in Asia and serve the Lord there, but at Troas he had vivid answer to his thoughts and prayers. A vision appeared to Paul in the night, of a man of Macedonia praying him to come over into Macedonia to help them. That was enough for Paul. Visions to him meant a door of service being opened. He had had a vision the Damascus road from which arose his commission as an Apostle and bearer of the Gospel to the Gentiles. He was given one in Corinth (Acts 18:9-11), where the Lord said to him, "I have much people in this city." Upon having the Macedonian vision he endeavored immediately to go, and straightway took ship, and then went inland to the chief city of Philippi. Here was the first Gospel work in Europe. He was then right away from Asia and Judea, the home of the Gospel, and being the Apostle of the Gentiles, he might well have wondered, yet would not be fearful, as to what awaited him in that new field of service.

WHERE PRAYER WAS WONT TO BE MADE

It was Paul's custom on arrival in any city to visit the synagogue of his Jewish brethren, and to reason with them out of their Scriptures. (Acts 17:2.) Strange to say there *is* no record of a synagogue at Philippi. If that was so, he would be forcibly reminded that he was in Gentile land and that his special mission to Gentiles had begun in earnest. No doubt each of us on arrival in some strange city would seek fellowship with those of like faith, and failing that, to join with our countrymen, perchance to hear of some gathering "where prayer was wont to be made," and where we would find an ear for the truth. And if, after a few days, we heard of such a meeting down by the riverside, our feet would soon take us there. This is just what Paul did, and it was the women there that Paul spoke to with joy. Could it have been that no men had arranged a service of worship and that the believing women had made their own service arrangements? Had there been a synagogue, the men would have been in charge. Whatever the answer be to the question, it must be noted that women first responded to the message of truth in Europe, and the woman specially referred to in the narrative was Lydia of Thyatira. But Thyatira was in Asia, the very region where Paul had recently served the faith. Perhaps she had heard of Paul's work there; perhaps she had told the women at the riverside; perhaps it was due to them and in answer to their

prayers that the vision was given to Paul "to come over and help us." No doubt the Apostle was gratified by this response to the message, and in that response was the answer why he had been hindered from going into Asia to preach.

That was the commencement of Paul's European service and from that small riverside prayer meeting grew the Church which Paul loved so much. And so, when writing later to them, he would affectionately speak of the fellowship in the Gospel he had had with them "from the *first* day until now" -- the first day he came to the riverside. (Phil. 1:5.) Later in the epistle his regard and love for them prompts him to refer to them as "my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown." (Phil. 4:1.) Paul proceeded from Philippi to other Grecian cities, and then sailed for Ephesus on his way back to Jerusalem where he was arrested and, after tedious waiting, sent to Rome for trial. In Rome at last, with his liberty somewhat restricted, but dwelling in his own hired house (Acts 28:30), what more likely than that he would recall his brethren in other lands and decide to write them, exhort them, and hope to hear in return of their steadfastness. And to encourage them, he told them how he himself had fared in the faith and how he still served; his example adding point to his exhortation when, in our text, he urged them to stand and serve. Though hindered from traveling to other cities and lands as previously, he found willing ears right in Caesar's Praetorium.* -- Phil. 1:12, 13.

* i.e. the barrack of Caesar's guards.

The following verses speak of his bonds and tell of his life devoted to the Gospel even to the point of death, which he does not fear. Yet while he personally longs for the return of Christ and the consummation of the Church's hope, he knows that to abide in the flesh and continue in service is needful for the Philippian and other ecclesias, though he could not be sure that he would ever see them again in the flesh. Phil. 1:25-26 express the hope that he would see them again, and some say that upon acquittal in his first trial he revisited this and other churches. But whether he sees them or not, he hopes to hear two things of them. And now we have come to the words in our opening text. Paul hoped to hear that they "stand fast" and that they "strive together for the faith." What better news could he hear of them while under "open arrest" in Rome? If he hears this he will know that all is well with the Church he founded and loves so much, and what a stimulant for himself! Then he would know once again that the vision regarding Macedonia was a commission from heaven, and he himself will be confirmed in the faith. (He was just the same with the Thessalonian Church. Read what he wrote to them from Athens - 1 Thess. 3:8.)

Bringing these thoughts up-to-date and applying them to ourselves: If by the misfortune of war, we in the British Isles were to lose contact with brethren overseas, we should, when at last peace was declared, hope to hear the same two things of them, that they "stand" and that they "strive." And if it happened that those overseas, had first heard the words of truth through our ministry, we should the more be concerned with their welfare.

