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Redeeming the Time A New Year Meditation

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

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

The *Analytical Concordance* (Prof. Young) defines the Greek word translated "redeeming" in the above quotations from Colossians and Ephesians as, "to acquire out of the form." Dr. Strong supplies the meaning as, "to buy up, i.e. ransom; to rescue from loss (improve opportunity)." There must be sacrifice; cost is involved if we are to "rescue from loss" the time which can be used in the service of God. The child of God has but a few short years at most in which to be conformed to the image and likeness of his dear Son, during which the affections must be weaned

from all that is earthly. *"We are his [God's] workmanship"*; it is he *"who has begun the good work in us"* and will complete it; but he has called us to be co-workers with him. He has not placed upon us a responsibility we cannot fulfill, nevertheless it is a task which requires all our effort and every moment of our consecrated life. How MUCH TIME ARE WE PREPARED To PUT INTO IT? The Christian life more than any other vocation is "a full-time job," requiring every moment of every twenty-four hours of every day. The intensity of our love for God; the strength of our determination to do his will; our love for the heavenly Bridegroom, and our desire to "enter with him to the Marriage" -- all are determined by our use of the time which has been placed in our charge.

"REDEEMING THE TIME, BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL"

There is a sense of urgency *in* those words of the Apostle, yet how appropriate in these closing days of this dispensation. These are "evil days"; evil because there are so many delusions and deceptions in the world, and so many "harmless pastimes" to occupy time and attention and to sap spiritual vitality. Do not we need to ask ourselves repeatedly whether "*all* our days and *all* our hours" are being spent in accordance with the will of God? Daily work and nightly sleep occupy a large part of every twenty-four hours, yet even these can be used either to help or hinder our Christian walk. But what about the time over which we have some measure of control? That "social hour" -- the time we spend reading "that book" or the newspaper, listening to the radio, or looking at the television? Do we question whether these are conducive to our Christian development?

It may be "just for a few minutes," and "quite harmless," but do they accord with the exhortation to "redeem the time," to "buy back" the moments? Failure to attain to the "prize of the high calling of God" will be the responsibility of one person only -- OURSELF. The commandments of God are his enablings, for he has promised to provide every need, to strengthen in weakness; but of us it is expected that everything we have shall be put into this greatest of all enterprises. And is that not what we promised to do when we surrendered our lives to God? Henceforth we would "live, and speak, and toil for him."

How then shall we use the moments, the hours and the days which our Father may mercifully loan to us during 1965? Shall we linger along the road marked "Henceforth," or shall we "run with patience the race set before us"? Shall we give to God the time we can spare, or shall we "redeem the time"? Let us in the remaining portion of this meditation be devoted to a consideration of the things which are essential to the growth and development of every true child of God.

PRAYER

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

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

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

How reassuring to know that our swift petitions to God are always heard, when we are faced with a sudden assault from our Adversary, or with the need for a swift decision, "HIS EAR IS EVER OPEN TO OUR CRY." But, for every child of God there must be those deliberate "prayer sessions," times of quiet and unhurried communion, when the heart's devotion to God is poured out, when we can tell him of our love and of our inmost longings to know and to do his will. Such

sessions need *time* and preparation in order that there might be a right attitude of heart and mind in our approach to "THE KING OF KINGS" at the Throne of Grace. O how needful is preparation for a reverent approach to God! Yet how frequently we rush into his presence, hastily utter our requests, and rush away! Our time is "so fully occupied"; hence the necessity to "*redeem the time,*" to buy up the moments, to sacrifice time spent on less important matters, to put "*first things first.*"

Is it hard to pray? Like so much else, effort and determination are required to cultivate the habit of prayer, yet with sincere desire and perseverance it will become a joy to be anticipated, to leave the world with its turmoil and care, and to shut ourselves away to "where none but God can hear." "They that *wait upon the Lord* shall renew their strength." Prayer should embrace every aspect and activity of the life -- little things and big things. "In *everything*, by prayer and supplication . . . let your requests be made known unto God." (Phil. 4:6.) It has been truly said that "If there be anything in our lives that cannot be prayed about, we may be quite sure that that thing has no business to be there at all." Therefore, *time* for prayer is as essential as the air we breathe. To be spiritually healthy we *must* find time for prayer. Let it be regular, a specified time each day, a season set apart as a time to meet and talk with God, for "any time" so frequently be-comes "no time." Shall this be our resolve for 1965?

STUDY AND MEDITATION

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

To Timothy Paul wrote: "STUDY to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15.) To read the Bible brings much blessing, but is not enough. To listen to the Word of God being expounded is not sufficient to maintain spiritual health and strength. There must be *study*. Of the Bereans of old it is written:

(1) "*They received the word with all readiness of mind,*" that is, they gladly heard God's Good News. (2) "*They searched the Scriptures,*" but even more than that (3) "*They searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*" (Acts 17:11.) "*They searched the Scriptures daily*" -- in those days of toil and slavery, that required *time* each day, a season set apart for the Word of God! How necessary for them to "redeem the time"; how necessary for God's people today to cut off the less essential things!

We pray that our appreciation of God's purposes might become more clear; the answer can come only through God's Word. Our prayer is that we might know his will for us; it is revealed in his Word. Never a day should pass without some time spent with God's Holy Word; upon it depends our growth in grace and knowledge. This then is a habit which must be cultivated and will require sacrifice and perseverance.

Hear the words of Jeremiah, the Prophet -- "*Thy words were found, AND I DID EAT THEM; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.*" (Jer. 15:16.) Such is the testimony of all who have developed the habit of private study with God's Word. A great musician once testified-

that if he ceased his practice of music for one day, he became conscious of his loss of skill; if for two days, his friends became aware of it; and if for three days he neglected his hours of practice, the public would know it. There is a parable for the Lord's people.

FELLOWSHIP

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

But *true* fellowship demands that we shall "redeem the time." Our Adversary is expert at finding "harmless occupations which so fill the time that fellowship is restricted. All need exhortation—the strongest with the weakest of saints; so much in the circumstances and conditions of life today tend to drag us down to "the lower levels." "*Let us hold the Hope we avow without wavering; . . . and let us consider how to stir one another to love and good deeds.* NOT CEASING TO MEET TOGETHER, *as is the habit of some, but admonishing one another -- ALL THE MORE SO, as you see the Day drawing near.*" (Heb. 10:23-25 Moffatt.) Another rendering of the foregoing quotation is -- "*By observing one another, let us arouse ourselves to rival one another's love and good deeds.*" What a happy rivalry that is! "*Let us not neglect meeting together is some do, but let us encourage on, another, ALL THE MORE as you can see the great Day is coming nearer.*" Are you "isolated" and unable to gather with others in true fellowship? Then neglect not that fellowship through "the written word"; the Lord will richly bless your correspondence with others.

