

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. LXIX May / June, 1986 No. 3

Jeremiah's Three Questions

"Is there no balm in Gilead?

Is there no physician there?

Why then, is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" - Jeremiah 8:22

Gilead was a place of aromatics and was termed a "mountain of spices:" Jacob first called the place Gilead because of the covenant made between him and his father-in-law Laban in that place. It is written that he "... *set his face toward the mount Gilead* (Gen. 31:21). The expression was evidently one of anticipation, a determination to reach that place, for upon arriving there he made no effort to continue his journey. He remained there until overtaken by Laban, as though assured in advance that a treaty of peace and reconciliation would be made between Laban and himself and that the balm of friendship would be poured upon the sore of enmity that had existed between them.

Gilead was very fruitful. Both the necessities and the luxuries of life were to be found there, and in bountiful supply. It was a city which yielded profits and pleasures, being filled with people.

God, in the Psalms, said, "*Gilead is mine*" (Psa. 60:7; Psa. 108:8). Many strangers resorted to Gilead to profit by its commerce; this we find referred to in the account of Joseph being sold by his brethren into Egypt.

For the purposes of our discussion we note that when Jeremiah made this reference he was not referring to,

- the physical condition of Israel,
- the natural balm contained in the balsam tree of Gilead, or
- the physicians of the natural body.

Instead of these, we find that Jeremiah used the "Balm of Gilead" in reference to the moral condition of fleshly Israel, even as we would use it in reference to the heart condition of Israel after the spirit.

The Balm Still Exists

The balm of the Word of the Lord was still to be found in Gilead. There were still competent physicians of that word, valiant prophets of God who would have skillfully applied the healing balm, who would have gladly ministered to the sickness of Israel.

Why then was Israel not recovered? Simply because she did not inquire of the true physicians: those who had the healing balm, who since the world began had preached judgment and restitution. Israel had hewn out for herself "*cisterns, broken cisterns, that [could] hold no water*" (Jer. 2:13). She did not resort to those true prophets or physicians who held the balm or Word of God. She appointed and hearkened to a false priesthood who were no longer repositories for the true word of God, but who had become broken cisterns that could hold no water.

This is why Israel was not recovered and substantiation for this view can be found in Scripture (See, Hos. 8:11-14; Ps. 74:4-9; Mal. 2:7,8; Ezek. 22:7,8,12,25-28).

Untempered Mortar

In the concluding portion of Ezekiel 22:28 we note the following: "*And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar....*" How significant, how full of meaning is this statement! Instead of the rightly tempered, perfectly balanced balm which would have been applied by the true prophets of God, these false prophets daubed with untempered mortar. Their's was no longer a soothing, healing balm. By their removal of the spirit from God's law, that law had lost its temper; it had become a dead, lifeless letter. It had become unbalanced; and these false prophets, instead of having the true balm with which to heal, daubed with untempered mortar which rendered the recovery of Israel impossible.

Is this not what *we see* today? Among today's religious teachers there are those who attempt to instruct and teach the people but who are themselves lacking in a knowledge of the truths of the Bible. There are those who have great knowledge of the Scriptures, but they lack the love and spirit of those Scriptures and yet they attempt to teach others. These are daubers of untempered mortar, just like those false healers of Israel. Let us avoid either of these extremes. Let us be balanced dispensers of the balm of Gilead, the precious Word of God.

Judgment came upon Israel for her neglect of the balm placed in Gilead; for her neglect of the physicians there to be found. Gilead, together with Mount Zion, the holy Sanctuary, was given as a prey to the Romans. The fruitful land was turned into barrenness and it was polluted with the blood of her people. Jehovah, who had once said "*Gilead is mine ...*" (Psa. 60:7) now has a different story to tell of her. Through the Prophet Hosea he says: "*Gilead is a city of them that work iniquity, and is polluted with blood*" (Jer. 6:8).

Lessons from the Balsam Tree

The balsam tree of Gilead had medicinal virtue all through the wood or tree itself, the seed of the tree, and the sap of the tree. In the wood, or the tree itself, we have a beautiful picture of the Word of God. The balsam tree was a saving, healing tree; the Word of God as expressed in Jesus and the Scriptures is the only means of salvation, either for the church or for the world of mankind.

The balsam tree seed well pictures the seed of the new nature; a seed that through the operation of the Holy Spirit is generated within a tabernacle of flesh, which like the seed of the balsam tree, when planted in the ground, germinates and brings forth. What a beautiful picture it presents of our begetting by the Holy Spirit as new creatures and an earnest, if we shall continue faithful, of the new birth to come. That birth shall be not from corruptible seed; not a mortal seed which contains the possibility of corruption within itself, and which under the reign of sin and death must finally eventuate in death and decay. The Apostle Peter describes this seed saying: *"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever"* (1 Pet. 1:23).

In the sap of the balsam tree we have a beautiful picture of the holy Spirit circulating through God's Word. Even as the sap of the balsam tree of Gilead circulating through that tree imparted life and vitality to it, so the holy Spirit circulating through the Word of God imparts life and vitality and generating power to it. Without that spirit the Word would be a dead letter of knowledge, fit for the head but a misfit for the heart, and no more than sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal (1 Cor. 13:1).

As the sap of the balsam tree generates or causes the seed of that tree to form, so the holy Spirit operating within our minds and hearts generates the seed of a new nature, fertilizing, sustaining, nourishing, and promoting its welfare until triumphantly it shall emerge from its womb of flesh.

The leaves of the balsam tree of Gilead were white and were thickly distributed over its branches, literally covering the tree and giving it a white appearance. This might properly picture the covering robe of Christ's righteousness and the purity and spotlessness of the Word of God. We read: *"The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times"* (Ps. 12:6) and *"Every word of God is pure: he is*

a shield unto them that put their trust in him" (Prov. 30:5).

The balm of Gilead had a sharp, biting taste, but was wholesome to the digestion. How like unto the Word of God, which is indeed sharp and unsavory to the unregenerated appetite. We read that it was folly to the Jews and a stumbling block to the gentiles, but to the chosen ones of both Jews and gentiles it was the power of God unto salvation (1 Cor. 1:22-23). Often the truth is sour to the taste, but afterwards it becomes sweet.

There is a class who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good (1 Pet. 2:3). These, in days gone by, have experienced the healing power of the balm of God's Word, but for various reasons have again become sick. They refuse to apply that precious balm for their recovery. They have become deaf to the warnings of the Holy Spirit; they are in the attitude of crucifying the Lord afresh and of putting him to an open shame (Heb. 6:6). To this group a solemn warning has come through the Prophet Isaiah: *"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter"* (Isa. 5:20)! Such a course if persisted in can have only one final ending.

The Sympathizing Jesus

The balsam tree of Gilead exudes or weeps a kind of gum very much in the form of tears, a picture of the tears of grief and sympathy shed by Jesus, that Word which was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). We see him over Jerusalem, as he grieved and wept over her. We hear those sweet words of pathos:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not" (Luke 13:34)!

Behold him at the grave of Lazarus! With a heart full of sympathy for those sorrowing sisters, the emotion of grief gripped him and he wept tears of sympathy (John 11:35).

