

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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A Glimpse of God's Plan

"According to the eternal purpose which he [God] purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." - Eph. 3:11.

The Bible was given for man's benefit and its account of creation deals with man and the place of man's habitation. Its first words tell us: *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"* (Gen. 1:1). The heavens are that expanse in which God placed the sun, moon, and stars. The earth is the place of man's habitation. Before creating man God created the birds, fish, cattle, and beasts of the field. Then he created man in his own image, male and female, and gave them power to bring forth children (Gen. 1,2).

We read in the second chapter of Genesis: *"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul"* (vs. 7). Notice that God did not give man a soul. He made man's body out of the elements of the earth and animated that body with the breath of life in order that man might be a living being. When he was created he *"... became a living soul."* In other words, no man *has* a soul, but every man is a soul. God designates various animals as "souls" (See Gen. 1:20 margin and Num. 31:28). Every creature is a *soul*.

God gave man a law. The keeping of God's law meant continuance of life and the blessings of Eden. Disobedience meant death and the loss of all the blessings that man enjoyed (Gen. 2:16,17). God had previously created the angelic hosts. These heavenly sons shouted for joy when he began his work in connection with man (Job 38:4,7). They watched the work in progress and when the highest earthly creatures, perfect man and woman, were created in God's image, there was great joy in heaven. All of God's creation is perfect (Deut. 32:4).

Sin's Beginning

Peace and harmony existed amongst all creatures in heaven and earth. Not a stain of sin, nor mark of evil, marred the happiness of the sons of God, angelic or human.

Lucifer was one of the brightest and most beautiful of the angelic hosts. Like all of God's creatures, he was created perfect, but iniquity crept into him (Ezek. 28:15). He was *"lifted up because of his beauty"* (Ezek. 28:17). He became proud and selfishly ambitious, seeking to live

like Jehovah himself (Isa. 14:12-14). By this we understand that he usurped that which rightly belongs to God. Satan rebelled and planned how he might divert man's worship to himself. Lucifer became "*that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan*" (Rev. 20:2).

By deception, Lucifer induced Eve to break God's command. She ate the fruit of the forbidden tree and passed it on to her husband. Adam ate also, knowing that this was against God's commandment. God's law was broken in this simple act of disobedience (Gen. 3:1-6; 1 Tim. 2:14). Under the test, man had failed. God's justice must bring the penalty upon man. They were turned out of Eden into a condition which was far from perfect. There they gained food by the sweat of their face until they returned to the dust (Gen. 3:17-19). Adam did so for nine hundred and thirty years before he died (that is, returned to the dust). The wages of Adam's sin was his death by a gradual process. Dying he died, according to the command (Gen. 2:17).

Adam's children were born after he was turned out of Eden and while he was imperfect, hence they were born imperfect, inheriting sin and imperfection from their father. Imperfection has passed to all of Adam's posterity; therefore all die (Rom. 5:12; 6:23).

Note that the wages of sin is death, not eternal torment. God does not eternally torment anyone. Such an idea is contrary to his nature and never entered the mind of God (Jer. 19:5). Sin began in Lucifer's rebellion. Sin entered the world of men by Adam's disobedience, and has passed upon all his children. This is why all die.

God made provision for every man through the death of his only begotten Son (John 3:16). All who die in Adam will in due time (1 Tim. 2:4-6) have a full, fair opportunity to gain life for ever in perfect happiness, free from death and all it implies -- aches, pains, sickness, infirmity, and the ills which man now experiences (1 Cor. 15:21, 22).

Deliverance Promised

A considerable period of time passed between the fall of Adam in the Garden and the time when God called Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). God promised Abraham that his offspring would bless all mankind (22:15-18). He had previously stated that the offspring of the woman should bruise the head of "*that old serpent ... the Devil.*" This was done when Adam and Eve were about to be turned out of Eden with the curse of death upon them (Gen. 3:15). This statement was God's promise to man of deliverance from the power of the Devil. The promise meant that a deliverer would arise from the offspring of the woman, who would destroy the Devil and bring blessing to man.

The promise made to Abraham showed that the long-looked-for Deliverer was to be of Abraham's children. Perhaps Abraham thought his son Isaac would be the one; but not so. Isaac and his son Jacob were greatly blessed by God, but they did not fulfill the promise.

Jacob died. His twelve sons and their families, known as the children of Israel (Jacob's name was changed to Israel), became a special people to God (Ex. 19:5). They were the descendents of Abraham. So long as they remained obedient to their God, they received many favors. But Israel, as a people, did not become the Deliverer of the world as they may have hoped. Moses, their leader and lawgiver, prophesied that the great Deliverer should be one of their brethren (Deut. 18:15). Many great men arose in Israel after Moses: Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, and others; but none of these proved to be the Deliverer.

Keeping Hope Alive

The prophets of Israel kept alive the hope that God would send a mighty One who would fulfill the promise made to Abraham. Later, this promise was limited to the house of David; God promising that David's children would sit upon his throne forever (Ps. 132:11,12). Jeremiah prophesied concerning the Deliverer, the great Messiah, that he would be a branch (offspring) of David, and that as a king he would reign, prosper, and execute justice and judgment in the earth (Jer. 23:5,6). From that time forward the faithful in Israel looked for Messiah as a great prophet and a great king.

When the great Deliverer came, the faithful recognized him. But the majority rejected him even though all men were in expectation of him (Luke 3:15). The Deliverer, the seed of Abraham, is Christ (Gal. 3:16).

Jesus' Birth

The promise made to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) and often repeated to others, impressed upon true Israelites that a holy child would be born of a Jewish woman. In some way, (which they could not then understand) the child would become a great king and bring blessing to all the people of the earth.

Words like these of Isaiah lead them to this expectation:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice .. for ever" (Isa. 9:6,7).

Christians realize that these words are now partially fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The greater fulfillment is future. The birth of Jesus is one of the greatest events in human history and his birth in Bethlehem fulfilled a prophecy written long before the event took place (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:5,6).

No pomp surrounded the great One's birth. God carefully chose those who were to take part in this act. They were humble, meek, and possessed of faith in his promises. Mary and her husband were poor, as no doubt were the shepherds to whom the angels brought their message of joy

A host of angels were ready to take their part in this great event. Jesus was born while others slept. The angels brought their message of joy and song of happiness to the shepherds keeping sheep. The angel of the Lord brought glad tidings which shall be unto all people. All have not yet heard these glad tidings, but faith looks to the time when all shall have heard, and all shall bow to the name of Jesus (Phil. 2:7-11).

