

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. I July / August, 1967 No. 4

Does God Not Care?

*(An inquiry into God's relation to the present widespread human suffering
and the wonderful future awaiting humanity.)*

That the eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good is unquestionable. That God could interfere with and stop all forms of evil is undoubtedly true. That he has not done so is manifest; but that the time will come when all evil shall be fully restrained is his distinct promise. Hence it is as *proper* to say that God *permits* sin, wickedness and crime, as it would be *false* to say that he causes, creates, instigates, or is in any sense the author of such things.

The truth is that so far from creating sin, or inciting to crime and wickedness, God's actions where he has interfered at all have been toward the restraint of sin. The Deluge in Noah's day was for the restraint of sin; so also the destruction of Sodom; the destruction of Korah and his followers; the destruction of the Canaanites; and the captivities, famines, etc. permitted to come upon Israel were designed to have the same effect.

No difficulty, perhaps, more frequently presents itself to the inquiring mind than the question: Why does God permit the present course of suffering and evil? If we keep the thought in mind and do not lose sight of the ultimate purpose of God and of the fact that the present is only a preparatory stage progressing toward full completion, we need never be skeptical about an overruling providence which now permits a cyclone, tornado, earthquake, hurricane, volcanic eruption, or any other of nature's distresses.

But while God's tender mercies are over all his works, we must not overlook the fact that man, by sin, has forfeited all claims upon divine providence. As a son of God, Adam had a son's claim upon his heavenly Father's benevolent providence, but when God condemned him to death on account of sin, God thereby rightly repudiated all human claims upon his fatherhood. The creature was thenceforth unworthy of life and of the divine providence which alone could sustain

life. Therefore the condemned world has no right *to* question why God permits calamities to overtake them and take their lives.

The whole human family, then, being born in sin and under the curse, pronounced upon Adam in Eden, sometimes finds the death penalty is executed by the disturbances of nature, such as cyclones, tempests, earthquakes, etc.; sometimes by the sinful, angry passions of mankind resulting in wars and in private and domestic feuds and revenges; and sometimes through lack of good judgment in discerning and avoiding danger such as fires, railroad accidents, ocean disasters, airplane wrecks, etc. All of these are but the executioners of the just penalty for sin -- death, pronounced against the whole race.

THE BENEFICENCE OF EVIL

While the condemned race is thus left to its fate, men are permitted largely to pursue their own course in the management of their affairs. They may take such advantages as they can of the elements of nature or of their own medical and surgical skill to prolong their days and to assist their condition under the curse; they may institute and maintain such forms of civil jurisprudence as they can agree upon, though hindered by the influence of Satan, the god of this world. But their course is *their own course* and God is not in it; hence God has no responsibility with reference to it; nor can he in any sense be held accountable for the misery men bring upon themselves and each other in the pursuit of their own godless and evil ways. Yet God could, and undoubtedly would, put a sudden stop to misery and sin now in the world were it not that his farseeing judgment counsels its temporary continuance for a benevolent ultimate purpose toward which even the wrath of man is unconsciously ministering.

God has devised and already partly executed a plan for the redemption and restitution of all who will by and by repent fully and submit themselves to his righteous requirements. In their present alien and outcast condition, he is giving them such experiences as will in time bring them to realize their own helplessness and to seek the favor of God. To this end God has also been overruling the affairs of men for the past 6000 years; that is, while he has been permitting men to rule themselves according to their own ideas, he has been, unknown to them, so directing events as to make even their blind and evil course bring to pass circumstances and events which they did not foresee nor contemplate, but which in the long run minister to his plan.

Thus, for example, the world's present blind and wrong course has brought about a great time of trouble upon everyone, which God foresaw and has been permitting, whose final outcome in the divine providence will be the overthrow of human governments and the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ under the whole heaven. In this way God has been overruling both man's and Satan's designs in the affairs and destinies of nations, so as to give to mankind the largest possible experience with sin and its consequences, thus to prepare them eventually for willing submission to the righteous reign of the Prince of Peace. They have had experience with every shade and form of government; and now the world is expressing its complete dissatisfaction with all conditions, with worldwide anarchy in the offing. However, as the crisis fast approaches, man's extremity will become God's opportunity. When, with broken and contrite hearts, the people turn to the Lord, they will find him indeed willing and able to bring to them the benefits of the Kingdom of Christ.

With these thoughts in mind, mark the stately steppings of our God along the aisles of history. The rise and fall of empires and the wars and revolutions that have unsettled and disturbed the world, while they were great evils in themselves, nevertheless they saved men from sinking lower and lower in lethargy and vice. They kept the human mind awake and set men to thinking and planning to improve their condition. They brought men of different nations together, sharpened intellectuality, stimulated ambition, led to discoveries and inventions and thus helped mankind to keep above the level of the brute creation. Similar providences we can also mark in the great persecutions and distresses of the Old World, which drove the lovers of liberty to a New World, there to establish a free government with all the benefits that have accrued to the individuals fortunate to live thereunder.

GOD'S OVERRULING CARE

But, it may be asked, how is the love of God to be seen from the standpoint of a deliberate arrangement beforehand which, in its outworking, has involved so vast an amount of sin, suffering, and death? In thinking of this question we must rid our minds of the erroneous thought that sin, suffering, and death are only preludes to an eternity of woe. Then we are to remember that God is not in any way our debtor. We are his debtors, even for existence; he owes the race nothing. Suppose we could disabuse all minds of the idea of eternal torture, or of a purgatory of suffering after death, and should then say to them: Consider, now -would you prefer to live on for a few more years, or would you rather die at once?

Or suppose we put it this way: Are you glad that you have an existence, or would you rather that you had not been born? We believe that the great majority would reply that they desire to live, and to live as long as possible. Those who feel that they would be glad to die, or who wish that they had never been born, are those who have had more than ordinarily evil and unhappy experiences, or else they are unbalanced in mind.

God could have made mankind devoid of ability to discern between right and wrong, or able only to discern and do right; but to have made him so would have been to make him merely a living machine, and certainly not a mental image of his Creator. Or he might have made man perfect, and a free moral agent, as he did, and have guarded him from Satan's temptations. In that case, man's experiences being limited to good, he would have been continually liable to suggestions of evil from without, or ambitions from within, which would have made the everlasting future uncertain, and an outbreak of disobedience might always have been a possibility.

Adam already had a knowledge of evil by information, but that was insufficient to restrain him from trying the experiment. Few appreciate the severity of the temptation under which our first parents fell, nor yet the justice of God in attaching so severe a penalty to what seems to many so slight an offense; but a little reflection will make it plain. The Scriptures tell how Eve was deceived and thus became a transgressor. Her experience and acquaintance with God was even more limited than Adam's, for he was created first and God had directly communicated to him before her appearance the knowledge of the penalty for sin, while Eve probably received the information from Adam.

The severity of the penalty was the necessary and inevitable result of the evil which God thus allowed man to see and feel. No injustice has been done to Adam's posterity in not affording them *each* an individual trial. God was in no sense bound to bring us into existence and having brought us into being, no law of equity or justice binds him to perpetuate our being everlastingly, nor even to grant us a trial under promise of everlasting life if obedient.