SERVICE

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

There are two kinds of service which should engage the time of those who would seek to obtain the "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." (1) That which concerns our individual lives, involving the discipline of self and the subjection of our whole being, even the thoughts of the

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

Our meditation draws to a close. At the entrance to another year we have together searched our hearts.

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

- *Edwin Allbon, Eng.*

Victory

(Author Unknown)

When I really am contented
That my wish be set aside,
When I cease from selfish longing,
When I triumph over pride,
When I'm willing, really willing
To be nothing (as they sing)
But a broken, empty vessel
In the service of the King
That is victory!

When I calmly take unkindness,
And as meekly bear a sneer,
When I'm willing to relinquish
All that earth is holding dear,
When the falseness of some dear one
Fails to waken in my heart
Any bitter, hard resentment
Or to wing an angry dart
That is victory!

When I cease to long for earth's love,
Am content to be unknown;
When I smile when friends neglect me,
Happy in His love alone;
When I lose myself in Jesus,
And surroundings cease to be,
With their little jars and discords,
Able to discourage me
That is victory!

Lord, I cannot hope to triumph
Over every form of sin,
And to live but for thy glory
While my own will reigns within.
So I bring my will to thee,
Lord, Rule thou me in all my ways,
And the glory shall be thine, Lord,
And the honor, and the praise
That is victory!

That Prophet

"Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we ..." - Heb. 3:5, 6.

ONE remarkable MESSIANIC prediction stands out prominently on the pages of Deuteronomy: "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me," said the great lawgiver and mediator of "Israel. He was urging the people never to resort to necromancy and divination, familiar spirits or wizards, superstitious vices common among the Canaanites whose land they were going to possess; and he enforces the prohibition by this promise, as though he would say, you shall not need to resort to such means of ascertaining the mind of God, for he will give you another mediator and legislator like myself. He tells them that he had received this promise from God Himself at the time of the giving of the law forty years before, at Sinai. The terrified people had exclaimed, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." They had realized their need of a human mediator, "in the days of the assembly in Horeb"; and God had responded to their desire by saying to Moses, "They have well spoken. I will raise up unto them a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I command him. And whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." Deut. 18:15-19.

Now God raised up many prophets in Israel in after-years, but of them all we may say, "there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses." So fully were the Jews in Christ's day convinced that the promised prophet had never yet appeared, that they naturally put the question to John, "Art thou *that* prophet?" alluding to this very prediction. When subsequently they ate of the food miraculously provided by Christ for the five thousand, the thought was again suggested to them by the remembrance of the manna sent through Moses, and the people exclaim, "This is of a truth *that* prophet that should come into the world." - John 6:14.

The rich depth of meaning that lies concealed in those words, "like unto me," was little understood by Moses, and is often little perceived among ourselves through deficient meditation. The following are some of the points that should be noted in the resemblance.

- 1 a. Moses was saved from death in his infancy.
b. So was Christ.
- 2 a. Moses fled his country to escape the wrath of the king.
b. Christ was taken into Egypt for the same purpose.
- 3 a. Afterwards the Lord said to Moses in Midian, "Go, return."
b. As the angel said to Joseph, "Arise, and take the young child, and go back into the land of Israel, for they are dead which sought the young child's life.
- 4 a. Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, though it might have led to his being a king.
b. Christ refused to be made a king, choosing rather to suffer affliction and death for the sake of his people.

5 a. Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Josephus says he was a forward youth, and had wisdom and knowledge beyond his years.

b. Christ increased in wisdom and stature, and favour with God and man, as his discourse in the temple with the doctors when twelve years old proved.

6 a. Moses contended with the magicians of Egypt, who were forced to acknowledge that he exercised Divine power.

b. Christ also contended with and cast out evil spirits, who similarly acknowledged his Divine power.

7 a. Moses was a lawgiver, a prophet, a worker of miracles, and a priest.

b. Christ was still more illustriously all these.

8 a. Moses brought darkness over the land.

b. The sun veiled his face when Christ died.

9 a. The darkness in Egypt was followed by the destruction of the firstborn, and of Pharaoh and his host.

b. The darkness at Christ's death was a forerunner of the destruction of the Jews.

10 a. Moses foretold the calamities which would befall the nation for their disobedience.

b. So also did Christ.

11 a. The spirit which was in Moses was conferred in some degree upon the seventy elders, and they prophesied.

b. Christ conferred miraculous powers upon his seventy disciples.

12 a. Moses was victorious over powerful kings and great nations.

b. So was Christ in the spread of his faith, and the conversion soon after his death of the Roman empire to his religion.

13 a. Moses conquered Amalek by holding up his hands and praying for Israel.

b. Christ overcame his and our enemies when his hands were fastened to the cross.

14 a. Moses interceded for transgressors, caused an atonement to be made for them, and stopped the wrath of God.

b. So did Christ.

15 a. Moses ratified a covenant between God and the people by sprinkling them with blood.

b. Christ with his own blood.

16 a. Moses desired to die for the people, and prayed God either to forgive them or blot him out of His book.

b. Christ did more, he died for sinners.

17 a. Moses slew the paschal lamb, none of whose bones were broken, and whose blood protected the people from destruction.

b. "Christ our passover was sacrificed for us," the true Paschal Lamb offered himself.

18 a. Moses lifted up the serpent of brass, that they who looked upon it might be healed of their mortal wounds.

b. Christ said, "I, if I be lifted up [on the cross], will draw men unto me."

19 a. All the love and care of Moses for Israel, all his toils and sufferings on their account were repaid with ingratitude, murmuring and rebellion.

b. The same return was made to Christ.

20 a. Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses.

b. As to Christ we read, "neither did his brethren believe o n him."

21 a. Moses had a wicked and perverse generation committed to his care; miraculous powers were given him to rule them, and he did his utmost to make them obedient to God, and to save them from ruin, but it was all in vain; in the course of forty years they all perished in the wilderness, save Caleb and Joshua.

b. Christ was given to a similar generation, his doctrine and his miracles were alike lost on them, and in about the same space of time after they had rejected him they were all destroyed in the Roman war.

22 a. Moses was very meek, above all men that were on the face of the earth.

b. Christ said, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls."