A Ransom for All

Jesus grew to manhood. In due time, John the Baptist heralded him as the Messiah, but the Jews were disappointed in Jesus. They looked for a greater leader than Moses, a general greater than Joshua, a king greater than David or Solomon, one who would deliver them from the subjection of the Romans, and make of them a great and mighty nation. The lowly Nazarene was rejected. Jesus became *"despised and rejected of men"* as the Prophet had predicted Messiah would be (Isa. 53:3). They had set their minds upon prophecies which spoke of Messiah's might and power

and glory, but had overlooked those which spoke of his humiliation and sufferings. They forgot that God's prophet had said that he would be brought as a lamb to the slaughter (Isa. 53:7), that he would pour out his soul unto death (Isa. 53:12), and make his soul an offering for sin (Isa. 53:10).

Jesus fulfilled these and other prophecies when he came to earth, but those which speak of his glory and power are yet to be fulfilled. Jewish hopes respecting Messiah and the expectations of Christians regarding Christ's second coming will yet be fulfilled.

Why should Jesus pour out his soul unto death? Why should he make himself an offering for sin?

Briefly stated, man dies because of sin. "*The wages of sin is death*" (Rom. 6:23). Sin entered the world by one man's disobedience -- the disobedience of Adam (Rom. 5:12). Sin passed upon all men, for the offspring of Adam are all born imperfect. Adam had fallen from perfection before any children were born to him. Thus all "*in Adam die*" (1 Cor. 15:22). Before man could hope for everlasting life a ransom must be found. Literally translating the Greek word for "*ransom*" [antilutron], a "*corresponding price*" must be paid for the first man whose sin brought death. If such could be provided, then all who die because of Adam's transgression could be given hope of life.

God had promised to ransom man from the power of death (Hos. 13:14), but where was the ransom to be found? Not from amongst fallen man! None of these could redeem his brother nor give to God a ransom for him (Ps. 49:7). They are all imperfect and therefore they cannot provide the ransom for man.

Jesus was a perfect man, "*the only begotten Son of God*" (John 3:18). God was his Father (Luke 1:30-35). Jesus said that he came to give himself a ransom (Matt. 20:28). The Apostle says that the man Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all

(I Tim. 2:6). Jesus said further: "*Jam come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly*" (John 10:10). By his great sacrifice he provided the ransom price, which "*in due time*" (I Tim. 2:6) will bring every man (He died for all; Heb. 2:9) a release from the death in Adam. Jesus will give all men one full, fair, opportunity of salvation and life everlasting. Thus "*all the families of the earth*" are to be blessed in him, according to God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3).

Jesus' teaching and example are the finest ever given to man. They have done much to make the world better, but his death was *the most* important matter. From the Cross there radiates the only hope for humanity.

Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day, highly exalted (Phil. 2:9-11) and given "*all power*" (Matt. 28:18). As the risen, exalted Lord, he has power to bring to mankind the benefits of his sacrifice. That work will not be completed until other features of God's plan and purpose are fulfilled.

The True Church

The blessing and deliverance of mankind by the Lord Jesus Christ is the purpose of his Second Coming. All the prophecies relating to his power and glory will then be fulfilled, just as those relating to his suffering and death were fulfilled at his First Advent. Meanwhile, another work has been in progress -- the development of the church of Christ. The church is not composed of one, nor all of the

church organizations or denominations. It is made up of faithful followers of Jesus, whether they have been inside or outside of church denominations.

Those who are followers of Jesus are given many precious promises (2 Pet. 1:4). They will be with Christ in his kingdom (Luke 12:32; 2 Pet. 1:5-11). They will share his throne and glory (Rev. 3:21; 20:4; Col. 3:4). Theirs is a heavenly inheritance (1 Pet. 1:3,4).

The Gospel has been preached amongst the nations. Those with an ear to hear have responded to its invitation, and conformed to the conditions of discipleship. These have been few, a little flock (Luke 12:32). They have lived and died, and slept in death, awaiting the return of the Lord for their reward. At the Lord's return they are the first to rise from the dead; they are made partakers of the First Resurrection to share the honor and glory of Christ. Those of the church living at the Lord's return do not sleep in death; death to them is a change from a human to a heavenly condition. See 1 Cor. 15:20,38, 50-52; 1 Thess. 4:14-18; Rev. 20:4-6; Phil 3:7-11.

This class is described figuratively. In 1 Cor. 12:12,27 they are called the body of Christ, Jesus being the head. As a class they are spoken of as the "bride" of Christ. The union of the members of the church with Jesus their head is the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7). When this has taken place, then the true church of Christ, with him in power and glory, sharing his great Kingdom, will share his work, and with him invite "*whosoever will*" to come and "*drink of the water of life freely*" (Rev. 22:17).

"Thy Kingdom Come"

The Christian hope has, for nineteen centuries, been the second coming of the Lord and the establishment of his Father's kingdom on earth. These have prayed from the heart: "*Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven*" (Matt. 6:10). This kingdom brings deliverance to mankind, and will bless all the families of the earth with the opportunity of life, liberty, and happiness eternal.

In symbolic vision, the Revelator saw the present order of things passed away and all things made new. After seeing the Devil, the adversary of God and oppressor of man bound (Rev. 20:1-3), he saw a new heaven and a new earth, a new order of things, and the present order of things passed away. He saw the time when death will be no more, when sorrow and suffering and pain will be ended.

He saw One on the throne (Christ, the new king of all mankind) saying:

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things. . . ." (Rev. 21:7) -- the blessings of life, and freedom from sorrows and suffering, and the oppression of the Devil. These blessings are for all, even for those in the grave. God has provided a resurrection of the dead through Christ his Son. Jesus said that the time was coming when those in the graves would hear his voice and come forth (John 5:28).

Restitution Of All Things

Looking further, the Revelator saw a river of life proceeding to man from the throne of God and the Lamb. Christ and his bride, the church, were glorified. Together, they were inviting whosoever will to come and drink of the water of life freely (Rev. 22:1-3, 17). The Apostle Peter spoke of "*times of restitution of all things*" (Acts 3:21) when Christ should return. Restitution means a restoration of something lost. Through sin, man lost life and his Eden home. Jesus said that he came to "*seek and to save that which was lost*" (Luke 19:10). In his kingdom, the earth is to be made beautiful and fruitful. (See Isa. 35:110 and Ezek. 36:35 for proof that the earth will be like Eden.) Man will be given a full opportunity to live for ever (Ezek. 18:19-23), but those who are disobedient will be destroyed from amongst the people (Acts 3:22,23).

