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Robes, Garments, Clothing

"He that overcometh ... shall be clothed in white raiment." - Revelation 3:5

It is said that the first occurrence of anything in the Word of God determines the sense in which it should be interpreted in all following instances.

Appropriately, the first Bible reference to clothing occurs in Eden. Our first parents disobeyed the clear instructions of the Lord God and partook of the fruit of that tree of which they were expressly commanded not to eat. Suddenly, they became aware of their guilt and sought to hide themselves by making aprons of fig leaves. Thus, they thought to hide from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. But no cover could screen them from the wrath of their creator. Their standing of innocence, of sonship, and of fellowship all ceased. No effort by Adam or his descendants could free them from the consequences of divine judgment.

A Covering from God

God not only excluded them from the life giving fruits of the garden, he also provided them with coats of skin to cover their guilt. God thus hinted that only by the sacrifice of life (which supplied the skin or covering) can release from condemnation ever be effected. The coats of skin *covered* their guilt. Guilt was not removed, nor was it pardoned. This covering of sin is the only aspect of atonement found in the Old Testament.

The primitive root of the words translated atonement, ransom, et. cetera, in the Old Testament has the thought of covering sin. The extension of this root word carries the thought of sacrifice or offering for sin. The removal of sin and its penalty will only be seen in the atoning work of Jesus Christ, who came to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself (Heb. 9:26).

Two lessons are taught by the first occurrence of clothing in the Bible:

Sins were covered by God's arrangement Man could therefore be given a standing through which to deal with God.

Men have perverted God's original teaching. Not only do they disregard the truth that clothing is a covering for sin, but further, they make much of garments as proofs of their standing. By color, trim, and cut man implies his superiority to other men. Clothing is so readily adopted as a sign of rank, and of pride, that man has, in practice, adopted Bible words saying, "*...Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler*" (Isa. 3:6). To what more glaring example could we point than the example of military dress. The stars, the tabs, the crown, the pips, and the stripes all declare the rank. In it all nothing reminds one that clothing was once a cover for sin. And yet, recalling the meaning of the word "candidate" (clothed in white) we see that man has not entirely lost this thought.

God Clothes Himself

It is written of God: *"Thou art clothed with honor and majesty, who coverest thyself with light as with a garment..."* (Ps. 104:1,2). He clothes himself - none has given God his standing, his honor, his character, his majesty. Man struggles to portray the holiness of God. The best picture is probably to say, as did the psalmist, that he clothes himself with light; or with the Apostle John that God is light (1 John 1:5); or with James that he is the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning (James 1:17); or with Paul that whatsoever doth make manifest is light (Eph. 5:13). Light, used as a garment, depicts the eternal character of the Lord God. When he is elsewhere revealed as taking the garments of vengeance and being clad with zeal as a cloak, then we see that he has girded himself, as it were, to leave his throne and intervene directly in the affairs of mankind in judgment.

Whereas God clothes himself, all who act for him have a robe of his providing. This indicates the standing of righteousness (or office) they hold from God. For example, the heavenly beings who served him on earth were shown in dazzling white garments (Matt. 17:2; 28:3; Acts 1:10), the nearest copy that could be made of the light which is God's garment. These servants are reflections of him and are blessed in that.

God's Earthly Servants

Human servants are sometimes clothed by God to indicate their duties. Aaron, the first and foremost of Israel's high priests, had elaborate robes of office. These official robes were for glory and for beauty. Moreover, Aaron was not anointed into office until he was so clothed, and his foundation garment was a white embroidered coat of fine linen, teaching that his office was based on the righteousness credited to him as the servant of Jehovah. By contrast we notice Aaron's brother Moses, who was more prominent in the birth of the nation of Israel than Aaron, but who had no distinguishing robes.

Hereditary offices, such as kings and priests, may be dignified by robes, but a prophet might arise from any family or tribe. Prophets had only their message to attract hearers. In this sense, the words in which the prophet chose to clothe his message might determine whether he would be well received. If he modified his words and prophesied smooth things, the nation would hear him. But, if the burden of the Lord was upon him, if his message was not carefully wrapped, and even if his words were the very words of the Lord God who commissioned him, the people would reject him. It would not matter whether he came to them in camel's hair or soft raiment. Rough garments became a mark of God's prophets and false prophets adopted such clothing in order to deceive (Zech. 13:4).

An Illustration

John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea clothed in camel's hair garments (Matt. 3:4). While in prison, he sent two of his disciples to Jesus. They inquired of Jesus, *"...Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?"* (Luke 7:19)? Jesus answered the messengers and sent them back to John. In the succeeding verses (vs. 22-24) he asked the people what they thought of John. *"...What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?"* Of course not. They would not have left the cities to hear so weak a character as a reed!

Our Lord repeats his question: *"...what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment";* a man of standing, denoted by his good clothing? They are in palaces, not in the wilderness. Clearly

the people were not merely curious. We read that all men were in expectation and that they wondered to themselves about John's mission (Luke 3:15).