God assures us that as condemnation passed on the whole human family as a result of Adam's sin, so he has been graciously pleased to accept the death of Jesus on the cross as a complete settlement toward God of the sin of Adam. As one man had sinned, and all in him had shared the penalty of that one sinner, so Jesus, having provided the ransom price at Calvary, bought not only Adam, but all of his posterity and the earth. As a result of that act, Jesus offers to adopt Adam's posterity as his children and in this way bring about the first free and full opportunity for the human family to obtain life and deliverance from sin and its curse under the ministry of the Messianic Kingdom referred to so often in the Bible.

PRESENT DISTRESS PRELUDE TO BLESSING

By this arrangement mankind receive their first chance to gain everlasting life, the only exception being the church of the Gospel Age, those called to be "saints." Such constitute only a fraction of the human family who have lived since the days of Adam. The vast majority of mankind are now in the condition of death waiting for the glorious day of resurrection, and during the reign of Christ, when sin and death no longer operate, the human family will experience the benefits of righteous living and the contrast with 6,000 years of the reign of sin and death will teach them the value of obedience to God's requirements.

The great world-shaking events of our day go back particularly to 1914, at which time we believe Christ began to intervene in the affairs of men, and hence students of prophecy are watching the changing scenes of earth with deep interest. That we are living in a time without parallel in the history of the world is freely acknowledged by all, but many are fearful of the outcome. To the Christian, however, instructed by the Father's Word, present developments are strengthening to faith because they speak of the nearness of the Kingdom for which Jesus taught us to pray.

The prophet Zephaniah (Zeph. 3:8, 9) describes the scene thus: "Wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." This is certainly as graphic a picture of the day of burning as could be asked for, but a careful reading of the prophet's succeeding words will make clear to us that after the burning day has passed, a population will still remain on the earth, and that for a blessing. We read: "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent."

The trouble now upon the world is the direct result of the blessings of our day which selfishness does not permit all to freely enjoy, allowing the burdens of life to fall upon the masses. The groaning creation not only cries out in despair, but revolutionizes everywhere, hastening the anarchy and disarrangement foretold in the Bible. Truly, as St. Paul has said: "The whole creation groaneth."

From this standpoint it will be seen that the Second Coming of Christ will mean the blessing of all the families of the earth as God promised Abraham (Gen. 12:3). The great mass of mankind have gone down into the prison house of death unblessed, ignorant of God and of the only name given under heaven and amongst men whereby they must be saved. The Millennial Kingdom of Christ is to be the resurrection day for all mankind; but it will be optional with each individual whether or not he ever attains to this grand perfection provided for all in Christ. It may at first seem strange to say that the dead will be obliged to cooperate in the matter of their own restoration or else will never attain it, but such is the Scriptural presentation. The dead will not be required to cooperate in their awakening from death (Eccl. 9:10).

The work of awakening the dead from the sleep of death will be done for the world by the Redeemer, who declares: "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth" (John 5:28, 29), that is, be awakened. Then the Lord goes on to speak of two classes thus awakened: first, they that have done good in this life, referring to consecrated believers in this Gospel Age, and second, they that have done evil, meaning the remainder of the human family, who will be disciplined under the Kingdom rule.

RESTITUTION IS NEAR

There is nothing in the word "resurrection" to limit or in any way determine the nature or organism of the one experiencing resurrection. If the human body which dies were the thing alone to which resurrection is promised, nothing more or less than the same body with its same atoms, same defects, and same peculiarities could be expected. This form of resurrection would be merely a renewal of present unfavorable fallen conditions. But it is not the bodies of men that God proposes to resurrect, but the beings, the individual egos, commonly referred to in the Bible as souls. To the human being God will give a wonderful body of flesh, whose grandeur may be conjectured if we can imagine all the fine qualities and gifts which we see exceptionally manifested in poets, actors, philosophers, musicians, mathematicians, etc., combined in one person.

Looking forward fifty years into Christ's Kingdom we foresee the blessings of peace and wise government by wise rulers - the ancient Biblical prophets. The people are happy, contented and industrious; the idle rich are gone, the unemployed poor are gone, the breeders of discontent are gone. Education is general, for under the new order wastes are eliminated and all have abundance. The wisdom of perfect rulers causes the earth to yield great increase in quantity as well as quality of food. Health is good to the extent that people obey the rules of the kingdom.

But the advent of this King and Kingdom means much trouble and the general overturning of the kingdoms of this world. It means the shaking of society in a manner and to a degree never before known, and so thoroughly that another shaking will never become necessary. While many would rejoice to see society relieved of its selfish, life-sapping ulcers, they seem to realize that so just and impartial a judge as the Lord Himself might cut off certain long cherished sins to which they desire to cling; they fear to have their personal selfishness touched. Their fears are well founded, because the hidden things of darkness will be exposed to the light of day.

Beyond the troubles now overspreading the world lie these glorious times of restitution foretold by all the holy prophets since the world began. The death of Jesus was for the redemption of Adam and his entire family from the curse of sin and death, and his return is for the purpose of binding Satan and setting free all his captives, including all that are in their graves, giving all who will an opportunity to come into the liberty of the sons of God. How glad we are to be able to declare that this glorious Kingdom is even now at the door, and soon earth's night of weeping will be over and give place to the morning of joy and blessing through Christ's Kingdom.

- *A. L. Muir*

"Oh, for a Deeper Love"

"I love Thee, Lord; yet 'tis no love of mine
That goeth forth to that great heart of Thine;
'Tis Thine own love which Thou hast given me
Returning back, O loving Lord, to Thee.

"The earth absorbs the soft, refreshing rain,
And sends it back in flowers and fruits again;
So I receive Thy love so rich and free,
And send it back in joy and praise to Thee.

"The moon receives the sun's bright, golden light,
And gives it forth to cheer the darksome night;
So I receive the rays of love Divine,
And with them cheer this weary world of Thine.

"'Tis by Thy love that I can love and bless
The foes who seek to blast my happiness;
Can e'en rejoice, when bearing wrong and shame
Thou deem'st me meet to suffer for Thy Name.

"Naught but Thy love can satisfy my heart,
Constrain my will from self and sin to part;
In love so great Thou givest Thyself to me,
For Thou art love -- to all eternity.

"Oh! help me, Lord, to take, by grace Divine,
Yet more and more of that great Love of Thine;
That day by day my heart may give to Thee
A deeper love and growing constantly."

"They Go From Strength to Strength"

"Be ye filled with the Spirit." - Ephesians 5:18.

LET us consider together briefly these words of the Apostle Paul, addressed to the Church of Christ, the saints. They do not apply to those who are merely empty professors, having a form of godliness only, but to those who have fully accepted the terms of God's Call, who have made the full consecration which alone brings us into the position of sons of God. These are the only ones who have the spirit of God. These only are begotten from Above. But St. Paul would have us remember that it is not sufficient that we receive the begetting of the holy spirit, which comes to us at the very entrance of the narrow way. We should see that the holy spirit of God abounds in us more and more as we go on in our heavenward course. The little spark of the new mind should grow stronger and brighter day by day.