LET YOUR CONVERSATION BE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL

Phil. 1:27 urges that our conversation be worthy of the Gospel of Christ. Other versions remind us that the word rendered "conversation" is better thought of as "citizenship," yet we need not fly to the correct translation of the Greek as though the A.V. had no useful instruction for us. The translators again render "*politeuma*" as "conversation" in Phil. 3:20; hence we must conclude that they had some good purpose in so doing. By one's speech we learn what country or district a man hails from, and by his conversation we know what his interests are. Conversation includes fellowship and discussion; and probably the translators are using the word in this good sense.

(And we may be sure that if men hear us converse on scriptural themes, at least they will judge that we belong to no earthly country.) And so it is but a short step from conversation to citizenship. Further, when in the Apostle Peter's writings we read "conversation" the thought behind the word is "behavior" -- another trait of character which reveals citizenship. Our citizenship is in heaven; our conversation reveals this; and our behavior agrees with this also. Our citizenship is in heaven, because we are "risen with Christ and seek those things which are above" (Col: 3:1-3) and having found them, "set our affections" on them, for "where our treasure is there will our heart be also."

Citizenship carries privileges which we may humbly claim. The Apostle Paul himself furnishes us a good example of this during his last visit to Jerusalem. Asian Jews stirred up the people, saying that Paul had polluted the temple, and the Captain of the guard intervened to stop the Jews who were beating Paul, and he took him under guard to the castle. Upon Paul asking permission to speak, the Captain replied, "Canst thou speak Greek? Art thou not that Egyptian, etc....?" Paul replied that he was a Jew of Tarsus, a citizen of no mean city; and receiving permission to speak to the people, he spoke in the Hebrew tongue. This temporarily silenced the mob (Acts 22:2) and Paul gave a spirited defense of life and Christian mission until the uproar began again. Then the Chief Captain ordered Paul to be examined by scourging, whereupon Paul immediately claimed that he was a Roman. On learning this, the Captain feared to hurt him, and loosed him from his bonds commanding the council to give Paul a hearing. Thus did Paul use his Hebrew speech, his Tarsus citizenship, and also his Roman, to obtain freedom to defend himself.

Paul began his defense before the council by *saying*, "I have *lived* in all good conscience before God until this day." The word translated "lived" is the same as that in Phil. 1:27 rendered "conversation." Citizenship, behavior, and living are all in this word "conversation." Who better than Paul could write on this subject?

But citizenship carries responsibilities as well as privileges -- the responsibility to uphold the dignity of the country we claim. If the citizen of another country living among us claims special privileges and dignity, we may find that he is also an ambassador to us. He represents the king and country from which he came, and if ever questioned on his actions would claim his rights and the protection of his own country. Another visiting citizen claiming special rights while among us might be the king's son. Surely we may claim all of these; so that we may read in Phil: 1:27 conversation, behavior, citizenship, ambassadorship, or sonship without destroying the sense of the verse.

STAND FAST IN ONE SPIRIT

The Apostle hopes to hear of the Philippian brethren (whether present or absent) that their conversation becometh the Gospel, and that they stand fast in one spirit, striving together for the faith of the Gospel. These two injunctions to stand and to strive appear at first sight to be the reverse of each other, for one speaks of holding on while the other tells of activity. One assumes work done; the other, work still to be done. The first belongs to the internal life of the Church, the latter to the Church's outside activities. The first assumes the Philippian Ecclesia to be convinced and confident, the other, that they defend what they believe. These two phases of Christian life assist each other, for he who stands fast is well suited to defend the faith, and he who defends the faith will increase his own steadfastness.

The first injunction is that they and we stand fast in one spirit. There are other exhortations in Paul's writings to stand faststand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free"; "stand

fast and hold the traditions ye have been taught"; "stand fast in the Lord"; and that one which above all others exhorts us "having done all, to stand."

In what spirit should we stand fast? When used by man, the word spirit may mean intellect, disposition, or courage, but these do not seem to be included in this advice. The Greek word here (*pneuma*) has many shades of meaning, but always has some connection with its root meaning, "breath" -- that is, the breath of life. James, speaking about another matter, voiced the accepted truth that the body without the spirit is dead. The spirit, the breath, is the universally acknowledged sign of life, and as the breath is the sign of life in the human body, so is the holy spirit the sign of life in the body of Christ, for by one spirit are we all baptized into one body. Further, the holy spirit is that gift from God which distinguishes the Church from other human beings, making them in fact New Creatures with heavenly hopes. Again the holy spirit makes us, and is personal proof to us, that we are sons of God. So we may read Paul's words as "stand fast in the holy spirit which has made us New Creatures and Sons of God."