When Christ's work on behalf of man is complete, every knee shall bow to Jesus' name (Rev. 5:13); all living creatures in heaven and earth will praise God (Phil. 2:10-11). The disciples asked Jesus for signs of his return and kingdom (Matt. 24:3). The Lord's reply (vss. 7 & 8) tells us that world wars are signs that his kingdom is near. Before man receives the blessings of this kingdom he is to pass through a wave of trouble which will destroy the present social order. Christ's kingdom will be established upon the ruins of these things -- the new heaven and new earth. The Bible message for today is ". . . *the kingdom of God is at hand*" (Luke 21:31). What a joy and hope to all who desire better things for mankind.

- Fred Musk, England

"This Do in Remembrance of Me"

Our Lord's Memorial

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

1 Corinthians 11:26

"... Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor. 5:7,8).

Here, in one sentence, brief, but pregnant with meaning, the beloved Apostle Paul, writing as always under the guidance and in the power of the Holy Spirit, draws our attention to the great antitype, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world, of whom the Jewish Passover lamb was but a type.

How well the type prefigured our Lord! The lamb selected was to be *without blemish*, reminding us of the fact that our Lord Jesus had no blemish of sin in himself and that he did not contract any stain or spot of sin by his contacts with the world. As the Apostle Peter reminds us we:

"... were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold.... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Pet. 1:18,19).

The blood of the typical lamb was sprinkled on the doorposts and lintels of the Israelite's *houses*, but the blood of Jesus, the unforfeited life which was made available to us by the shedding of *his* blood, has been graciously applied to *our hearts*, removing from us the burden of unforgiven sin, setting us free from all consciousness of evil.

Instituting the typical passover, we read in the twelfth chapter of Exodus that the Lord said unto Moses: *"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you"* (vs. 2). How truly this feature is fulfilled in the experience of a consecrated believer of this gospel age! Everything in his life dates from the time when he came under the blood. Before that, all is darkness; before that, all is death. He does not care to even think of the darkness of his unconverted days, and when he does occasionally mention them, it is only that his Savior may be the more magnified in the hearts and minds of those to whom he speaks and that the contrast of that past with his present happy state may awaken in him a still greater sense of gratitude and devotion.

Jesus, Our Passover Lamb

As the Jews fed on the literal lamb, so we feed on Christ; that is to say, we appropriate to ourselves by faith his merit, the value of his sacrifice. Not only so, but if we would be strong spiritually, and prepared for the deliverance in the morning of the new dispensation, we must eat of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

What is it to "eat" of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth? Ah! this means much more than might at first be supposed. It involves not merely a belief in the truth concerning Christ and his atonement -- it goes beyond even a confession of that belief. It includes a loving surrender to this and related truths so that they are grasped by the moral no less than by the intellectual side of our complex nature. Thus partaken of, the truth will accomplish our sanctification; day by day the renewing of our minds with his precious Word will gradually transform us into his likeness.

In the typical arrangements bitter herbs were included, which aided and whetted the Israelites' appetite for the lamb and unleavened bread. Commenting on this feature, it has been observed that instead of these,

"We have bitter experiences and trials which the Lord prepares for us, and which help to wean our affections from earthly things and to give us increased appetite to feed upon the Lamb and the unleavened Bread of Truth. We, too, are to remember that we have here no continuing city; but as pilgrims, strangers, staff in hand, we are to gird ourselves for our journey to the Heavenly Canaan, to all the glorious things which God has in reservation for the church of the firstborns, in association with our Redeemer, as kings and priests unto God."

On the night of his betrayal, our Lord Jesus clearly identified himself as the antitypical Passover lamb. Peter and John had been sent ahead, and in the upper room to which they had been led, they made ready the passover. When the hour was come, he gathered his Apostles round him and said: "*With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer*" (Luke 22:15).

It was necessary that as Jews they should celebrate the Passover Supper on that night -- the night of the anniversary of the slaying of the passover lamb in Egypt, of the saving of the typical firstborns from the typical "prince of this world" -- Pharaoh -- the same date on which the real Passover Lamb was to be slain. But as soon as the requirements of the type had been fulfilled, our Lord Jesus instituted a new Memorial upon the old foundation, saying, "*Do this in remembrance of me.*"

We recall the circumstances of the first Memorial -- the blessing of the bread and the cup, the fruit of the vine, and of our Lord's words in connection therewith. Year by year, as we keep the feast, and the time of our departure draws nigh, the appropriateness of the symbols and the humility and love of our Lord are more deeply impressed on our hearts; and the longing desire within us grows more earnest that we, too, though imperfect, may faithfully follow in his steps. We quote from C.T. Russell:

"In presenting to the disciples the unleavened bread as a memorial, Jesus said, '*Take eat; this is my body.*' The evident meaning of his words is, This symbolizes, or represents, my body. The bread was not actually his body; for in no sense had his body yet been broken. In no sense would it then have been possible for them to have partaken of him actually or antitypically, the sacrifice not being as yet finished. The picture is complete when we recognize that the unleavened (pure, unfermented) bread represented our Lord's sinless flesh, leaven being a symbol of sin under the Law, and especially commanded to be put away at the Passover season. On another occasion Jesus gave a lesson which interprets to us this symbol. He said:"

"... the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.... I am the bread of life.... I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for *ever*; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (John 6:33,35,51).

"In order to appreciate how we are to eat, or appropriate, this living Bread, it is necessary for us to understand just what the bread signifies. According to our Lord's explanation of the matter, it was his flesh which he sacrificed for us. It was not his prehuman existence as a spirit being that was sacrificed, although that was laid down and its glory laid aside, in order that he might take our human nature. It was the fact that our Lord Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners -- without any contamination from Father Adam, and hence free from sin -- that

enabled him to become the *redeemer* of Adam and his race, that permitted him to give his life a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (1 Tim.2:6).

"When we see that it was the pure spotless nature of our Lord Jesus that was laid down on behalf of sinners, we see what it is that we are privileged to appropriate. The very thing that he laid down for us we are to 'eat,' appropriate to ourselves; that is to say, his perfect *human* life was given to *redeem* all the race of man from condemnation to death, to enable them to return to human perfection and everlasting life if they would; and we are to realize this and accept him as our Savior from death."

The unforfeited life of Jesus, laid down in sacrifice for us in obedience to the Father's will, is thus seen to be that which alone has value in the Father's sight. As the Apostle declares: ". . . *the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all*" (1 Tim. 2:5). It is important to observe that the work of recovering Adam and his race from the power of sin and death, while based on that ransom price, extends beyond the mere provision of the ransom. While the provision was made nearly two thousand years ago, it is manifest that the recovery of Adam and his race from the power of sin and death has not yet been accomplished; indeed it has scarcely begun. The only disposition thus far of that ransom has been to make it available for the church, and this only by faith.