If this development does not take place, if we merely stand still, we shall soon begin to lose ground; but if we progress, the natural man will gradually perish and the new man will thrive. Christian development should be steady and continuous. We are to be more and more filled with the spirit. Sometimes the Lord's children say, "I do desire to be filled with the Lord's spirit, but it seems as if my capacity is so small. I wish to have his spirit in large measure, but I am unable to be what I long to be. I am not satisfied with my attainments." But if we are striving earnestly and prayerfully to become like Christ, let us not be discouraged. . . .

If it were an impossibility for us to be filled with the spirit of God, the inspired Apostle would not have so instructed us. To the truly consecrated child of God this is possible, and not only possible, but obligatory. But as there are ebbs and flows in the ocean tides, so with our sense of the Lord's presence with us and his smile upon us. We may not always realize his presence to a large degree, but the Lord's saints must learn to walk by faith, to trust him and his abiding love

The spirit of the Lord dwelling in us in fullness, as it should be, will cause our entire being to be so absorbed by the principles of righteousness laid down in the Lord's Word, to be so in love with the heavenly things, heavenly hopes, heavenly prospects, that everything else will be of no value to us. And this will be more and more our blessed experience if we continue faithfully in the narrow way, if we "follow on to know the Lord."

But if, on the contrary, we find ourselves making provision for the flesh, making worldly plans, if we find ourselves inclined to lay up treasures on earth instead of in heaven, we should take alarm, and should ask ourselves whether we are deficient, whether we are neglecting the means of grace -- prayer alone with God, study of his Word, meditation upon the glorious things to which we have been called, watching ourselves as to our growth in the fruits of the spirit... .

But we need to continually watch and pray; for there is constant danger otherwise that we may be tripped up or stumbled either by our own faults or those of others. We are never safe from being sidetracked unless we go often to the throne of grace; we cannot be filled unless we keep very close to the great Fountain from which our infilling comes. We must daily carry our earthen pitcher to this heavenly Fountain to be replenished, for we are leaky vessels. We are not to feel discouraged if we do not find in ourselves the rapid growth that we desire to see. Strong, sturdy trees that can withstand the fiercest storms are not developed in a day. Their growth is a slow, steady process. We should show our loyalty to the Lord by renewed effort every time we fail. He is looking at us not to see if we are perfect in the flesh -- for He knows that we are not and can

never be -- but to see whether or not we have the spirit of earnestness and loyalty which daily and hourly seeks to keep the body under and to cheerfully take up the cross.

BLESSED RESULTS OF SPIRIT'S INFILLING

This unwavering trust in the Lord,, this abiding rest of soul, this zeal in God's service, is a matter of growth. "They go from strength to strength," the Psalmist declares of the inhabitants of Zion. "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear," said our Lord of this class (Psalm 84:7; Mark 4:28). Notwithstanding the difficulties of life, these can continue to make melody in their hearts unto the Lord. They rejoice no matter what may be the outward earthly conditions. They can smile even through their tears, knowing that, according to his promise, all things are working together for their good. To attain this development is to be filled with the Spirit; and each consecrated disciple of Christ should reach this plane.

Some Christian writer has well said: "Wherever there has been a faithful following of the Lord in a consecrated heart, several things have, sooner or later, inevitably followed. Meekness and quietness of spirit become in time the characteristics of the daily life. A submissive acceptance of the will of God, as it comes in the hourly events of each day, is manifested; pliability in the hands of God to do or to suffer all the good pleasure of his will; sweetness under provocation; calmness in the midst of turmoil and bustle; a yielding to the wishes of others [where there is no conflicting principle involved], and an insensibility to slights and affronts; absence of worry or anxiety; deliverance from care and fear -- all these, and many other similar graces, are invariably found to be the natural outward development of that inward life which is 'hid with Christ in God.'"

- *C. T. Russell*

Conversion in the Afterlife

"The Spirit and the bride say, Come And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." - Rev. 22:17.

Perhaps the most celebrated saying of Jesus is that recorded in John 3:16 " . . . *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" That text has formed the subject of many a sermon, has been declared at many a street corner meeting, and in all Christian teaching is accepted as the principle upon which God is dealing with men. Belief in Christ, acceptance of Christ, is essential to what the Christian calls "salvation." All the efforts of all the missionary endeavor and evangelizing of all the centuries since Jesus lived has been turned toward this end. *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"* was the theme of St. Peter's preaching on the Day of Pentecost and so it has been ever since.

But what does it mean to be "saved," and what is the alternative for the man who is not "saved"? By what process is this salvation attained and what is the nature of that "everlasting life" which becomes the portion of those who do indeed "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"? The world is already a long way past the beliefs of past ages that this earth as the center of the universe and the human race upon it was the sole object of God's work, that he would eventually take a relative few of men -- the righteous -- to a somewhat shadowy heaven, an eternal playing of harps and singing of sacred songs round the celestial Throne, while the rest of men - the unsaved - would be condemned to some kind of perpetual punishment and the earth destroyed as of no further use.

The whole question of everlasting life is bound up with divine purpose in creation, that men are brought into existence as part of a scheme of things which because of its very immensity cannot be fully comprehended by us in our present immature state, but nevertheless one in which man will eventually find his place. That involves fitness for that place. There has to be preparation for the future life, a process of development and experience culminating, it must be said, in the wholehearted surrender of self to God and willing acquiescence in all his laws and his ways. That is where belief and conversion come in. Before any progress can be made toward understanding the nature and characteristics of the life to come, it is necessary to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is laid down very definitely in Scripture and there are no exceptions. *"Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved,"* said St. Peter to the men of Jerusalem, *"neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 2:21; Acts 4:12). Nothing in all the Bible gives any ground for concluding that failure or refusal to believe on Jesus Christ, for whatever reason, will be accepted as excuse; the uncompromising dictum, ever and always, is that salvation and everlasting life is dependent upon this inflexible condition.

Fortunately we are not left without explanation why this is so. God is the source of all life and everlasting life can be the possession of any man only when that life comes from God. We do not understand the mystery of life, what it is, how it activates our minds and our bodies. We only know that as earthly beings we are conscious of our environment and can exercise our faculties of reflection, of remembrance and of anticipation, because we are alive. The Scriptures make it plain that the measure of life we now have is defective because of sin; it is not everlasting, and of itself must expire in death. We are also told that there is a way to restore the communion with God that was broken by sin, a way that will allow his life to flow uninterruptedly into us, and that, says the Divine Word, is everlasting life. Because that life originates in God, men can receive it only through Christ. *"In him was life; and the life was the light of men."* *"God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life."* *"I am the living bread*

which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever" (John 1:4; 1 John 5:11, 12; John 6:51).