23 a. Israel did not enter the land of promise till Moses was dead.

b. It is the death of Christ which has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

There is also a resemblance in some points between the death of Moses and the death of Christ, though imperfect and associated with contrasts. Moses died in some sense because of the iniquities of the people; it was their rebellion which led to the fault on his part which drew down the displeasure of God on them and on him. He went up in the sight of the people to the top of Mount Nebo, and there he died, when he was in perfect vigor, his eye not dim or his natural force abated. Christ suffered for the sins of men and was led up to Calvary in the presence of the people, in the flower of his age and in his full natural strength. Moses was buried, and no man knew where his body lay; nor could the Jews find the body of Christ. Just before his death Moses promised the people another prophet like himself; Christ promised "another comforter."

Eusebius long ago noted many particulars of the resemblance between Moses and Christ. He says:

1 a. "Moses was the first to rescue the Jewish nation from Egyptian superstition and idolatry, and to teach them the true theology.

b. Jesus was the first teacher of truth and holiness to the Gentiles.

2 a. Moses confirmed his teachings by miracles ;

b. So likewise did Christ.

3 a. Moses promised a happy life in the Holy Land to those who kept the law ;

b. And Christ a better country -- that is, a heavenly -- to all righteous souls.

- 4 a. Moses fasted forty days.
b. And so likewise did Christ.
- 5 a. Moses gave the people bread in the wilderness;
b. And our Saviour fed five thousand at one time, and four thousand at another with a few loaves.
- 6 a. Moses went himself and led the people through the midst of the sea ;
b. And Christ walked on the water, and enabled Peter to do the same.
- 7 a. Moses stretched out his rod, and the Lord caused the sea to go backward ;
b. Our Saviour rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was a great calm.
- 8 a. Moses' face shown when he descended from the Mount ;
b. Our Savior's shone like the sun in his transfiguration.
- 9 a. Moses by his prayers cured Miriam of her leprosy;
b. Christ with a word healed several lepers.
- 10 a. Moses appointed seventy rulers,
b. And our Saviour seventy disciples.
- 11 a. Moses sent out twelve men to spy the land;
b. Our Saviour twelve apostles to visit all nations.

Never was there a prophet so like unto Moses as Jesus Christ! Isaiah wrought no miracle; Jeremiah promulgated no new law; Daniel instituted no new system of worship. We may search over the sacred and profane historical portrait galleries of the past, during the fifteen hundred years that elapsed between the appearance of these two great deliverers in Israel, but not till we come to the Prophet of Nazareth do we meet with the predicted "like unto me." And it should be noted that the emphatic "him shall ye hear" of Moses is rendered by Peter in the third of Acts, "Every soul that will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." *This settles the question that it was of Christ that Moses spoke.*

Previous generations had rejected previous prophets without perishing in consequence. But the generation that rejected Jesus were, according to his own prediction, "miserably destroyed"; and the total excision of the Jewish people for a time from their own olive tree, was the consequence of their refusal to hear the prophet like unto Moses. Seventy years of captivity in Babylon was inflicted on them on account of their iniquities and idolatries in the days of the kings, but eighteen hundred years of dispersion and misery have followed their rejection of Christ. Could Moses have foreseen this? Were not his words weighty with a mournful meaning he little imagined? Were not the mind and purpose of God expressed in the simple yet solemn and sublime prediction "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people?"

If the long and detailed prophecies of Lev. 26 and Deut. 33 were a program of the future of Israel, may we not say that this brief but frequent utterance about the prophet that should come into the world illustrates that program with *a portrait*? Not only was a long and complete history foretold, but *an individual character* was delineated in the words, "like unto me." The sketch is held up to the gaze of generation after generation; fifteen hundred years pass by, and no one at all like it

appears. Judges and deliverers arise in Israel, David the man after God's own heart orders and instructs the people, a line of kings and a line of prophets pass over the stage of Jewish history, but no one appears answering to the prophetic sketch, "like unto me."

After the lapse of fifteen centuries, however, Jesus of Nazareth appears, and, lo! every feature of the portrait can be recognized, and we need not inquire, "Art thou that prophet that should come into the world?" His likeness to Moses makes the question needless! Deliverer, leader, Saviour, lawgiver, mediator, ruler, judge, prophet, priest, king; God's servant, God's representative, God's reflection, God's ambassador among men, illustrious founder of a new order of things; mighty yet meek, patient yet inflexible, tender yet stern against sin, loving, even to tears and agony, and self sacrifice, yet denouncing sore judgments to come, -- was any one ever so like Moses as Christ, and so like Christ as Moses? When they beheld these two stand side by side in glory in the transfiguration on the Mount, did Peter, James, and John perceive any likeness between them? We know not! There is something far deeper than face or form; when illuminated by the spirit in after days, the Apostles perceived and expounded this deeper likeness between the great prophet of the old covenant and the greater Prophet of the new, and called on all to obey the voice from the excellent glory which had fallen on their ears, "Hear him."

Most marvellously did the Lord Jesus Christ answer to this description, "a prophet like unto me"; and some of the points of resemblance are brought out by God's own words as to Moses, as distinguished from other prophets.

"Were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" demanded the Lord of Aaron and Miriam when they spake against their brother. "Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold." To other prophets God revealed his message by visions and dreams; to Moses, face to face. Superior fidelity characterized the man; greater intimacy with God was his portion. Now "Moses verily was faithful in all God's house as a servant, but Christ as a son." How much more intimate the Son with the Father than Moses with Jehovah! Did not God put his words into the lips of Christ? "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself," he said; and again, "I have given unto them the words that Thou gavest me ." "I have given them Thy words." "He shall speak unto them all that I shall command him," said God of the prophet like unto Moses. "I have not spoken of myself," said Christ; "but my Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting, whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak. "

The incredulous twentieth century, the age of the scoffers of the last days, is still confronted with an existing fact, a world-wide and well known fact -- the fact of a Jewish dispersion foretold in the days of Moses, accomplished sixteen hundred years later in the days of Titus, Vespasian, and Adrian, just after their crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet like Moses, whom to reject would, he foretold them, be fatal, but whom they nevertheless did reject. If in the face of such evidence men refuse to own the finger of God, are they not without excuse?

- *H. Grattan Guinness.*

Seven Royal Failures

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." - Proverbs 4:23.

THE kings of Israel [the ten tribes] were, without exception, depraved and ungodly men, wholly given over to idolatry and licentiousness. And it is a striking fact, worthy of our most thoughtful consideration, that their evil characters and deeds are stated in the Scriptures, without any attempt at concealment or palliation. Never were the annals of any kingdom so written by a *human* chronicler. Wherefore we have in this remarkable feature of Bible history a further proof of the Divine Authorship of the Holy Scriptures.

