

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## **New Year Reflections**

*"Tell . . . how great things the Lord hath done for thee." - Mark 5:19.*

FROM among many beautiful expressions of praise and thanksgiving we have chosen for consideration at this New Year Season, the 30th Psalm. What child of the Lord can consider these words of warm gratitude without his heart burning at the thought of his own "many benefits" received from the "Giver of every good and perfect gift."

"I will extol thee, O Lord; for thou hast lifted me up,  
And hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.  
O Lord my God,  
I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.  
O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave:  
Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit " - Ver. 1-3.

Is not this descriptive of our own experience? Do we not remember "the hole of the pit whence we were digged"? We "who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past we walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." (Eph. 2:1-3.) "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." (Titus 3:3.) And what of our many foes who so frequently triumphed over us; those "works of the flesh," the enemies within the fortress so graphically resented in Galatians 5:19-21? What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed For the end of those things is death." - (Rom. 6:21.) Yea, our feet were almost gone; our steps had well nigh slipped. We looked for some to take pity, but there were none; and for comforters, but found none. - Psa. 73:2; 69:20.

Then "this poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." For "He looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death." "But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy spirit; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. " For " God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. " -Psa. 34:6; 102:19, 20; Titus 3:4-7; Eph. 2:4-7; 1 Cor. 15: 54-57.

"Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, And give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. For his anger endureth but a moment; In his favor is life Weeping may endure for a night, But joy cometh in the morning." - Ver. 4, 5.

Sing praise ("sweep the strings" or "make *music*" - *Rotherham*) unto Jehovah for "praise is comely for the upright." (Psa. 33:1.) Again, "Praise ye the Lord for it is good to sing praises unto our God for it is pleasant; and praise is comely." (Psa. 147:1.) "I waited patiently [suffering intensely, with earnest longings, an intensity of feeling which amounted to real suffering] for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. " - Psa. 40:1-3.

In its highest and truest significance, Praise is the instinctive outburst of adoring worship that rises from a pure spirit at the knowledge and vision of an Infinite, Self-existent, All-Creative, and Sovereignly Ruling God, a God of Holiness, Justice, Goodness, and Truth. It occupies a higher vantage-ground than Thanksgiving, since it represents reverent homage for God in himself, as he *is* in his eternal, glorious, perfect, and blessed Being, and appreciative adoration utterly without thought of the good he bestows upon the worshiping, recipient creature. The offering of Praise, therefore, is the one spontaneous act of the true saint, unaffected by promise of good and uninfluenced by expectation of return for service. As thus unmixed with any thought of self, Praise is the highest expression of honor to God, and it brings the purest and loftiest element into the Christian's communion with him. In both Testaments it is characterized as an "offering" or "sacrifice" by which God is glorified. (Psa. 50: 14, 23; 107:22; Heb. 13:15.) Joined with the tenderer and sweeter note of Thanksgiving for ineffable and unlimited "goodness and mercy," Praise is the one revealed employment of the sinless and redeemed hosts in the Heavenly Presence. (Rev. 5:7-14.) "Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion. " - Psa. 65:1.

The "remembrance of his holiness" means literally "his holy memorial" ("celebrate his holy memorial" - *Darby*) and refers probably to the passage (Exod. 3:15), "This is *my* name for ever, and this is my *memorial* unto all generations." God's name is his revelation of himself in all his various attributes of love, wisdom, power, holiness, truth, righteousness. God's memorial is that great history of redemption, which was, so to speak, the setting up of a monument to his glory, on which all these attributes were in-scribed. The Revised Version brings out the precise thought in translating: "Give thanks to his holy memorial name."

The things of this Psalm are of continual interest. They do not belong to any one time or any one type of experience. Some of the notes in it are suitable to home and family and individuals through all the years of their history. Eminently so is the fifth verse, which tells us of the bitter and the sweet, the dark and the light, which run in various distribution among human lives. The underlying doctrine is the great fact that "God is love," that love runs through all, rules over all, explains all.

Here is a reason why God is to be praised—because he manifests himself in love, not in wrath; or if in wrath, but for a moment. Love directs all. Rotherham renders this verse, "For there is a Moment in his anger, a Life-time in his good-pleasure [or favor]; in the evening cometh Weeping to lodge, but by the morning 'tis a Shout of Triumph [or joy]!" The parallelism is carefully preserved in each member -- "anger . . . favor"; "a moment . . . a lifetime"; "evening . . . morning"; "weeping . . . joy." Weeping is described under the image of a wayfarer who comes in at evening to lodge for the night. The suddenness and surprise of gladness, on the other hand, in the morning, are beautifully represented by the simple "at dawn, a shout of joy," without a verb. Just as the sun in Eastern lands, without any long prelude of twilight to announce his coming, leaps as it were, in a moment above the horizon, so does the light of God's love dispel in a moment the long night and darkness of sorrow. From Isaiah we quote a beautiful parallel passage : "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for *a moment*; but with *everlasting* kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." (Isa. 54:7, 8.) And in the greater picture of the Restitution day which the Psalmist's words bring to mind, with what thrilled hearts do we in foretaste picture the glorious revealing, through his Christ, of the great God of the Universe, whose righteous and holy character will then be made manifest to all humanity. In that new "heaven and earth," God's blessings abundantly poured forth upon astonished mankind will result in the wiping away of all tears from their eyes and will more than offset their experience under the terrible Night of Weeping. - Isa. 65:17; Rev. 21:4; Isa. 35:10; Isa. 25:6-9.

"And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.  
Lord, by thy favor thou hast made my mountain to stand strong;  
Thou didst hide thy face; I was troubled. I cried to thee, O Lord;  
And unto the Lord I made supplication:  
What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit?  
Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?  
Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me Lord, be thou my helper." - Ver. 6-10.

In their times of trial God's people in all ages have been brought to feel their entire dependence on him. In days of flowing prosperity we have little sense of that dependence. As the Psalmist expresses it here "In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved." We are very apt to dream, when things are well with us, that they will always be so, and never otherwise. "Tomorrow shall be as this day." Yet prosperity is more pleasant than profitable to us. Though in show it look like a fair summer, it is indeed a wasting winter, and spends all the fruit we reap in a harvest of sanctified affliction. For we are never in greater danger than in the sunshine of prosperity. It is rare to receive much of the world and not (as the prodigal) to go afar off; 'tis hard to keep close to God when we have much of this world to live upon and content ourselves with; to live upon God and make him our content and stay, as if we had no other life nor livelihood but in him. We are very apt in such a case to let go our hold of God, discustom ourselves to the exercise of faith, abate and estrange our affections from God.

It is more common to pray for strength to endure through times of adversity and suffering than for strength to endure through times of prosperity and gladness. Yet it is these latter times of buoyant self-reliance that are most full of peril. It is not in those perilous ways when every step gives fresh evidence that without our Leader we are lost, that we are most likely to turn away from him. That supreme peril comes rather when we walk in the open plain, and have forgotten the serpents that lurk among the flowers. For every soul that is harmed by adversity, ten are harmed by prosperity. Yet you will find a hundred persons who pray against that adversity which *so* often brings men closer to God, where you will find one who prays against that pleasant prosperity which too often lures men away from God and from their own best future.