It is very important that this fact be clearly understood. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the manifestation of God toward men. *"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory as of an only begotten of the Father." "[He is] the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person" (John 1:14; Heb. 1:3).* All that comes to man from the Father comes only through the Son; the Son is the vehicle of divine life to man on earth and life can only come to us, whether spiritually (*"born again"*) or physically (*"in him we live, and move, and have our being"* (Acts 17:28) through Christ. Thus this everlasting life which comes to us consequent upon our belief in Christ is not the result of mere intellectual assent to the fact of his reality or acceptance of his claim to lordship. It is the consequence of our linking our lives with him so that we are, as it were, in tune with the Son, hence with the Father, hence with the Father's laws of Creation. Voluntarily and willingly we are adjusted to the place in that Creation for which he has created and ordained us. This in turn implies the elimination of all that is out of accord with the Divine Will from our hearts and lives so that we can take our places in an order of things from which all sin and evil have vanished and the promise is fulfilled: *"As truly as I live, the whole earth shall be filled with my glory" (Num. 14:21; Isa. 11:9; Rev. 21:3-6).*

THE ETERNAL PURPOSE IN CHRIST

If then God desires the reconciliation of the sinner rather than his condemnation, if the creation of man was for a purpose, to fulfill a definite function in the Divine Plan, if Jesus came to earth *"to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10), it logically follows that God has provided in some way for each and every one of his creatures to have the eternal issues placed before them and to have full and adequate opportunity to make their choice, with all the persuasive powers God can bring to bear short of coercing man's inherent free will. There is no escaping from the acceptance of this position; when Jesus said, *"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die"* (John 11: 25, 26), he was stating in the plainest of terms that because he himself is the channel of life and source of resurrection power there is only one means by which there can be a resurrection from the dead and an entry into everlasting life, and that is through him. Intelligent and definite acceptance of Christ is the only means; on this the Christian faith takes its stand. There is no other way.

Now if in the outworking of the Divine purposes every human being does at some time in life come into contact with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and is able clearly to perceive the issues at stake, the position is clear. But this is not the case. Even though John said of Jesus *"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world"* (John 1:9) the fact remains that up to the present time in history that statement simply is not true. Consider first the whole mass of the human race which lived and died in all the generations before Jesus was born in Judea. Not one individual of all those teeming millions had ever so much as heard the name of Christ or had his gospel preached to them. Not one of them, no matter how upright and moral their lives, or -in the case of a very small proportion -how much they may have known and served the God of Israel, had the opportunity of accepting the death of Jesus Christ as the basis of their redemption from sin and their entry into life.

Of those who have lived since our Lord's First Advent, many millions in "unevangelized" lands have lived and died without hearing of the "only Name." Of those who were born into the nominally "Christian nations" there have been and are the infants who die before reaching years of discretion, the mentally deficient, those who grow up in irreligious families and even today live their lives through without ever having the claims of Christ presented to them in such fashion that they obtain a true perception of what Christianity really is. And of those who do hear and learn something of the Gospel many are so handicapped by their weaknesses and failings and the influence of the godless world around them that they cannot truthfully be said to be in a position dispassionately to understand the

call to discipleship of Christ. When all that can be said has been said it remains a glaring fact that in this present life only a minute proportion of the souls which in the providence of God have come into existence can possibly have had the opportunity to hear the Gospel and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

All kinds of suggestions have been made to escape from the implications of this dilemma. Most Christians rightly feel the injustice of condemning eternally people who because of ignorance or unfitness never had a chance. So it is surmised that of the "unsaved heathen," the remote barbaric tribes unreached by missionary endeavor, those who have lived right and moral lives according to their own standards, even though without God, will be saved in their ignorance because of their good deeds-and without Christ. But such are not fit for Heaven! The surmise ignores the fact that in many such cases that which is accounted good and moral conduct in that particular primitive community would be judged immoral and horribly cruel by modern European standards -- such as the custom, to which all young men are bound, in certain stages of culture, to kill off their parents or expose them to be devoured by wild beasts when they get too old to look after themselves or contribute further to the work of the tribe. The immature child, or the incurably insane, it is said, will of course be admitted to the realms of life at death though they have not professed Christ because of immaturity or ignorance.

None of these expedients have any Scriptural backing and they all deny the plain teaching that life can come only through Christ and there can be no entry into everlasting life without acceptance of him. They are adopted and held, even by many theologians and ministers, because the heart rebels at the thought of condemnation without opportunity, and feels instinctively that there must be some way in which such can at least come within sight of eternal life. Few stop to reflect that if eternal life can be had on plea of ignorance or good works, then far better would it have been if Christ had not come, for then all would have been ignorant and all would have been saved. And if the uncultured native can attain salvation without the Cross, then is the Cross so essential to the overcoming of evil and death as the Scriptures claim?

These are the inconsistencies to which men are led in the endeavor to bolster up the erroneous idea that belief and character are fixed at the end of this life and there can be no change of mind and repentance after death. Once it is realized that experience, development, and change of mind goes on after death as well as before, the entire position clarifies. It is widely believed that the day of grace, the opportunity for repentance and conversion, ends at death and after that there can be nothing but the Judgment, but this is not true. The Scriptures do define a day of grace at the end of which is the Last Judgment, when the issue of life and death for each individual is decided, but that is not at the close of the individual's present life on earth but at the end of the whole period of time God has ordained for his work with the human race. Before the day of grace comes to an end and the Last Judgment gives its verdict there has to come the Messianic Kingdom, presided over by our Lord Jesus Christ, present in the glory of his Advent. That Kingdom is also part of the day of grace.

"GOD HATH APPOINTED A DAY"

When St. Paul made his memorable oration before the philosophers of Athens -- the account is in the seventeenth chapter of the Book of Acts -- he referred to the "times of ignorance" preceding the First Advent as having been permitted by God. But now, he said, there is a worldwide call to repentance because God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness in the person of Christ who had been raised from the dead. This notable statement combines in a masterly fashion two vital truths: one, that God wills and wishes that men should repent and achieve life; and two, that the Divine Son is appointed to preside over the process of repentance and conversion and the final judgment which awards life to those who have responded and thus come to God. God *"will have all men to be saved,"* he says, *"and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim. 2:4); this confirms the words of the Lord to Ezekiel in a much earlier age: *"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no*

pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from, his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" (Ezek. 33:11).

That the period of repentance and conversion and probation over which the Lord Christ presides includes the entire span of time from Pentecost at the beginning of the present Age, to the Last Judgment at the end of the next, the Messianic Age, the day of the reign of Christ upon earth, is clear from the many Scriptures which describe that Age no less than this as a time of evangelism and probation. The great conference on faith and order called by the primitive Jerusalem church, the proceedings of which are recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Acts, laid down three fundamental principles in sequential order as basic to the emerging Faith. First, God is visiting the nations to take out of them a people for his name -- the Christian Church. That is the work of this Age. Next, God will restore the polity and privilege of Israel as a literal nation sanctified to Divine service and purpose. Scripture teaching elsewhere abundantly associates this with the end of this Age and the premillennial coming of Christ.

Third, the remainder of mankind -- those not included in the Church in Israel -- will be urged to convert to the Lord and have his name called upon them. That is evangelical work and it is associated with the Millennial or Messianic Age, the time following the commencement of the Second Advent and up to the Last Judgment. Jesus anticipated this expectation when he told his disciples that *"in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit . . . "* (Matt. 19:28) where the term "regeneration" has the meaning of giving new life.