Only by faith has even the church passed "*from death unto life*"; not *even* this *little* flock has been fully recovered from the power of sin and death; still less has the rest of the race. Manifestly, then, it will require a considerable time (the Scriptures indicate the entire thousand years of Messiah's kingdom) to restore, to deliver, to set free from the power of sin and death Adam and his children. It is evident that the work of restoration, for which the foundation was laid nearly two thousand years ago, is still to be accomplished. To quote once again from Brother Russell:

"In order that any of the race of Adam might profit by the sacrifice of Jesus, it was necessary that he should *rise from the tomb* on the divine plane of life, that he should ascend to the Father and deposit the sacrificial merit of his death in the hands of Justice, and receive from the Father *all power in heaven and in earth*. As relates to the world, it was necessary also that in the Father's due time he should come again to earth a glorious divine Being, then to be to the whole world a mediator, prophet, priest, and king, to assist back to perfection and to harmony with God all who will avail themselves of the wonderful privileges then to be offered."

This blessing, restoration to *human* perfection (not perfection on the spirit plane) which will be the happy portion of the entire race (all the willing and obedient), the church of this gospel age receives now, by faith; that is to say, human perfection *is reckoned* to them by God. And the partaking of the unleavened bread at the Memorial season means to us, primarily, the appropriation by faith of this right to perfect *human* life, with all its privileges, the blessing which, at the cost of his own life, our Lord procured for us. Likewise the fruit of the vine symbolizes our Savior's life given for us, his human life, his being, poured out unto death on our behalf; and the appropriation of this by us also signifies, primarily, our acceptance of *restitution* rights and privileges secured by our Lord's sacrifice of these.

Two Additional Significations

In showing forth the Lord's death in this, the way appointed (1 Cor. 11:26), we may not improperly associate in our minds two additional thoughts of great beauty and solemnity:

1. Our consecration to be dead with him (Col. 2:20), even as we remember the Apostle's words, "... *if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him*" (2 Tim. 2:11).

2. The oneness of spirit which obtains between fellow-members of the Christ company.

The fruit of the vine fitly represents the life given by Jesus, the sacrifice -- the death -- "*Drink ye all of it: For this is my blood [symbol of life given up in death] of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins*" (Matt. 26:27,28). It is by the giving up of his life as a ransom for the life of the Adamic race, which sin had forfeited, that a right to life comes to man (Rom. 5:18,19).

Jesus' shed blood is the ransom for all. That is the dominant idea of our "feast." In addition we may rejoice that we may (indeed we have covenanted, have we not, to) drink of his cup, even as (though beyond their then understanding) he spake to his close disciples: "*Ye shall drink indeed of my cup*" (Matt. 20:23).

This is a high calling (Phil. 3:14), and we might well question our ability to drink (unaided) of his cup. But, our sufficiency is of God. With the Apostle we count all things loss that we may know the power of his resurrection, the "*fellowship of his sufferings*" (Phil. 3:10), not repining, but all the more rejoicing at any evidence which may come to us that the sufferings of

Christ may be abounding in us. (2 Cor. 1:5).

With regard to the oneness of spirit possessed by fellow-members of "his body," the church (Eph. 1:23), how close to the heart of our Lord does this thought bring us when we recall also that it was at just about the time of his institution of this "remembrancer" that he offered the matchless intercessory prayer on our behalf, recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John: "*That they all may be one [not his close disciples only, but us also, who have since believed.] As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us*" (John 17:20,21).

What thoughts these are which just before his passion our Lord entertained with regard to his consecrated followers! What grand and noble hopes respecting the mutual love, the sympathy, affection, and interest should prevail amongst the members of this "one body" of our Lord!

Who Participates?

No one should join in this celebration who does not trust in Christ as his personal Savior from sin and death and who does not purpose to walk worthy of the name of Jesus, in his footsteps wherever they may lead to the best of his ability. No one should come to the Lord's table lightly, or carelessly. As the Apostle exhorts: ". . . *let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup*" (1 Cor. 11:27-29).

On the other hand, none should absent themselves or refrain from this communion because of a sense of unworthiness. Thanks be to God for a sense of sin, for a keen conscience about it, but let not that keep any away: ". . . *if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*" (1 John 2:1; see also 1:9). Thus cleansed, let us draw near, gladly confessing our love for our Lord, rejoicing in the pleasure and privilege of remembering him in this, the way appointed.

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26).
- P.L. Read

Notice of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Pastoral Bible Institute, Inc. will be held (D.V.) on June 7, 1986. Reports will be rendered and matters discussed amongst those in attendance. There will also be an election of Directors to serve during the coming fiscal year.

We remind members that they may nominate brethren they wish to elect as directors. The Institute's affairs are committed to seven brethren elected from among the Institute membership. Those now serving are:

Buss, J.L., Albuquerque, N.M.
Gonczewski, A., West Suffield, CT
Hogrebe, H.C., St. Louis, MO
Jarmola, A., Chicago, IL
Pazucha, P.J., Milwaukee, WI
Petran, L., Racine, WI
Webster, J.B., Haverhill, MA

We, your brethren, report that a Christian spirit dwells among us and we believe that the Lord has blessed our association in this ministry. We would gladly continue in this service, but recognize that our re-election is not essential: selfishness, even in the Lord's service, is not appropriate. We would see the Word of the Lord proclaimed with the greatest efficiency and it is always possible that those involved with the intricacies of any work may not see opportunities that are apparent to others. Changes in office can be beneficial and we are ready to stand cheerfully aside if the membership feels that others are better fitted for this service.

Pray about this. If the Lord leads you to nominate other brethren, forward their names and addresses (with their consent) to this office before March 24, 1986. The nominees will be published in the May-June issue of the HERALD for the prayerful consideration of the membership.

How Long?

When we have found in God's pardoning love and justifying grace; when he has become the home of our souls; when he has the direction of our path, the control of our daily life deliberately placed in his hands; when the horse or the mule in us is practically displaced, so that in nearness to God we can get the guidance of his eye; then we have discovered, at least, the secret of happiness, which we can invite others to share with us. *"Be glad in the Lord and rejoice ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart."*

- M.I. Reich

Whither Are We Traveling?

"As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" Psalm 103:12

East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.

So said Kipling, referring of course to peoples. Apparently he was quite unaware of God's divine purpose *"to unite all things in him [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth"* (Eph. 1:10, RSV). At that time the solidarity of the human family will be restored as at the beginning and East and West will be joined together in an indissoluble brotherhood.