The history of the line of the kings of Judah [the two tribes] is characterized by the same outspoken truthfulness, notwithstanding that there would be every incentive humanly speaking, to glorify the house of David by concealing the faults and extolling the virtues of his descendants. Of some of the kings of Judah, it is stated in the boldest terms that they were wicked men; and of others, who did follow the Lord, their failures and departures are recorded quite as impartially as are their virtues.

Taking a rapid survey of the career of the most prominent kings of David's line, we may read therein some valuable lessons, and receive therefrom some wholesome and impressive warnings.

David, in his "last words" (2 Sam. 23:1-7), had declared by inspiration what God requires in those who rule over men, saying, "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, *He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God*"; and, being a prophet, David foresaw and foretold the failure of his own line, for he went on to say, *"Although my house be not so with God, yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure."*

The subsequent history of David's line fully confirms this prophecy, making it quite clear that his house was "not so with God." Again and again we read of a king who began well, and continued for a longer or shorter time to walk "in the first ways of his father David," that is to say, in the fear of God, and according to the law of God, but who, later on, departed from those ways, some after one manner, some after another. It will be a profitable exercise to pass briefly in review the most prominent of those instances of departure from the right ways of the Lord.

KING SOLOMON

Solomon, who was beloved of God, made a good start; and God blessed him with riches and honours in abundance, so that his kingdom is famed above all the kingdoms of the world for its glory and magnificence. For "King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom." "And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore trees that are in the vale for abundance" (1 Kings 10:23, 27). "And all King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver, it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon" (1 Kings 10:21).

But Solomon failed in the vital matter of *obedience to the law of the Lord*. Moses had expressly said, concerning the one who should be chosen for a king: "But he shall not *multiply horses* to himself, nor cause the people to go down *to Egypt*, to the end that he should multiply horses ... Neither shall he *multiply wives* to himself, that his *heart turn not away*, neither shall he *greatly*

multiply to himself silver and gold. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests the Levites; and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, and to keep all the words of this law and these statutes to do them" (Deut. 17:14-20).

Solomon violated the law in the most flagrant manner, in each of the three particulars expressly stipulated in the above Scripture. We have already quoted the passages which record how he *greatly* multiplied to himself silver and gold; and we further read that "Solomon loved many strange women (together with the daughter of Pharaoh) ... And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives *turned away his heart*. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that *his wives turned away his heart after other gods*" (1 Kings 11:1-8). Further it is written that "Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen" (1 Kings 4: 26). "And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen; and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem. And a chariot came up, and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty" (1 Kings 10:26-29). Because of this flagrant disobedience, the Lord rent away the ten tribes from the Kingdom of David.

KING ASA

King Asa also began well. He "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, as did David his father. He took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made" (1 Kings 15:11-15). Moreover, he "commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. Also he took away, out of all the cities of Judah, the high places and the images; and the kingdom was quiet before him" (2 Ch. 14:3-5). "And he brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated, and that he himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels" (2 Ch. 15:18). Thus Asa avoided the sin of multiplying gold and silver *unto himself*, and devoted those precious things to the Lord. Therefore, the Lord greatly prospered him, and gave him rest on every side. Moreover, when the Ethiopians and the Lubims came against him with a huge host, and Asa cried to the Lord for help, He smote his enemies before him, insomuch that they were destroyed before the men of Judah; and they carried away very much spoil (2 Ch. 14:7-15).

Nevertheless, afterwards, when Baasha came against Asa with a relatively small army, Asa *brought out* the silver and the gold out of the treasury of the Lord, in order to hire aid from the king of Syria, thus not only turning to man for help, but actually *bartering away the precious things of the Lord in order to procure it*. And not only so, but when God sent a prophet to reprove him, he flew into a rage, and put him in prison. And finally, when God chastened him by sending a disease upon him, Asa, in his sickness, sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians (2 Ch. 16:1-14). Thus in Asa we have the example of one who knew the Lord, and who "yet," in difficulty and sickness, *turned to man for help*.

KING JEHOSHAPHAT

Again in the history of King Jehoshaphat we find one who began well, and went on well for a time. Jehoshaphat's error was of a different character from that of his forefathers, Asa and Solomon. It consisted in "joining affinity" with Ahab, the utterly corrupt king of Israel, even going so far as to say to him "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people, and we will be with

thee in the war" (2 Ch. 18:1-3). That friendship with his ungodly neighbour caused far more damage to the house of David and to the people of Judah than the worst that Ahab could have inflicted by waging incessant warfare against them. Thus we learn from the career of Jehoshaphat the vital importance to the people of God of *separation from the world*; for "the friendship of the world is enmity against God" (James 4:4). Jehoshaphat did not, like Solomon, multiply wives to himself, or horses, or silver and gold. Nor did he, like Asa, fail to seek the Lord in time of need (see 2 Ch. 18: 4.) But he became "unequally yoked together with unbelievers"; he had fellowship with unrighteousness, and joined himself in a common cause with men of Belial (2 Cor. 6:14-17); and thereby he brought disaster upon himself and his posterity for four generations (Ex. 20:4).

KING JOASH

Joash was a king who enjoyed from his infancy the great benefit of godly restraint and tuition under the care of Jehoiada, the priest. So it is recorded that "Joash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest" (2 Ch. 24:2). But it appears that the commendable deeds of Joash were due to the strong influence of Jehoiada. There is no evidence that the heart of Joash was ever changed, but the contrary appears. For, "after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them; and they left the house of the Lord God of their fathers, and served groves and idols; and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass" (2 Ch. 24:17, 18). Moreover, the people under Joash stoned the prophet whom God sent to reprove them; and Joash manifested the basest ingratitude toward the house of his benefactor, Jehoiada, by slaying his son. Therefore he was afflicted with "great disease," and "his own servants conspired against him for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest, and slew him on his bed, and he died and they buried him in the city of David; but they buried him not in the sepulchres of the kings" (2 Ch. 24: 20-25).

From the career of Joash we may learn the immensely important fact that a good bringing up, and the restraints of good moral influences, though of very great value, are but external in their action, and do not avail for salvation and a new heart without personal faith and the *inward* work of "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5). Without personal faith and regenerating work of the Spirit of God it will surely happen "according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Pet. 2:22).

KING AMAZIAH

Amaziah, the son of Joash, was one who "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, *but not with a perfect heart*" (2 Ch. 25:2). He obeyed the voice of the prophet in dismissing the army of Israel which he had hired to help him; and God thereupon gave him victory over the Edomites. Yet, when he returned from the slaughter of the Edomites, he brought *their gods with him*, "and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them. Wherefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against Amaziah, and He sent unto him a prophet which said unto him, Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people *which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand?*" (2 Ch. 25:6-15). Amaziah would not, however, receive this reproof, but silenced the messenger of God; and when he essayed to go to war against the king of Israel, he was defeated. The end of his career is told in these words: "Now after the time that Amaziah did turn away from following the Lord, they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem; and he fled to Lachish; but they sent to Lachish after him, and slew him there" (2 Ch. 25:27).