STRIVE TOGETHER FOR THE FAITH

The second injunction is that they should be "with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel," just as Paul himself was doing at that very time. This word "mind" like "spirit" is used by men to include thoughts of intellect, disposition, and courage. But again, are these ideas the ones Paul would intend to convey in this verse? Here the Greek word is "*psuche*" (thus we have the two Greek words associated with life "*pneuma*" and "*psuche*," in one verse) and is used of active life, whereas "*pneuma*" is used of the life *within*. "*Psuche*" is used here as though we are alive, active, with one soul, one being, one corporate body standing shoulder to shoulder defending the faith. This "*psuche*" life is that which others will see by our striving; the "*pneuma*" life is that internal and eternal life which proves to ourselves how and where we stand.

And so, Paul's words summarized seem to mean -- let your citizenship be worthy of the Gospel of Christ, so that you are firm in your sonship and active is your service. Once again we have the thoughts coupled elsewhere in Scripture that we are sons and yet servants. We serve because we are sons. The advice in Phil: 1:27 is repeated in Phil. 2:15, 16, "That ye may be blameless and harmless [good citizens, in fact], sons of God, not meriting rebuke, in the midst of a crooked nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life" (in other words striving for the faith of the Gospel). When Paul heard of the Philippian steadfastness in these respects, he would know that he had not labored in vain there, and the Macedonian vision would again be confirmed; and he again would say "*We* live if *ye* stand fast in the Lord." - 1 Thess. 3:8.

- B. J. Drinkwater, Eng.

Israel Today

"And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." - Isaiah 11:12.

Dunedin, New Zealand,
March 28, 1960

Here we are away down on the South Island of this country, about as near to Antarctica as we may ever get. We are poised for the last public presentation of our illustrated lecture on Israel in New Zealand, which will be given next Thursday at the well known Burns Hall of Dunedin, one of this country's largest cities.

In winding up our New Zealand lecture campaign the tally shows that we have already reached approximately 2,500 people through the public meetings that have been arranged, the most successful one having been in Wellington, the capital city, where at the Dominion Museum Lecture Hall 350 people occupied every seat in the house, with a few standing. At this Dominion Museum hall we had the use of professional projection equipment, and the over-all results were most gratifying. For every dollar spent in advertising, eight people were attracted to the lecture.

Last Thursday, March 24, in Christchurch, another principal city of New Zealand, we had the use of the new Canterbury Museum Lecture Theatre, and when 8:00 P.M. rolled around, the auditorium was packed with 268 persons, the doors were shut by the custodian, and 70 people had to be turned away because the municipality fire ordinance prohibits standing in the aisles. This overflow assembly was achieved by a mere Forty-five Dollars worth of advertising.

Several radio interviews and numerous newspaper write-ups have supplemented our efforts in spreading the message of Israel's redemption and its significance. God willing, on April 6th we fly to Australia, where we will carry on another witness program. On the Easter week-end we expect to attend a Bible Student Convention in Adelaide, South Australia.

THE MAN OF THE HOUR

Israel's Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, has won the admiration of not only his own people, but of statesmen and thinkers the world over. It should be of deep interest to herein quote the most significant excerpts from an address that he delivered very recently on the occasion of the conferring upon him of the Doctor of Laws degree at Brandeis University in Waltham, Mass. His words pretty well reveal his thinking and to what extent he has been imbued with the vision of the Hebrew prophets and the divine revelation. In part, here is what he said:

"... I am one of those who believe whole-heartedly in the prophecy of Isaiah:

"I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and have taken hold of thy hand, and kept thee, and set thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the nations.' - Isa. 42:6.

"That is not the only prophecy of his in which I believe. Isaiah said:

"I will bring thy seed from the East, and gather thee from the West: I will say to the North: Give up, and to the South: Keep not back, bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the end of the earth.' - Isa. 43:5, 6.

"And he also said:

"And it shall come to pass in the end of days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say: Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.' - Isa. 2:2-4.

"One of these prophecies has already begun to be realized in our day, and in the first decade of the resuscitation of the Jewish State in our ancient homeland we have brought in about a million Jews from over a hundred countries, from East and West, from the North and the South. And the vision of general disarmament has also been placed on the agenda of the United Nations Assembly in our day.

"... The renaissance of Israel in our days has not been merely political and material in character. Israel cannot endure without strength and power, but we still hold fast to the faith that has accompanied our people for thousands of years, faith in the supremacy of the spirit. Not the spirit opposed to matter and divorced from it-the duality of matter and spirit was foreign to the Jewish outlook in Biblical times, as it is foreign to science in the present. We believed and still believe in the supremacy of the spirit that pervades matter and rules it. On this faith is founded the historic mission and destiny of the State of Israel.