But there is a sense, though not the one Kipling had in mind, in which East and West will never meet. These scriptural terms represent diametrically opposite trends which lead away from one another. Nothing establishes the faith of God's people in the Word he has given (apart from the personal experience of its power) more than the meticulous use of its language as dictated by his Holy Spirit, which exhibits a harmony and fitness of expression through successive writers even to the end of the divine revelation.

Traveling Eastward

At the commencement of man's story (which is but a small portion of God's story), called by us history, emphasis is placed upon the East. We read in Genesis 2:8: ". . . *The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed*" (RSV). From this we learn that Eden comprised a district of which the eastern section formed the famous Garden, implying that the remainder of Eden lay to the westward of it. Later on, after the Fall, when our first parents were driven from the Garden, we read: "*He [God] drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life*" (Gen. 3:24, RSV). Hence Adam and Eve were not driven out of the Garden westward into the other section of Eden, but eastward out of Eden altogether: into the unknown and unprepared, and debarred by the cherubim stationed on the east side of the Garden from ever returning to their original home.

When Cain, following the murder of his brother Abel, was driven away to become a fugitive and wanderer on the earth (Gen. 4:12) his direction was still eastward (Gen. 4:16).

When man began again, after the flood, to multiply on the face of the earth and the imagination of his heart was evil from his youth (Gen. 8:21), while still united in language and aims, some *"migrated from the east to the plain of Shinar"* (Gen. 11:2, KJV margin, and NAS); where they were subsequently scattered abroad and confounded in language in connection with the building of the tower of Babel.

Eastward -- Away From God

In these instances the student will note that travel eastward was the external accompaniment of widening departure from God. Recognizing this invests the narrative with added significance.

In the gradual development and unfolding of the divine purpose Abraham was called to separation (holiness) from Ur of the Chaldeans -- a separation first from the idolatry of Ur (Hos. 24:14) and then from the majority of his kinsmen when he left Haran (Gen. 12:1-4). Finally, he

was separated from his nephew Lot who had accompanied him into Canaan and had shared some of his experiences. But Lot was to have no share in God's promises to Abraham, and in due time circumstances overruled by God brought about the necessary final separation of Abraham unto God alone.

When this time came, Abraham unselfishly gave his nephew the choice of direction, as we read (Gen. 13:11-13):

Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east ... and dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

"Thus Lot journeyed east -- into a sinful environment, and it was not long before he is found to be actually residing in Sodom itself, apparently accepting a position as a judge of the city, sitting in the gate" (Gen. 19:1).

Later on, after the birth of Isaac, when Abraham had other grown sons who might conceivably endanger Isaac's birthright, we read:

"... To the sons of his concubines Abraham ... gave gifts, and while he was still living he sent them away from his son Isaac, eastward to the east country" (Gen. 25:6, RSV).

Thus these other children of Abraham had to take themselves eastward, away from any share in the special divine privileges reserved for Isaac and for his seed, in conformity with the divine dictum, ". . . *in Isaac shall thy seed be called*" (Gen. 21:12).

Calamity In The East

The record of Genesis, then, is of a consistent movement of the race eastward as man departs more and more from the revealed will of God and his ways. By implication, therefore, we would expect that any return to God would be scripturally depicted as progression *westward*. Before examining this aspect, however, let us note the extension of the usage of "*east*" as being indicative of something evil or of having something calamitous in its nature. For instance, we read in Psalm 48:7: "*By the east wind thou didst shatter the ships of Tarshish*" (RSV). When Jonah was displeased that God should repent of his threatened destruction of Nineveh when its king and people repented of their evil course, the prophet, out of harmony with God, went and sat to the east of the city. And when his sheltering gourd or plant withered as the result of being attacked by a worm, we read that "*When the sun rose, God appointed a sultry east wind, and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah so that he was faint*" (Jonah 4:5-8, RSV). Hosea 12:1 and Hos. 13:15 are other interesting references.

Perhaps the most striking illustration is recorded in Exodus 10:12-19, in connection with the plague of locusts upon the land of Egypt. When, in obedience to the Lord's command, Moses stretched out his rod over the land, we read:

"... The Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night, and when it was morning the east wind brought the locusts.... very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such."

So disastrous was the ruin left in their wake that Pharaoh quickly repented and besought Moses for their removal. We then read:

"... he went out from Pharaoh and intreated the Lord. And the Lord turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red Sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt."

Westward -- Toward God

It has been suggested above that just as eastward represents departure from God, so westward bespeaks a drawing nigh unto him. Thus Abraham's separation unto God from Ur was in the direction of the west. The same lesson is clearly depicted scripturally in connection with the tabernacle in the wilderness and Solomon's temple. Both of these structures were so oriented that their gateways were on the east side, necessitating an entrance from that quarter.

Progress through the Court into the Holy and thence into the Most Holy, or inner sanctuary, where the divine presence was symbolized in the Shekinah light between the cherubim, was therefore westward. When, in the days of Ezekiel the prophet, gross idolatry on the part of Israel had invaded the very temple of God itself and the symbol of his presence could no longer abide there, the Glory of God was seen to withdraw eastward by stages until it finally was seen to rest on the Mount of Olives to the east of the city (Ezek. 9:3; 10:18,19; 11:22,23).

One example of Israel's improper idolatry and the illustration of this picture of directions is seen in Ezekiel chapter 8. -The Prophet was sent by God to the Temple area to witness several forms of improper worship. Among the sights that God shows him are twenty-five men standing in the court of the Temple. These had turned their backs to the temple and were facing the east. From there they directed their worship of the sun. To the Prophet, God cites this among the reasons for his fury upon his people.

The Great Pyramid

The fact that movement toward the east represents departure from God is also depicted in the Great Pyramid of Egypt. This is one of many striking parallels which stamp this mighty and enduring structure as *"the Bible in stone."* The passage system of the pyramid runs from north to south. The passages do not run through the central axis of the structure. Rather, they run to one side, the east side. Thus is shown the *"side-stepping"* into sin of Adam and the race in him. The measurement of this *"one-sidedness"* in the pyramid is known as *"the Displacement Factor."* How simply God has illustrated three processes: the displacement from original righteousness into sin; those who are justified in Christ from sin and counted as righteous; and those who in God's due time are restored to actual human perfection.

For instance, the King's chamber (now so called) is the goal of the upper passage system. (It runs at right angles to the lower passages.) By progressing westward, down the length of the chamber, the central axis of the Pyramid is reached when the displacement factor has been cancelled out. Arriving at this point, one stands in front of the open tomb and risen Lord, the only basis and hope of new life, as is testified throughout the New Testament (e.g., 1 Cor. 15; 1 Pet. 1:3,4).