From the history of this king we may learn the inveterate disposition of the natural heart of man to turn to idols, and to trust in any creature rather than in the living God. The folly of trusting in the gods of a nation who could not deliver that nation is apparent. Yet such was the folly of this descendant of the wise King Solomon, and such were the gods chosen by this degenerate scion of the house of David.

KING UZZIAH

Uzziah's reign was the next to the longest of all the kings, fifty-two years. (Mannasseh reigned fifty five.) "And he did right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Amaziah his father did. And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had knowledge of the visions of God, and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper" (2 Ch. 26:4, 5). "But when he was strong, *his heart was lifted up to his destruction*; for he transgressed against the Lord, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense" (2 Ch. 26:16). This was the sin of *pride and presumption*. For Uzziah was not content with the honours of the throne, but desired those of the priesthood as well. But "no man taketh *this* honour to himself, but he that is *called* of God as was Aaron" (Heb. 5:4). God had strictly separated the offices of king and priest. Only in Jesus Christ are they united. Hence, of all the characters in the Old Testament none was both a king and a priest, save Melchisedec, in whom the two offices were united only that he might stand as a type of Christ in his royal and eternal priesthood. (Heb. 7:1-3.) Therefore was Uzziah smitten with leprosy *for his presumption*, and had to live apart "in a several house" until the day of his death (2 Ch. 26:17-21). Hence Uzziah stands before us as a warning against the pride of the natural heart. Man is a sinner; and leprosy is a type of sin. He may effectually conceal the corruption of his heart from his fellow-men; "but God looketh upon the heart;" and all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. None can approach unto the presence of a holy God, except such as are "called," and are made fit for his presence by the Atonement which he has provided. When Uzziah transgressed this rule, which guards the sanctity of God's presence, the corruption that was in his heart was allowed *to come to the surface, where all could see it*; and then, in bitter humiliation, "he himself hasted to go out" (2 Ch. 26:21). If others could see what is in our hearts we would shun the light of day, and much more the light of God's holy Presence.

KING HEZEKIAH

Finally, in Hezekiah we have doubtless the best of all the kings of David's line-after David himself; for it is written that "he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord according to *all* that David his father had done" (2 Ch. 29:2). "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah; nor any that were before him. For he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses. And the Lord was with him, and he prospered whithersoever he went forth" (2 K. 18:5-7). Of the chief incidents of his reign we would only call attention to his conduct in the incident of the ambassadors from Babylon, who came to bring the congratulations of their king after that Hezekiah had been healed from a deadly sickness by the direct action of God in answer to prayer. The incident is related three times (2 K. 20:12-19; 2 Ch. 32:24-31; Isa. 39:1-8). In the account in 2 Chronicles 32 it is stated that Hezekiah, after his miraculous recovery when sick unto death, "rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for *his heart was lifted up*, therefore there was wrath upon Judah and Jerusalem" (2 Ch. 32:25). His ingratitude and failure consisted in this, that when those heathen ambassadors of high rank and station came and paid their respects to him, he did not glorify the Lord, who had healed him, but, with puerile vanity, he displayed the baubles and showy trumpery, which constituted his own regal glory. For "he showed them all the house of *his* precious things, the silver and the gold, and the spices and

the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures; there was nothing in *his* house, nor in all his dominion that Hezekiah showed them not" (2 K. 20:13). In all this there was not one word to the praise and glory of God. Wherefore, in 2 Chronicles 32:31 we have this comment: "Howbeit, in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that as done in the land, *God left him* to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart." Ingratitude and vanity were "in his heart, " but he was unaware of it. Such sins, however, are very grievous in one on whom God has lavished the riches of his grace and mercy. Therefore God "left him," so that what was in the heart might come out, as in the case of Uzziah. How earnestly then ought we to pray continually, "lead us not into temptation! "

EPILOGUE

Here we have before us a complete sheaf of seven typical kings of Judah, illustrating the various ways in which one who "did run well" may falter, or stumble, or turn aside. We can make no better or more apt comment upon these inspired records, which have been written for our admonition, than that of the Apostle Paul, who, speaking of the lessons which are to be found in the Old Testament types, said: "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

In the case of all these kings it was prosperity and ease that led to their downfall. We may well, therefore, contrast with them the case of their father David, whose life was one of hardships, persecutions and afflictions, during the entire reign of Saul, and of conflicts and domestic troubles after he himself came to the throne. But in all that befell him he was humble, lowly minded, tender-hearted, submissive to the will of God, and always full of thanksgiving and praise to the Rock of his Salvation. Hence David made a *good ending*; for "he died in a good old age, full of days, riches and honour" (1 Ch. 29:28). Let such of us, therefore, as are advanced in years, seek grace continually that we may end well; and let our ambition be that of the Apostle who said, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, that I might *finish my course with joy*" (Acts 20:24).

- *The Wonders of Bible Chronology* - P. Mauro

The Ransom Sacrifice

"Behold the Lamb of God!" - John 1:36.

Jesus was unapproachably distant from all that ever were honored with a divine mission, with no predecessor and no successor in the multitude and harmony of his spiritual revelations. The Hebrews epistle opens thus: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, bath in these last days *spoken unto us by his Son*"; a fulfillment of a promise which waited fourteen centuries for its accomplishment, given in the days of Moses to Israel -- "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." (Deut. 1:18.) This the Son confirmed: "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." (John 12:49.) Again "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." (John 17:8.) Those who heard and saw testified, "This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world." - John 6:14.

For "never man spake as this man!" "His lips like lilies, dropped sweet: smelling myrrh." His hearers, enthralled, "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded forth from his mouth" as he appropriated to himself the divine commission recorded by Isaiah eight centuries before: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Mark 4:17-22.) A wondrous light burst upon sin-sick and weary humanity. He spoke forth doctrines strange for their searching character and revolutionary for their boldness, and always with the air of authority: I am the Way -- the Truth -- the Life -- the Door -- the Bread from Heaven -- the Light of the World; no man cometh unto the Father except by me. A most astounding message, a message of salvation "which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord" . . . *"a hope of eternal life* which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." (Heb. 2:3; Tit. 1:2.) It was "the word," said Peter to Cornelius, "which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all;) that word, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy spirit and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil for God was with him." - Acts 10:36-38.