The balsam tree of Gilead was first granted to one land: Judea. From there it was introduced to other peoples. It was first taken to them by merchants of Judea. So it was with the Word of God: it was first given to the Israelites. *"He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them"* (Ps. 147:19-20).

We remember Jesus expressly commanding his disciples not to go into the way of the Gentiles nor any city of the Samaritans, but only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 10:6). But when the time came for the spiritual balm of Gilead to go to other nations and to other peoples, it was even as with the natural balm of Gilead: it was taken to them by Jewish spiritual merchants. We refer to two Jewish evangelists, Paul and Barnabas.

"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, 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 13:46).

Grew Only in the King's Garden

Historians tell us that when the first balsam tree grew in Judea it was permitted to grow only in the king's garden. Subjects of the king had full access to the balm for their needs and sicknesses, but they were not permitted to control the output of the balm or of the balsam tree itself. So it is with the spiritual balm, the Word of God. This balm is not of men. Nor did it originate with man. This balm came from heaven; it was given to man through Jesus and the apostles and through the prophets by whom it was preached since the world began.

Historians not only tell us that it was only permitted to grow in the king's garden, but that it grew in two orchards of those gardens. The king's gardens were laid out in two parts. One of these orchards was larger and finer than the other. What a beautiful picture of that day so soon to come when there will be two phases of God's kingdom in operation: the heavenly, the larger or greater phase of that kingdom, and the lesser or earthly phase of that kingdom. Both will be glorious. From both phases of that kingdom shall flow the healing balm of the even-balanced, even-tempered Word of God. Isaiah says of that time: *"They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine"* (Isa. 29:24) A day is coming when the spirit of love and the truths of the Bible will go hand in hand. It will be a rightly tempered, perfectly balanced gospel, not untempered mortar.

It has been written of the balm of Gilead that it was recommended for the breaking up or dissolving of stones or calcium formations in the body. Again, what a picture this is of the spiritual balm. God's Word has power to break up and dissolve the hardest of all formations in man or woman: a stony heart. Jeremiah, says: *"Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces"* (Jer. 23:29)? In Ezekiel we read *"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh"* (Eze. 36:26).

The Great Physician is Now Near

Today a distraught world is casting about for healing balm. Her concoctions fail to bring peace, fail to bring healing to the sickness of the peoples of the earth. She seeks for balm, but refuses to seek it in Gilead; she seeks a physician, but refuses to seek for him in Gilead. She refuses the only Physician who can heal all her diseases.

Communism, socialism, and other "isms" will be tried by a despairing, dying world. All these failing to bring about healing, this world will finally gaze on its discarded mound of broken cisterns, even as did Israel after the flesh, even as did many Israelites after the spirit. The nations of this present evil world will heap to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

As final destruction descends upon her, some will cry out: "*Lord, save us: we perish*" (Matt. 8:25). To those will be granted an opportunity of life in the next age ". . . *wherein dwelleth righteousness*" (2 Pet. 3:13). And as the great Physician is then seen pointing the way to the healing balm, to those who shall have been delivered from the besieged city, who shall have been delivered from the power of Satan, he will be seen pointing toward literal Gilead, the Gilead of old, for from Palestine shall the word of the Lord go forth, and the healing balm for every ill (Micah 4:2).

Jeremiah's Cry Goes Forth Today

We sometimes wonder if there are those who, coming among the Lord's people, ever have occasion to ask of us the question of Jeremiah, "Is there no balm in Gilead?" This question might come from some lonely heart or it may come from some seeker after truth and righteousness. Has such an one ever come to us in search of the balm of Gilead and gone away without receiving it? To this question each one of us should give serious thought.

And then again, in those all too rare moments of self-examination, does that question come to each one of us? How about our heart and mind? Is the balm of Gilead to be found there? Is the true and great Physician reigning within our hearts? Does he hold individual sway there?

Let us hold fast those spiritual blessings that have been bequeathed to us. Let us remember that we wrestle not with flesh and blood. Our great adversary is watching spiritual Israel at this time as never before. If we let down our guard, he will be sure to reach some vulnerable spot.

So let us shine as lights in a dark place. Thus will we be living epistles "... *known and read of all men*" (2 Cor. 3:2); so shall we fight the good fight of faith; so shall we lay hold on eternal life (1 Tim. 6:12); so shall we at last be caught up to that heavenly phase of the king's garden, from where we shall be used in assisting the world up from sickness to health, from death to life, and from destitution to restitution.

O break my heart; but break it as a field
Is by the plough up-broken for the corn
O break it as the buds, by green leaf sealed,
Are, to unloose the golden blossom, torn;
Love would I offer unto love's great Master,
Set free the odor, break the alabaster.
O break my heart; break it victorious God,
That life's eternal well may flow abroad;
O let it break as when the captive trees

Breaking cold bonds, regain their liberties;
And as thought's sacred grove to life is springing,
Be joys, like birds, their hope, their victory singing.

"He Is Our Peace"

Peace is love in flower -- it is love reposing on the green pastures and beside the still waters. It is that sweet restfulness that we can leave everything in the Father's hand and be satisfied. I believe that "everything" means *every thing, and* that nothing is excluded. Peace is that calm confidence that trusts the Lord's goodness and wisdom "*at all times*" (Psa. 34:1). It is the abiding sense of his love that does not lose heart because others are disturbed or unreasonable. It is the "*very*" peace of God put into the heart. Can that be ruffled because circumstances are trying or because people don't suit us or because our wills are crossed? No! God's peace is not a happy sensation coming now and then. God's peace is an abiding thing, a habit of soul and mind which makes the possessor wondrously independent of man.

- Selected

The Deep Things of God

"Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts." - Psalm 42:7
"The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." - 1 Cor. 2:10

In nature, deep is continually calling unto deep.

-- The depths of the clouds call to the depths of the sea.

-- The sea responds and permits the sun's rays to pick up water from its surface and carry it to the clouds, and thence by the winds to the thirsty land.

-- It is true also when the waterspout strikes the ocean.

-- There are deep things in the tree that call to deep things in the soil and in the air. The tree's cells must be nourished, and consequently they call out for sustenance.

The deep things of science call out to those who have the depth of intelligence to appreciate them. The orbs of space and the vast interstellar spaces call out to the astronomer. Various laminated and fossilized deposits call out to the geologist. The aligned forces of gravity, heat, and electricity call out to the chemist. The diseases that are deep seated in the human body call out to the pathologist and the therapist. Deep things of the mind invite the attention of the psychologist.

But the deepest of deep things are those things that are spiritually deep, and the deepest capacities are those that enable us to respond to the things of the spirit. *"The spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."*

Truth is fact. Such fact may be self evident, a truism, or it may lie deep down. When James Watt saw steam lifting the lid of the teakettle, *he beheld* a simple thing which had been seen but unexplored by millions of persons before him. It took much searching before the steam engine was invented as a result of discovering the expansive power of steam. Then came the further idea that ships might be propelled by steam, and Robert Fulton concentrated all his energies to bring this to pass.