Westward -- The Gospel's Spread

It is interesting to note the direction of the historical spread of the Gospel. The good news of salvation has spread mainly westward. This direction was determined quite early in the history of the Church as recorded in Acts 16:6-10. Paul had traveled westward from Antioch in his first two missionary journeys, returning to his base on the first occasion and attempting to do likewise in the course of the second.

However, on this latter occasion he was prevented from thus turning back, first via the left, and then via the right. Instead, he was led by the spirit straight on the sea coast at Troas in what is now known as Asia Minor and opposite the continent of Europe. There the vision of the man of Macedonia appealing to him for help across the water led Paul away from Asia westward into Europe. From there, his own spirit-inspired visions of further conquests for the Gospel led him on to Greece, to Rome, and even, in desire if not in actuality, to Spain (Rom. 15:24).

Within the span of his lifetime the message had reached the confines of the Roman Empire, the world then known (Col. 1:6). In God's due time the message was to cross the Atlantic Ocean and blossom afresh in the Americas still farther to the west.

In the light of God's divine purpose how thrilling is the record of the voyage of Columbus, which paved the way for these further developments. *"Westward, ever westward"* was his urging cry despite the murmurs and threatened mutiny of his crew, largely unmindful of the higher destiny of new nations he was being used to shape.

Stationary East

Throughout the centuries the swarming millions of the East remained in heathen darkness *"without God and without hope in the world"* until the beginning of the last century. Then modern evangelical missionary enterprise on an organized scale had its inception. Only then was the westward cycle finally completed with the influx into the east of missionaries from America in association with those from the older countries of Europe.

An appreciation of the divine plan in calling out *"a people for his name"* throughout those centuries past, with a view to the ultimate blessing of the rest, including past generations of ignorant heathen now asleep in death, satisfactorily explains their seeming neglect on the part of the Creator and Ruler of the universe. On the other hand, what significance is seen to attach to seemingly worldly events in the light of divine overruling, such as the voyage of Columbus, the opening of Japanese ports to trade after centuries of isolation, and many others! This explains why it was in God's due time that Christ died for the ungodly, even though the crying need of salvation had been apparent for four thousand years since the Fall. Both time and direction are important elements in the divine plan!

In view of the scriptural significance in the usage of the terms *"East"* and *"West"* what assurance underlies the inspired utterance of the Psalmist:

"As far as east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Psa. 103:12).

North

The "East" and the "West" have been dealt with at length as they depict the course of sin and salvation, the main themes of the divine Word. but what of the "North" and "South" aspects? Are these drawn to our attention in any marked way with any indication of their biblical significance?

Perhaps the most striking text in this connection is Psalm 75:6,7: "*Promotion cometh neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south. But God is the judge.*" Three points of the compass are mentioned negatively in contrast with God as the direction from which promotion comes, a plain indication that he is identified in a special way with the North.

Failure to recognize the North as linked with God in Scriptural usage robs many passages of their full significance. When Lucifer as recorded in Isaiah 14:13-14 expresses his ambition to exalt his throne "*above the stars of God*" he says:

"I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far north; ...
I will make myself like the Most High."

Likewise when divine judgment was impending upon Judah in the days of Jeremiah, the prophet in vision saw this as coming from the north (Jer. 1:13-15). A similar visitation in the future is foreshadowed in the prophecy of Joel, chapter 2, referred to as "*the northern army.*"

South

Conversely, the south, insofar as it is referred to in Scripture in any sense other than literal, would seem to represent a condition unblessed by the presence of God. Abraham had entered the Promised Land in faith but shortly afterwards a famine afflicted the land. He journeyed southward and ended up in Egypt (Gen. 12:9,10) where, as a result of deception towards Pharaoh in regard to Sarah, he got into trouble and left Egypt under a cloud of disfavor. However, his troubles arising from his sojourn in Egypt were not ended, as he brought out with him an Egyptian slave girl named Hagar who became a fountainhead of trouble for the seed of Abraham headed up in Isaac.

In the subsequent history of this seed, lack of faith frequently resulted in their looking southward to Egypt for help instead of in the opposite direction for divine assistance. In the time of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, after the murder of the governor whom he had appointed, the remnant of Judah not carried into captivity in Babylon fled into Egypt to escape the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar. They did this in spite of the prophet Jeremiah's assurance that if they remained in Judah God would preserve them but that if they persisted in their own willful course in going south into Egypt they would be utterly exterminated. In consequence, the foretold disaster overtook them.

However those who are obedient to God are assured that "*all things work together for good to them that love God ... the called according to his purpose*" (Rom. 8:28), no matter from which direction seemingly they come. Hence in Song of Solomon 4:16 we read: "*Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.*" Frequently the spices flow more freely in adversity than in prosperity, but in any case the trusting soul can echo the invitation under all circumstances, "*Let my Beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits*" rejoicing in the fruit of the spirit manifested by such.

In the meantime such faithful believers also rejoice in every new realization of the perfection of God's Word as continually being revealed and their inward prayer is:

"Still new beauties may we see,
And still increasing light! "

Believe

Literally, the word *believed.. is* to say Amen. To Amen the Divine word to the soul is the noblest thing a creature can perform. Yet must the creature be reduced to utter impotency and emptiness before it is prepared to cease from its own contrivances, and by its Amen to make room for the power of God.

- M.I. Reich

The Purpose of the Refiner

Malachi 3:3 says: *"And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver."* Notice the word, *sit*. A woman read this verse and said, "I shall find out al I can about the way silver is refined." So she visited a silver refinery. She watched the process for a time and then said to the man who sat by the boiling liquid, "Do you always *sit* at your work?"

"Oh, yes," he replied. "You see the liquid needs constant and careful attention. All the scum must be taken off and the fire must never get too hot."

"How do you know when the refining work is done?" queried the woman.

The answer was: "It is done when I can see my face in the molten metal."

Here is Romans 8:28,29 in our lives. *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."* This is the purpose of every trial in our lives -- to make us more like Jesus.

- E.A. Williams

Never Alone

"Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." - John 16:32

It need not be said that to carry our conviction into action is a costly sacrifice. It may make necessary renunciations which leave one to feel a strange sense both of deprivation and loneliness. But he who will fly, as an eagle does, into the higher levels where cloudless day abides, and live in the sunshine of God, must be content to live a comparatively lonely life.

No bird is so solitary as the eagle. Eagles never fly in flocks; one, or two, are the most ever seen together. But the life that is lived unto God, however it forfeits human companionships, knows divine fellowship.

