

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. LXVIII July / August, 1985 No. 4

Does God Not Care?

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

"For the Lord will not cast off forever: But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men." - Lam. 3:31-33.

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*

The Salvation of the Lord

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else." - Isa. 45:22

ISRAEL trembled on the banks of the Red Sea. Pharaoh and his chariots were in close pursuit. There seemed no way of escape. They were trapped by the Egyptian host and faced return to slavery. Moses, full of faith in the power of God, encouraged Israel to similar faith. (Exod. 14:13.) "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he *will* shew to you today." Then God commanded Moses to stretch forth his rod and the sea divided, forming a path through which the people marched safely to the other side. , The Egyptian chariots followed, and in the midst of the sea their chariots stuck with loosened wheels. Once again Moses stretched forth his rod and the wall of water broke, overwhelming Pharaoh's might. "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians ... and the people feared the Lord, and they believed the Lord, and his servant Moses" (Exod. 14:30, 31). They broke into song and praise: "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously . . . the Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation." - Exod. 15:1, 2.

What a wonderful salvation that was by which Jehovah finally set his people free from the bonds of their first great oppressor! They stood still and saw the salvation of the Lord.

"The Salvation of the Lord" is a wonderful theme also for us living today.

The most important question each of us can ask is that asked by the jailor of Philippi, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And the answer of Paul is still the answer we need, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Unless we, each one of us personally and individually, have accepted this offer of salvation, having repented of sin and accepted the pardon so graciously offered by God in Christ, further knowledge of other phases of the Salvation of the Lord will profit us little. If, however, we have accepted Jesus as our personal Savior and have experienced some measure of his saving power in our lives, in turning us from sin to righteousness, we shall be desirous of learning all we can concerning the many phases of the Divine Purpose as revealed in the Bible.

"SALVATION! O THE JOYFUL SOUND!"

Contrary to general thought, the word "salvation" is not restricted to the salvation of men from sin, but very often refers to deliverances from sickness and death, from physical dangers and captivity, as in the instance of Israel at the Red Sea. In that was seen the salvation of the Lord. So in many other places in the Old Testament in the deliverance of God's people from their earthly enemies. Jonathan reminded Saul his father that David "put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel" (1 Sam. 19:5). David himself cries: "Stop the way against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I am thy salvation ... And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord: it shall rejoice in his salvation." - Psalm 35:3, 9.

But David was not unmindful of the deeper aspects of personal salvation from sin, for in Psalm 24:3-5 he asks: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" and answers the question himself: "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart . . . He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." In Psalm 91:1, 16 he makes known the promise of God to the one who dwells in the secret place of the Most High: "With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation." And in that great penitential Psalm 51 he cries: "Create in me a

clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee" (Psa. 51:10-13). The man who wrote these words knew something about salvation in the Gospel sense, although he lived in the old dispensation.

The Salvation of the Lord is therefore a very personal thing, and we can count this as the first thing we must learn about it-the salvation of the Individual.

But the salvation of the Lord has a wider scope than this, and the second phase we now consider is the salvation of the nation of Israel, the chosen people of God. Through allowing Israel, as punishment for their sins, to be subjugated to their enemies, he raised up saviors who delivered them from Egyptians, Philistines, Midianites and Ammonites. He further saved them from the Babylonian Captivity and returned them to their own land. Finally, because of their rejection of the Messiah, they were scattered for centuries among the Gentiles. But even from this longest captivity, God promised to restore them. Ours is the blessed privilege to be living in the days when God's Arm is being put forth on their behalf. Their most formidable oppressor was crushed in the Second World War, and we witness their return to Palestine in fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

What will this phase of the salvation of the Lord mean for Israel and the World?

"WHAT TIDINGS FOR OUR RACE!"

We must recognize at the outset that the great dispersion now ending resulted from rejection of the offer of salvation when it was presented to the nation at Messiah's First Advent. Had the Jews accepted, they would have been spared terrible centuries of suffering, and the Millennial blessings would have begun long ago. But only a few recognized the significance of the First Advent in its relation to the nation.

Among these few was Zacharias, who, regaining his speech at his son John's birth, uttered these words, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; . . . That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us." - Luke 1:68-71.

This was God's purpose for his people at that time, if they had only accepted the Savior, whom he was about to send.

The Prophet Zechariah (Zech. 9:9) foretelling Messiah's entry into Jerusalem cried: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt, the foal of an ass." Unhappily they did not know the time of their visitation and the things which belonged to their peace, even as Jesus later said.