And how deceiving is that prosperity! When the days run smoothly, "involving happy months, and these as happy years," all seems certain to continue. But a change comes over our life. Ill-health fastens on us; death invades our circle; relatives bring us into deep waters; our means of living fail; we are plunged into a very wilderness of woe. How falsely we judged when we thought that it was by its own inherent stability our mountain stood strong! No; it was solely the result of God's favor, for all our springs are in him; the moment he hides his face we are most grievously troubled. All the world does no good without the favor of God. As all the stars, though they shine together, do not dispel the darkness of night, so no creatures can coin-fort us sufficiently when God hides his face. His absence cannot but be lamented with greatest grief, whose presence the soul prizeth above all earthly joy.

"O! may no earth-born cloud arise  
To hide thee from thy servant's, eyes."

How moving is the Psalmist's plea to God in verses 8 and 9! And yet his prayer for prolonged life was not offered with the view of any earthly possession or enjoyment, but only with a view to the honor of God. He dreaded death as being an end of praise to God. His plea is, "What would my life-blood avail if thou shouldst send me to the grave If I may live I shall praise thee and witness to thy truth before the living, and this will avail to thy glory and honor. But, cut down in death, my lips are dumb thenceforth as to any testimony for thee in the land of the living." Essentially the same reasoning appears in Psalm 6:5 and Psa. 88:1.0-12 and Isa. 38:18, 19.

Every better spirit, just in proportion to its thoughtfulness and nobility, is saddened as it compares performance with aspiration and work with aim. There are times when the words of God's most believing children about this fleeting life, and the shortness of our time for doing God's appointed work, run in the mold of the Psalmist's. There was a point of view from which life presented itself to our Lord himself as a golden day, and death as a cheerless night. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work."

Thank God for the assurance that we shall not lie silent in the grave, but in the glorious Age of the future shall show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light-him whose workmanship we now are, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. We therefore ask aright for life when we have in view that we may live and praise *him*.

"Lord, be thou my helper." In every duty, in every conflict, in every trial, in every effort to promote the Lord's cause, in every season of prosperity, in every hour we live, this short prayer is suitable. If the Lord help us, there is no duty which we cannot overcome; there is no difficulty which we cannot surmount.

"Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing;  
Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;

To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent.  
O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever." - Ver. 11, 12.

To bless God for mercies is the way to increase them; to bless him for miseries is the way to remove them. No good lives so long as that which is thankfully improved; and no evil dies so soon as that which is patiently endured. The concluding words of this Psalm raise a responsive chord in our hearts: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." - Isa. 61: 10.

"To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee." This word "glory" is also found in Psalm 16:9 and signifies "tongue," and is so translated in the quotation of this verse found in Acts 2:26. As light is the glory of fire (Exod. 24:17), so speech is the glory, the bright shining of the intellect. "Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee." (Psa. 63: 3.) For what have we to do in the world as once and again his creatures, anew created unto good works, but to exercise ourselves in those, and by those to advance his glory? That all may return to him from whom all is, as the rivers run back to the sea from whence they came. Of him and through him, and therefore for him are all things. "I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning; for thou hast been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defense, and the God of my mercy. I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou Most High." - Psa. 59:16, 17; 9:1, 2.

- *W. J. Siekman.*

## **The Year Before Us**

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

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

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

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

- *Frances R. Havergal*

## Israel Today

*"And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first ... And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it." - Jeremiah 33:7, 9.*

ISRAEL'S economy has outstripped that of eight neighbor Middle East countries over the past several years, according to a 183 page supplement on Middle East economies from 1959-61, published by the U. N. Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

The report said Israel's economy was setting the pace in the Middle East and that the country, in 15 years, had risen from an agricultural to an industrial base of such stature that it can currently hold its own in the world market.

### ISRAEL FEEDS ITS OWN

While the Arab countries in the survey received the majority of their food imported from the United States, Israel produced enough to feed its own people and was also able to export.

This year\* agricultural exports are expected to reach \$90 million and will thus constitute more than one quarter of Israel's agricultural output. This is amazing when one takes into account that Israel has more than tripled its population in the 15 years of its existence as a state.

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\*This article was written in 1963.

The largest food export has been citrus. Israel's citrus exports this year total a record-breaking 12,560,000 cases, a 44 per cent increase over 1962.

### ANOTHER FACET OF ISRAEL'S BRILLIANT ECONOMIC PROGRESS

Israel will export \$100 million worth of diamonds in 1963, some 22 per cent more than last year, when \$82 million were sent abroad. The diamond industry is the fastest developing industrial branch in the country. Not only have exports increased considerably, but more than 1,000 additional workers have been taken on, and by the end of the year the industry will be employing some 10,000 workers.

Israel receives the rough diamonds from South Africa, then they are cut and polished in Israel. Israel is now the world's largest exporter of industrial diamonds.

### TOP TOURIST YEAR EXPECTED

Nineteen sixty-three is expected to be Israel's top tourist year. Last year 183,701 tourists arrived there; this year the target has been set at 225,000. Tourist revenue last year was \$33 million, whereas this year it will probably be about \$50 million.

Because of Israel's increased tourism, her El Al Airlines had the highest passenger load factor of any international airline on transatlantic routes in the first six months of this year as its flights were 58.2 per cent full.

### **EXPLOITATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

It is time to forget the groundless idea that Israel is poor in natural resources, declared Mr. Yosef Almogi, the Minister of Development. "It is true," he added, "that we are not one of the world's wealthy countries, but our natural resources are much more extensive than has been imagined, and we must go ahead and exploit them with the least possible delay. "

Soon after Mr. Almogi's statement was made, a deposit of an estimated one million tons of surface copper ore, suitable for strip mining, was discovered by geologists near the Timna Copper Mines. Now \$10 million is being raised to expand the copper works at Timna, near the Red Sea, where King Solomon had his copper operation centuries ago.

### **GIGANTIC FUTURE IN POTASH**

The Dead Sea may be one of the richest sources of potash in the world. A few words are in order about the economic value of the potash. This chemical is one of the vital elements in modern fertilizer. Scientists are already concerned about the consequences of the population explosion. The world must produce food or men will die of hunger by the millions. Exhausted soils must be enriched. Organic manure is limited. In the whole Asiatic area which strives to feed the teeming populations of India and China there are no known potash resources of any consequence except in Israel.

Last year there was an income to Israel of close to \$5 million from the export of potash. As the new plans increase production the income will rise to about \$35 million a year. Considering that along with the potash, Israel can also reap the rich harvest of bromine, magnesium and other chemicals which are in the Dead Sea, it may be conservatively estimated that an annual income of well over \$100 million is within reach.

### **MODERN DESERT CARAVAN ROUTE**

The Israel Cabinet Economic Committee recently decided to give top priority to the completion of the Sodom-Eilat road, which is planned to serve as the main artery for the rising exports, via Eilat, of the products of the Dead Sea Works now being enlarged.