Advanced Revelations

It is easy to permit ourselves to think that we have been given the last word of truth and that there is nothing else to be found out. This of course is a colossal mistake. Yet there are those who resent all advanced revelations. If one enjoys such revelations and is living close to the Lord, he will become a target for shafts of criticism even from some of his friends. This is especially true if he is thoroughly honest and outspoken. It is not always wise to tell all that one knows. Jesus said, *"I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now"* (John 16:12). There are occasions when it is good to be silent. Advanced truth can be received only by those whose minds have been prepared to receive it. If soil is not soft and porous it will not absorb the rain. Truth cannot be forced on anyone.

Eventually, people find their true level. The jackdaw in the peacock's feathers was only a jackdaw after all. Tares in the garb of wheat are still tares; and wolves in sheep's clothing are still wolves. The frog need not pretend that he can fly like the eagle; yet he is all right in the pond, which is where he belongs. That is a fact which he must see in order to be true to himself. At least, he must not desire to be elsewhere. Unless one has clear vision, he misses many things as he goes through life.

To be able to see that what is true is true and that what is false is false is a wonderful faculty to possess. We note with curiosity that it is also an ability which a comparatively few people possess. This is expressed in Hebrews 5:14: *"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both [the real] good and [the real] evil."* As, for instance, between sectarianism and brotherly love and tolerance.

Truth is perceived by the majority of men when it is superficial and obvious, not when it is deep and hidden. Such recognize it when it is a fruit that hangs conspicuously on the bough; whereas the truth-seeker looks deeper. *He* knows that the most precious fruit lies inside the nut and that the nut has to be cracked before the kernel can be secured. The parables of Jesus usually have superficial meanings of moral and ethical worth but contain truths of still greater value, packed, like the kernel of a nut, inside the shell.

All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables, and without a parable spake he not unto them; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world (Matt. 13:34,35).

The deep things of God called to the deeps of the mind of our Lord; and his words have been calling to the deeps of the minds of his people throughout the age.

Some day, when the deeps below call to the deeps above, the ocean of divine love will roll over the world. But now, that love has touched only certain individual lives, and this because there has been a calling and a response. *"No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him,"* (John 6:44) said the Master. But he also said,

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and by burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

The Calling of God

God's calling has been different from every other call. He calls upon faith in the hearer to accept the evidences of faith upon his part, to step beyond the threshold of tangible and visible things, to recognize the fact that *"things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal"* (2 Cor. 4:18). Faith, therefore, is connected with the deep things of God. Love is another of the deep things of God. Has anyone ever reached the measure of the depths of divine love? The cross of Jesus comes nearest to measuring this love.

Measure the stars in the azure sky,
Measure the boundless sea,
But only Christ upon the cross
Can measure God's love for thee.

If Jesus Came Today

Jesus in person manifested divine love in its various elements. In the exercise of love he was humble, devout, simple, strong, calm, pure, sympathetic, analytic, patient, poised, denunciatory of hypocrisy and sham. Had the world received the words of love that fell from the lips of Jesus, we should have had a new world ere this. But jealousy got the upper hand of love. If Jesus were here today, he would be as surely rejected as he was over nineteen centuries ago.

We observe that men do not care to think deeply, preferring to take things at face value, particularly in religious matters. To wear the spectacles of our grandfathers, or of trusted leaders, is much easier than to accept the invitation, *"Come, let us reason together, saith Jehovah"* (Isa. 1:18). *"... the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."* It is the possession of the spirit and unreserved yielding to its leadings that makes the difference. He who has the spirit is looking for treasure not to be found on the surface. With pickax, shovel, and spade he removes his coat and goes to work in the mines of God to find precious jewels.

Divine Knowledge

God must possess that final, absolute, and ultimate knowledge that does not change. God knows the truth of all things, and the truth of all things is a fixed and changeless quantity. There was a time when man did not know certain facts about electricity, but God knew all the facts. It may be that electricity, or nuclear power for that matter, will be used in ways not now known. But if so, God knows all about it. God knows the potency of faith as we do not; and Jesus knew it, for he said, *"If ye have faith, even as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and cast into the sea, and it shall be done"* (see Matt. 17:20; 21:21; Mark 11:23). And God knows the indomitable power of love. God's love may be compared to the ocean. An earthquake may change the bed of a stream, and the wind and the sun may dry up a shallow pool, but the ocean is still there in all its profound depths. He who possesses the spirit of truth will sooner or later discover how vast is the ocean of truth. He will then probably feel like Sir Isaac Newton, who said he was, as a little boy, walking along the shore and picking up here a bright pebble and there a pretty shell, while the mighty ocean of truth lay all un-explored before him. Now men attempt to go into that sea to dive below to learn of its mysteries.

Unrealized Depths

Many who call themselves Christians are but babes in Christ. They have never penetrated the deep things of God. With them it is a matter of accepting Christ and being saved, or of rejecting him and being lost. They have never delved down, have never examined the philosophy of such a proposition, have never considered the elements that enter into understanding and an acceptance of anything. The matter is deeper than they realize, for it touches the very springs of human thought and action. Therefore, the natural man says at once, "Why should I receive Christ? Who is Christ? And why should he play a part in my life's affairs? I do not believe in torment after death. And how can Christ make my life more successful than it is?"

The lifting up of Jesus in the Millennial age will doubtless overcome all such arguments. It will present the principles of Jesus as the only desirable goal. They alone will insure success. If they could be presented that way now, people would want Christ as their life's partner. Those who have received the Lord and his precious truth realize that truth runs in deep channels. The deeply operating laws of God tell us that in the spiritual, as in the natural realm, to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The waves of love that we send out roll back upon our consciousness and make us more lovely than we were. If we send out waves of jealousy, fear, or dislike, they react to our injury. Thus we can never escape from ourselves. If we make friends of our thoughts, words, and doing, we shall not need to effect such an escape, since we already enjoy liberty in having the spirit of the Lord.

The spirit searcheth to find out how the laws of God are operating in our lives. -- how God is dealing with us. That is, we seek to learn the lessons God has for us in our experiences. That the lesson is there, there can be no doubt. It may be a lesson of faith, as it was with Peter when he got out of the boat. Or it may be a lesson of meekness or of humility or of love. We may have to look below the surface to see just what the lesson was intended to be.

"This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." What? Know God? Gain a knowledge of an infinite being? Yes! But how? By gaining a heartwarming and heart filling conception of the love of God. By realizing in our experiences as well as through divine revelation that God is "too wise to err, too good to be unkind. By searching the depths of the various manifestations of love.

Christ's Personal Appeal

When Jesus was on earth he called men to know him, to follow him. He did not say, "Will you join my organization?" For at first he had no organization to invite men to join. He did not say to them, "Will you accept these views that I am proclaiming?" For when he first invited men to follow him, he had as yet proclaimed no views. He asked men to join him. He did not ask them to join an institution; he did not ask them to believe in his opinions; he asked men to join him and to believe in him. It was on the personal relation to himself that he laid all the emphasis. Years passed. Christ's organization began to develop. His views had been set before men and he called them into his life. Even then he did not say to them, "I wish you would join this fellowship of men; it is the only fellowship." He still said to them, "Follow me." At the close of his teaching it was still the thought of being personally united to him that he wanted to have understood as the fundamental thought of his kingdom. *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me"* (John 10:27).