His deeds attracted attention and enforced awe at the mysterious power which lay in his hand and voice. He defended the weak, forgave the sinners, fed the thousands, healed the sick, raised the dead. "The people were amazed and said, Is not this the son of David?" (Matt. 12:23.) Here was a transcendent character and a Teacher without parallel, who could instruct in truth higher than man had conceived, opening vast and pure reaches of the unseen realms of knowledge. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God shone forth from his face. The ruler Nicodemus confessed, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3:2.) "The common people heard him gladly," and would have made him king. - Mark 12:37; John 6:15.

But resolutely rejecting all human exaltation, he "stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," in marvelous obedience to a greater commission entrusted him by the Father. This commission he revealed to his inner circle of disciples in words perplexing and strange: "The Son of Man must be lifted up." (John 3:14.) "The Son of Man came to give his life for many." (Mark 10:45.) "My flesh I will give for the life of the world." (John 6:51.) "I lay down my life for the sheep." (John

10:15.) "This is my body, broken for you. This is my blood, shed for you." (Matt. 26:26-28.) But they fell on unbelieving ears for they were incompatible with the disciples' expectation of an immediate establishment of God's Kingdom. They were not to comprehend until after his resurrection when he spoke to them again: "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Then he said to them, "These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that *repentance and forgiveness of sins* should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. " - Luke 24 25-27; 44-47, R.S.V.

In these plain words explicitly and unqualifiedly does Christ, the central and supreme theme of all Old Testament disclosure, affirm *his atoning death* to be the one fact that gives vital significance, substance, and value to the entire body of the Inspired and Written Scriptures of that time. For God has made the Death of Christ the procuring means of Human Salvation. This, the central and cardinal fact of divine revelation found its concentrated expression in the heralding Baptist's sublime announcement when, pointing to the approaching Christ, he exclaimed:

"BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, WHO TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD!" - John 1:29.

GODS ANOINTED PRIEST

We are thus brought directly to the ultimate objective in Jesus' earthly ministry. He who had existed before the world was -- who had made all things -- who had left the glories of a higher nature and been made lower than the angels-whose birth, supernaturally of a virgin, was heralded by the spirit host -- dedicated his life to the will of his Father, and in perfect submission to that will "emptied himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:8.) He became a man for the very purpose of "tasting death for every man. " He took on him the human nature "for the suffering of death" -- the very penalty that was against our race. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." (2 Cor. 5:19.) "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1:17.) The revelation of God through the Mosaic Law resulted only in proving Jews and Gentiles as all under sin; stopping every mouth and making the world subject to divine judgment, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. But the revelation of God through Jesus Christ brought justification freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. For though "the wages of sin is death, the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. " - See Rom. 3:9-24; Rom. 11:32; Rom. 6:25; Gal. 3:22.

Great (worthy of all acceptance) is the inner doctrine of the religion of Christ:

"Who in the flesh was manifest,
In spirit just was shown;
To angel eyes he stood confest,
Was preached the Gentiles' own;
On him the world has glad believed,
In glory now, on high received."

- 1 Tim. 3:16.

This doctrine of the atonement effected by Jesus in the sacrifice of himself, is the grand touchstone by which we may determine what is Truth and what is not Truth. For in the great Plan of God for human salvation the Ransom constitutes the very central feature from which radiates all the doctrines which end in the fulness and completion of that Divine Plan. The vicarious aspect of Jesus' death is the definite teaching of many Scriptures, for example:

Matt. 1:21 - He shall save his people from their sins.

Matt. 26:28 - My blood ... shed . . . for the remission of sins.

Isa. 53:5 - He was wounded for our transgressions.

Isa. 53:12 - He bare the sin of many.

Dan. 9:24 - To make an end of sins.

1 Cor. 15:3 - Christ died for our sins.

Gal. 1:4 - Who gave himself for our sins.

Eph. 1:7 - We have redemption through his blood.

1 Tim. 1:15 - Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Heb. 9:26 - He was manifested to put away sin.

1 Pet. 1:19 - Redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.

1 Pet. 3:18 - Christ suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous.

1 Pet. 2:24 - Who his own self bare our sins.

1 John 2:2 - He is the propitiation for our sins.

1 John 1:7 - The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.

Rev. 1:5 - Washed us from our sins in his own blood.

Typically, also, the elaborate sacrificial system of the ceremonial Law of Sinai revealed the same truth. The substitution of an unoffending animal for the human offender-where nothing less than the lifeblood (Lev. 17:11 - "Blood maketh atonement by reason of the life.") of the substituted victim sufficed for the remission of deserved penalty, with the offerer's act of laying his hand on the animal, an exercise of faith in the transfer of guilt -conveyed the fact and meaning of Atonement. These sacrifices of Israel were intended and adapted to point onward to Him in whose death a real sacrifice was offered, in whose death a real want of mankind was met. This truth is forcefully expounded in the Book of Hebrews, particularly chapters 9 and 10 -- the key thought itself in Heb. 9:22 - "Without shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins." - R.S.V.

Jesus' atonement work must not however be crudely construed as simply shedding literal blood to placate an angry Deity. We may be certain the Philosophy of the Ransom is commensurate with the lofty attributes of God. In seeking to understand the workings of Him, "whose thoughts are

not our thoughts, and whose ways are not our ways," we may accept the theologian Hooker's dictum: "Let us not think that, as long as the world doth endure, the wit of man shall be able to sound the bottom of that which may be concluded out of the Scriptures." This question as to the ability of the human minds to comprehend absolute truth need not, however, diminish our appreciation of the boundless love of God for his human creatures; in whose Plan on our behalf the "Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world"; and who "gave his only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Students of the Scriptures are generally agreed in a Philosophy of the Ransom, which magnifies the Creator; an interpretation whose pivotal truth is expressed by the Apostle in 1 Cor. 15:21, 22: "As by *a man* came death, by *a man also* came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

This interpretation has been briefly stated thus: "The ransom views the matter of man's recovery from sin and death as a purchase -- a redemption. The basis of this thought is the divine law, 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a man's life for a man's life.' (Deut. 19:21.) Adam and his entire race of thousands of millions are in dire distress through sin and its penalty. God has provided a recovery by a ransom process -- purchasing back from their fallen condition.

"Our first thought naturally would be that to redeem, or purchase back, the right of humanity to life, would mean that each member of Adam's race must be purchased by the life of another person, holy, harmless, unsentenced. But looking deeply into God's Plan we find that only one man was tried before the divine court -- namely, Father Adam; that only Adam was sentenced to death; and that all of his children go into death, not because of their individual trial and death, but simply because Adam failed to maintain his perfection, was unable to give his children more life or rights than he possessed. And so it has been throughout the entire period of six thousand years from the time of Father Adam's sentence until now.