The father of John the Baptist in his further words reveals a deeper conception of the salvation offered to Israel: "Thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins" (Luke 1:76, 77). It was only through finding salvation from their sins that they could hope for full and final salvation from their enemies.

How far-seeing and comprehensive was the vision also of old Simeon as he looked with awe and severance upon the tiny babe Jesus: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. Luke 2:29-32.

The priests and leaders of the nation did not have the vision of old Simeon. How different the history of the Jews and the world would have been if they had only seen in Jesus what he saw. The great tragedy of Israel would have been averted and the Kingdom of God established at that time.

"DELIVERANCE FOR THE WORLD IS FOUND"

Yet God's Purpose was not frustrated, for he is able to overrule opposition and cause it to carry out further a stage in that Purpose's fulfillment. God had decreed, as Simeon had said, that Jesus should be a light to the Gentiles; and strange as it may seem, the Master's rejection by Israel enabled this to be carried out in some measure. But before this happened, another opportunity was given to the Jews, especially to the Dispersion whom Paul took every opportunity to reach first wherever he went. To those at Antioch he said: "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, ... to you is the word of salvation sent." But we know the result. Though some accepted, the great majority rejected the word of salvation, and so Paul declared: "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." - Acts 13:26, 46.

Finally, when the Jews of Rome took the same attitude, he declared to their elders there: "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it" (Acts 28:28). Paul was sure about this, because of the words of the Prophet Isaiah (Isa. 49:6), which Paul himself had quoted in Antioch: "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." To the Apostle this was divine sanction to carry the Gospel to the nations. The salvation of God which was first offered to Israel and by them rejected, was now sent to the Gentiles.

Paul, in considering this turn of events, asks the question concerning Israel: "Have they stumbled that they should fall?" and answers: "God forbid: but through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:11). Israel's rejection therefore is not final, for the Apostle goes on to declare that their hardening of heart would endure only until the "fulness of the Gentiles be come in," and then Israel will at last accept the offer and so be saved. (See Rom. 11:26.) The salvation of the Lord, once rejected, will finally return to them and be accepted at last, and so the whole purpose of God will be harmoniously fulfilled.

"THROUGH GOD'S ABOUNDING GRACE"

The present restoration of Israel in their own land as a nation is preparatory to their national acceptance of the Messiah and his salvation. However, before that happy ending is reached, according to the prophecies, they have yet to pass through the final and most awful phase of 'Jacob's trouble.' Nevertheless we have the assurance of Jeremiah 30:7 that they shall be saved out of it. Zechariah 12:7-11 depicts their subsequent mourning, when they recognize in the Pierced One their long-awaited Messiah. What wonderful joy shall succeed that mourning!

Isaiah, after describing in Isa. 11:11, 12 how the Lord shall set his hand the second time together the outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth, goes on in Isa. 12:1-3

to tell what they will say in that day: "O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; . . . the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall we draw water out of the wells of salvation."

Then will the way be opened for the third and final phase of the salvation of the Lord. For God's Purpose involves not only the salvation of the individual, and the salvation of the nation of Israel, but has its grand finale in the salvation of the World.

To the woman at the well, Jesus said: "Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). For it was to Israel that God's salvation was first made known. To them the Savior came, and it was by Jewish disciples and apostles that the Gospel reached the Gentiles. The very Scriptures we study, because they are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ, are all Jewish Scriptures. So truly, "Salvation is from the Jews" as the Revised Version renders it.

After he spent two days in the Samaritan village, the people reached a most wonderful conclusion regarding Jesus, for they said: "We have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Savior of the world" (John 4:42). And this recognition that Christ is the appointed means of the world's salvation is testified to by the Apostle: "He is the propitiation . . . for the sins of the whole world." Also "the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." - 1 John 2:2; 4:14.

Now while much has been done during the present age to take the Gospel to all nations, the efforts of the missionary societies touch only the fringe of the problem. The birth rate alone far outstrips all the noble efforts these organizations can make, not to speak of the political barriers now being erected to exclude them from various countries. It is therefore evident that something unprecedented must happen in order that the Salvation of God be truly made known to all the ends of the earth. We believe this will result from the conversion of the restored nation of Israel which will thereupon become the great missionary nation of the Millennial era in declaring the glory and salvation of God to all the nations.

"DELIVERANCE FOR THE WORLD IS FOUND"

The Apostle Paul cherished such expectations, for we read in Romans 11:12: "Now- if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?" And in Rom. 11:15: "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" What streams of blessing will flow to all nations when the people of Israel are filled with the spirit as was Paul, and desire, like him, to take the message to the ends of the earth!