Jesus did also have much to say about the connection of the resurrection with the time of his Kingdom. *"All that are in the graves shall hear his voice,"* he said, *"and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment"* (John 5:28, 29). Here is the intimation that there will be distinctions of resurrection and the operation of a divine law of retribution for deeds committed in the past, but there is nevertheless the idea of an opportunity to make amends, for it is to be "more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for Chorazin and Bethsaida in that day, "more tolerable" for Sodom and Gomorrah than for Capernaum, for these earlier peoples, abandoned and depraved as they were, would have repented, said Jesus, had they experienced the benefit of the preaching which the later cities did hear and reject (Matt. 10:15; Mark 6:11; Matt. 11:22-24; Luke 11:31, 32). If they would have repented then, had they received the opportunity, how can any assert that God will not give them the opportunity before passing final judgment? And since they manifestly have not had that opportunity yet, and now sleep in death, clearly it must be theirs in the future day of which our Lord is here speaking.

"I WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME"

Before any are condemned, then, as incorrigibly impenitent, they must experience resurrection to the Millennial world and come under the administration of the Prince of Peace and the evangelical appeal of his Kingdom. This is the time of which St. Paul speaks when he says that the *"saints shall judge the world"* (1 Cor. 6:2), when the resurrected Church live and *"reign with Christ a thousand years"* (Rev. 20:6). There was a time a few generations ago when this understanding of the divine purpose was slightly referred to as the "gospel of the second chance." Those who coined or used the phrase failed to reflect that nothing in Scripture forbids the idea of a second chance or a multiplicity of chances for life if there is any likelihood in the sight of God that the result will be repentance and conversion. Many a man has more than one chance in this life in that he may turn from the Gospel in early life and then, later on, life's experiences bring him back to God and he is accepted. The Prodigal Son had a second chance. Peter was bidden to give his offending brother, not only a second chance nor even seven chances, but seventy times seven (Matt. 18:22). Christians have always held that a "death-bed repentance," if sincere, is honored and accepted by God. Why then should not repentance after death, if equally sincere, be likewise honored? A modern churchman, Canon R. H. Charles, has stated *"The idea that forgiveness is impossible in the next life has only to be stated in order to be*

rejected; for till absolute fixity of character is reached, repentance and forgiveness, being moral acts, must always be possible under a perfectly moral Being." When St. Paul said of Jesus that he "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2:6), he laid down the eternal principle that all men are included in that which was achieved by the death of Jesus, viz., freedom from Adamic condemnation, release from Adamic death, and a full and comprehensive opportunity to heed the lessons of this life's experiences and take advantage of the call to discipleship in the next, that when the end does come, the world enter into the Last judgment, they may be of those to whom the King says in the language of Matt. 25:34, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

The doctrine of future probation is not new; it has been held by Christians since the days of the Apostles, and although superseded in the Middle Ages by the Romish doctrine of purgatory it has never died out. In the year 1562 the Houses of Convocation of the Church of England, supported by all the bishops, struck out the 41st and 42nd Articles, which up to that time declared unorthodox the doctrines of the Millennium and of Future Probation. After that date these matters became items of optional belief in the Church. In 1864 the judicial Committee of the Privy Council of Great Britain, sitting in judgment upon a case of ecclesiastical discipline within the Church, ruled, with the consent of the then Archbishops of Canterbury and York, that nothing in the Confession of Faith (the "Thirty-Nine Articles") precluded a clergyman from holding or preaching the possibility of repentance and pardon after death. Many of our foremost Christian thinkers and ministers of this and the last century have endorsed this position and declared their belief that it is not the end of the present life, but the Last judgment, which brings the day of grace to an end; that beyond the portals of death there is still hope for the unregenerate, if he will. Perhaps this is nowhere more eloquently put than by Dean Farrar of Westminster Abbey at the close of his book *"Mercy and Judgment (1881)*:

"I believe that man's destiny stops not at the grave, and that many who knew not Christ here will know him there. I believe that in the depths of the Divine compassion there may be opportunity to win faith in the future state. I believe that hereafter-whether by means of the "almost sacrament of death" or in other ways unknown to us -- God's mercy may reach many who, to all earthly appearance, might seem to us to die in a lost and unregenerate state. I believe that without holiness no man can see the Lord and that no sinner can be pardoned and accepted until he has repented, and till his free will is in unison with the Will of God, and I cannot tell whether some souls may not resist God for ever, and therefore for ever may be shut out from his presence.

"For, according to the Scriptures, though I know not what its nature will be or how it will be effected, I believe in the restitution of all things, and I believe in the coming of that time when -though in what sense I cannot pretend to explain or to fathom - GOD WILL BE ALL IN ALL."

- A. O. Hudson, England

Going Home

"So shall we ever be with the Lord." - 1 Thess. 4:17.

THE word *home* has been included among the finest words in our language. Indeed, someone once said that the three very sweetest words are God, Mother, and Home. Well, that was one man's idea. There are other exceedingly precious words, such as Jesus, Salvation, Faith, Hope, Mercy, Love. But we are willing to admit the value of Home. When Madam Albani as an encore sang "Home, Sweet Home" in London, England, it was said that there were few dry eyes in the audience. The great word *home* strikes a chord deep down in the human heart.

How the Christian thinks of home on the great sea of human life, when the foam-crested waves mount up toward heaven and a thousand perils seem about to spring upon him! And why should he not think of his heavenly home? Many have thought of it and have thereby felt an inspiration that has assisted them in making good. Jesus thought of it, and we are told that he "for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame." Just how much he remembered of that former joy we are not told, but that he kept his eye on the goal before him there can be no question. And, furthermore, he held out the prospect of future bliss to his disciples, saying, "In my Father's house are many mansions:... I go to prepare a place for you. And . . . I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3). How many weary pilgrims on life's rugged road have been cheered and encouraged by the music that has entered into their hearts from this mighty promise made by the Son of God.

We are not home yet. Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. And "we know that if the house of this earthly tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." We should be getting ready for this heavenly home. We have been placed here to gain the necessary character development. The chief purpose of what we call the truth is to enable us to become acquainted with the Mighty One of the universe, and to establish connections between him and ourselves. Every point of truth gained, therefore, should lift us to a higher level, making us more Godlike.

And just what is the character of God? According to the Bible it is love, and divine love has been said to be broader than the measure of man's mind, and the heart of God to be wonderfully kind. Well, we have been trying to gauge and measure his love. A great many persons in so-called Christendom have set forth written or unwritten creeds, most of them having pretty high fences around them, and in these credal enclosures they have placed (as they suppose) the love and the wisdom of God.

But some of us feel that the love of God cannot be thus circumscribed. God may be giving his favor to some who cannot see all points of doctrine exactly as we see them, or who express their belief in different terms. They cannot say "Shibboleth," and so they do the best they can and say, "Sibboleth." The question then is, should we condemn them for doing this and judge them as being virtually out of the truth? (Judges 12:6).