Minister of Development Almogi, who announced the decision, favors both the building of a railroad to Eilat and enlarging the present highway to the Red Sea town, to handle the Negev's export products. He said that in three years the Dead Sea Works would be shipping 600,000 tons of products annually and the chemical combine in the Arad-Oron region another million tons.

### **CONTINUING SEARCH FOR BLACK GOLD**

In our industrialized society the need for oil is constantly growing. Last year Israel spent over \$40 million to import oil. However, some of Israel's petroleum needs are met by the output of her own wells. Quest for additional sources of supply is going on apace. At least 112 drillings have been made and a number of them have proved successful. The oil now being produced there provides about 9 per cent of Israel's annual consumption.

The prospects for finding much larger reserves are bright. Dr. Lewis G. Weeks, former chief geologist for the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, recently made an intensive survey of the possibilities in Israel and gave the highest possible rate to the coastal plain and off-shore areas. A thorough exploration has been made of Israel's continental shelf, an area consisting of about 1,300 square miles, all under water, by an American oil man, Gordon Hirschhorn, head of the Petrocana Company, who afterwards made this statement: "There is now very substantial reason to believe, on the basis of the scientific data we have gathered, that oil does exist off-shore in commercially feasible quantity, warranting the pinpointing of the exact spots, with subsequent drilling."

Those who know of the enormous oil deposits found in the Gulf of Mexico or off the California shore can only hold their breath with excitement. Three to four million dollars are being invested in floating self-propelled vessels with new devices and technical improvements developed in the U. S., for the drilling operations. According to the experts, Israel can expect to strike it rich.

### **SOME VITAL STATISTICS**

The annual rate of increase of Israel's exports in the past four years (1958-1962) was approximately three times higher than the rate of increase for total world exports -- 18 per cent as against 6.4 per cent, according to a survey of Israel's foreign trade released recently by the Central Bureau of Statistics. It was considerably higher than the rate of increase for the European Economic Community (10 per cent annually).

Israel's exports per capita in 1962 were \$119, higher than the per capita export rates of the United States and Japan.

Israel's trade balance deficit decreased by 31.7 per cent between October, 1962, and March, 1963, as against a rise of 12.2 per cent in the corresponding period last year. In this period 64 per cent of imports were covered by exports, an unprecedented achievement. In the same six-month period exports rose by 29 per cent and imports dropped by 2.7 per cent. Further progress may be noted from the fact that Israel's exports rose by \$50 million for the first six months of 1963 as compared to the first half of 1962.

Israel's foreign currency balances rose by \$126 million in 1962 and by an additional \$116 million in the first three months of 1963, to an embarrassingly high record foreign reserve of \$640 million.

After a tough currency devaluation last year, Israel is increasing its gross national product 10 per cent a year and has a stock market on which the value of shares has risen twelve times in three years.

Israel's Bank Leumi le-Israel is the largest bank in the Middle East and the largest underwriter of Israeli development projects, according to the "American Banker." Bank Leumi le-Israel ranks in 139th place among the list of the free world's 500 largest banks. Two other Israel banks, Israel Discount Bank and Bank Hapoalim, rank 384 and 385 respectively. Those three banks recorded combined deposits of over one billion dollars.

For 15 years the struggling Jewish homeland has depended for financial help on outsiders, mostly in the United States. American Jews have poured in \$568 million in Bonds for Israel,

\$1,035,000,000 through the United Jewish Appeal, and another \$250 million in private investments that were often motivated by conscience.

However, the Israeli have done their part. For instance, more than 103 million Israeli pounds (about \$34,333,333) was invested by the Israeli residents in government bonds during the first five months of 1963.

### **THIS PROBLEM WILL BE SOLVED TOO**

The columnist Carl Alpert, writing from Haifa, says:

"The economists in Israel are worried again. Too much prosperity The immediate sources: German restitution money brought to Israel by local residents and spent here; investments from abroad spent here; large scale government spending, especially for new immigrant housing.

"The key word is 'spending.' Large amounts of money put into circulation create demand, resulting in higher prices. The money begins to go round and round, faster and faster, higher and higher, and the result is known as inflation. Some people call it prosperity, but the economists say it is a false prosperity, doomed to burst, since the spending is primarily on consumer goods. I t may raise the standard of living of the individual for the time being but it does not add to the basic income of the country. It means, in effect, that the country is getting fat by eating up its true wealth, rather than by adding to such wealth.

"Full employment in local factories producing only for the domestic market is not necessarily good.

When the same factories produce for export the result is good for the economy. The trouble is that plenty of money is available here, from the sources indicated above, and it is easier and more profitable to sell our goods in Tel Aviv than in New York or Rome."

Nevertheless, Israel is exporting at a rapidly increasing rate.

- *Casimir Lanowick.*

### **Our Correspondence**

We esteem highly the letters of encouragement received from the friends, as well as the Greetings at this special season of the year, and wish all to know of our appreciation and of how pleased we are to have them. The Lord has blessed many of your kind letters to our refreshment of heart. It would be our pleasure to reply to all of these messages, but this we find impossible. We trust all our readers will charitably remember that our office force is limited, and that we cannot do all that we would like in the way of answering, and please accept this as a statement of our appreciation. Our prayer for you all is, as for ourselves, "that we might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

## Doctrines More Or Less Important

THERE are certain features of the doctrine of Christ which are fundamental and indispensable, and without which none would be recognized of the Lord as one of his followers. There are other features which would seem to be useful, helpful, blessed, but not fundamental -- not essential to membership in the Body of Christ. The fundamentals have been enjoyed by good, saintly ones from the day of Pentecost until now.

We, the same class now, have the same fundamentals, and are permitted to have other privileges, truths, "meat in due season," for our strengthening. These latter are not necessarily essential to our membership in the Body of Christ; otherwise our forefathers who did not have them would not have been members of Christ, and there would have been no Christ Body for centuries.

The fundamental theory of the Atonement is as follows:

- (1) All men-all of Adam's children-are sinners.
- (2) None can be reconciled to God without a Redeemer's sacrifice.
- (3) Jesus came into the world to be that sacrifice -and later to apply that ransom-price for the sins of the world.
- (4) On the basis of faith in the Redeemer's work, the believer may consecrate himself to the divine service, in acceptance of the divine invitation, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice."
- (5) So doing, the believer may up to the time of the completion of the elect number exercise full assurance of faith that his sacrifice will be accepted of the Father; and that he will receive a share of the anointing of the holy spirit -- the begetting.
- (6) Such as meet these conditions are to be accepted as brethren in the highest sense of the term. This much would seem to have been always necessary, and more than this we believe is not necessary today. But if by reason of our favorable day we have more knowledge, we may also have corresponding trials, which our greater knowledge will offset.

Our advice to the Lord's dear people everywhere is that they put no yoke upon each other, beyond the fundamentals specified above -- that otherwise they stand free, and leave each other free, and fellowship and agree as much as they can with each other.

If there be a disposition to crowd each other on more than this basic faith, and if it be considered necessary to separate in order to the progress of either of the parties, then doubtless rather than a continual contention a separation would be the wise course.