That day shall see the fulfillment of Isaiah 49:6, when the Father will say to the Messiah his Son, who will then have fully restored Israel to favor: "It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."

The work of restoring Israel, admittedly now so difficult a task to all involved, including her statesmen, when fully accomplished by the revealed Messiah will seem in the eyes of God, as it were, but a "light thing." Therefore the Father's words to his Son: "It is too light a thing that thou shouldst have restored Israel. I will also give thee a heavier task, namely, to be a light to the Gentiles, and my salvation to the ends of the earth."

Nothing will so astonish and awaken the nations as the full restoration of Israel, following upon the overthrow of their last great enemy and oppressor-Gog and his hosts from the north. This fulfillment of Bible prophecy will completely vindicate the Word of God in the eyes of all nations. They will be ready to listen as never before to the emissaries of restored and converted Israel as they go forth to all the earth, declaring the glory of the Lord and his Salvation unto all peoples. (See Isa. 66:19.) Thus as Ezekiel 39:27 declares, "Jehovah will be sanctified in the sight of many nations."

Then the nations will be ready to flow unto the mountain of the Lord's house, to be taught his ways and to walk in his paths, "for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations and rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks" -- their tanks and their guns into combine harvesters.

"Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war *any* more." - Isa. 2:1-4.

"THROUGH GOD'S ABOUNDING GRACE

Is not that the kind of salvation all the world longs for at the present time? They may not be particularly interested in the more spiritual phases of salvation, but all the nations would leap for joy if they could be relieved of the crushing burden of the Armament race and could turn their wealth and energy into the paths of peace.

It was estimated some time ago that the armament bill exceeds one hundred and twenty thousand million dollars! Consider what material blessings such a sum would provide! Furthermore, the diversion of man's ingenuity from the creation of frightful and diabolical weapons of destruction to that of raising the living standards of all races, would make this globe into a Paradise for man. And that is exactly what will happen in the approaching Millennial Age, when the Lord shall "speak peace to the nations." - Zech. 9:10.

How Israel and the nations will rejoice in that day when at last the clouds of war will forever roll away. "In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things," as Isa. 25:6-9 foretells. He shall destroy the veil of ignorance and superstition and prejudice that is spread over all nations, and shall take away the reproach of his people from off all the earth.

Psalms 98:2, 3 declares that it will be said in that day: "The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the nations. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of the Lord."

How wonderful when all humanity will join in that cry of eternal gratitude (Isa. 25:9): "This is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Amen!

- J. McGeachy, Eng.

"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*

"THINGS" - A Contrast Study

"For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. " - 2 Cor. 6:16-18.

GOD has purposed the selection of a people "for His name" (Acts 15:14); separated unto Him -- "in the world, but not of it" (John 17:11, 14); a "heavenly calling" (Heb. 3:1) and uncompromising; a complete separation of ourselves, households, and possessions, from the domain and service of the god of this world. So St. Paul emphasizes: "Having therefore these promises [in the title scripture], dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." - 2 Cor. 7:1.

Turning directly to our subject, we begin by noting that in essence the work of the Holy Spirit in consecrated believers is their instruction in the ability to distinguish between *two* classes of "things" (a word which sums up the gross materialism of our world). In the process this evidences also the inability of most humans to distinguish between "want" and "need." It will be profitable for us to consider these two classes of "things" in which we as New Creatures are involved, by contrasting related scriptures.

THE "THINGS OF GOD"

"For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the *things of God* knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." - 1 Cor. 2:11.

"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the *things which be God's*." - Luke 20:25.

"Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savorest not the *things that be of God*, but those that be of men." -Matt. 16:23.

"The *things which God hath prepared for them that love him*," which he has revealed to us by his spirit -- "spiritual things" -- "the things of the Spirit of God." - 1 Cor. 2:9.

Our Lord in his last conversation on earth with his disciples spoke with them of "the *things* pertaining to the Kingdom of God." - Acts 1:3.

We read of Apollos that he "taught diligently the *things* of the Lord" (Acts 18:25). And of Paul that he disputed and persuaded "the *things* concerning the Kingdom of God." - Acts 19:8.

THE "THINGS OF THE WORLD"

We are warned not to love "the *things* that are in the world ... for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life [lust of the mind], is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." - 1 John 2:15-17.

We recall that Demas "loved this present world." - 2 Tim. 4:10.

SEEKING ONE'S OWN THINGS

Paul, writing to the Philippians, says, "All seek their own, not the *things* which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. 2:21). Of earthly things, he further sadly speaks, saying: "For *many walk*, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind *earthly things*." - Phil. 3:19.