"And the supremacy of the spirit implies not only the supremacy of science and intelligence, but also that of morality, of which the authentic and practical expression in our lives is 'halutzit,' the quality of pioneering and personal dedication to man's mission in life. We have undertaken to do in our country something without parallel in history. We are receiving the fragments of a people scattered throughout the world, to rebuild the ruins of a small and--poor- country surrounded by enemies, and to establish a model society constructed upon a basis of liberty, equality, cooperation and love of our fellow-men.

"The great Book, or, more correctly, the collection of great Books, that has given us the prerogative to be known, in honor, as 'the People of the Book,' was created at a time when our people lived on its own soil and was sovereign in its own right. Though it was a small and poor people, small in numbers and poor in military strength and in extent of territory, yet from that day to this it fell in no wise behind any nation in its creativity and it gave to itself and the world books of highest spiritual values, of majestic and enduring expression of poetry and thought, of morality and religion.

"When we went into exile, we continued to live, in our hearts and our minds, within the bounds of this Biblical heritage; but we did not continue to create anew, save for multiplying the making of interpretations, and interpretations of interpretations, explanations and explanations of explanations about our precious writings. Our spiritual lives, like our material lives, were impoverished and shriveled....

"The new period that began with the renewal of the upbuilding of our Homeland eighty years ago, and of our independence during recent years, opened up a new chapter not only in respect to our status in the world, but also in regard to our spiritual creativity. True, for the first phase of the

third restoration of our independence -- and that phase will last for many, many years -- we shall, as up to now indeed, be constrained to invest the better part of our energy and our spiritual and physical forces in Israel in fortifying our security, developing the country, building up its economy, absorbing its immigrants, and laying safe foundations of a free and independent nation, sovereign in its own right. Our independence is still in danger; we are still beleaguered; we still face vital problems in regard to immigrant absorption; our deserts still await redemption. Our primary endeavor therefore must lie in the security, political and economic spheres. These efforts, however, will not succeed unless sustained by a great spiritual dedication.

"One of the marvels of our generation has been the victory of the Israel Defense Forces; but it was not by its weapons or its numbers that the young Israel army withstood the onslaughts of the enemy hosts. Its secret was the high moral quality of our youth. The upbuilding of the country, too, the hundreds of villages that sprang up as if overnight in every corner of the land, the discovery of water in a desert left arid and barren since the dawn of Creation, the hundreds of thousands of immigrants assembled in the Homeland within a brief space -- all these things were not done by means of technology and finance alone. A decisive fact was also the power of that same tenacious spirit that inspires our people.

The driving force was the Messianic vision that had preserved them from the moment they went into exile, over two thousand five hundred years ago. Had it not been for that spirit they would not have clung to their Jewishness, they would never have returned to Israel.

"... Not only we, but other ancient peoples as well, have at different epochs given voice to great and sublime moral truths. But I doubt if there was ever any one who succeeded in doing so with a mightier vigor or with a purer and holier passion than did the Prophets of Israel. The idea that man was created in the image of God, and that all men are children of God and therefore brothers, the precept, 'And thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' our prophets' vision of peace and justice -- in no ancient or modern literature is there anything to excel or even equal them. And our Prophets found and demanded justice not only in the life of man, but in the whole world, in the entire cosmos. Isaiah, one of the greatest of our prophets, envisions justice and peace as imprinted upon the heavens above and on the earth beneath. He says:

"'Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together.' - Isa. 45:8.

"And when the Psalmist seeks in one short verse to catalog supreme moral values, he says:

"'Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.'

"And he adds:

"'Truth shall spring out from the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.'- Psa. 85:10-11.

"The moral content, in the words of our prophets, is inherent not only in man but in the whole of Nature: the skies pour down righteousness, truth springs out of the earth.

"Only by pursuing the goals of prophetic ethics is it possible to direct the tremendous and fructifying power of science so that it may be a blessing to peoples and to men. Science, unguided by moral values, could be dangerous.

"... The establishment of the third State of Israel in our time has opened a new era. At its establishment the State comprised 650,000 Jews. It still comprises less than two million Jews today. We have yet to consummate the process of rebuilding. The road ahead is long and hard. And while engaged in our national regeneration, we must always remember the Messianic vision of redemption that preserved us for thousands of years. That vision foresaw not only complete redemption of the Jewish people, but of all humanity. For there can be no whole and lasting redemption of one people without the redemption of all nations. And we shall discharge the great and difficult task that is laid upon us only and solely if we are true to the great vision of the Latter Days which Israel's prophets saw and which will surely come to pass...."