It is worth noting that only Jesus Christ dares say: "Follow me." No other founder of a great religion has based his religion upon a personal following of himself. Confucianism, as a religion,

consists merely in a practice of maxims. Buddhism is a religion of method. Mohammedanism is the religion of a book and of a formula. Twelve hundred years ago Mohammed wrote it all down, never to be changed while the centuries pass. The poet has written:

While the world rolls on from range to range,
And realms of thought expand --
The letter stands without a change,
Stiff as a dead man's hand...
As the lifeblood fills the growing form,
The spirit Christ has shed
Flows through the ages, quick and warm,
More felt than heard or read.

Does the spirit search this essence of Christ to learn what it means? Surely it does. The spirit finds that Jesus embodied all the grand things of life, the things that are good and true. The follower of Christ acquires perfect confidence in him as the Way, which he claimed to be.

Setting aside superficialities, and embracing Jesus Christ in all his beauty, we arrive at a wellspring of the deep things of God. At that crystal pure well of truth we are able to drink long and deep -- if we will. Finding this great common center, we are drawn together in common interests, in a unity of faith and love, which is a foretaste of the wonderful joys we shall share together beyond the veil.

*O Christ, he is the fountain,
The deep, sweet well of love!
The streams on earth I've tasted
More deep I'll drink above.
There to an ocean fullness
His mercy doth expand;
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.*

- *W.A. Sargent.*

One Lord and His Name One

"This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." - Exodus 3:15

There are several Old Testament terms used in reference to the deity. A name or title is expressive of nature and character. Each title of God may be regarded as one letter, complete indeed in itself, yet, when arranged and combined together, spelling out in full the one grand and wondrous name of the God of the Bible. We shall list ten terms, giving the Hebrew and its English equivalent on the authority of the Newberry Bible.

El

El (God, singular) occurs about two hundred and fifty times, with the first occurrence in Genesis 14:18, 19, 20, 22 (translated "most high God"). The word signifies "strong" or "first." It is the title which shows God to be the mighty one, the First Great Cause of all.

The title is generally connected with some one or more of the divine attributes or perfections such as:

"Almighty God" Genesis 17:1

"The living God" Joshua 3:10

"A merciful God" Deuteronomy 4:31

"A faithful God" Deuteronomy 7:9

Eloah

Eloah (God, singular) from *ahlah* meaning, to worship, to adore, presents God as the one supreme object of worship, the adorable One. It occurs about fifty-six times; first in Deuteronomy 32:15: *"Then he forsook Eloah, which made him"*; again, Deut. 32:17, *"They sacrificed to devils, not to Eloah."* It is very frequently used in the Book of Job.

Elah, or Elahah

The corresponding title to the Hebrew word *eloah* is in the Chaldee language *elah* (God, singular) or *elahah* (emphatic). It is found in the Books of Ezra and Daniel seventy-seven times, and always in the singular. The Chaldee portions of the Scriptures occur in Ezra and Daniel, with one verse in Jeremiah 10:11. Thus the record of Israel's captivity is inwrought in the sacred Word.

Elohim

Elohim (God, plural of *eloah*) occurs about twenty-five hundred times; first in Genesis 1:1. Though most frequently referring to the All-mighty it is also used appropriately in referring to angels (Ps. 8:5), to men (Gen. 23:6; Exod. 7:1; Exod. 22:28) and to saints (Ps. 82:6). This same word is also used nearly two hundred times in referring to the false gods of the heathen. To these latter also applies the Chaldee form *elahhayah* in Jeremiah 10:11.

El Shadday

The words *El Shadday* mean God Almighty, or God All-sufficient. This title combines the singular title, *el*, with the plural title *shadday*. It occurs in combination "God Almighty" or "the Almighty God" seven times, and alone, "the Almighty," forty-one times, and chiefly in the Book of Job. Its first occurrence is in Genesis 17:1.

Adon

Adon (Lord, singular), master, possessor, or proprietor. Occurring about thirty times with the first in Exodus 23:17.

Adonahy

Adonahy (Lord, plural), Lord, or Master. In this form used only as a divine title; different from *adonay*, plural of *adon*. *adonahy* occurs about three hundred times, the first in Genesis 15:2, "*And Abraham said, Adonahy Jehovah.*"

Jah

Jah (*the* Lord). This title occurs forty-nine times and only in the Book of Exodus, Psalms, and Isaiah with the first occurrence in Exodus 15:2. It is often associated with the words "praise ye" in the word Hallelujah, "praise *ye Jah*." It is evidently a contraction of the longer word Jehovah and is occasionally found together with it, as in Isaiah 12:2 and 26:4. It is a title expressive of eternal existence, the title of God, as inhabiting eternity, to whom past, present, and future is one eternal now. It is a sublime title; see Psalm 68:4, "... *Extol Him that rideth upon the heavens* [or the void spaces of infinitude] *by his name Jah* [the Eternal One], *and rejoice before him.*" The word for heavens *here* is not the usual word, but a word expressive of desolateness -- space untenanted and void. Infinitude and eternity are indwelt by him. The title *Jah* or *Yah* is at once one of the sublimest yet simplest of the divine names. "The simplest form of speech which infant lips can cry," yet expressive of God's infinitude.

Ehyah Asher Ehyeh

Ehyah Asher Ehyeh -- literally, "I will be that I will be" (Exod. 3:14). But as the so-called future or long tense expresses not simply the future, but also and especially continuance, the force is, "I continue to be, and will be what I continue to be, and will be." *Ehyeh*, "I am," literally "I will be." But in force and meaning, "I that ever will be"; "the Ever-existing One." Here we have God's own explanation of his Holy Name to Moses at the burning bush, which is translated in our Common Version, "I am that I am." In this connection we quote Professor Bush from his "Notes on Exodus:"

This title properly denotes the underived, eternal, and unchangeable existence of the great Being to whom it is applied, carrying in it also the implication that he, in distinction from all others, is the one only true God, the God who really is, while all the pretended deities of the Egyptian and other nations were a vanity, a nonentity, a lie. It implies, moreover, as founded upon the immutability of the divine nature, the certain and faithful performance of every promise which he had uttered, so that whatever he had bound himself to do for Abraham, for Isaac, and for Jacob, he pledges himself by the annunciation of the august title to make the same good to their seed. "*I*

am that [which] I will be, and I will be that [which] I am; the same yesterday, today, and forever."

YHWH

YHWH -- These four consonants (to which scholars apply the technical term -- *tetragrammaton*) form the Hebrew "incommunicable name" of the Supreme Being. They are variously written *Ihvh*, *Jhvh*, *Jhwh*, *Yhuh*, *Yhwh*. The Hebrew word, which occurs about seven thousand times in the Old Testament, is rendered "Jehovah" four times, "God" about eight hundred times, "Lord" about sixty-eight hundred times, and seven times in combination with some other word as *Jehovah-Jireh* (Gen. 22:14), and elsewhere. It first occurs in connection with *elohim* in Genesis 2:4, and is used first alone in Genesis 4:1,3. It is explained in Exodus 3:14,15.