And another question is, should doctrines be to us stumbling stones or stepping stones? There is nothing that can make a person so narrow-minded and intolerant as religion if received in a sectarian way. Just think of the millions of persons who have been slain in the name of Christ. The knowledge of this fact should make us all very humble before the Lord, lest we be found in

the company of persecutors of the saints. Of course, we would not want to be found in such company, but Satan is very artful, and if he can get us to judge others, doubtless he feels very much pleased with his success.

OUR HOME QUALITIES

The fact is that we should be developing home qualities if we expect to reach our heavenly home. We should be learning to live with all those who love ' the Lord, in peace, in charity, and in goodwill. There will be no judging among us in heaven. Then why should there be judging among us here on earth? Why judge any man when we cannot read his heart? God judges according to motives. How many little points in the Bible has God left undetermined and therefore debatable simply for the purpose of testing our love. Do we deserve a lot of credit for loving those who agree with us in everything? Surely not; for such "yes" people are but the shadows of ourselves. Is it not a fact that some go about looking for their own mental reflection in all whom they meet? Such persons might just as well look in a mirror. It is often persons who do not see things just as we do who are the most helpful to us, for they are more broadening to our minds.

Now then, do we want to be narrow or broad? The world has two general classes conservatives and liberals. One finds them everywhere, even among Bible students. But did not Jesus say that the way is narrow? Yes, but in what sense? In the sense that it bars out the world, the flesh, and the devil, but not in the sense that it bars out other Christians who are living up to the best they know and are seeking any enlightenment that God may have for them.

How many of us will reach our heavenly home? All the Christlike ones will be there. How little Jesus had to say along the technical lines of doctrine, but he had much to say about faith in himself, and about love, for he interpreted the entire Decalogue in terms of love.

THE VALUE OF DOCTRINE

But doctrine is valuable -- just in so far as it makes us Christlike. It has no value in itself as an abstract entity. Does it warm up our hearts with a strong and ardent appreciation of the Master? Does it cause us to manifest greater kindness toward the brethren? If so, it is accomplishing its divine purpose. If on the other hand it is making us narrow, conservative, select, and selfish, then it has failed of its purpose, for we have not been using it in the right way. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). And why? Because he lacks the home spirit, the spirit of love for other members of God's chosen family.

God has set the members in the Body as it bath pleased him, not as it bath pleased us. Oh yes, it is a fact that some of them do not appeal to us. If we had the selection of them perhaps they would not be in the Body at all. Being out of harmony with our own mental tendencies, these brethren jar against us. But God did not want a lot of people just alike, or those who would see things exactly alike. But does not the Word say that God's people will see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion? Yes, and they will do just that when this prophecy is fulfilled. And even that does not mean that they will see all things exactly alike, but they will see all the main things alike. And the wise virgins will make the types of the Old Testament conform to the teaching of the New, and not try to twist the New Testament to make it fit the Old Testament types.

There will be some wonderful surprises in connection with our going home. Probably some will be there whom we considered heterodox and not fit to preach the Gospel while on earth. So we did not vote for them as elders or teachers, although they possessed ability to teach and preach,

and their lives were unimpeachable from the standpoint of rectitude. But on some purely technical point of the Scriptures they did not coincide with our views, so we ruled them out. But the question arises that, if we acted in the aforesaid manner, shall we be there ourselves? It would seem not. This business of being a Christian is a serious matter. We do not dare to repudiate our responsibility to the other members of the Body.

There are times in our experience, perchance, when we fancy ourselves on the verge of the broad ocean of eternity. Ere long the tide will come in and pick up our frail barque and carry us far away. But the stars will be there to guide us, and one glorious orb will outshine them all, and that will be the bright and morning Star. And oft we find ourselves thinking of the ones whom we expect to meet in our heavenly home -- the great Father and his Son Jesus, and a glittering throng of tried and faithful ones. Oh, loyalty, faith, and love will have achieved their crowning victory in that blessed morning when the portals of heaven open to receive us and we "answer to his call."

When we go Home,
Shall the broad sea lie all at rest,
Or shall the breakers roar
With riot of the deep,
Scorning the voice of sleep;
And thus 'mid billowy sound
Shall we go Home?

It matters not.
That going Home will be the same.
The virgins will be there.
God's loved, the true, the tried,
Bound for the other side,
In robes of light divine,
Shall meet us in the air.
When we go Home,

I think the ocean's mighty roar
Shall melt away in peace
To lullaby of foam;
And heaven's gold shall glow
In the vast vault, and so,
Born in eternity,
We shall go Home.

- Walter Sargeant

Earnest, Honest, Scriptural Contention

"Exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." - Jude 3.

THIS advice is given because certain men, ungodly, "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ," had crept in among those to whom Jude was writing. We inquire, therefore, is this "bond servant of Jesus Christ" urging his brethren to conduct themselves contrary to the definite instructions of the great Apostle Paul as well as that of the wisest man of the previous dispensation? Surely that cannot be. Paul writes: "The servant of the Lord must not strive." And, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." While Solomon says: "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water [as by the making of an opening in a dam]: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with." "It is an honor for a man to cease from strife; but every fool will be meddling." (2 Tim. 2:24; Phil. 2:3; Prov. 17:14; 20:3.) It is evident from these inspired statements that contention and strife are evils which the Christian must make every provision to avoid. Whatever our interpretation shall be of Jude's exhortation let us make sure that it does not lead us into the error of violating these other plain instructions of the spirit. For our safety note well the intimation in the verse quoted from the letter to the Philippian brethren -- that if any of them discover a contentious spirit developing in themselves they will be wise to suspect that it is because of thinking too well of themselves and not appraising highly enough the virtues of their brethren. To avoid "strife and vainglory" "let each esteem other better than. himself."

No saint will lack opportunities for developing the argumentative, contentious spirit. For the guarding of their hearts against this catastrophe all need a full garrison of the "peace of God," the peace that is characteristic of God, a peace that has not been ruffled though twenty billion sinners have persisted in their disagreement with him for 6,000 years. Only thus, by humility and a God given peace, can one be certain not to be overcome by this most seductive evil. The flesh can very expertly argue itself into believing that it is valiantly "set for the defense of the Gospel," when the truth is that it is merely standing up for its own opinions. Also, "Watch ye, *stand fast in the * faith*, quit you like men, be strong," can be perverted into authority to use the methods of human depravity in defending *our* interpretation of various teachings that have to do with the Gospel. (1 Cor. 16:13.) If we are to "shine as lights in the world," it will be not because of our contentiousness of "the thing believed," becomes very apparent when one thinks of the confusion that must quickly result if every saint is enjoined to devote his consecrated energies to contending with every saint who disagrees with him on some point he thinks was "once for all delivered to the saints." By that process this present phase of the "Kingdom of heaven" will be entirely devoid of the "peace" that is to be one of its hallmarks. The divine definition fits perfectly in this and all passages, but our common parlance has so long used the modern definition, "my belief," it is easy to substitute it for the divine one: "Faith is the *assurance* of things hoped for." - Heb. 11:1, R. V.