(Foregoing is the eighteenth report about the Land of Promise, from Brother Casimir Lanowick, Editor of Jews in the News - Ed. Com.)

Show Me Thy Face

"Show me thy face -- one transient gleam
Of loveliness divine,
And I shall never think or dream
Of other love than Thine;
All lesser lights will darken quite,
All lower glories wane,
The beautiful of earth will scarce
Seem beautiful again.

"Show me thy face -- my faith and love
Shall henceforth fixed be,
And nothing here have power to move
My soul's serenity.
My life shall seem a trance, a dream,
And all I feel and see,
Illusive, visionary -- Thou The one reality.

"Show me thy face -- I shall forget
The weary days of yore;
The fretting ghosts of vain regret
Shall haunt my soul no more.
All doubts and fears for future years
In quiet trust subside;
And naught but blest content and calm
Within my breast abide.

"Show me thy face -- the heaviest cross
Will then seem light to bear;
There will be gain in every loss,
And peace with every care.
With such light feet the years will fleet,
Life will seem brief as blest,
'Till I have laid my burden down
And entered into rest."

God is My Rock

"Thou art my rock and my fortress." - Psalm 31:3.

IN THIS changing world, when former standards and customs are in the melting pot, and nothing seems beyond the influence of decay, no quality in persons or possessions is more sought after than that of stability. Ever since the expulsion from the Garden of Eden of our first parents, with its accompanying curse and the process of dying, the transitory nature of all earthly plans and things has been continually brought home to the race. The tragic death of Abel so soon after (his name itself meaning Vanity), was an emphatic reminder to Adam and Eve that the security of their Paradise home was no longer theirs. And ever since, as one generation has succeeded another, the lesson has continuously been taught that "here we have no abiding city," only the few having the faith and the desire to "seek one to come." Humanity at large seeks to entrench itself behind the things of time and sense that seem to be the most enduring, and to multiply such as much as possible. As the Psalmist observes, they "trust in their wealth and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches." - Psa. 49:6.

FLEETING RICHES

But life's experience teaches the truth of the Psalmist's further observation, that when a man dieth, "he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him." And the writer of Ecclesiastes, who engaged in the various activities of life and abounded in wealth more than all his contemporaries and forebears, realized even before death robbed him of these, that "all is vanity." He could find no satisfaction or lasting support in any of these things. Not only so, but he experienced that sense of frustration so common today, and that the fulfillment of earthly desire frequently brings in its train only "vexation of spirit." His testimony is: "I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there is no profit under the sun." - Eccl. 2:11.

Those who are privileged to exercise faith as a result of the revelation of God's character and purpose vouchsafed to them -- for "faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes from the preaching of Christ" (Rom. 10:17, R.S.V.) -- gladly turn from "the perishing things of time" to find stability and rest of heart in the Eternal One, "the LIVING GOD," as contrasted with the dying world around them and its dead idols. And just as a great rock is an abiding object in a land of shifting sand, and witnesses the passing of many generations, so the Eternal God appears to these pilgrims and sojourners as a mighty Rock, "with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning."

GOD IS MY ROCK

This figure of speech first occurs in the Song of Moses as recorded in the 32nd chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy, where it is applied to God no less than five times. (Deut. 32:4, 15, 18, 30, 31.) It is taken up and expanded by the Psalmist over and over again, as he contemplated the Eternal God as meeting his utmost needs from a variety of angles:

As a stronghold and refuge: This thought is amplified in Psalm 18:2, 3, God epitomizing to the writer all the defense sought to be provided by the numerous human devices for protection. "The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from mine enemies."

It is worthy of note that in this passage the Hebrew word rendered "rock" is *sela*, from which the name of the capital of Edom was derived (2 Kings 14:7), known subsequently in Roman times as Petra, likewise meaning "rock" (compare Peter). The buildings of this "rose-red city half as old as Time" were literally carved out of the living red sandstone hills, and access to the fortress was so narrow and tortuous that the place was considered impregnable. It was indeed no mean feat of King Amaziah of Judah and his army to storm the fortress; and the fact that he succeeded in so doing serves to emphasize the contrast between all human planning for safety and the abiding refuge of the "everlasting arms" of the Eternal God. - Deut. 33:27.