God seeks eagle men. No man ever comes into a realization of the best things of God, who does not learn to walk alone with God. We find Abraham alone in Horeb upon the heights, but Lot, dwelling in Sodom. Moses, skilled in all the wisdom of Egypt, must go forty years into the desert alone with God. Paul, who was filled with Greek learning and had also sat at the feet of Gamaliel, must go into Arabia and learn the desert life with God.

Let God isolate us. I do not mean the isolation of a monastery. In this isolating experience he develops an independence of faith and life so that the we need no longer the constant help, prayer, faith, or attention of his neighbor. Such assistance and inspiration from other members are necessary and have their places in the Christian's development, but there comes a time when they act as a direct hindrance to the individual's faith and welfare. God knows how to change the circumstances in order to give us an isolating experience. We yield to God and he takes us through something, and when it is all over those about us, who are no less loved than before, are no longer depended upon. We realize that he has wrought some things in us, and that the wings of our mind have learned to beat the upper air.

We must dare to be alone. Jacob must be left alone if the angel of God is to whisper in his ear the mystic name of Shiloh. Daniel must be left alone if he is to see celestial visions. John must be banished to Patmos if he is deeply to take and firmly to keep the "Print of Heaven."

"He trod the winepress alone." Are we prepared for a "Splendid isolation" rather than fail him?

Burden-bearers are we all,
Great and small.
Burden-sharers by ye all,
Great and small!
Where another shares the load,
Two draw nearer God.
Yet there are burdens we can share with none
Save God;
And paths remote where we must walk alone
With God;
For lonely burden and for path apart --
Thank God!
If these but serve to bring the burdened heart
To God.

- Anonymous

In the Upper Room with Jesus

"He will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us." Mark 14:15

The four Gospels contribute individually distinctive touches to the story of Jesus' last passover with his disciples. Matthew is brief, with no detail about the place selected. John makes no reference to the supper beyond telling us that Jesus rose from supper and washed their feet. Luke adds Jesus' words, *"With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer,"* or as the marginal reading: *"I have heartily desired."* Mark adds the last two words of our text -- *"for us."*

The disciples had asked: *"where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover"* (Mark 14:12)? Jesus said, *"he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us"* (Mark 14:15). This was in keeping with his remark, *"I have heartily desired to eat this passover with you."*

Who, more than he, could have rejoiced in the last of all the typical Passover feasts? It must have been a joy to know that a new and more wonderful day of divine favor was about to begin through his own death. No doubt he rejoiced in leaving them a memorial in which they would be identified with him *"till he come."* How greatly he loved them: *"the church of the firstborn."* They would pass from death into the life he came to give. Henceforth they would be bound to him as stated in his words: *"This is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me"* (Luke 22:19).

Linked Together With Him

Is there any more heart-moving illustration of Jesus' readiness to be linked with his own than in his marvelous prayer in John 17? There he says:

"... All mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.... I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory...." (John 17:10,24).

How intimately he joins himself to us. Is he not repeating his words to the two sent to prepare the upper room: *Make ready for us, for me and mine? We say of our espoused Bridegroom, as the bride portrayed in Song of Solomon, "I am my beloved's and his desire is toward me" (Song of Solomon 7:10); and with the Psalmist: "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them" (Ps. 139:17)!*

There are lessons to be gathered in this upper room with Jesus. The upper room experience can be with us still if we will turn our steps aside, to be alone in his presence. Our blessed Lord has not changed. In days of old he found a place to be near his own. Today he also chooses the times and places where we may come apart from distracting things and find rest and enlightenment in some *"... secret place of the most High"* (Ps. 91:1). He brings us there in order that we may sense more of the beauties of his words and ways and that we may carry the fragrance of these into our lives.

Measureless Depths of His Love

Consider the words, "*a large upper room furnished and prepared.*" There were only twelve besides the Master who would gather for that evening hour. For so few it would seem a smaller room would be sufficient. Why the particular reference to its capacity? Recall that Jesus had selected the place. He knew what would transpire in that appointed room. That evening was to be of special interest to his people throughout the age.

The disciple must learn that the narrowness of the heavenly way is real indeed. "... *Strait is the gate and narrow is the way, ... and few there be that find it (Matt. 7:14).*" But the fellowship and blessing into which the Good Shepherd will guide his faithful sheep is not so narrow. These he feeds in pastures large and fair, leading them beside deep and wide streams of living water. They are able to say, "*He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me*" (Ps. 18:19). Jesus seeks those with hearts large enough for the fullness of his blessing.

The memorial of Jesus' atoning death and his all-embracing prayer with which that evening closed brought new meaning into view. Even Judas, traitor though he was, was not excluded from Jesus' attentions. His feet were not passed by, but washed as were the feet of them all. Not until he chose to leave, going out into the night, did he cease to share in the feast or the ministrations of him who made himself servant of all. We are ashamed as we see Jesus' patient dealings with the frailties of men so like ourselves.

Can we believe that the dimensions of that room grew larger as the disciples witnessed the loving, tender service of Jesus? If for the moment there was a faint sense of expanding vision, we know that in subsequent days the scene unfolded in ever-widening perspective. Their hearts grew broad in brotherly sympathy, and large in Christlike love. Has it been so with us? How sad if this is not true in our experience. Think of the large room into which divine love has led us through the sacrifice of Jesus. Paul said it is furnished according to his riches in glory; prepared with a multitude of reminders of condescending grace beyond our deserving or comprehension. Here there can be no more making

"the love of God too narrow
by false limits of our own."

for of his fullness we receive, from grace to grace.

A Warning Shadow

We learn another lesson from that Passover evening. A dark presence was felt that evening. Satan intruded, just as it had been written of an earlier time: "*the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them*" (Job 1:6). This he has continued to do to our own day. How great must be our watchfulness lest he insinuate himself into our fellowship; even in angelic garb, like Bunyan's Mr. Valiant for Truth.

If Satan dared to enter that upper room in the presence of Jesus, then where, yes *where*, can saints gather that Satan will not intrude? If there be one heart in which he may find a place, through that one he will come, even to the Lord's own table. He came into the upper room in the heart and aims of Judas. A selfish heart it was, and selfishness is always a blinding thing. How much of heaven's riches has been bartered away for a mess of pottage of trifling worth! What an example

Judas becomes of those who for some temporary gain lose sight of real spiritual riches. The spirit of betrayal grows rapidly in a selfish heart.