The spirit of seeking one's own things is manifest even in childhood. At a very early age a child begins to seek his own things, and will snatch them from the fingers of playmates; he cannot bear to see them in the hands of another. And this spirit develops with age. How much need there is that the believer should be instructed as to the precious things of Christ; "the *things* that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2:12). Without that instruction he is apt to adopt, and to act upon, the principle that a man's life consists in "the abundance of the things that he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). Let us not be found following those "whose glory is in their shame," when our *glory* is in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, "by whom the world has been crucified unto us, and we unto the world." - Gal. 6:14.

THINGS OF FLESH AND SPIRIT

In Romans 8:5 the distinction is made between these: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the *things* of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the *things* of the Spirit." The difference between the minding of these two classes of things is the difference between *death* and *life*. "For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace." - Verse 6, R.V.

The "things of the flesh" need no knowledge of Christ for their enjoyment. They appeal to the old nature in the believer; and hence the repeated warnings of Scripture with reference to the desires of our natural hearts. The Word of God does not detail the things of the flesh, listing some as allowable and some not. It does not say what we may indulge of the tastes and desires of the old nature while others restrain. On the contrary, we are bidden to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and to make *no provision* for the flesh to fulfill the desires thereof." - Rom. 13:14.

"THINGS SEEN" AND "THINGS NOT SEEN"

In 2 Cor. 4:17, 18 the distinction is made thusly: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: while we look not at the *things* which are seen, but at the *things* which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." It is a matter of what we are *looking at*.

If, with inward eyes, we are looking in the *direction* to which the Holy Spirit is pointing, then we are looking at "the things which are not seen"; the things "which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man" (1 Cor. 2:9). We are in that case looking at Him "whom having not seen we love" (1 Pet. 1:8); and we shall therefore be like Moses, who "endured as seeing Him who is invisible." - Heb. 11:27.

It is while we are thus occupied with the unseen things that the trials and persecutions of which the Apostle is speaking will seem only "a light affliction which is but for a moment," though their severity be such that we are being "alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:11). It will work out for us a far more exceeding and surpassing weight of glory which will be eternal.

Looking at unseen things is preeminently an exercise of faith; for faith is "the evidence [conviction] of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1), and "the victory that overcometh the world." - 1 John 5:4.

"THINGS ABOVE" AND "THINGS ON THE EARTH"

We read in Col. 3:1, 2: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those *things* which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on *things above*, not on *things* on the *earth*."

Thus we have a power of choice, and the responsibility for the results of our choice rests upon us. Fixing and staying our mind upon things above, not on things upon the earth, precludes the indecision incurred by questioning whether *this*, or *that thing is* proper for a child of God. One's whole time could be taken up by such indecisiveness and in giving ear to suggestive plausible reasons which commend "things on the earth." The Scriptures cut short all such questions. They do not "sort out" some things on the earth as suitable to engage our minds. The word *is* "not on things upon the earth" whatever their apparent worthiness.

The context of St. Paul's words in Col. 2:16-23 (which please read), is instructive as showing the particular earthly things listed are not impure in themselves but may include *religious* ordinances and doctrines and precepts of men which have a show of wisdom in self-imposed worship, false humility and harsh treatment of the body, but which lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence. Among "the things that are on the earth," none are better calculated than the religious observances devised by man to disguise the real character of the world; to turn the mind away from the person of Christ, and the place where he now is, at the right hand of God.

"THINGS BEHIND" AND "THINGS BEFORE"

Consider Phil. 3:13, 14: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those *things* which are *behind*, and reaching forth unto those *things* which are *before*, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

The things which the Apostle left *behind* were many held in highest esteem by the heart of man.

They were *not ills*, misfortunes, follies, mistakes, failures, shortcomings, transgressions, and wicked deeds of his life. Far from it!

They *were* all that he had to pride himself upon before he found Christ: his birth, nationality, pedigree, religious zeal, his ecclesiastical denomination, his performance of all religious rights and, above all, his righteous life and blamelessness under the Law as listed in Phil. 3:5, 6. Phil. 3:7 reads: "What *things* were gain to me, I counted loss [and refuse] for Christ."

This passage is expressive of intense earnestness, a condition of soul which is possible to all believers, but only experienced by those who have *fully accepted* what God has said about the *things to come*, and who are living in *daily expectation* of them.

"OLD THINGS" AND "NEW THINGS"

"Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: *old things* are passed away; behold, all *things* are become *new*. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Christ Jesus." - 2 Cor. 5:17, 18.