Welcome shade: Not only does a rock symbolize security, it also offers shade. In the hot and sandy wastes through which Israel traveled from Egypt to the Promised Land, such shade must have been more than welcome many a time; in all probability to the very young and very old, the preservation of life itself. This was convincingly illustrated in the case of a married couple with six children, as related in a recent number of *The Reader's Digest*. While on holiday in the Utah canyon country, a wrong turn was taken, in their car, and the party was eventually stranded without food or water in a disabled car fifty miles from the nearest settlement, in a country where the daytime temperature may reach 125° and a person may be dehydrated in a matter of hours. When located some 40 hours later, all the party were still alive, due in large measure to the fact that they had been able to shelter from the heat of the sun beneath an outstanding rock, coupled also with the fact that they were a Christian family, upheld by belief in prayer and did not panic. How frequently the Psalmist expressed his thanksgiving for the spiritual shelter of his Rock from the rage of his foes! So also the Prophet: "Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall." - Isa. 25:4.

To the Christian this shade is experienced "in Christ" and is well expressed in the words of the well-known hymn:

"Beneath the Cross of Jesus
I fain would take my stand,
The shadow of a Mighty Rock
Within a weary land;
A home within the wilderness,
A rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat,
And the burden of the day."

Shelter from storm: While in some countries, as in Egypt for instance, shade from the heat of the noonday sun is necessary, elsewhere shelter from storms is also important, as the above quotation from Isaiah suggests. And so in the various experiences of his stormy life, David encouraged himself in God: "From the end of the earth [land] will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the Rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever; I will trust [margin: make my refuge] in the covert of thy wings." (Psalm 61:2-4.) How precious, indeed, down through the generations of the Lord's people has been the experience expressed in the 91st Psalm: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in him will I trust." (Psa. 91)

KINGDOM THAT CANNOT BE MOVED

Since the Fall introduced the element of impermanence into all human affairs, mankind has sought to counteract its effects so far as possible by developing institutions of their own devising, calculated to outlast the brief span of a single human life. Not only have they endeavored to ensure the greater permanence of their own houses extending beyond the death of the individual to his successors, but they have also sought to bring a measure of stability into their affairs by ordered governments and dynasties, which might last for centuries instead of decades. As history has subsequently universally proved, these have not been free from transition, one kingdom in turn giving place to another, frequently with violent changes. It was this somber fact that was the subject of King Nebuchadnezzar's meditations, as he contemplated the great Kingdom of Babylon which he had built up and sought to peer into the future. (Dan. 2.) It was revealed to him through the Prophet that his kingdom would be no more permanent than others before it or which would succeed it, until at long last a Kingdom would be set up, but not by human power or planning, which would triumph not only over all human kingdoms and displace them, but over the transitory nature of all human affairs. Here at last was the prospect that in place of the "change and decay in all around," a stable, ordered government upon earth would be established.

A KINGDOM OF PEACE

A necessary element of stability is peace. Nothing disrupts and ruins like strife and war. Thus this promised Kingdom of the future is depicted in Isaiah 9:6, 7, introduced by the foretold Messiah of David's line: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father [LXX: The father of the age to come], The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government *and peace* there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." Many other prophetic Scriptures emphasize this aspect of PEACE resulting from the establishment of this Kingdom, as Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-4. The peace here visualized is mainly external, but in the New Testament a deeper concept of the causes of unrest is revealed and the true basis of peace, viz., the right relationship of the individual to God through Jesus Christ our Lord, is stressed. In human society unhappiness is the result not only of strife and war on the national plane, but also between classes, families, and individuals. In Hebrews 12:28 the Apostle -refers to a "kingdom which cannot be moved," but this can be enjoyed only by those who whole-heartedly embrace the moral government of God as the ruling principle of their lives. "There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked." (Isa. 57:19.) "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." - Matt. 6:33.

STABILITY OF CHARACTER

This brings us to the final phase of our treatment of this subject. The Fall has undermined the stability of character in a greater or less degree in all of Adam's descendants. Yet no attribute is of more value than this. Lack of stability has been the cause of ruin to many. A striking illustration of this is afforded in the Book of Genesis, in the familiar story of Esau who despised his birthright and sold it to his scheming brother, Jacob, for "a mess of pottage." Today we can evaluate this despised birthright in the light of history more clearly than could Esau or even Jacob, much as the latter desired it. Faith in God's promises regarding the future was needed to appreciate even slightly all that the birthright involved, and Esau lacked this. But looking down the stream of time from our vantage point we see how the whole philosophy of history is centered

in God's dealings with the inheritors of this birthright, his chosen people, the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and *Jacob*, not Esau. This is of very great importance in the outworking of the Divine Plan in the immediate future.