We are not criticizing the views of any one. Each has a perfect right to hold whatever he believes the Bible to teach, and our views are doubtless well known to all of our readers. Briefly stated, they are as follows

- (1) That the one that sinned was Adam, and that he and all his posterity were involved.
- (2) That a Redeemer was necessary, that Jesus became that Redeemer, and "gave himself a ransom for all."

(3) That God has invited some of the redeemed sinners-not to be the ransom-price, nor to redeem anybody else, but -to be associates of the Redeemer, members of his Body, his Bride.

(4) The terms and conditions upon which these may have fellowship are that Jesus as the great Advocate shall accept them as his members -- their flesh as his flesh -- and that he shall impute to them the share of his merit which would be coming to them as members of the Adamic race. Then they are legally justified from all the shortcomings, weaknesses, and imperfections inherited by them; and their own wills and all their remaining powers and talents being consecrated, their sacrifice may be acceptable to God-as part of the sin-offering by the great High Priest.

(5) Sharing thus in the Redeemer's death, these are privileged to share in his life, by the first resurrection. The Redeemer does not now make application of his merit to the world, aside from the newly accepted and added members. He will carry out the divine program, and sacrifice all his members before presenting, at the end of the Age, the merit of his sacrifice on behalf of the sins of the whole world, and will thereby seal the New Covenant for them.

In our judgment many err in attaching too much value to the Church's sacrifice; whereas other dear brethren err, we think, in that they do not see any value in the Church's sacrifice, nor that she is permitted a share in the Master's sacrificings at all. To us it seems like the swing of the pendulum from one extreme to the other; whereas our view lies in the center, as we have stated the matter.

If after fully considering these matters, a class finds that it cannot agree, and would make better progress as two classes, we would concur in that conclusion as a wise one, as much as we would deplore the necessity of a division. Such a separation would not necessarily alienate either class from the Lord's people, nor from the Society, because both acknowledge Jesus as their Redeemer, and both acknowledge that his blood is primarily efficacious.

- *Reprints*, R5284.

## **Thomas Jefferson**

### **ON CHRISTIANITY AND HUMAN FREEDOM**

"I am a Christian . . . it behooves every man who values liberty of conscience for himself to resist invasions of it in the case of others, or their case may, by change of circumstances, become his own."

## Private Interpretation

*"No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation." - 2 Peter 1:20.*

STRANGE as it may seem, this text is usually misunderstood to mean that any one presenting an exposition of Scripture different from that generally held by the Bible study group with which he associates must evidently be in error. His exposition, being at variance with that of the Class (or its leaders), is quite obviously a "private" interpretation. As such it must be rejected.

Such reasoning, of course, is quite wrong, but also, alas, quite common.

The right of private judgment -- private interpretation -- is claimed by all good Protestants. Unfortunately though, it is claimed by them as though it were their *exclusive* possession. Few of them ever think of exercising the right for themselves, and too many deny it to their brethren. An exposition of Scripture comes their way which clashes with their preconceived ideas -- clashes with the ideas of their group. It is, therefore, unwelcome, and so, instead of investigating and, if the circumstances warrant, embracing the new teaching, they reject it, rebuke the expositor, and refer to St. Peter's words in support of their position.

Let us turn to the text itself and seek to understand it in the light of its context.

In 2 Peter 1:16, 17, 18, St. Peter had been speaking of our Lord's Transfiguration, and had insisted that he had been an eye-witness on that occasion, and had himself heard the voice from heaven which said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Nevertheless, sure as he was of these things which he had both seen and heard, there was something even "more sure." It was, he tells us, "the word of prophecy."

In a previous Question Box ("Herald," November 1949, page 159) we have been cautioned against a common misconception. Too often we conceive of "prophecy" as though it meant only "prediction." The "word of prophecy" is a term that includes all the moral teaching of the Bible, as well as its predictive utterances. Indeed the expression points rather to the moral than to the predictive element. And this body of moral teaching, broken only occasionally by predictions--the whole Bible indeed, insofar as it was known to him--the Apostle Peter affirms to be a safer guide to faith than even that message from heaven which they who were eyewitnesses of the Transfiguration had made known. No doubt, as they stood on the Mount of Transfiguration and witnessed the honor and glory which Jesus received from the Father, the Apostles understood that the Son of Man was indeed the Son of God, but the very voice which pronounced him God's beloved Son bade them "*hear* him." (Matt. 17:5.) The Transfiguration was a wonderful thing for them to have witnessed; indeed it was a miracle. And all of our Lord's miracles are full of tender and wise instruction. Yet should we have learned their true meaning save for the words he spake?

Miracles are "wonders" that arrest our attention; but when our attention has been arrested, we still need to have it engaged and instructed. What the Apostles needed, what we all need, indeed, is not to see an occasional miracle, dazzling in its splendor, but a little light on the dark and troubled path we have to tread, a lamp that will burn steadfastly and helpfully over the work we have to do. Stars are more sublime, meteors more superb and dazzling, but the lamp shining in a dark place is infinitely closer to our practical needs. Plain rules of life that commend themselves to our conscience, in obedience to which we rise above "the world, the flesh, and the devil," and become better, happier men--these, with some bright hope in the future to attract and draw us on, to assure us that if we do God's will, we shall enter into God's rest -- these rules and this hope are worth far

more to us in the conduct of our daily life than all the signs and wonders ever wrought. *These* are as the lamp by which we can walk and work; miracles are but as the distant stars or occasional flashing comets. And this lamp of rules for daily conduct is given us in the "word of prophecy."

And here we come to the point of the question with which this discussion began. This wonderful "lamp," which shines so helpfully on the activities of our every day lives, does *so because it has been lit and is fed by God himself*. Not one single statement in it is the private thought the best opinion or counsel of the Prophet uttering it. Those Ancient Worthies were no doubt capable of reaching sound conclusions as to the various problems of human life and conduct. Trained in the principles of truth and righteousness they might well be supposed to be able and willing to give wise and wholesome counsel. But the "word of prophecy" did not come that way, says St. Peter. It "came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy spirit."

No prophecy of Scripture is a private interpretation of the Prophet, That is to say, the "word of prophecy" is not a mere logical deduction from the facts of life and nature, by the Prophet uttering it; nor is it a mere guess at things to come, based on a knowledge of what has taken place in the past. A Prophet was not simply a man who, after studying a multitude of various facts, discovered the law which was common to them all, or inferred a maxim on which men would do well to act. Nor was he simply a man who, having studied the ethical forces which were at work in his age, arrived at a probable conjecture as to the results that would flow from them and give its form and pressure to the succeeding age. There was something higher than human wisdom in his utterances, something safer than the forecasts of human reason; for prophecy did not come from the will of man, but holy men, borne along by the holy spirit as the ship is borne before the wind, spake the words that were given them by God. Their prophecies -- their forth-tellings -- were not their private interpretations of the moral facts and enigmas of human life; they were the authoritative interpretations of God himself. There is a divine wisdom, therefore an infallible wisdom -- there is a divine power, an Almighty power in the inspired Word, even when it is most human and imperfect in outward form. And it is this divine wisdom and power which makes that Word a sure and certain guide to our feet. The lamp itself may be only an earthen vessel, unskillfully molded by the hand of man; but the treasured splendor of the light, and the oil that feeds the light, are the gift of God.