* English readers need to have in mind that one of the characteristics of the Greek language is the frequent use of the definite article before the abstract names of virtues and vices, *etc.*, but with the force of the indefinite article in English.

Of course no one would think of putting this thought of "a belief" into such passages as "Though I have the doctrines that would remove mountains," or the "demons have a creed that makes them tremble," or "the belief of Abraham," etc. But there are ten instances, including our text, where some think this meaning of "the thing believed" is the intended one. We must not therefore say it cannot be the meaning in some instances, but to the writer it is unthinkable that any word in any language would be used in its many thousands of appearances with one definite meaning and that there should be ten instances, and only ten, where an entirely different meaning is intended.

According to the note which Professor Wilson gives in the back of the Diaglott he knows of no definition other than that of "belief, trust, confidence." In discussing this verse in Jude, the *Expositors Bible* comments: "Every Christian ... is to 'contend earnestly,' with all the energy and watchfulness of an athlete in the arena, for the preservation of this sacred deposit, lest it be lost or corrupted. And the manner in which this earnest contest is to be maintained is not left doubtful; not with the sword, as Beza rightly remarks, nor with intemperate denunciation or indiscriminate severity, but with the mighty influence of a holy life, built upon the foundation of our 'most holy faith.'" Elsewhere the same publication gives the definition of faith as "being the confidence we have in God." The *Companion Bible* has a note of similar import, defining "faith" as "The living, Divinely implanted principle.

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called, and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses. One whose faith is in God instead of in himself will be able to discuss doctrinal differences with others in full confidence that when God's time has arrived *he* will give them a change of mind," provided they are really wrong. "Deceitful flesh, desperately wicked above all things, can, however, talk one into believing that his motive is to bring the opposing one "to the acknowledging of the truth," when the real purpose is to get him to acknowledge "that I am right." Fighting the good fight *of faith* means doing to the best of our ability what seems to be the will of the Lord for us to do, and then leave him to "direct 'the issue." - 1 Tim. 6:12;, 2 Tim. 2:24, 25; Jer. 17:;9.

FAITH THAT IS NOT DEAD

The testimony of the context indicates that what Jude would guard the brethren against is a lack of trust which might even eventuate in "denying the Lord" (ver. 5), and thus fall like those who left Egypt long ago only to mark the path of their journey with their graves because they "believed not. Sodom and Gomorrah, Cain, and "those who make separations" are given as illustrations of the fleshly mindedness to which a lack of faith depraves one; and then in the twentieth verse the safeguard is recommended: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the holy spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. But faith is not a selfish thing, so Jude's next thought is as to what we can do for the brethren who are "weak in faith "and on some have mercy, who are in doubt, and some save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."

Having said this much it is necessary to confess that if we have faith, confidence in our God, we will also have confidence in the revelation he has provided for us, and while exerting ourselves with all the vigor of an athlete to maintain and develop this trust in him, we will as vigorously strive for the purity of the message that is to be lived by us, and given out by ourselves and our brethren. One who is willing to see the Word of God polluted by being handled with unholy hands, spirit or human, has no great love for that Word. If his love is genuine, he will not change a syllable of it himself or permit any one else of this or any other generation to alter it in any detail. And he would not think of submitting a dogmatic interpretation suggested by his brain as a substitute for the clear cut revelation the holy spirit has not yet seen fit to give.

For ourselves and for all our brethren, and particularly for those who are caving a desperate fight against the fleshly desire to engage the fray with the carnal weapons of sarcasm, etc., let us join our hearts in the doxology with which Jude ends his letter: "Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time and now, and for evermore. Amen.

- P. E. Thomson.

Full Consecration

"O Sacred union with the Perfect Mind!
Transcendent bliss, which Thou alone canst give,
How blest are they this Pearl of price who find,
And, dead to earth, have learned in Thee to live!

"And thus, while dead to human hopes I lie,
Lost, and forever lost, to all but Thee,
My happy soul, since it has learned to die,
Has found new life in Thine infinity.

"With joy we learn this lesson of the cross,
And tread the toilsome way which Jesus trod;
And counting present life and all things loss,
We find in death to self the life of God."

Recently Deceased

Charles P. Biggins, Baltimore, Md.
Marion Capps, Chatham, Kent, Eng.
Olive M. Eves, Kingston, Jamaica
Minnie E. Falkner, Dayton, Ohio
Luella Kranz, Kenosha, Wis.
John Rigby, Calgary, Alta.
Thomas C. Smith, Gardiner, Me.

The Question Box

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." - Hebrews 4:9-11.

Question:

Who are "the people of God"? What is the "rest" that "remaineth" for them (Heb. 4:9) ? And when do they "enter into that rest" (Heb. 4:11) ? In your reply please include a discussion of Heb. 4:10. What connection, if any, does it have with Heb. 4:9?

Answer:

The "people of God" are the overcomers of this Gospel Age. The "rest" that "remaineth" for them, is that complete satisfaction of heart and mind which awaits them when they enter the joys of their Lord on the other side of the veil. By faith and consecration, however, this rest is entered by them here and now, in this present life. Heb. 4:10, although apparently offering no logical support to verse 9, is vitally connected therewith, as we will endeavor to show in a later paragraph.

TWO ASPECTS OF REST

Rest may be understood in two senses: (1) rest *from* work and (2) rest *in* work. With us both forms of rest are experienced. In various ways, with brain or hand or both, we work. When the labor has been especially hard, we become rested and refreshed by ceasing from it. We are enabled to return to it, whatever it is, and to do it better, because we left it for a season. This is rest *from* work, a most true and refreshing rest.

But is mere cessation from toil our best and most welcome refreshment, our truest rest? By no means! To see our work well done; to search into it and find no flaw; to feel that it comes up to that conception, that ideal, of it, which we had framed in our mind - *this*, when we get it (which is not often, we fear) gives us a far more perfect and restful satisfaction than mere sitting or lying still. This is rest *in* our work as distinguished from rest *from* our work; and the one is immeasurably higher than the other.

GOD'S REST

Thus, only very much more so, must it have been, always, with the Eternal God. Thus must it have been with him in the period we call "creation." Day by day, *this* consummate Artist, this master Musician, this peerless Poet, may be seen at work (in the first two chapters of Genesis). The work proceeds happily. Day by day God sees that the work of the day is good. "And God saw that it was good," is the familiar refrain appended to the story of each day's toil. At last the six days come to an end, and with them the work. And now God surveys all that his hands have made - the heaven and the earth, land and sea, day and night; sun, moon and stars; fish, birds, beasts; man and woman. As he surveys them he rejoices in his finished work, and pronounces them not "good" only, but "very good." They answer to his thought. They are *his* thought, in varied and beautiful forms. He takes delight in them and blesses them. *This is his picture*; and it is a finished and triumphant work of art. This is his *music*; and it is perfect harmony, perfectly rendered. This is his *poem*; and it is without flaw. He rests *in* it and is refreshed.