UNSTABLE AS WATER

Bat Esau was not the only one who forfeited his birthright. In the warning conveyed in Hebrews 12:16, two individuals are referred to, not one, and the record of Genesis links both of them with the birthright. "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person as Esau who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." (The comma after the word "person" is here omitted as confusing the sense.) There is no evidence at all in the Scriptures that Esau was a fornicator; he was *profane* in regarding his birthright so lightly as to dispose of it to Jacob for "a mess of pottage." In due course this birthright should have descended to *Reuben*, his first-born by Leah, as we read in Genesis 49:3, 4: "Reuben, thou art my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power. *Unstable as water*, thou shall not excel: because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; . . . he went up to my couch." And thus Reuben the fornicator forfeited the birthright too, and it passed to Joseph the first-born son of Rachel.

But in 1 Chronicles 5:1-2 an additional development is recorded. "Now the sons of Reuben the first-born of Israel [for he was the first-born; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's.]"

THE CHIEF RULER

How exact are the fulfillments of Divinely-inspired prophecy! In the prophetic blessing of his sons by the dying Jacob, Reuben is credited originally with a double or twofold *excellency*, viz., "the excellency of *dignity*" and "the excellency of *power*." But with his next breath Jacob declares that "unstable as water, he shall not *excel*." These excellencies, therefore, passed from him and in so doing became separated. *Judah* inherited "the excellency of *dignity*"; "of him came the chief ruler"; in the first instance King David, a prototype of his greater Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Joseph's sons inherited the birthright, which includes "the excellency of *power*," and in the preceding chapter (48) Jacob's blessing of Joseph's sons placed the younger one, Ephraim, before the elder, Manasseh. Hence the future prophecy of Jeremiah 1:9, referring to the regathering of Israel, wherein God declares: "For I am father to Israel, and *Ephraim* is my first-born."

It is a solemn thought that the profane nature of Esau and the unstable character of Reuben should have influenced the course of human history throughout the centuries down to our own time, both as regards the descendants of Jacob, instead of Esau, being regathered in the Land of Promise today, and that He in whom the Divine Plan is centered should be "of the seed of *David* according to the flesh," i.e., descended from Judah and not from Reuben. How true is the saying:

"Sow a thought and you reap a word,
Sow a word and you reap an act
Sow an act and you reap a habit,
Sow a habit and you reap a character,
Sow a character and you reap a destiny."

And, of course, the individuals, such as Esau and Reuben, themselves suffer loss as well as influencing the destiny of their posterity. As the Apostle James says: "A double-minded man is

unstable in all his ways. Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." - James 1:8, 7.

The reverse is equally true, as is well illustrated in the case of Joseph. Tempted under very trying conditions in Potiphar's house, he stood fast, and suffered disgrace and imprisonment rather than sin, where Reuben with no excuse failed. Joseph looked beyond his master and clearly realized that in the final analysis he would have been sinning not merely against Potiphar but against God. By his trying experiences for a period of thirteen years, Joseph was being prepared for rulership and honor. Iron entered into his character so that he became stable, fixed, "made meet for the Master's use," and correspondingly determined the future sphere of his descendants.

UNITE MY HEART

As quoted above, the Apostle James indicates one cause at least of personal instability and points out the remedy. In effect, full consecration to the will of God will safeguard us from becoming unstable. The Psalmist prayed, "Unite my heart to fear thy name" (86,11), and Paul defined his attitude, "This one thing I do." There was no double mindedness about Paul, even as was the case with his great Exemplar, the Lord Jesus, who in pursuance of his Heavenly Father's will, "steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" and Calvary. He "set his face like a flint" was the prophetic declaration of him. (Isa. 50:7; Luke 9:51.) It is in this complete conformity to the Father's will that our union "in Christ Jesus" becomes complete; and thus united to him we become partakers of his rock-like stability and permanence. This it was that enabled Paul, when faced with the certain prospect of imprisonment if he persisted in going up to Jerusalem, to say: "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself" (Acts 20:24), and again: "I am ready not to be bound only, but to die also at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 21:13.) Thus it was that Peter was changed from a denier of his Lord into bold champion of the Crucified One, and thus may each of us be enabled to testify with the Psalmist, "My heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." (Psalm 57:7.) "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." - 1 Cor. 15:58.

- *Contributed*

The Question Box

"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." - Isa. 35:8.

Question:

After saying that the unclean shall not pass over The Way of Holiness, the Prophet proceeds to state that "it shall be for those." Please explain these apparently conflicting statements.

Answer:

If, by the word "those," we were to understand the Prophet to mean "the unclean" he had just mentioned, we would be bound to admit that his statements were not merely apparently, but actually, in conflict. However, according to the scholars, the phrase *it shall be for those* "is an extremely doubtful rendering of a very obscure original." (*The Century Bible*.) In agreement with this view, *The Variorum*, in a footnote, comments: "Text probably corrupt. According to *The Interpreter's Bible*, "the second part of verse 8 has been mutilated in transmission, as is obvious from the attempt of the King James Version to translate it literally."