"Here we see a wonderful economic feature connected with the Divine Plan. God would not permit more than one member of the human race to be tried and sentenced to death; for his purpose from the beginning was that the sacrifice of one life should redeem the entire human race. By one man the whole trouble came; by another Man the whole trouble will be rectified.

"Thus we see the value of Jesus' death -- that it was not merely for Adam, but included all his posterity. We see, too, how necessary it was that Jesus should be 'holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners'; otherwise, he, like the remainder of the race, would have been under a divine death sentence. Because all of Adam's race were involved in sin and its penalty, it was necessary to find an outsider to be the world's Redeemer; and that outsider, whether angel, cherub, or the great Michael himself, the Logos, must exchange the spirit nature for the human nature in order to be a corresponding price -- a ransom for the first man.

"It was not a god that sinned; hence the death of a god could not redeem. It was not a cherub that sinned; hence the death of a cherub could not redeem. It was a [perfect] man who sinned, and the ransom for him must be furnished by the death of a [perfect] man. It was for this cause that the great Logos, in carrying out the divine plan for human redemption, left the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, humbled himself and became a man, 'was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.'"

To this agree the words of Jesus himself: "The Son of Man came ... to give his life a ransom (*lutronanti* -- a price to correspond) for many." - Mark 10:45.

In Romans 5:15-21, we read St. Paul's contrast between Adam and Christ. The two great heads of the race are introduced, Adam in the Fall, Christ in the Redemption; and the results of the Fall and the results of the Redemption are shown in strong and pointed contrast. In brief, this remarkable passage teaches that Adam, the progenitor of the race, carried all his descendants with him into corruption, condemnation, and death; that Christ, the Second Adam, and constructive Head of the race, carried, *potentially*, all the race redeemed by his vicarious death, with him into regeneration, justification, and life.

The Scriptures are thus explicit in their assurance that our Redeemer bought the world with his own life, "his own precious blood." Here is also assurance of the *unchangeableness* of divine law, which could not be broken, but instead provided redemption at so great a cost. The remission of the death penalty is not a violation of God's justice, but its satisfaction by his love; "that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. 3:26.) We may be grateful and satisfied that the *Truth of the Atonement stands as a Fact*, clear, immovable, and supreme among the stupendous verities of Divine Disclosure, and that it is unchangeably interwoven with them all. "Mercy glorieth against judgment." "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." - James 2:13; Psa. 85:10.

This sovereignty over all will be realized in the glorious Millennium. For "God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts 17:31.) "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself *a ransom [anti-lutron -- corresponding price]* for all, to be testified in due time." (1 Tim. 2:6.) This will be the "times of restitution" which will see the original purpose of God in the creation of man accomplished in the peopling of earth with perfect human beings, restored thus and to eternal life through Christ's Ransom *Work*. Of the result of that ransom, and of the work of redemption as it shall finally be accomplished by the close of the Millennial Age, the Prophet speaking of our Lord says, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." - Isa. 53:11. We conclude by adding, in spirit, our voice to that of the "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" of angels as they rapturously proclaim

"WORTHY IS THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN TO RECEIVE POWER AND RICHES, AND WISDOM, AND STRENGTH, AND HONOR, AND GLORY, AND BLESSING.'

- *W. J. Siekman.*

Religious Intolerance

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is ca partaker of his evil deeds." - 2 John 10, 11.

IT WILL be seen at a glance that Truth and Love are keynotes of the Epistle, and that the conceptions which prevail throughout are those with which we have been made familiar by the previous Epistle. And yet one passage of the Epistle has again and again been belauded, and is again and again adduced as a stronghold of intolerance, an excuse for pitiless hostility against all who differ with ourselves. There is something distressing in the swift instinct with which an unchristian egotism has first assumed its own infallibility on subjects which are often no part of Christian faith, and then has sped as on vulture's wings to this passage as a consecration of the feelings with which the "odium theologicum" disgraces and ruins the divinest interests of the cause of Christ. It must be said -- though I say it with the deepest sorrow -- that the cold exclusiveness of the Pharisee, the bitter ignorance of the self styled theologian, the usurped infallibility of the half educated religionist, have ever been the curse of Christianity. They have imposed "the senses of men upon the words of God, the special senses of men on the general words of God," and have tried to enforce them on all men's consciences with all kinds of burnings and anathemas, under equal threats of death and damnation. And thus they have incurred the terrible responsibility of presenting religion to mankind in a false and repellant guise. Is theological hatred still to be a proverb for the world's just contempt? Is such hatred-hatred in its bitterest and most ruthless form -- to be regarded as the legitimate and normal outcome of the religion of love? Is the spirit of peace never to be brought to bear on religious opinions? Are such questions always to excite the most intense animosities and the most terrible divisions? Is the Diotrephes of each little religious clique to be the ideal of a Christian character? Is it in religious discussions alone that impartiality is to be set down as weakness, and courtesy as treason? Is it among those only who pride themselves on being "orthodox" that there is to be the completest absence of humility and of justice? Is the world to be forever confirmed in its opinion that theological partisans are less truthful, less candid, less high minded, less honorable even than the partisans of political and social causes who make no profession as to the duty of love? Are the so-called "religious" champions to be for ever, as they now are, in many instances, the most unscrupulously bitter and the most conspicuously unfair? Alas! they might be so with far less danger to the cause of religion if they would forego the luxury of "quoting Scripture for their purpose." The harm which has thus been done is incredible:

"Crime was ne'er so black
As ghostly cheer and pious thanks to lack.
Satan is modest. At Heaven's door he lays
His evil offspring, and in Scriptural phrase
And saintly posture gives to God the praise
And honor of his monstrous progeny."