If a man be *in* Christ, he has not merely improved his old state, eliminating the bad things and importing some new things; rather, he has been taken *out* of the old state altogether, and put into a state where all things are new, and all things are of God.

In the old creation there were things of the world, things of the flesh, things of the Devil. There was nothing in the whole system that God would accept. Of the grandest, noblest, most beautiful works of man, not a single one can survive into the new creation. To one in Christ, *all* these old things are *passed away*.

In God's sight the new creation is not something to be called into existence in the *future*. It exists *now*, and everyone who is "in Christ" is already a part of it. True, this new creation is not revealed in all its completeness, but by faith we can even now look to the end of God's plan in it.

Eph. 1:9, 10: "God hath made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one *all things in Christ*, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."

THINGS TO COME

Our Lord promised of the Spirit of Truth that "it will show you *things to come*" (John 16:13); the new imperishable and incorruptible things *upon* which our interest is to be fixed.

The promise has been fulfilled: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the *things* which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the *deep things* of God." - 1 Cor. 2:9, 10.

THINGS THAT CANNOT BE SHAKEN

In Hebrews 12:26, 27 we have the last of these contrasts, and very appropriately the distinction is made between "*things* that are [or can be] shaken," and "*things* that cannot be shaken." "Whose voice then shook the earth [at Sinai]: but now hath He promised, saying [Haggai 2:6, 7], 'Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.' And this word, 'Yet once more,' signifieth the removing of those *things that may be shaken* [marg.] *as of things that are made*, that those *things that cannot be shaken* may remain."

For (2 Pet. 3:10): "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; -- in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the *works* that are therein shall be burned up."

Heb. 12:28, 29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved [shaken], let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire."

CONCLUSION

Such is the testimony of the Scriptures concerning "the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2:12). These things are all in Christ, "for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell" (Col. 1:19). The testimony of the Spirit is to show *all the things of Christ*. "To this agree the words of our Lord: "It shall glorify me: for it shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine." - John 16:14, 15.

Where do we find this testimony concerning the things of Christ? Only in the Scriptures, for He is the subject of the Bible. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10). He himself said of the Scriptures, "They are they which testify of me." - John 5:39.

Let us therefore abide close to our Lord, of whom it is written (Luke 24:27): "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in *all* the Scriptures, the *THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF*."

- *W. J. Siekman*

Clay in the Hand of the Potter

A Meditation

"O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand. " - Isaiah 64:8.

GATHER my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice" (Psa. 50:5). So speaks the Eternal, through his Prophet, the Psalmist. The word "saints" is significant. One of the problems perpetually confronting any enlightened and responsible interpreter of Holy Writ is that of determining those utterances which may reasonably be taken as having a spiritual significance and message for the New Creation, the Church of the Firstborn, which is Christ's Body (Eph. 1:22, 23), and those which are obviously of exclusively literal significance, the meaning of which is plain and clear, allowing no involved or obscure construction.

Here, however, we have a message which is at once both clear and involved. A message which, at the first reading, seems natural and literal; but, at the second reading, conveys a deep and significant "alert" -- to all who have the hearing ear!

"Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." Not literal Zion! When was literal Zion ever "the perfection of beauty"? But it is those "washed, sanctified, justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God." Christ is their righteousness, the "altogether lovely," in whose perfect merit his people are beheld by the Almighty Father-and accepted. - Eph. 1:6.

To and through these the Father speaks-have they but the ears to hear -- and says,, "Let my saints be gathered together unto me."

He speaks with a measure of indignation. (Psalm 50:3, 4, and 6.) And no wonder! "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" (Isa. 5:4). Wherefore, then, this scattering of the sheep-all these unhappy divisions-this "oppression of the poor"

by those who would dictate to and bind his people, "lording it over God's heritage," and "through covetousness, with feigned words, making merchandise" of them? - See Psalm 12:5; 1 Pet. 5:3; 2 Pet. 2:3.

Had God's people, in the representative body once established, remained faithful to him, how different would matters have been! But now he calls, and calls with vigor, to those still precious in his sight. "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence:... " "Hear, O my people . . . " And all still worthy the name "my people" will hear. - 1 Pet. 2:10.

Under the beautiful natural parable of a potter sitting at his wheel, molding a lump of clay and fashioning it to the beauty of design and workmanship in his mind (Jer. 18:1-4), Jeremiah was shown a type which applies to both natural and spiritual Israel (1 Cor. 10:11); the latter being the greater, and therefore the more important fulfillment.