Out of superstitious reverence for this name, or perhaps to safeguard the divine majesty in the minds of men and prevent the inconsiderate mention of him before whom seraphs veil their faces -- whatever the motive -- both Jews and Christians have caused this name to be almost completely suppressed by the substitution of other terms for the deity. The name, in its four essential letters, was reverently transcribed by the Hebrew copyist, and therefore was necessarily placed before the eye of the Hebrew reader. The latter, however, was instructed not to pronounce it, but to utter a less sacred name -- *adonay* or *elohim*. The Septuagint version made the concealment complete by regularly substituting *kurios* (Lord). The Vulgate, in like manner, employed *dominus*.

The sacred name was expressed in writing, as was the custom among the Jews in earlier times, without any signs indicating the vowels, simply by four consonants corresponding to our *Yhwh*. When vowel signs were added to the consonantal text of the Hebrew Bible in the eighth century A.D., as a means of preserving the traditional pronunciation of the sacred literature, those of *adonai* (my lord) were attached to the tetragrammaton as an indication that the name was to be pronounced as though it were *adonai*, or those of *elohim* (God) were attached if an *adonai* preceded it; but the Masorites (Hebrew scholars) did not intend that it should ever be pronounced either *Yehowah* or *Yehowih*.

By a misunderstanding, medieval Christian scholars combined the vowels of *adonai* with the consonantal frame, thus producing the hybrid form *Jehova*, *Iehovah*. The avoidance of the use of the original name led to the gradual loss of the true pronunciation. Some scholars, among them the translator Rotherham, have concluded that *Yahweh* most nearly corresponds to the original word. This seems to be borne out by the pronunciation as it has come down to us through the Samaritans, who seem to have continued longer than the Jews to pronounce the holy name. Among other attempts to represent the original word are *Jahaveh*, *Jahvah*, *Jahve*, *Jahveh*, *Yahve*, *Yahveh*, *Yahwe*.

Although both the pronunciation and full meaning of this sacred name are unknown, from the explanations given in Exodus 3:14,15 and 34:6 it would appear that the God of the patriarchs in revealing himself to Moses under this awe-inspiring appellation, did so in order to reveal himself as the unchangeable, ever-existing Deity. He is a God of promises, a covenant keeping God -- One who will cause all his will to be done. His name, *Yahweh*, was also to be the everlasting memorial of his changeless character. "*This is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations*" (Exod. 3:15). See also Hosea 12:5 and Psalm 135:13.

This is the God of both houses of Israel, fleshly and spiritual. And though the contemptuous words of Pharaoh of old, "*Who is Yahweh, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?*" (Exod. 5:2) may be repeated in the conduct of present-day earthly rulers, the Arm of the Lord will again

be made bare in the astonishing deliverance of his people, which will mean the deliverance of the world. Then shall be sung the song of thanksgiving recorded in Isaiah 12.

And the Lord [*Yahweh*] shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord [*Yahweh*], and his name one (Zech. 14:9).

- W.J. Siekman

Rest in the Lord

"For we which have believed do enter into rest." - Hebrews 4:3

In the fourth chapter, St. Paul outlines to the Hebrews that the Jewish rest days and years pointed forward to the Christian's rest in God. Natural Israel had experienced these rests:

- A seventh day of rest for man and beast
- A seventh year of rest for the land
- A forty-ninth year specially marked for rest
- A fiftieth year -- the Jubilee -- a Sabbath or rest year.

The forty-ninth year was typical of the Millennium, which is the seventh one thousand year period of the last seven-thousand-year day of the creative week.

The Jubilee (which followed the forty-ninth year) was the time of beginning again. Each family went back to the homestead that had been apportioned to it when Israel entered the promised land. If misfortune, improvidence, or sickness had caused the sale of the land, it was returned to the original possessors, debts were canceled. Israel began living over again. This fiftieth jubilee year typified the grand jubilee period following the Millennial reign of Jesus. We have said that the *Jew had* these rest periods, but history shows that actually very few of the Sabbaths were *kept* in accord with the Law's requirements.

The Invitation

The Jew had been told *"You only have I known of all the families of the earth..."* (Amos 3:2). One would think that they would have been glad to have God work his purposes in Judah; that after slipping away from him, only a little reminder (by way of chastisement) would bring them into cooperation with God, to the restful condition of trusting in and obeying him. Each of us, no doubt, has marveled that the Jews were so stiffnecked, not heeding the Prophets, and after the repeated punishments (in the form of captivities, plagues, and crop failures) not to heed Jesus, who had been sent to them by the Heavenly Father.

Evidently, Jesus had entertained similar thoughts. We particularly note the parable of the householder (Matt. 21:33-41). The immediate lesson was that Israel was the vineyard, set up with great demonstrations of divine power in Canaan. The land's former inhabitants had been dispossessed. Nothing was left undone to enable Israel to keep the Law, to faithfully perform the typical sacrifices, and other features of the ceremonial law, and to bring forth the fruits of rest in God. But those who sat in Moses' seat in charge of Israel used their positions for gain and

aggrandizement. It was they who persecuted Jeremiah. It was they who killed Jesus by their conspiracies.

The Jew was not content as a small nation ruled over by prophets, but demanded a king. The Jew could not bring himself to let the land lie idle each seventh year. Because of their greed they would not tithe the tenth part of their increase to God. The temple sacrifices were considered wasteful. Finally, to give back lands and to cancel debts each fiftieth year required too much of the Jew.

St. Paul says in the fourth chapter of Hebrews that some must enter into God's rest, (vs. 6) and since the Jews would not, then "... *we which have believed do enter into rest*" (vs.2). In Genesis 2:2,3, after the creation of the earth, the animals, and finally Adam and Eve, God rested from all his work which He had created and made. *Scripture Studies, Vol.VI*, Chapter 1, has shown good reason to believe that the first six days of the Creative Week *were* each seven thousand years long, and that the seventh is also seven thousand years in duration. This seventh day started after the creation of Adam and Eve. It will continue until the end of the Millennial reign of Christ. God has been resting "*from all his works*" during the reign of sin and death. This, therefore, is the "rest of God" to which the saints are invited.

The Rest of Faith Is Bliss

In Romans, chapter eleven, St. Paul says that if the natural olive branches (the Jews) were broken off through unbelief, it would also be easy for the wild olive branches (the gentiles -- who were grafted in to take the place of the cast-off Jew) to be broken off. Again in Hebrews (Heb. 4:11), he says: "*Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*"

God's rest has not been a rest of inactivity. Neither is our rest in God to be a lazy man's rest. It takes vigilance, careful planning, and agonizing labor to enter into God's rest. It is not easy for the Christian to deny himself, to stop doing his own work, destroy his natural ambitions, and instead to work the works of him that called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. Satan is always at hand to aid our flesh and the world in ensnaring us into a denial of our consecration.

In all the arrangements given them by God, the Jew was an example (or a "type") for our instruction. In his falling away, his unbelief, his willfulness, he illustrated the history of the Gospel church. We *even* find that the casting away of the Jewish nation is representative, for in it we see how all organizations which have claimed to speak for God are also cast off (see 1 Cor. 10:1-14).