If this passage of St. John had indeed authorized such errors and excesses -- if it had indeed been a proof, as has been said, of "the deplorable growth of dogmatic intolerance" -- it would have been hard to separate it from the old spirit of rigorism and passion which led the Apostle, in his most undeveloped days, to incur his Lord's rebuke, by proclaiming his jealousy of those who worked on different lines from his own, and by wishing to call down fire to consume the rude villagers of Samaria. It would have required some ingenuity not to see in it the same sort of impatient and unworthy intolerance which once marked his impetuous outbursts. . . . In that case

also the spirit of his advice would have been widely different from the spirit which actuated the merciful tolerance of the Lord to Heathens, to Samaritans, to Sadducees, and even to Pharisees. It would have been in direct antagonism to our Lord's command to the Twelve to salute with their blessing every house to which they came, because if it were not worthy their peace would return to them again. It would have been alien from many of the noblest lessons of the New Testament. It would practically have excluded from the bosom of Christianity, and of Christianity alone, the highest workings of the universal law of love. It would have been in glaring disaccord with the gentleness and moderation which is now shown, even towards absolute unbelievers, by the wisest, gentlest, and most Christlike of God's saints. If it really bore the sense which has been assigned to it, it would be a grave reason for sharing the ancient doubts respecting the genuineness of the little letter in which it occurs, and for coming to the conclusion that, while its general sentiments were borrowed from the authentic works of St. John, they had only been thrown together for the purpose of introducing, under the sanction of his name, a precept of unchristian harshness and religious intolerance.

But there is too much reason to fear that to the end of time the conceit of orthodoxism will claim inspired authority for its own conclusions, even when they are most antichristian, and will build up systems of exclusive hatred out of inferences purely unwarrantable. It is certain, too, that each sect is always tempted to be proudest of its most sectarian peculiarities; that each form of dissent, whether in or out of the body of the Established Churches, most idolizes its own dissidence. The aim of religious opinionativeness always has been, and always will be, to regard its narrowest conclusions as matters of faith, and to exclude or excommunicate all those who reject or modify them. The sort of syllogisms used by these enemies of the love of Christ are much as follows

"My opinions are founded on interpretations of Scripture. Scripture is infallible. My views of its meaning are infallible, too. Your opinions and inferences differ with mine, therefore you must be in the wrong. All wrong opinions are capable of so many ramifications that any one who differs with me in minor points must be unsound in vital matters also. Therefore, all who differ with me and my clique are 'heretics.' All heresy is wicked. All heretics are necessarily wicked men. It is my religious duty to hate, calumniate, and abuse you."

Those who have gone thus far in elevating Hatred into a Christian virtue ought logically to go a little farther. They generally do so when they have the power. They do not openly say, "Let us venerate the examples of Arnold of Citeaux, and of Torquemada. Let us glorify the Crusaders at Beziers. Let us revive the racks and thumbscrews of the Inquisition Let us, with the Pope, strike medals in honor of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Let us reestablish the Star Chamber, and entrust those ecclesiastics who hold our opinions with powers of torture." But, since they are robbed of these means of securing unanimity -- since they can no longer even imprison "dissenting thinkers" like Bunyan and "regicide Arians" like Milton -- they are too apt to indulge in the party spirit which can employ slander though it is robbed of the thumbscrew, and revel in depreciation though it may no longer avail itself of the fagot and the rack.

The tender mercies of contending religionists are exceptionally cruel. The men who, in the Corinthian party sense, boast "I am of Christ," do not often, in these days, formulate the defense of their lack of charity so clearly as this. But they continually act and write in this spirit. Long experience has made mankind familiar with the base ingenuity which frames charges of constructive heresy out of the most innocent of opinions; which insinuates that variations from the vulgar exegesis furnish a sufficient excuse for banding anathemas, under the plea that they are an implicit denial of Christ! Had there been in Scripture any sanction for this execrable spirit of heresy-hunting Pharisaism, Christian theology would only become another name for the collisions of wrangling sects, all cordially hating each other, and only kept together by common repulsion

against external enmity. But, to me at least, it seems that the world has never developed a more unchristian and antichristian phenomenon than the conduct of those who encourage the bitterest excesses of hatred under the profession of Christian love. (1 John 3:10, 11.) I know nothing so profoundly irreligious as the narrow intolerance of an ignorant dogmatism. Had there been anything in this passage which sanctioned so odious a spirit, I could not have believed that it emanated from St. John. A good tree does not bring forth corrupt fruit. The sweet fountain of Christianity cannot send forth the salt and bitter water of fierceness and hate. The Apostle of love would have belied all that is best in his own teaching if he had consciously given an absolution, nay, an incentive, to furious intolerance. The last words of Christian revelation could never have meant what these words have been interpreted to mean—namely, "Hate, exclude, anathematize, persecute, treat as enemies and opponents to be crushed and insulted, those who differ with you in religious opinions." Those who have pretended a Scriptural sanction for such Cain like religionism have generally put their theories into practice against men who have been infinitely more in the right, and transcendently nearer God, than those who, in killing or injuring them, ignorantly thought that they were doing God service.

Meanwhile this incidental expression of St. John's brief letter will not lend itself to these gross perversions. What St. John *really says* and *really means*, is something wholly different. False teachers were rife, who, professing to be Christians, robbed the nature of Christ of all which gave its efficacy to the Atonement.... These teachers, like other Christian missionaries, traveled from city to city, and, in the absence of public inns, were received into the houses of Christian converts. The Christian lady to whom St. John writes is warned that, if she offers her hospitality to these dangerous emissaries who were subverting the central truth of Christianity, she is expressing a public sanction of them; and, by doing this and offering them her best wishes, she is taking a direct share in the harm they do. This is common sense; nor is there anything uncharitable in it. No one is bound to help forward the dissemination of teaching what he regards as erroneous respecting the most essential doctrines of his own faith. Still less would it have been right to do this in the days when Christian communities were so small and weak. But to interpret this as it has in all ages been practically interpreted—to pervert it into a sort of command to exaggerate the minor variations between religious opinions, and to persecute those whose views differ with our own—to make our own opinion the exclusive test of heresy, and to say, with Cornelius a Lapide, that this verse reprobates "all conversation, all intercourse, all dealings with heretics" -- is to interpret Scripture by the glare of partisanship and spiritual self-satisfaction, not to read it under the light of holy love.

Alas! churchmen and theologians have found it a far more easy and agreeable matter to obey their distortion of this supposed command, and even to push its stringency to the very farthest limits, than to obey the command that we should love one another! From the Tree of delusive knowledge they pluck the poisonous and inflating fruits of pride and hatred, while they suffer the fruits of love and meekness to fall neglected from the Tree of Life. The popularity which these verses still enjoy, and the exaggerated misinterpretation still attached to them, are due to the fact that they are so acceptable to the arrogance and selfishness, the dishonesty and tyranny, the sloth and obstinacy, of that bitter spirit of religious discord which has been the disgrace of the Church and the scandal of the world.

- F. W. Farrar in *Early Days of Christianity*.

Recently Deceased

John Balcerzak, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Mae Forrer, Dayton, Ohio

Herman F. Oertel, Wausau, Wis.

S. R. Przeborowski, Chicago, Ill.

Louis Rich, Lynn, Mass.

Frances Whelpton, Hamilton, Out.