"As ... clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand (Jer. 18:6); thus speaks the great Creator of mankind to those upon whom he has laid his hand, as chosen vessels in the Redeemer unto himself, sanctified and meet for his use. - See Ezek. 40:1; Rev. 1:17; Acts 9:15; 2 Tim. 2:21.

God could, had he wished, have chosen clay of finer, nobler substance than they. He could chosen, even from among fallen men, clay of better composition, of minimum fault or failure, which would have responded utterly and instantly to the great Potter's hand, yielding the immediate fruits of obedience, loyalty, and trust. He did not do so -- either with natural *or* with spiritual Israel. - See Deut. 31:27, 1 Cor. 1:26-29.

There is hope, then, when the clay is marred in the hand of the great Potter, in that he does *not* cast it away, and choose another piece, but remakes it, in different mold, "as seemeth good." And now, behold, a wonderful thing. The fact that the clay has failed, and been remade, does not *diminish* its value or usefulness, but rather enhances it! For experience has shown, time and time again, that not the shallow, inexperienced servants are the most useful to the great King. Rather it is those who, through failure, trial, suffering, deep-and often bitter-experience, have come to know him as Father of mercies, God of love - and his dear Son as the great "High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec," able to bear patiently with their infirmities, and even to recover them *when out* of the way -- these are the "vessels of mercy" able, because of a ripe experience of his mercy manifest to and in themselves, to carry the word of forgiveness and salvation to others! - See Heb. 5:1, 2, 5, 6; 7:25; 1 Tim. 1:15, 16; 2 Cor. 3:6; Rom. 9:23.

When a Persian carpet is being made, it sometimes happens that one or more of the apprentices who are allowed to help may make a mistake in weave or color. When this happens, should the artist be a past master *at* his craft, he does not undo the mistake! Instead, *he weaves it into the pattern*, achieving new and enhanced heights of design and craftsmanship. Can this man -- *and can God not?*

So take heart ye who, as the poet has expressed it, "Kneel, conscious of our failure and our sin, and dare to call *His* righteousness our own

"God is never impotent amid the wreckage of any one's hope and expectation. There is no "cul-de-sac" in the Divine purpose.

Abraham, "Father of the faithful," *believed God*, and it was counted to him for righteousness; being fully persuaded that what God had promised he was abundantly able to perform! We are His workmanship-not our own-and the tremendous faith which shone in the heart and life of Abraham earning him the magnificent title of "the friend of God" -that tremendous faith must be ours also as we look up and say, "Yea, Lord, I believe -- help thou mine unbelief. I believe that what thou hast promised thou art abundantly able to perform. That thou, who hast begun a good work in me, wilt perform it. That thou wilt perfect that which concerneth me." And one day we shall see this apparent ruined, wasted, emaciated, unprofitable life of ours, crowned with glory and honor, as the lovely product of his grace!

"Keep on believing, there's nothing to fear;
Keep on believing, Jesus is near;
Keep on believing, in night as in day;
He is still guiding -- will guide all the way."

To return to the Psalm: "Those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." Any application to natural Israel must of necessity be overshadowed by the aptness of its application to spiritual Israel; those born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). It is obvious that if natural Israel were in "a covenant by sacrifice," spiritual Israel (for whom the Son of God died - Ephesians 5:25) is much more so. For whereas the nation of Israel was involved in that Covenant whether, in a manner of speaking, they liked it or not (they had no choice or option in the matter, for the covenant had already been made with their fathers, and the types *had* to be formed and fulfilled) spiritual Israel *is* in a very different category. *Every member* of the Church of the Firstborn, the New Creation, Israel after the spirit, is there by specific invitation and acceptance, on the basis of the sacrifice of God's dear Son. His precious blood was shed for and accepted by each of them as individuals, on an entirely voluntary basis, and they are thereafter "members of his Body," the Church of the living God.

"By sacrifice"! Admittedly, we have offered our puny little all-"All we have, our hearts, we give Thee; consecrate them Thine alone . . . "; have presented our bodies as "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," our "reasonable service." But far transcending any or all of these is *His* great and tremendous sacrifice of his only begotten Son, the dearest treasure of his heart, on our behalf. And thereafter all we can offer is, as the Apostle so beautifully and *simply* puts it, the "sacrifice of praise"! - Heb. 13:15.

And this is itself a most beautiful and spiritualized rendering of the final verse of Psalm 50: "Whoso offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving glorifieth me; and prepareth a way, that I may show him the salvation of God." - R. V., margin.