In the church we see a mirror of the hectic conditions which prevail in the world. Are the sparks of worldly conflagration falling in our backyards? Are we forced into quarrelsomeness toward one another by worldly-mindedness? Do we lose our rest in the Lord? If so, let us heed Psalm 116:7:

Return unto thy rest, O my soul;
for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.
For thou hast delivered my soul from death,
mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.

Various church spokesmen call for more and greater works. Is this our inheritance of the Jewish longings for power and greatness? Have we forgotten Jesus' words, "*Fear not little flock, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* "

We need no feverish excitement of work. Let us do with our might what our hands find to do, but still *resting in faith*. If the servants are not sealed in their foreheads, the winds of trouble will be held back until this has been accomplished (Rev. 7:1-4). As new creatures we have ceased from our works as God did from his. The church is not *our* church or *yours*, nor *anyone's* but God's. This preaching of the gospel is God's work. So we should lay down our lives for the brethren, and leave the results with God. We should "*preach the word. Be instant in season and out of season,*" and yet be in that peaceful, restful, and hopeful attitude of heart -- *resting in faith*.

Rest implies dependence. When we rest physically, we relax all our muscles and rely upon something or someone. Standing erect illustrates self-sufficiency and the opposite of rest. Standing is accomplished by opposing muscles pulling the bony framework of the body. One set in the frontal portion pulls the body forward. Another set of muscles in the posterior portion pulls the bony structure backward. By the tension of the two the body is balanced from within from front to back. Similar muscles on the right and left side keep the body from falling sidewise. A portion of the brain is devoted to keeping us in balance. So perfect is the organism that no thought is required. We usually lie horizontally when we rest. We depend on a bed, spring, and mattress to keep us from falling. So it is with the Christian, we must depend upon God to fight our battles: to work his work in us: to bring order out of chaos in the world and in the church.

Confidence and Rejoicing

When the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mt. Seir allied themselves and invaded Judah (2 Chron. 20), a Levite named Jahaziel relayed this message to Jehoshaphat:

"Do not be afraid or dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's. Tomorrow you will find the invader by the cliff of Ziz, at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. You shall not need to fight; set yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you."

Here we finally find an instance where the leaders of Israel entered into God's rest. Jehoshaphat believed the message and organized the people into great choral groups to march before the army, singing and praising as they went.

Military leaders know the inspiring effect upon their men and the terrifying effect upon the enemy of a singing army. Possibly, the Jews were above the clouds in the hills, and the invaders were coming up the side of the cliff of Ziz through a fog. Imagine the invaders hearing a great company of men singing a stirring song as they marched, such as:

Mine eyes can see the glory
Of the Presence of the Lord;
He is trampling out the winepress
Where his grapes of wrath are stored....

The hills take up the echoes and reverberate the thunder of their intonations. Imagine the invaders reaction: Judah's arrogance in putting aside all thoughts of concealment and surprise; their utter carelessness in not waiting behind entrenchments, walls, or rivers for the invaders to attack. This

apparent lack of strategy may have suggested to the invaders a confidence on the part of the Jews which struck terror to Israel's enemies and disorganized them.

Regardless of what natural means may have been used, the account says, *"And when they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushments against Ammon, Moab, and Mt. Seir, . . . and they were smitten."* Then is described how the three allied armies turned on each other and destroyed themselves. The end of the account is, *"So the Kingdom of Jehoshaphat had repose and God gave him rest all round about."* Jehoshaphat had to go out to meet the enemy. Judah had to exercise faith and trust in God. Had they stayed in Jerusalem, no ambushments would have smitten the invaders. If they had not sung, the enemy would not have fought one another in their confusion. So we must step out on God's promises and labor to enter into his rest, if we would have God fight our battles.

Friends, let us *"begin to sing and praise"* and let the Lord fight our battles for us, while we rest in Faith.

- B.F. Hollister

Afterwards

"Thou shalt follow me afterwards." - John 13:36

Let us go back to that upper room at Jerusalem some nineteen hundred and fifty years ago. The last supper had been partaken of and Jesus had performed an act of humility; and in that act he had furnished a great example of perfect love, which, in its lowliness and dignity, could hardly be surpassed. After a few words, his heart being burdened with a great sorrow, he revealed that one of his disciples was to betray him. The traitor left to do his master's work, for, as we read, *"Satan entered into him"* (John 13:27).

Realizing that the shades of darkness were fast enveloping him and that his time of personal service to his brethren was nearly over, Jesus speaks to his disciples in words which have no equal in all literature, words in which love is stressed to its furthest attainment.

He knew that after he had gone they would be scattered, and, having doubts and fears, would be subject to trials, temptations, and tests of faith. He knew their need of further light and of power. And so he speaks to them of love, hope, and faith; words in which is included the promise of a place with him in his Kingdom. From his gracious lips came words which, in their power and spirit, would eventually rock the world's foundations.

In chapters 13 to 17 of John, Jesus' unspeakable love, his desire, and sanctification are revealed. Those humble men were endeared to this great heart of love, and now Jesus consoles, comforts, and exhorts them with a love that has no equal. O, what comfort and encouragement have been had from his words:

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. 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).

He spoke of sorrow, but he also spoke of joy and peace, which can be had only through the unity of the spirit. This he explained in his perfect illustration of the vine and its branches. *"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing"* (John 15:5).

Love's Deepest Revelation

Love assumes its deepest form as those dear eyes look upon the bewildered and wondering disciples. Peter -- the indomitable Peter -- is anxious to know more about his Master's abode. He was undoubtedly concerned about the words, *"Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now."* He had learned to love this homeless, almost friendless man, who, notwithstanding his sinless life and gracious deeds,- was *"despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief"* (Isa. 53:3). So, perhaps with frustration in his voice, Peter asks, *"Lord, whither goest thou?"*

The Master does not fully answer Peter's question. *"Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards."* Peter reveals his nature in his reply: *"Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake."* He was yet to learn a far greater power than he yet possessed. This would be essential to that "following" of which he speaks in 1 Peter 2:21-23.

Even now it would seem that many who profess to follow his steps lack the incentive which only the Holy Spirit can give. Like Peter, when the test comes, the power unto victory is not their's. How glad we are to know that, while the Lord is thus denied, the same love and grace which uplifted Peter after his denial is available to all who, in the spirit of humility and contrition, will yield to the influence of divine spiritual power! In gracious love our lives are extended and every means provided for all that God's love entails in us, both for this present life and "afterwards."

Afterwards, Glory

Afterwards! What a joyful theme. Perhaps there is no reference to this word that brings greater hope and joy to the believer than that of Psalm 73:24: *"Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."* Afterward! But what about the meantime? -- What was to precede this promise which was only to be theirs "afterwards" ?

Through the stillness of the evening shadows the Master's words seem to gain added force: *"He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."* We slowly learn what is entailed in cross bearing and following in his steps. Each day added light is shed on our pathway, and experiences come which test the genuineness of our hearts when we sing or repeat -

"... Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow thee; . . . "

". . . Where He leads me I will follow,
I'll go with Him, with Him all the way . . . "

Brave words! But how do they work out in practice, for practiced Christianity is the only kind that has value. Jesus said, *"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them"* (John 13:17). The inference is plainly seen. As we examine ourselves we realize only too well that sin is ever present, within and without. 1 John 1:8 and Romans 8:7 suggest that sin is always at hand to thwart our efforts toward a fully consecrated, sanctified life. Our Lord and his apostles were

subject to temptations and met such temptations with a *"thus saith the Lord,"* or a refusal to bend to them (Luke 4:1-13; 1 Cor. 6:12; 9:27).