It is true, of course, as the Scriptures record, that (the works of creation being finished, Gen. 2:1, 2; Heb. 4:3, 4) God rested *from* them; but it is also true that his is a rest (a sense of refreshment, Exod. 31:17) *in* them. Indeed, the idea of rest, in his case, as mere relief from weariness, is repugnant to us, as it is to the whole tenor of Scripture. "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" (Isa. 40:28).

Moreover, the term "rest" as applied to God, not only could not imply relief from weariness, but also could contain no suggestion of inaction. Indeed, no less an authority than our Lord Jesus himself, affirmed: "My Father worketh *hitherto*" -- *that* is to say, up to that very hour in which Jesus made the statement (John 5:17). Having ceased *from* the works of creation, and while resting *in* them, God proceeded to work on a higher plane. Rising from the works of creation, he commenced the work of sustaining and providentially administering them. And rising yet higher, he proceeded to the work of redemption, including his "New Creation." And who can doubt but that *these* works of providence and redemption (which he is accomplishing during his day of rest from his works of creation -- a day which, so far as we have been able to ascertain from the Scriptures, *will never end*) who can doubt but that *these* works do but heighten and intensify his "rest."

GOD'S REST OFFERED TO MANKIND

Rest *from* work may be considered as the negative, and rest *in* work the positive form of God's rest. In God's rest man was destined to share. But he failed to attain it at the creation, for after that, all too soon, came the fall.

When God began dealing with the typical people, Israel, his offer of rest was first presented in the negative form. Even God himself condescended *thus* to rest, although, as we have seen, this was far from realizing his idea of rest, either for himself or for man. *It was, however, the only idea of rest which Israel could grasp.* The Pharisees, at the time of our Lord's first advent, do not appear to have understood in any degree the significance of his words when he insisted that his Sabbath keeping should be like that of his Father, who "worketh until now"; that the sabbath *he* regarded, was one in which *works* (good works, of course) were appropriate -- a sabbath made *for* man, not one for which man had been made. The Jewish sabbath, therefore, was God's offer of rest in its most elementary (its negative) form, of rest from work.

CANAAN REST TYPICAL

The offer of rest in Canaan went beyond this negative aspect. While falling short of the perfect rest which remained for "us (the Gospel Age Church), it was nevertheless a development in that direction. Israel, however, that is to say, all those who came out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses, so provoked God by their disobedience -- their lack of faith and lack of fidelity -- that he would not permit them even to enter the Land of Promise, much less would he allow them to enter *his rest* (Heb. 3:1-19). Joshua *did* take their *children* into Canaan, but even they did not realize the true rest there, for (as our Author points out in Heb. 4:8, where the word "Jesus" should be "Joshua") if Joshua *had* given them rest, there would have been no occasion for God, by his holy spirit, to have extended the invitation once again, as he does in Psalm 95:7, 8, "*Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart.*" The fact that this gracious invitation was once again made *then*, "after so long a time" (Heb. 4:7), (that is to say, after so long a time as the interval between the entrance into Canaan and the date of Psalm 95) shows that the promised rest had not yet become their portion.

In view of all this failure on the part of mankind in general and of Israel in particular, to obtain the rest promised, what shall we conclude? Obviously-so reasons *unbelief-we* must conclude that the promised rest will never be possessed; it is nothing but a beautiful mirage!

This, however, is not the conclusion of our Author. Instead, he exclaims: "Not so! I happen to be acquainted with God. He is my Father. Perhaps the most wonderful thing about him is that he has a craving to share this rest of his with his intelligent creatures. Moreover his desire is so intense that, though the invitation to share his rest remains without response for centuries, the effect is merely to extend the horizon; meantime renewing the invitation. My Father craves intelligent fellowship *and will not be denied*. The King's house must be filled with guests. Surely you will recall our Master's own parable (Matt. 22:1-14; Luke 14:15-24). Since they to whom the good tidings (of entering into his rest) were first preached, entered not in because of unbelief, it remaineth that some (that is, some others) must enter therein" (Heb. 4:6). *Our Author's inference*, from Psalm 95:11, thus seen, *is based on the gracious character of God*.

GOD'S REST REALIZED BY CHRIST

At this point we turn to Heb. 4:13 for guidance in properly understanding Heb. 4:10. In the Authorized Version, Heb. 4:13 reads:

"But all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

Rotherham, Moule, and others, however, have pointed out a preferred translation, which reads

"But all things are naked and exposed to his eyes: -- *As to whom is our discourse*. (Italic ours.)

Ah, yes! Christ is his theme from beginning to end of his epistle. If in our attempt to follow his involved discussions, we find ourselves, at times, in danger of forgetting the main theme, our Author will not long permit us to do so. Christ is the theme of his discourse, and if we do but remember this *as we ponder Heb. 4:10*, the reflection cannot fail to prove helpful in reaching the proper understanding of that verse.

In the Authorized Version, it reads:

"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

This verse is one of peculiar difficulty. It is not surprising that scholars differ in their expositions of it. These expositions fall into two groups, which, freely translated, are:

(1) "Whosoever has entered into God's rest, has ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

(2) "He, Christ, entered into God's rest, having himself ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

In support of the second view a number of reasons have been advanced, which may be summarized as follows:

- (a) The definite phrase, "he who entered"; (not as R.V. "he that is entered") .
- (b) The emphatic pronoun, "himself."
- (c) The historic tense "entered upon rest"; (not as R.V. "hath rested").
- (d) The implied contrast with Joshua (Josh. 4:8).
- (e) That otherwise there is no mention of Jesus' experience or achievements between Heb. 2:1, and Heb. 4:13.
- (f) That otherwise read, the verse offers no logical support to Heb. 4:9, but interpreted thus supplies the ground on which the Sabbath -- rest is offered to Christ's followers.

While at first sight this second view may be surprising, it gains in beauty, the more it is considered. God's rest which is set before us, our Forerunner (our Joshua) has already entered. He who once said, "I must work while it is called Today" (John 9:4), on entering into God's rest, ceased from his own works, as God did from his. He said, "It is finished" (John 5:36; John 17:4; John 19:30). Joshua gave Israel no deep and satisfying rest; but Jesus (our Joshua) Son of God, has entered into rest on our behalf, and by him, we too, may enter. He it is, whom Heb. 4:10 represents, with a marked and isolating emphasis, as having "himself entered into rest." Thus understood, the verse does not stand alone and unconnected, but prepares the reader to return, after having seen the supremacy of Jesus over Moses and Joshua, to the consideration of his representative character, his high priesthood, already mentioned at the end of Heb. 2 and the beginning of Heb. 3.

In our consideration of Heb. 4:10 foregoing, we have endeavored to distinguish the two main viewpoints of scholars, and we confess that if we had to choose between them, we should take the second. But why not combine them? Since the rest that Jesus realized was not for himself alone, but for all who share his fellowship; since he could and did offer the rest of salvation to all who came to him -- "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28); and even the deeper rest of consecration to those who would take his yoke and learn of him (Matt. 11:29, 30). Since these things are so, may we not understand from Hebrews 4:10 that *Christ first, and we after him*, are to cease from our own works as God did from his? It would surely seem so.

- P. L. Read