Two suggestions have been offered to resolve the difficulty. One is that the word "those" be replaced by the word "redeemed."*

* Scholars who adopt this suggestion do so on the grounds that the Prophet *is* employing the figure of speech known as prolepsis, or anticipation. Here, since the word "those" does not refer to any persons previously mentioned, it must refer, by anticipation, to some who are about to be mentioned, and who actually are mentioned, in the next verse.

This is the translation of the *American Standard Version*, which reads: "But it shall be for the redeemed." This certainly harmonizes with the context, for in verse 9 we read: "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; *but the redeemed shall walk there.*"

However, an alternative suggestion, one which all scholars consulted admit is permissible, and which most of them prefer, not only harmonizes with the thought that this highway is for the redeemed, but includes an additional thought, namely, that the reason this is to be, is because God himself is to be walking with these pilgrims on their way to Zion.** Furthermore, by adopting this suggestion, as *Ferrar Fenton* has shown, the Hebrew metre of the Prophet is retained; the beauty of his poetry is not reduced to prose. Note how *Rotherham*, while rejecting the conflicting statements of the King James Version, retains the Hebrew metre, and includes the thoughts mentioned foregoing in his fine translation:

"And there shall be there a raised way-even a high road,
And the Highroad of Holiness shall it be called,
There shall not pass over it one who is unclean;
But He Himself shall be one of them traveling the road,
And the perverse shall not stray thereinto."

** In the margin of the *Newberry Bible* this thought is expressed as follows: "And He, Himself, shall be with them walking in the way; and fools shall not err. Heb. *Ve hu lahmo holeec derec ve evilim lo yithhu.*"

Moreover, this highway is called the Way of Holiness, not only because "the unclean *shall not* pass over it," but also because it is the way to the sanctuary. He, to whose sanctuary the pilgrims on this road will be traveling; He, the Holy One, the author of the Way; He, it is, who will be their guide. When they are tempted to turn aside to the right hand or to the left (Deut. 5:32; Josh. 1:7), they will hear a voice behind them, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it. (Isa. 30:31.) Walking in that way, with such a guide, how shall they go astray? It was thus, in an earlier day, that He who had redeemed Israel out of Egypt, Himself guided them-by day in a pillar of a cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire.-Exod. 13:20, 21.

A second question has been asked in reference to this verse. It reads: "An highway shall be there, and a way." How is the highway to be distinguished from the *way*? We answer: The Prophet is employing another figure of speech -- that of hendiadys (from the Greek *hen dia dyoin* signifying one by means of two.) The *two* nouns "highway" and "way" are to be understood as expressing *one* idea, namely, a high way. ***

*** This figure of speech *is* the expression of *one* idea by the use of *two* nouns joined together by the conjunction "and," one of which, generally the latter, is to be understood as an adjective qualifying the other. Instances of -the use of this figure of speech may be seen in a number of Scriptures. (See *The Herald* for August-September, 1958, page 122.)

The comparison suggested by the Prophet is between an almost, if not quite, indiscernible pathway in the sandy desert, with a solid, artificial causeway. Job speaks of "I wilderness where there is no way" (Job 12:24); and Jeremiah of "a way not cast up." (Jer. 18:15.) To these descriptions, Isaiah's highway presents a decided contrast.

The use of this Highway of Holiness has been referred by some interpreters, to the return of the exiles from Babylon. And doubtless it had its first fulfillment then. After the first two verses (of chapter 35) the prophecy very evidently addresses itself to the nation of Israel in captivity, speaking of their salvation in verses 3 and 4, and in the remainder of the chapter, of all the wonderful providences of God which they would experience as they journeyed back. But in a larger sense, the Highway of which the Prophet speaks, is the road by which the pilgrims, first of Israel, and then of all nations, will journey to the mountain of the Lord's house, in the Millennial Age, now so close at hand. Isaiah, himself, has told us this in an earlier passage (Isa. 2:2, 3):

"It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and-.all- nations shall flow unto it.

"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for cut of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

- P. L. Read.

Recently Deceased

Sr. P. Farsje, Seattle, Wash. - (Feb.)

Sr. Myra Godfrey, Roanoke, Va. - (Feb.)

Bro. Alexander Kirkwood, Glasgow, Scot. - (Mar.)

Bro. J. A. Taylor, Glace Bay, N.S., Can. - (Mar.)

Bro. Anthony Tygielski, Walkerton, Ind. - (Mar.)