In that solemn hour, Jesus said, one of you shall betray me. Is not our time just such an hour? How sobering the warning: *"And then many will be ensnared, and will betray their associates, and abhor them"* (Matt. 24:10, Diaglott). *"My soul be on thy guard!"* How shocking the spirit that will cooperate in putting a child of God into the hands of an enemy or assist in his beheading! It may mean spiritual suicide for those who do such things. O the possibility of losing heaven itself, or all opportunity for life, for a thing of such little value as thirty pieces of silver! Yet, temptations to selfishness, wrong ambitions, and covetousness will assail us until we pass beyond the veil. Let us watch and pray that we be not overcome of these and thus fall as a prey of the great Adversary. Let us follow the Master in the spirit of loyal devotion.

Lord Is It I?

There are times when the Word speaks directly to our hearts; times when through it we seem face to face with glaring defects in our own lives. We remember that even a loving John could desert his Master in fear; that Peter denied him with vehemence because he was too sure of his ability to remain loyal. This is a lesson to be learned in the upper room. Even though Jesus' warnings are generalized, our own fall may be involved in their application to our lives. It would be well that we think not so much of what others may or may not do, but say with our brethren of long ago, *"Lord, is it I?"*

In some moment of self-laudation has the Lord not heard us affirming our loyalty, declaring (or perhaps only thinking) that while others have fallen or may yet fall we can be depended on to remain steadfast and true? How often has he found us comparing ourselves among ourselves and others with ourselves, and too often to self praise? How glad we should be that he loves us too much to let us go on without rebuke and correction. Sometime, somehow, he will make us conscious of his searching gaze, while he asks, *"lovest thou me more than these"* (John 21:15)!

Our feelings are not different than Peter's when he was reminded of his weakness and disloyalty by that heart searching question. No hint now that he thought himself to be a better disciple than the others. Too humbled to flatter himself, he could only say, *"Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee"* (John 21:17). Such humbling may be painful, but thanks be to God for all that destroys the spiritual pride of self righteousness.

Remember the largeness of the upper room! The Lord's words reveal that some very close to him will fall, so let us remember how we have thought ourselves to be superior to saints of former days who did not see some things we now know. Let us remember for what minor differences we disparage a brother walking beside us. He too is under the efficacious blood of Christ. Do we more deserve a halo of faithfulness more than he? If we are honest we will not ask the Lord, Is it I? We will confess: "It is I. I have not done better than Peter or others." Humility and unspeakable joy go hand in hand when we learn this lesson of the upper room. There is no sweeter witness to our relationship to Jesus than this lesson permanently learned. Then we have entered the spirit of oneness with Jesus; the love wherewith he loves all his church.

He Called Them Friends

We next turn our consideration to Jesus' last words to his disciples as given in chapters 14 to 17 of John's Gospel.

Jesus' last sermon opens with a word of comfort to his disciples and to all such followers throughout the age. It closes with a plea to God on their behalf by which we ought to be transported into the highest sense of blessedness. To his disciples he says,

"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me ... I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

To the Father He prays,

I will that they also, whom thou has given me, be with me where I am.... And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:24,26).

Between these statements Jesus yearns for our intimate relationship with God and himself and for the interrelationship of the whole family of God. The chief points of his prayer are:

1. The sending of the Comforter. (Which would be of greater meaning than if he remained with them as a man.)
2. Their subsequent identification with him as branches in himself, the vine, and their bearing fruit to the glory of the Father.
3. The rich blessings possible through prayer.
4. The joy of being together with him in the home prepared above.

"Ye are My friends!" What a privilege this represents! But more than a privilege, a requirement. Jesus lifts our relationship above that of servant; it is our friendship he desires. If we fail to reach this plane we do not belong to that inner circle defined in this last hour sermon. We must abide in him and he in us, a relationship in which there will be a mutual sharing of interests and joy in all things revealed to the Son by the Father. We must prove, like Paul, that having Christ formed in us is the purpose of all Christian experience. And like him we will learn to turn away from everything in order that we might eventually be found in Him.

And So With Us ...

The ideals found in this farewell discourse are the only ideals consistent with our high calling -- called to be saints. They are not impractical or impossible but are intended to inspire every disciple with the same glorious hope given to Paul -- the hope of attaining all that there was in Christ for him. Any who stop short of this stop short of God's will for them.

Jesus' closing words lift our thoughts into the sublime. He portrays the Christian life, not as a hard and burdensome experience, but as a life similar to his own. His joy, his peace, his fruitful prayers, his love: all these can be known, experienced, and reflected in this life. In Ephesians Paul

sums up the lessons of the upper room. In chapter 2, verses 1 to 7, he shows us *our* place in the will of God.

We are raised with Christ and seated in heavenly places in him.

Jesus' gracious words, there prepare for us, reveal the breadth of his love. Paul expands this saying: He "... *hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*" (Eph. 2:6). Our conception of union with Christ is wholly wrong unless it embraces all saints as sharers together with us. Can we listen in the upper room and miss this lesson? We do not sit alone, nor with a select few chosen by ourselves, but with all who love our Lord in sincerity. This is the fullness of life, the completion of the testimony that we have passed from death unto life. Love to Christ will fill the heart, give strength to shake off hindering prejudices, adjust all our intellectual difficulties. That love to Christ will broaden our love until we can survey the whole field of Christian brotherhood and say with the Savior, There prepare a room -- a place for us.

- J.J. Blackburn

Historical Note on the Trinity

For many years pagans had been familiar with the trinitarian beliefs of the East, beliefs which found their strongest expression in the complicated theology of Hinduism and Brahmanism. It is in honor of the three chief Brahman deities, Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma, that a very early hymn to the trinity was composed. Nearly a hundred years before Christ, Kalidasa, one of the greatest of Indian poets, wrote:

'In those three Persons the one God was shown
Each first in place, each last -- not one alone;
Of Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, each may be
First, second, third, among the blessed Three.'

The similarity of those words to the later doctrine of the trinity as defined in the Athanasian Creed is obvious.

It was in the fourth century A.D., and nearly five hundred years after Kalidasa wrote his hymn, that the controversy which had been gathering force in the church came to a head. Arius was an old man, Athanasius a younger man well versed in philosophy and literature, and his ability and energy led the Council to decide in favor of his demand that the doctrine of the Trinity be declared the teaching of the Church. Only two bishops, Thomas of Marmarica and Secundus of Ptolemais, supported Arius. The latter, being thus defeated, was excommunicated and banished, and his books ordered to be burnt. Even so, a considerable portion of Christendom refused, at first, to accept the doctrine. This was more especially the case in Northern Europe and Britain. Although it was nearly three hundred years after this council that Augustine landed in Kent to convert the English to Latin Christianity, a British Christian Church having little or nothing to do with Rome had existed from very early times. Several centuries elapsed before the Trinity was firmly established as a generally accepted Christian doctrine.

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