Dearly beloved, can we not, then, in view of all these wonders, realize the greatness of his love and mercy toward us, the unspeakable gift of the sacrifice of his dear Son, and, on this basis, "gather together unto him," forsaking all lesser things, the comparatively minor things which divide and separate us one from another? On the basis of his great sacrifice for us, and full acceptance and belief of that great and vital fact, let us meet together in love and gratitude, and with one mind and one mouth "*glorify* him" to whom all *praise* belongs, and his dear *Son*, who loved us, and gave himself for us.

- T. Ballantyne

Annual Report of Directors

"When you SEE these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near." - Luke 21:31, R.S.V.

FROM these inspiring words we select this theme -- the proximity of God's kingdom upon this earth -- for our preamble to this sixty seventh yearly report of the Institute's ministry. Our Journal's masthead -- The *Herald of Christ's Kingdom* -- has perseveringly testified to the glorious event as the decades have passed-1918, 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970 and now has reached 1985. Have we been wearied in waiting? Has our blessed Hope dimmed? Has discouragement beset us as it did recently one who sighed "it may not be for a hundred years yet"? God forbid!

Rather, we abide in the spirit of a dear Sister who pointed out the deeper significance of the little word "SEE" in our heading text. Our hearts burn as we recognize its full implication of a literalness unobserved in the past., In those decades the word "SEE" meant to *discern* world events in ways apart from actual visual observation; through printed matter, lectures, radio reports, etc. For who on this vast globe could literally "SEE" all its activities? But to the present generation, world events are *actually* "SEEN" by the miracle of television, even as they occur! Is it too much to believe our Master deliberately referred to literal visualization? How wonderful that such is now the experience of all who search for Bible significance in the daily events unfolding before our very eyes. Do we not savor the Kingdom's proximity?

And what do present events testify? Is it not that human dreams of a stable world order underwritten by universally accepted standards of international conduct-the original goal of the United Nations charter - are everywhere breaking down as greed, ambition, and lust for power reassert their historical demands. Fallen human nature continues its dominance. A high political figure recently observed that "every continent is sliding toward crisis." Even a generation ago men were fond of envisioning a future transformed by wondrous technological breakthroughs. This view was a natural product of the widespread belief not only in the inevitability of progress, but in an accelerating and uninterrupted march toward a better world. But this opening new period has now blurred this optimism by doubts. The world and the future appear less rational to our troubled generation. Their hopeful expectations are dulled by apprehension. The tangible difficulties - energy availability, monetary inflation, economic security, social stability, etc., pose a continuing threat to self-confidence. How comforting, then, are the Bible's certainties!

Jesus' words (Luke 21:25, Diaglott): "On the earth anguish of nations in perplexity," are all embracive. To Christians *seeing* these things taking place, there comes the Master's blessed assurance (in our heading text) for the certainty of the kingdom's proximity. He additionally encourages us (Luke 21:28) to "lift up your heads, for your deliverance is drawing near," filling our hearts with joy. One remembers Bunyan's words when ending his matchless classic and describing the joyful entrance of Pilgrim and Hopeful into the Celestial City: "Which, when I had seen, I wished myself among them." Such, also, is our wish!

Beloved brethren, look up, behold the glorious vision! Sorrows, conflicts, perplexities -- let them only cause us to pray with greater earnestness -- "Thy Kingdom come!" Let us rejoice that earth's time of suffering will soon be over, all tears wiped away, and pain, mourning and death be no more. For "gladness will come to stay." All God's promises are Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus. Alleluia!

INSTITUTE STATISTICS

The Institute's Policy continues to emphasize the principles of liberty, fellowship, and unity of all consecrated believers in ,Christ. Thus, we believe, conforming to the teaching of the Lord Jesus and his disciples. It is not a church organization and never exercises authority in any Ecclesia.

Our *Herald* endeavors in each issue to reflect only "wholesome words, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness" (1 Tim. 6:3). Our hope is that its perusal will strengthen the faith of each reader and, in these difficult days, assist in "lifting up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees" (Heb. 12:12). Our subscription list remains steady in numbers and includes readers in 59 countries. We urge all who themselves have appreciated the *Herald* to send in the names and addresses of any whom they have reason to believe would profit from a free six-month trial subscription. Here is a simple and profitable form of witnessing.

Our sixteen booklets on Bible subjects are free to all subscribers for judicious distribution. Some back issues of the *Herald* are still available at twenty copies for \$1.00.

The Pilgrim ministry, so blessed in past years, remains largely restricted to local and Convention service, and for funerals. All Directors and Editors can be called upon as required. Visits to shut-ins has become a special privilege, and in this we all may share, a personal service which surely has the approval of the Master.