Discipleship has always been a test of obedience. Not that we earn salvation by our obedience, for Paul shows plainly that our salvation is of grace, abounding grace (Rom. 5:15). And while this is so, all recipients of divine grace are required to follow a well defined process. This is clearly stated in John 17:15-23 and Romans 12:1,2,21.

Obedience is the fruit of faith, and John speaks very emphatically with respect to sin: *"All unrighteousness is sin"* (1 John 5:17). Righteousness, imputed and imparted -- as this is seen in us -- may well be one of the greatest tests of discipleship; for if we abide in Christ, if the love of God dwell in us, our thoughts, words, purposes and actions will be in harmony with the will of God as that will is expressed in his Word. Righteousness can be defined only by the divine standard as we find it in Holy Writ. Jesus kept the commandments (Matt. 5:17-20), and if we follow in his steps, we will do likewise. *"Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments"* (1 John 2:3-6; 1 Pet. 2:21).

One Condition For Life

The pre-requisite for eternal life remains forever the same: perfect obedience to God, perfect righteousness. This is not difficult to understand. If life were granted on any other condition, the happiness of all would be in danger. Adam failed to obey God's righteous law, and because of his sin our "natures" are fallen. We are unable to make ourselves righteous, for, being sinful and unholy, we cannot perfectly obey a holy law. But, a God of love has opened up *"a new and living way"* through the accepted merit of his dear Son, Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:20). He lived a sinless life, he died for us, and now, praise God, *"... the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin"* (1 John 1:7). We are justified by faith in him; his righteousness is imputed to us, and we are thus made acceptable unto the Father as though we were sinless! Truly, wondrous love and grace!

And then a new era dawns upon our lives! We leave behind the old carnal desires; the things we once loved, we now hate, and our affections are bent upward. We can say with Paul, *"The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"* (Gal. 2:20).

If Christ has his abode in our hearts, we will manifest his spirit in our life and we will do works of righteousness and obedience. We have nothing of which to boast. Our only basis for hope is in Christ's imputed righteousness and that which is wrought by his spirit working in and through us. Some may feel that their imperfections are beyond removal and may perhaps doubt about their standing before their Lord and Savior. To any such we would say, do not give way to the Adversary's taunts. If we are overcome, we are not yet cast off, not forsaken or rejected of God. Recall the precious promises, especially such as Isaiah 41:10: *"Fear thou not; for I am with thee."* Reach out in living faith and say with Paul, *"It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us"* (Rom. 8:34).

Blessed Recognition of Our Sins

As we come closer to Jesus, our own weaknesses and faults appear, more in contrast with his purity and perfection. This, however, may be good, for by it we see that the spirit is effectively working within us. *No deep seated love for Jesus can dwell in the heart that fails to realize its innate sinfulness.* The one who is being transformed by the love and grace of Christ will, of a sureness, admire his beauty and excellence, but if such a one does not see his or her own moral

weaknesses, it is an unmistakable evidence that the perfection and glory of Jesus Christ has not been fully seen.

One has said that:

"The less we see to esteem in ourselves, the more we shall see to esteem in the infinite purity and loveliness of our Savior. A view of our own sinfulness drives us to him who can pardon, and when the soul, realizing its helplessness, reaches out after Christ, he will reveal himself in power. The more our sense of need drives us to him and to the Word of God, the more exalted views we shall have of his character, and the more fully we shall reflect his image."

The followers of Jesus share some of his experiences: *"The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his lord"* (Matt. 10:24). Those words imply a life in which negative forces will have their place and part. Not all sunshine, nor yet all shade, but all things working together to the desired end, *"... that ye may be perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"* (Matt. 5:48). The same mighty power which enabled Jesus to live a pure, holy life is available to us. We do not see what lies in the upward path, nor can we always see the purpose of life's tangled maze, but *"in the afterwards"* we shall praise God for all that has, in any way or measure, been to us a means of grace.

"I cannot always see the way that leads to heights above,
I sometimes quite forget he leads me on with hands of love;
But yet I realize the path must lead me to Immanuel's land,
And when I reach life's summit I shall know -- and understand.
I cannot always trace the onward course my bark must take:
But looking backward I behold afar, its shining wake
Illumined with God's light of love, and so, I onward go,
In perfect trust, that he who holds the helm the course must know.
I cannot always see the plan on which He builds my life,
For oft the sound of hammer blow on blow -- the noise of strife
Confuses me, till I quite forget he knows and oversees
And that in all details with his great plan, my life agrees.
I cannot always understand the Master's rule,
I cannot always do the task he gives in life's hard school:
But I am learning by his help to solve them, one by one,
And when I cannot understand, to say, thy will be done."

An Attainable Goal

To so live that each day finds in us a greater purpose, a more ardent desire, and an increasing effort concerning the things of God and our eternal salvation -- this must be the one concentrated object governing our lives.

As workers together with God (2 Cor. 6:1) we are to go forward in faith (James 1:6), redeeming the time (Eph. 5:16), walking in the light (1 John 1:7), patient in tribulation (Rom. 12:12), watching and praying (Matt. 26:41), in short, being steadfast in the faith (1 Pet. 5:9), and thereby *"growing in grace and in the know] edge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"* (2 Pet. 3:18). To possess the same knowledge of him (Phil. 3:10) a: did Paul -- this must be our daily purpose, our contemplation, and our joy.

Yes, we are to be *rejoicing* Christians. Can we not look back and see the innumerable evidences of God's love and care over us? His promises and his provision for our every need have never failed; his mercy and grace have ever been manifest; and we remember David's words: "*Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, the Lord be magnified*" (Ps. 40:16). We have every cause to be "magnified" in the Lord. Christians are not to be fearful and repining. We are to be cheerful and by a confident trust reveal something of the Master's serenity and excellence of peace and joy.

Jesus was nearing the end. He spoke things which related to his peace, his joy, and his victory. He desires that his disciples shall have those things. He holds out before them (and us) a fullness of joy which is, by far, too rare; for even here and now we may possess a joy which in its scope shall yield a foretaste of the more enduring joy of the afterwards. And so we say, let us be rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; instant in prayer (see Rom. 12:12).

Prayer is mighty. It is one of our greatest means of grace. In prayer, heaven and earth are close together, and as the believer reaches out with this mighty arm of prayer and faith, the heart can and will find a peace and rest beyond the reach of any evil source. Let none be indifferent to this privilege of prayer. Note Jesus' words that: "... *men ought always to pray...*" (Luke 18:1). Paul says, "*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance*" (Eph. 6:18). Praying with the spirit, and with the understanding also (see 1 Cor. 14:15).

"We need to praise God *'for his goodness and his wonderful works to the children of men'* (Ps. 107:15). Our devotional exercises should not consist wholly in asking and receiving. Let us not always be thinking of our wants, and little of the daily benefits we receive. We do not pray any too much, and we are too sparing in giving thanks. We are the constant recipients of God's mercies."