The foregoing, we think, is the truth which St. Peter is emphasizing. However, two other related truths should not be overlooked:

(1) The meaning of a Scripture cannot be clearly discerned except by such as are guided by the selfsame spirit as that which inspired the Prophet. - 1 Cor. 2:14.

(2) Since *all* Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable (2 Tim. 3:16), it follows that any interpretation given to a single passage of Scripture, which conflicts with the general tenor of Scripture, cannot be the true interpretation.

In closing we submit a few translations of the Greek word translated in our Authorized Version "interpretation." According to the Diaglott a prophecy "is not of its own solution." Rotherham translates "No prophecy of Scripture becometh self-solving." As J. Rawson Lumby says, it is not of its own "untying." There are hard knots in the utterances which God puts in the mouths of his Prophets, which they themselves had not the power of untying. The same word appears in Mark 4:34, in reference to our Lord -only in his case the power to "untie" was possessed. We quote "When they were alone he expounded [literally, untied] all things to his disciples."

- P. L. Read.

## 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.***

WHY not abandon all human systems and confessions, now used for tying men's tongues and consciences, and let each other stand free to study God's Word untrammelled, and to build, *each for himself*, such a creed as he shall find authorized in God's Word; adding to his creed, or subtracting therefrom continually, as he continues to grow in grace and in knowledge and in love of God? This is the attitude which God designed; this is the liberty wherewith Christ makes us all free.

Why surrender our liberties and enslave our consciences and tongues to a sect, or the decisions of majorities in sects? If all of God's children were really free, thus, it would not be long before they would be at perfect oneness of heart and nearly at one in faith and work-the only true union.

We exhort all God's true Church -- the one Church, which includes *all consecrated believers* -- to awake to the principles of the Reformation, to a recognition of the *right of individual judgment* upon religious questions. Demand Scriptural proofs for all you are asked to believe; take neither the *decisions of Rome*, nor those of Westminster, nor those of any smaller councils or synods, as final settlements of the question, "What is truth?" And be sure that you believe and confess nothing that you do not *understand* fully and clearly. To subscribe to, or confess, what you do not understand, and therefore cannot truly believe, *is solemn lying* in the presence of God and witnesses, no matter if it be true that others, by the hundred, have done the same before you.

Require of all who shall attempt to teach in the name of the Lord, the *exact words* of the Lord or the Apostle which they claim support their teaching. Get the chapter and verse and look the matter up for yourselves, critically, examining the text and the context. Weigh and test every item of teaching which you receive as your faith, regardless of how much you esteem the person who presents it. We know that no fellow-mortal is infallible, and that his Word is the only standard by which God wishes to square and measure and build up our faith.

The foregoing paragraphs, as many of our readers will have recognized, are condensed from the *Reprints*, pages R1168 and R1136. They contain wise counsel indeed, from a pastor who surely was faithful. It is in agreement therewith that the ministry of the Pastoral Bible Institute, both by the printed page and by the spoken word, has been rendered. (See the special notices in reference to the Editorial Committee and the Pilgrim Service, which regularly appear on Page 2 of this Journal.) May we who have sought to follow this wise and faithful counsel "through the years" -- "through evil report and good report" -- be granted grace sufficient to continue therein; careful that, though others may count us deceivers, especially in our handling of the Word, we may yet remain true-scrupulously careful to maintain integrity of heart and life, and in our teaching, giving no cause for stumbling -- no offense in anything, that our ministry (our ministry of the Gospel) be not exposed to justifiable reproach. For we are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God, but as out of a heart of transparent sincerity -- yes, as under prompting from God and in his presence, we write and speak in Christ. - 2 Cor. 6:8; 4:2; 6:3; 2:17.

- *The Herald*.

## The Sequence of Events

(Revelation Chapters 18-22)

A QUESTION is sometimes asked as to what is the sequence of events to be expected in connection with the Second Advent of our Lord. Of course, as these events unfold I shall be able to speak with greater certainty than would become me today. However, I think I can find the answer in the last five chapters of the Book of Revelation.

Beginning with Rev. 18, and continuing to the end of the Book I find a series of 12 distinct visions *narrated in orderly sequence*. If I mistake not, they commence with the times in which we now live, and cover the entire period up to the full establishment of the Kingdom of God, at the close of the Millennial Age. The events thus symbolized are"

1. The fall of Babylon. - Rev. 18.

This, in my judgment, has been in process for years, but is not yet complete.

2. The first resurrection, that is to say, the resurrection of the Church, symbolized as the Marriage of the Lamb. - Rev. 19:6-9.

This too, I think, has been in process for years; my belief being based on the text: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord *from henceforth*." (Rev. 14:13.) It is my conviction that this text began to be fulfilled some years ago. First the dead in Christ were raised, as predicted in 1 Thess. 4:16; then, ever since, the remaining members of the Church, one by one, as they complete their course in death, are blessed by an instantaneous change to perfection as spirit beings. As soon as the Church is complete on the other side the veil, the Marriage will occur.

3. The glorious epiphany of Christ *with* his Church. - Rev. 19:11.

Note: The Church, in my understanding, is to share in her Lord's epiphany. (Col. 3:4.) This, in my judgment, has not yet taken place, nor, indeed, can it, until the last member of the Church has gone beyond the veil and the Marriage has occurred. (That some of the last members of the Church are still in the flesh I firmly believe, with all due respect to those who think otherwise.)

4. The *final* Armageddon conflict and victory. - Rev. 19:17, 21.

Note: -- While there have been some notable conflicts the *final* one, *and the ensuing victory*, is, in my judgment, still future.

Moreover, if I understand the matter correctly, it is in connection with *this* event, that Israel's experience, spoken of by the Prophet as "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7), is to occur. Those who are looking for the time of Jacob's trouble to occur before the Church is gone, are looking for the right thing at the wrong time. What is taking place in the Middle East is merely preparatory; not only will the Church be glorified, but even the Great Company will have completed its earthly experiences, and, while not part of the Bride, will have shared the blessedness of the Marriage Supper (Rev. 19:9), before the time of Jacob's trouble occurs.

*Jacob will be saved out of his trouble, by Christ and his Church, operating from the other side the veil, directing the victorious Armageddon conflict.*

5. The binding of Satan. - Rev. 20:1-3.

In my view this has not yet occurred. World conditions fully confirm this. One has only to read the headlines, to leaf through a few popular magazines, to listen to the radio, to glance at television, to review the newspaper advertisements of theatres and motion picture houses, to realize this. Evident it is that, far from being bound, Satan is still going about like a roaring lion; still operating as an angel of light. Evident it is that far from hearing the calm, strong voice of Jesus speaking, in tones of *kingly authority*: "Peace, be still," we hear only the expression of men's hearts failing them for fear, looking after those things that are coming on the earth. Moreover, when we turn from the advertisements of theatres and motion picture houses to the advertisements of the "Church" page, or leaf through religious magazines, it becomes increasingly apparent that the powers of the (ecclesiastical) heavens are being shaken. - Luke, 21:26.