Correspondence is considerable. Many hundreds of letters are received yearly and about as many are answered. We are grateful for the fellowship thus afforded and would that our replies could be more extensive. To this end, please remember in prayer, our limitations.

In summary, we are most grateful for the Lord's blessing upon this past Fiscal Year's ministry. As to the future, we continue in the belief that the course most pleasing to the Lord would be for us to continue the same ministries in which for so many years the Institute has been engaged. As always, so now again, we earnestly solicit all to join their prayers with ours that the Lord's leading may be clearly discerned and faithfully followed, as we "follow on to know the Lord."

Your brethren in the Master's service,
Board of Directors,
J. B. Webster, Chairman

The Annual Meeting

The sixty-fifth Annual Meeting of the members of the Pastoral Bible Institute, Inc., was held on Saturday, June 1, at 11:00 a.m. at 145 N. Grand St., West Suffield, Conn.

After the customary devotions, Brother J. B. Webster was elected chairman of the meeting, and Brother L. Petran, secretary.

Next followed the reading and approval of the minutes of the previous meeting, held June 2, 1984, in West Suffield, Conn.

The annual report of the Directors, for the fiscal year ended April 30, 1985, was then presented. This, including the Treasurer's Financial Statements, is published on pages 62 and 63.

The names of recently deceased members were read next-also names of those brethren who had become members of the Institute during the previous year; after which the meeting proceeded with the election of a new Board. Sis. A. Lange and Bro. L. Hindle were appointed to act as tellers. While they were counting the votes, the rest of the friends enjoyed a season of fellowship in praise and testimony. At the conclusion of the count, the names of the following brethren were announced as elected: J. L. Buss, A. Gonczewski, H. C. Hoglebe, A. J. Jarmola, P. J. Pazucha, L. Petran, and J. B. Webster.

A devotional service concluded the meeting.

Following the Annual Meeting, the new Board met. Among other actions taken, they elected officers as follows: J. B. Webster, Chairman; A. Gonczewski, Vice-Chairman; L. Petran, Sec'y-Treasurer; P. J. Pazucha, Ass't Sec'y-Treasurer. Editorial Committee: A. L. Jones, C. B. Odell, P. J. Pazucha, T. M. Thomassen, L. R. Webster.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FISCAL YEAR ENDED APRIL 30, 1985

(1) Balance Sheet as of April 30, 1985

Assets

Cash on hand		\$24,244.20
U. S. Treasury Bills		88,210.85
Accounts Receivable		142.00
Interest Receivable		698.35
Prepaid Expense		500.00
Inventory of Books, etc.:		
Pocket Edition-Divine Plan	(533)	\$533.00
Miscellaneous Items		<u>27.50</u>
Total Inventory		<u>560.50</u>
Total Assets		\$114,355.90
Liabilities		<u>18.00</u>
Net Worth (as per analysis below)		\$114,337.90

(2) Statement of Income and Expense and Analysis of Net Worth
Fiscal Year Ended April 30, 1985

Income

Contributions		\$14,708.99
Herald Subscriptions		2,838.00
Interest Earned		<u>8,058.80</u>
Total Income		\$25,605.79

Operating Expense

Pilgrim Expense	\$ 6,308.60	
Herald Expense Including Printing, Mailing and Clerical	14,788.33	
Free literature	406.41	
Administrative and Office Expense	<u>590.74</u>	
Total Operating Expense		<u>22,094.08</u>
Net Expense for Fiscal Year Ended April 30, 1985		\$ <u>3,511.71</u>
Net Worth, May 1, 1984		<u>110,826.19</u>
Net Worth, April 30, 1985 (as per Balance Sheet above)		\$114,337.90

Entered Into Rest

Anna Baum, Withee, Wis.
Lois Blicharz, Detroit, Mich.
Ettie Chariton, Melbourne, Australia
James M. Glass, Upland, Cal.
Floyd L. Hibbs, Whittier, Cal.
Sylvester E. Husted, Grand Rapids, Mich.
Edith M. Huyck, Kansas City, Kan.
Leslie Knapp, South Haven, Mich.
Delia A. Mershon, Clovis, Cal.
Mrs. J. K. Morgan, Hayes, La.
Alice Owczarski, Milwaukee, Wis.
Mildred F. Oxford, Bangor, Pa.
Marie Panteny, Romford, Eng.
Robert E. Robinson, Holwell, Eng.
Kathleen Thompson, Milborne Port, Eng.
Elinor N. Wojcik, Redford, Mich.