"Yet how little gratitude we express -- how little we praise him for what he has done for us. He desires us to worship him, to take pleasure and comfort in his service: He desires that -- in the unity of his spirit with ours -- we shall enter into a fuller and richer life The soul may ascend nearer heaven on wings of praise. God is worshiped with song and music in the courts above, and as we express our gratitude, we are approximating the worship of the heavenly hosts."

"*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth*" God (Ps. 50:23). Let us with reverent joy come before our Creator with "*thanksgiving and the voice of melody*" (Isa. 51:3).

The years pass, the shadows of sin and unbelief which are falling upon the world are profoundly revealing; they speak to the end of the age in which we live. The attainment of our hope is near at hand. The "afterwards" is assuming its shape. As yet, we do not know what shall be in the "afterwards," but we are assured that it will hold for us blessings and transcendent joys, far beyond our most sanguine hopes (1 Cor. 2:9). Those hopes will mature if we follow the Master all the way. If the spirit has free rule, we shall be more and more conformed to his image and, "*as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly*" (1 Cor. 15:49).

"Pleasures Forevermore"

Soon life's day will end. But oh, the "afterwards"! What joys are to be ours when our change comes! No more sorrow, pain, tears, partings, and no more death! Such is the vista which lies in the "afterwards." Love -- gracious, redeeming love -- shall wipe the tear from every eye; grace -- unbounded grace -- shall be at the disposal of all; faith will have been largely lost in sight, as our risen and glorified Lord, (along with his saints) assumes his rightful place as the *"King of kings," "The mighty God, the everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."* Then, in the glorious light of an endless day, we shall find no greater joy than that in which the Father and Son are magnified. Forever, freed from the limitations of the flesh and its unrighteous tendencies, and *"clothed with righteousness"* (Ps. 132:9), we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is:

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God:.... Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, *even* as he is pure (1 John 3:1-3).

Let us remember that the church of God has suffered more from weak, wavering, and compromising adherents than from any other cause. Let us not forget that many of God's victories have been accomplished by small numbers and that God *"... is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work"* (2 Cor. 9:8).

And now, what remains? A measure of the things to which flesh is heir? Yes. Tests and trials? Yes. But, thank God, in all these things we are made more than conquerors through him that loved us (Rom. 8:37). *"Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards"* (John 13:36).

"I go not now to glory bright
To dwell with Christ in robes of white --
To see my Lord enthroned above --
To joy in his eternal love:
But afterwards, I shall be there,
In his eternal bliss to share.
I go not now to understand
The deep perfection love has planned --
to see life's problems all made plain,
To know the need of pang and pain,
But afterwards, I shall be there,
Then perfect knowledge I shall share.
O Master, afterwards, I come,
Unto the mansions fair 'to home,'
When glory crowns thy blessed grace,
And I shall see thee, 'face to face':
But afterwards I shall be there,
And in thy glory I shall share."

Our thoughts return to those with which this meditation began -- the scene in the upper room just prior to the betrayal of Jesus. The master has opened his heart to his disciples; his closing words are words of hope and words of cheer: *"These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the*

world" (John 16:33). Next follows a prayer, a prayer in which love for his Father and for his followers is the theme. Who shall say what pain and sorrow were under control as those gracious words of prayer ascended to his Father's heart?

"Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:.... I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.... I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world:.... I have given them thy word; Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.... for their sakes I sanctify myself.... Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee,... Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; ... O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. 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" (excerpted from John 17).

Love Beyond Compare!

And so, Christ commends his followers to the Father. As a consecrated high priest he intercedes for his brethren. As a faithful shepherd, he gathers his flock, the everlasting arms underneath, and urges confidence and trust. He was soon to suffer and to die for all mankind, for you and for me. But afterwards! "Love divine, all love excelling." Yes, and so we pray:

"Finish, Lord, thy New Creation; Pure and spotless let us be;
Show us all thy great salvation -- Thine shall all the glory be.
Changed from glory into glory, Till we see thine own dear face;
Till we cast our crowns before thee Lost in wonder, love and praise."

- W. Wainwright

Consolation

God glories in the appellation that he is the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort. Therefore, to minister in those offices is to become like God; to imitate the charities of heaven. God has fitted mankind for this office; men feel their brother's wants by their own experience.

God has given us speech, the pleasures of society, and pleasant conversation in order to reduce our sorrows, to provide us with periods of comfort, of excitement, of hope, and of the reciting of his promises that we may become instruments of virtue. It is certain that as nothing can do it better, so there is nothing greater for which God made our tongues (next to reciting his praises), than to minister comfort to a weary heart.

What pleasure we have to bring joy to our brother, who with dreary eyes looks to heaven and cannot find so much rest as to let his eyelids close. Our tongue should be tuned with heavenly accents, and make the weary heart listen for light and ease. And to help another perceive that there is such a thing in the world as comfort and joy. To help them break out from the prison of sorrows, and little by little melt into showers and refreshment. This is glory to our voice and employment fit for the brightest angel.

I have seen the sun kiss the frozen earth, which was bound up with images of death and the cold breath of the north. The waters break from their enclosures, and melt with joy.... So is the heart of a sorrowful man under the influence of a wise comforter. He breaks the despairs of the grave; the fetters and chains of sorrow. He blesses God. He blesses man. He feels life return; for to be miserable is death. Nothing is life but to be comforted and God is never so pleased as in the thanksgiving songs of relieved widows, of supported orphans, of rejoicing, comforted, and thankful man.

- Jeremy Taylor

Notice of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Pastoral Bible Institute, Inc., is scheduled to be held (D.V.) on Saturday, June 7, 1986, at 11:00 a.m., at 4454 S. 14th Street, Suite, #2 Milwaukee, WI 53221. Brethren needing travel directions or airport pick-up should call our regular phone number: (414) 282 -1076.

Only members of the Institute may vote (in person or by proxy), but all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ and his appearing are welcome to attend.

A report of the Institute's activities during the preceding year will be given, and an election of directors to serve during the coming year will be conducted. Opportunity will be given for such other matters as may properly come before the meeting.

These brethren, now serving as directors, are candidates for re-election, viz.: J.L. Buss, A. Gonczewski, A. Jarmola, P.J. Pazucha, L. Petran, and J.B. Webster. Br. H.C. Hogrebe has resigned his position on the board due to health and other considerations. Also nominated as director is: L.R. Webster.

Entered into Rest

Lois Adams, Oregon, IL
H.B. Campbell, Spartanburg, SC
Don Danchev, Yucca Valley, CA
Irmgard Fisher, GERMANY
E. H. Frels, Houston, TX
Harriet Fuerst, Grand Rapids, MI
John Godfrey, Asheville, NC
A. J. Hopkins, Carlsbad, CA
Haniffa Jains, INDIA
Eugene Jezuit, Woodbridge, IL
Mary Krasinski, St Charles, IL
Mamie Miller, South Bend, IN
Jonathon Pittsley, Wausau, WI
A. J. Pywell, AUSTRALIA
Sadie Stuart, Elgin, IL
Amos VanSant, Stuart, FL
John Wanio, Muskegon, MI
Theresa Wayne, Lexington, TN
Mary Wilkins, Little Rock, AR