6. The Millennial reign of Christ and his Church. - Rev. 20:4-6.

7. The loosing of Satan for a little season, at the end of the Millennium. - Rev. 20:7, 8.

8. The Post-millennial apostasy, and the judgment on it. - Rev. 20:9.

9. The destruction of Satan. - Rev. 20:10.

10. The judgment of the dead, small and great. - Rev. 20:12, 13.

11. The destruction of the last enemy, death, with all that the word destruction implies. - Rev. 20:14.

12. The eternal Kingdom of God. - Rev. 21; Rev. 22:5.

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be. " - 2 Peter 3:11.

- P. L. Read.

## Rest

The rest of faith! How wondrous sweet,  
Each trial and each grief to meet,  
Upheld by that sufficient grace,  
That trusts him where it cannot trace.

The rest of peace! With mind so stayed,  
That as the sea-birds, unafraid,  
Upon the stormy deep do sleep,  
My soul an inmost calm doth keep.

The rest of love! What holy bliss,  
That he is mine, and I am his!  
It sweetens every bitter cup,  
It bids my tear-dimmed eyes look up;

It satisfies my hungry heart,  
And makes this life of heaven a part.  
Oh! blessed rest of faith and peace,  
Oh! A rest of love ne'er shall cease.

- Gertrude W. Seibert.

## "Ye Shall Die Like Men"

*"I have said, 'Ye are gods . . . but ye shall die like men.'" - Psalm 82:6, 7.*

A READER asks: Will you please review Psalm 82, with special reference to Psa. 82:6 and Psa. 82:7? In your discussion will you please say if the "gods" in verse 6 are the same as those mentioned in Psa. 82:1? Then, too, I was told recently that the Hebrew word which, in Psa. 82:8, is translated "God" (singular), would better be translated "gods" (plural), and that in both verses 6 and 8 the reference is to the Church. Your comments on this point also would be appreciated.

*Answer:*

To my understanding the word "gods" in verse 1 refers to the judges of Israel. The Hebrew word *elohim* here translated "gods" has this meaning elsewhere. See, for example, Exod. 21:6; 22:8, 9, 28.

These judges were as gods to the rest of the nation. They were not to be worshiped as God, but they were to act in his stead. They represented him. In so far as they discharged the duties of their office faithfully, their decrees were as the decrees of God. This principle should be true of all judges everywhere, but it was especially true in the theocratic state of Israel. The office was sacred, no matter how far short of faithful performance of its duties the incumbents fell.

Expositors, generally, are agreed that the "gods" in verse 6 are the same as the "gods" in verse 1.\* Thus understood, the Psalm bears the descriptive title given it by Rotherham in his *"Studies in the Psalms"* as "The Judgment of Unjust Judges." Moulton, in his *"Modern Reader's Bible"* gives the caption: "God in judgment on the gods." The Westminster Study Edition of the Bible supplies the title "God Condemns Unrighteous Judges."

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\* Brother Russell at one time shared this view. However, he then believed that in both verses 1 and 6 the reference was not to unjust judges but to the Church (Reprints 338, 421, 1410). Later, he came to agree with the generally accepted view of the scholars that in verse 1 the reference is not to the Church but to unjust judges; however he did not abandon his belief that verse 6 applied to the Church. - S.S. Vol. V, pages E68, E69.

Psa. 82:1 is attributed, generally, to the Psalmist, Asaph, as is also verse 8, while the intervening verses, Psa. 82:2-7 inclusive, are understood to apply, in their entirety, to the unjust judges of verse 1.

In this generally held viewpoint, verses 6 and 7 are understood to be the concluding words of God's judgment of the judges, and may be paraphrased thus: "Gods though I myself have styled you, you are, nevertheless, but mortal men. As mortal men ye shall die; yea, as princes whom I have overthrown in their rebellion, ye shall ignominiously fall."

In verse 8 the Psalmist, having listened to this righteous judgment of God on these unjust judges, calls on God to arise, and put an end to the perversion of justice, by himself judging not Israel only, but all nations.

To my understanding, there is nothing in our Lord's reference to this Psalm, in John 10:34-38, which conflicts with the interpretation given foregoing. He there appeals to verse 6 of our Psalm in his argument with the Jews, when they charged him with blasphemy "because he being a man,

made himself God." (Verse 31.) The point of his argument seems clear: "If earthly judges are Scripturally termed 'gods' - and in Psalm 82:6 they are -how can you justly charge me with blasphemy for saying that I am God's son? Moreover, this title of 'gods' was given to those *to whom* the word of God *came* (consecrating them to their office, and requiring them to conform their judicial decisions to that word). In my case, I am not one *to whom* that word *came*, but the one *who was himself* consecrated and *sent*."

In the interpretation *of* the Psalm presented foregoing, its *primary* reference has been shown to be to the unjust judges of Israel who lived in the days of the Psalmist Asaph; men who, though placed by God in exalted stations would, nevertheless, die as other mortals, and who would first suffer ignominious ruin for their unrighteous course.

But this primary reference by no means exhausts the teaching of the Psalm. It is a fact, which no scholar would dispute, that many of the Old Testament Scriptures are Messianic in character. This is particularly true of the Psalms. Examples may be seen in whole Psalms such as Psalms 2, 16, 22, 45, 46, 72 and 110; also in selected passages from other Psalms such as Psalm 31:5 (Luke 23:26); Psalm 34:20 (John 19:36); and Psalm 41:9 (John 13:18). Such a Messianic application is hinted at by Rotherham in his comment on verse 8 of our Psalm. I quote:

"We seem to be carried forward on the wave of a Messianic flood as we read in the concluding couplet: As if to say, *Oh arise, Elohim, oh judge the earth-thyself*, in a clearer and nearer Divine Manifestation than at present; no longer permitting Justice to be perverted as now; and do this the rather that *all nations* are thine by right; thine by the claim of thy birth as earth's King, into the full possession of which wilt thou be pleased soon to enter. "

And here we are brought back -- rather we are brought forward -- to Brother Russell's illuminating exposition, as condensed in the footnote to S.S. Vol. V, page E69. I quote it here in full, except for the reference to verses 6 and 7:

"This entire Psalm (82) seems to refer to our Lord Jesus as the divinely appointed Deliverer and Judge of Christendom, now, in the time of his *parousia*. To him we apply the words, 'God [*elohim*, Christ appointed by the Father to judge the world now] standeth in the assemblage of the mighty [amongst the financial, political, and ecclesiastical princes]; he judgeth among [these] *gods* [*elohim* - *mighty* ones].' He is represented first as reproving these princes and calling for equity, but 'They heed not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness [respecting what will be the result of their policy]: all the foundations of the earth [the social world] are out of the course;' is his decision: it is useless to attempt to patch present institutions; they must all be 'dls solved,' that the new heavens and new earth -- the new social world -- may come instead. Then . . . when all the 'elect' Church *by dying* shall have passed beyond the veil-then Christ will be called upon, 'Arise, O God [*elohim*] judge the earth: for thou hast inherited all nations.' It will be to establish His Kingdom that he will let loose the judgments which in 'a great time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation,' shall abase the proud and exalt the humble and usher in the 'times of restitution' long promised by all the holy prophets. - Acts 3:19-23."

One question remains: "Would the word translated 'God' in verse 8 be better translated 'gods'?"

The answer to this question may be traced in S.S. Vol. V, pages 6669. There Brother Russell discusses the word *elohim* at some length. On page 66 he correctly states that "like our English word 'sheep' *elohim* is used either in the singular or plural as occasion may require."

What does the occasion require in Psalm 82:8? I reply: The noun *elohim* must here be translated in the singular (God) for the reason that it is the subject of three verbs, "arise," "judge" and "inherit," *all of which are in the singular*. The fact that the verb forms are in the singular rules out as ungrammatical any interpretation which gives *elohim* in this verse the plural meaning which it does in fact have in verses 1 and 6.

To utilize Brother Russell's "sheep" illustration: If told that the sheep *was being sheared*, we would understand that the reference was to only one animal; whereas, if told that the sheep *were being sheared*, we would understand that the reference was to more than one animal.

Since writing the foregoing, one additional related question has reached me, as follows:

*Question:*

In recent years conflicting views have been expressed as to whether the last members of the Church are to die, or whether their change is to occur in some other way. As you doubtless know, in S.S. Vol. III (pages 238, 239) Psalm 82:6, 7 is adduced as a "proof text" that the last members are not to be exempt from experiencing death, but must all "die like men." What is your thought?

*Answer:*

It is my conviction that the last members of the Church are to die, but I do not think Psalm 82:6, 7 so teaches.

In the preceding paragraphs I have endeavored to show that, in the view of expositors generally, including Rotherham, the "gods" of verses 6 and 7 are the same unjust judges as are first brought to our attention in verses 1 and 2. If, as I believe, this view be correct, there can be no reference in verses 6 and 7 to the Church, for *unjust* judges, in the very nature of the case, could not be used to represent any of the members of the Body of the Christ, all of whom are just-their faith being reckoned to them for righteousness.

The manner in which the change of the last members of the Church is to be effected is, of course, an intensely interesting question-more interesting today than ever. But it is a question which, in my judgment, lies outside the scope of Psalm 82 and is, therefore, one to be decided, if it is to be decided in this life at all, not by reference to Psalm 82, but to other Scriptures; e.g.: 1 Cor. 15:51-59; Rev. 2:10; Rev. 14:3.

- P. L. Read.

## **Our Fellowship in Christ**

THE Scots have a saying that some things are better felt than telt, and perhaps this is especially true of Christian fellowship. Difficult to describe, it is easy to enjoy.

As illustrating this, a story is told of a mother who taught her children that each day they should make it a point to do something for others which would greatly please Jesus. At the end of one day her twelve year old daughter reported that her good deed had been to read aloud to a blind lady. The nine year old boy had visited a schoolmate who was in bed with a broken leg. When it came the little four year old's turn to render her account she could think of nothing. However, in response to prompting, she remembered that across the street there was another little girl her own age whom she had seen sitting on the steps of her thus and so"; would that reply bring fellowship about, where before there was none? Or suppose the reply were: "No! we ought not to have fellowship with so and so"; would that reply hinder, in any way, a fellowship which really existed? You know very well it would not.

Let me give you another illustration of true fellowship, this time from the birds: All of us will recall the proverb: "Birds of a feather flock together." Now we know that this proverb is true. Birds of a feather do not hold a meeting to discuss the matter, and pass resolutions as to whether they shall or shall not, but by nature they actually do flock together.

This is true also of men. A man who is of a generous mind never, under any circumstances, longs after, and seeks out, the company of a house, sobbing bitterly. Not knowing what else to do she had crossed the street, thrown her arm around her and, "Mother, I cried too."

Ah! she could not define fellowship as it is done in the dictionary, and knew nothing about analyzing it; but she knew how to weep with those who weep. And who shall say that she had not learned the very essence of the matter at the tender age of four?

### **BIRDS OF A FEATHER**

Sometimes we hear the expression: "May we have fellowship with thus and so?" Or, "Do you think we ought to have fellowship with so and so?" Such questions indicate that those who ask them do not fully understand what the word fellowship means. s. Suppose the reply were "Yes, we may have fellowship with miser; a humble-minded man never, by any chance, delights himself in the company of a man who is proud in heart. It just isn't done.

### **ALL ONE BODY WE**

Fellowship never constructs fences. It is true that from time to time, while endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace, the Lord's people have found themselves separated by fences which others have constructed. But to these footstep followers of Jesus has been given God's own holy spirit, and those who yield themselves to its sweet influence find themselves possessed of a strange wisdom, a wisdom which knows how to climb over the walls of separation others might build, which knows how to reach through the fences others might construct, and clasp in warm and loving greeting the hand of a brother Christian. Such have been able always truthfully to sing: "We are not divided, all one body we."

## DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES

The question is sometimes asked In what respect does an understanding of doctrine affect fellowship? To this I reply: It all depends on the individuals concerned.

I find in myself and in others a natural disposition to give attention to doctrine rather than to conduct, whereas, what attention we give to doctrine should ever be with a view to a closer walk with God. There is in this a great danger. One may hold the most accurate views regarding the fundamentals of Christian doctrine, may be able to state them in the most precise formulas, may be thoroughly instructed in dispensational and prophetic truth, and may know familiarly the teaching embodied in the types, and yet be barren of fruit. There may be little life where there is much light.

Brethren, let us thank God that our faith is not in a creed, not in a statement of belief, but in a Person, our blessed Lord Jesus, whose personality embraces every grace, in loyalty to whom we can all find fellowship and unity; yea, and if it did but know it, a distracted world could find its life.

If Jesus stood in our midst today so that we could see him with the eyes of flesh, I venture the assertion that he would identify himself with none of us; but with what gladness -- nay, in what a delirium of delight -- would *we* identify ourselves with *him!*

## TOGETHER

One more little story: A few years ago three of us stood on a station platform waiting until the train, in which another friend was to take a journey, pulled out. As we stood there, the train conductor came along. He was one of those kindly, genial-faced men, who had grown grey in the service of the public. As he walked down the platform near to where we stood, the engineer of the train, also one whose face showed his kindly character, walking a little faster, caught up with him. Said the engineer to the conductor: "Are you going with me today, or am I going with you?" The smiling face of the conductor remains with me still, as I remember his reply "Let's go," said he, "*together.*"

- P. L. Read.

## The Question Box

### *Question:*

In Matthew 16:18 our Lord is reported to have said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church." What is the significance of this statement? Please also explain the meaning of the words in the next verse, which read: "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven."

### *Answer:*

Roman Catholic theologians teach that in the words "upon this rock," our Lord has reference to Peter, himself.

It will be recalled that when his brother Andrew introduced him to the Lord, Simon had been greeted by Jesus with the words: "Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation Peter" (that is, a rock or a stone. - John 1:42 margin, A.R.V.). At that time Simon was anything but a rock, but our Lord's penetrating glance saw in the hotheaded, impulsive, rash, unstable Simon other qualities which, in *his* skillful and loving hands, could be, and would be, so trained and developed, so molded and strengthened, as to give him the self-control he lacked; which would fit him for service, make him stout-hearted and strong where he was now weak -- helpful, no longer unreliable, in the cause which at heart he loved.

Catholics, indeed, contend for much more than this. It is their position that, after his resurrection, having previously conferred on Simon the name of Cephas, our Lord made Peter "Prince of the Apostles"; that when he thrice reinstated him in the under-shepherd's office (John 21:15-23) our Lord conferred on Peter a primacy-a primacy which he began to exercise immediately following our Lord's ascension.

Protestant expositors readily admit the outstanding leadership of Peter during the early days of the Church. This is clearly in evidence in the events recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Some, indeed, share the Catholic view that in the words, "upon this rock," our Lord had reference to Peter. However, such Protestant scholars reject the further Catholic claims that this preeminence descended to a line of successors. For this idea Protestants of all shades of belief find no Scriptural basis.

Most Protestant scholars, however, do not believe that the words, "upon this rock," refer to Peter. Such believe that had that been our Lord's meaning, he would have said "Thou art Peter and upon *thee will* I build my Church." On this point there is an interesting footnote in Rotherham's translation.

Other scholars, too, have noted that in Matthew 16:18 the word "Peter" is a translation of the Greek word *petros*, which means a piece of rock; whereas the word "rock" is a translation of the Greek word *petra*, which means a mass of rock. On this point see the Greek Dictionary in the back of *Strong's Concordance*, Nos. SG4074 and SG4073. The word *petra* suggests the bed-rock out of which pieces of rock or stones are cut; whereas *petros* carries the thought of one of such stones; a large stone, indeed, and perhaps the first-certainly one of the first -- to be laid upon the great underlying Rock -- foundation on which all the faithful would be built.

Some of the early Christian Fathers -- indeed some modern Protestant expositors -- have supposed that the rock referred to was not Peter, but Peter's confession of faith, the faith to which he had just given expression in Matt. 16:16, namely, that Jesus was the long-promised Christ -- the Messiah of Old Testament prophecy. Against this interpretation, however, there has been urged, what appears to be a valid objection. The objection is this: In Scripture, whenever the word "rock" is employed figuratively, it is applied to *persons, never to things*. Indeed, the designation "rock" in the Old Testament is applied *only to Jehovah*; in the New Testament only to *Christ*. For example: "He [God] is the rock." (Deut. 32:4); "Who is a rock, save our God?" (2 Sam. 22:32); "In the Lord Jehovah is a rock of ages." (Isa. 26:4, margin "They drank of a spiritual rock that followed them; and the rock was the Christ." - 1 Cor. 10:4, margin.

Christ, then, not Peter, nor yet Peter's confession of faith, but Christ himself is the rock. And on *this* rock he has ever since been building his Church. The bedrock, the "Rock of Ages," is here, in Matthew 16:18, as elsewhere in the Scriptures, God, as revealed in his Son.

In harmony with this, the Apostle Paul declares: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." - 1 Cor. 3:11.

We come now to those other words: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven." What is the meaning here?

In these words the Savior varies his presentation. He had spoken of his Church as an edifice, himself as its bedrock, and Peter as likely to become an important foundation stone, to be well and truly laid upon it. The figure in his mind was evidently that of a temple. Now he likens his Church to a kingdom. The headquarters of a kingdom is a city; keys would be needed to open its gates.

Elsewhere in the Scriptures our Lord declares that he, and he alone possesses the key. This he tells us, in language unmistakable, in his message to the Church at Philadelphia: "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth." (Rev. 3:7.) The only one possessing the power to open the door into his Church was and is himself. But when he spoke, his earthly course was about to be ended. Henceforth he would operate through honored agents. Whom shall he use to open the doors of the Kingdom? *The answer to this question may be seen in the events which followed his ascension.* Very evident it is that to Peter it was granted, in his great discourse on the day of Pentecost, to open the door of the Kingdom to the Jews. (Acts 2:14, 40.) To him also was assigned the high privilege of opening that door to the Gentiles, in the case of Cornelius. (Acts 10; 11; 15 7.) In this privilege of opening the door to both Jews and Gentiles Peter was, indeed, signally honored; but only in this did he have any preeminence amongst the Apostles. And of course, such a prominence, granted for a particular service, could not, in its very nature, be passed on to a successor.

It is worthy of note that the power to bind and loose on earth and in heaven, mentioned in the closing words of verse 19, was granted not only to Peter, but to all the Apostles. (Matt. 18:18.) These phrases, "whatsoever thou shalt bind," and "whatsoever thou shalt loose," were common Hebrew expressions, having a definite and well-known meaning. "To bind" meant "to forbid," or "to declare forbidden." "To loose" meant "to allow," or "to declare allowable." The eminent scholar, Lightfoot, tells us that one might produce thousands of examples from the writings of the Jews to prove that such was the meaning of the phrases in question. By our Lord's employment of them here, then, may be understood, in harmony with his promise in John 16:12, that after he had

been crucified, raised from the dead, and ascended to God's right hand, the holy spirit of truth would be sent to them, to guide and direct them in their ministry, so that in their presentation of the Gospel, and in all related matters, in connection with the unfolding of God's great plan of salvation, the true follower of the Master might have confidence that they were having revealed to them, not merely the thought of the Apostles, but the very mind and purposes of God.

To summarize then, Jesus is, as the hymn-writer has suggested:

" . . . The great Rock-foundation,  
Whereon our feet were set by sovereign grace;  
Not life, nor death, with all their agitation,  
Can thence remove us, if we see his face."

Meanwhile, while we do not worship them, we delight to honor those whom Jesus honored, namely, the Twelve Apostles, as being, all of them, foundation-stones indeed. The wall of the City (of the New Jerusalem), we are told by Peter himself, is built of living stones. (1 Pet. 2:4, 5.) And the Master, in "the vision glorious," has told us that this wall has twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. (Rev. 21:14.) And not only are their *names* inscribed there; these foundations are seen to be "adorned with all manner of precious stones." (Verse 19.) Well may we honor them.

To close with words well known to us all, we "are being built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; in whom every building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the spirit. " - Ephes. 2:20-33, A.R.V., margin.

- P. L. Read.

## RECENTLY DECEASED

Elizabeth M. Bernoudy, St. Louis, Mo.  
Alice Booth, San Bernardino, Calif.  
Mary Dabrowski, Holland, Mich.  
Jesse Hemery, London, Eng.  
Joseph Kuzma, Detroit, Mich.  
Josephine Kwolek, Garden City, Mich.  
Joseph T. Mleczewski, Climax, Mich.  
Rose Naismith, Montreal, Que.  
Charlotte Nesbed, Berwyn, Ill.  
Harvey M. Nosby, Minneapolis, Minn.  
Katherine Polakowski, Chicago, Ill.  
Katherine Sikora, La Grange, Ill.  
Birdy Tornquist, Staten Island, N.Y.  
Estelle Williams, West Concord, Mass.