Our Lord asks a third time: *"What went ye out for to see?"* Again he anticipates their answer: *"A prophet?"* This was their reason for their journey to hear John. They regarded him as a prophet. But they had underestimated John, for he was more than a prophet. He was a herald, and his calling was itself a fulfillment of prophecy. Like previous prophets he spoke of imminent judgment, but he was given the honor of making another announcement; the most momentous, the most joyful of messages. He had the joy of proclaiming that his successor and superior, the Lamb of God, was contemporary with him! John was also honored in baptizing the Son of God! These singular honors made him more than a prophet. Read his joyful words: *"The friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled"* (John 3:29). He was more than a prophet. In Jesus' words, *"...there hath not risen a greater..."* (Matt. 11:11).

It could be, though not likely, that Israel first regarded John as a prophet because of his traditional garb. Such would be a superficial, external judgment. Having received him to the extent of being baptized by him, how many stepped beyond? Had they listened intently? Had they followed his pointing finger? All would have been well with them if they had, but it is clear that many stopped short of this understanding (Luke 7:31-35).

Common Failings

If, as mentioned, clothing is evidence of position, it may be asked: Are Christians prone to judge each other by dress? A quick answer might be: "Of course not!" Yet, James claims there is such a tendency

(James. 2:2,3). The well-groomed member receives little courtesies which are not afforded to the poorly clad. This occurs irrespective of their standing as new creatures. But, whether or not one is well dressed, if they have put on Christ, they are dressed for every eventuality of life - within or without the church. No brother should fail to recognize this clothing of the true follower of the Lord. James points out that it was partiality which caused the practice of looking at outward appearance in the synagogue (2:4). He says that those whom they were liable to underrate were the very ones that God had chosen. God looks on the heart. He sees the richness of faith hidden there. God chooses those who have no standing of themselves. On this matter Paul and James agree (1 Cor. 1:27,28; James 2:5).

The Wedding Garment

In the parable of the wedding garment, we see those whom God calls (without standing) represented by those who are brought in at the last moment to furnish the feast with guests (Matt. 22:1-14). The parable tells of a feast rather than a wedding. Only passing reference is made to the son, and there is no mention of a bride. The main characters are the king and the guests. Matthew chapter six closes with the parable of the wicked husbandman.

This story was not lost on the Pharisees. They perceived that Jesus pictured them and they sought to lay hands on him. The parable of the wedding garment follows, spoken to the same hearers, and again the Pharisees realized that the story rebuked them (Matt. 22:15). The fact that the Pharisees recognized themselves in the story prompts the question: Was this an immediate lesson, or a prophetic parable? Is this a statement of some greater divine purpose yet to be fulfilled?

Matt. 22:6-7 corresponds to the conclusion of the previous parable. They clearly prophesy of judgment to come upon them. While the prophetic portion of the parable may not have been noted by the hearers, there was a greater truth than that which the Pharisees allowed. In verses eleven and twelve the king enters the feast to see the guests. He is surprised to find a guest who is not wearing a wedding garment. It was customary for each guest, good and bad, to be given a robe to cover their other garments. In this way all guests were put on an equal footing. The only ones who would stand out at the feast were the king and his son.

To attend a feast without a wedding garment would be disrespectful to the hosts. Now we see the Pharisee's position. They recognized that the Lord's message was directed against them. They were not as other men. To be called to a feast where all guests were treated alike was not agreeable to them. Had the king graded the guests and given them the uppermost seats they would have accepted the honor. By -doing so their righteousness would be acknowledged. But this was a feast to honor the king's son, not his guests.

The king had invited a number of guests to honor his son. Every guest, (figuratively every Christian) will accept that garment which gives them the right to appear at the feast and honor the king's son. The feast is now being held; and, of course, none can attend without a wedding garment provided by the king. In the parable, our Lord is supposing a case to teach a lesson, just as in the parable of the sheepfold (John 10) none can actually climb up some other way to enter his fold.

The Robe

What is this robe of which the parable speaks? What puts all guests on a common footing and gives them their standing? There is one robe that the Lord God alone can give, being judge of all. The Bible says plainly: Blessed is he whose transgression is covered (Ps. 32:1; Rom. 4:7). Justification -- that which the self-righteous Pharisee did not know he needed. All Pharisees were not of this caliber; some had better hearts. Even if they did not join the feast, they would not oppose the king's son. But how blessed are they, who perhaps are from the highways mentioned in the parable, who know in their hearts that they need the grace of God which gives them standing and fits them for fellowship as they honor the Son. The longer they live, the more they realize their need of the robe. They know that nothing they could ever do would enable them to stand on their own merit or dispense with this cover for sin. Being a gift from God himself it is perfect, absolutely, and needs no embroidery. It is the foundation garment for all other garments that we may wear, just as the white embroidered coat was the foundation of Aaron's official robes.

Another Garment

Christians now wear "...the *garment of praise*..." (Isaiah 61:3). This is a portion of the prophecy which Jesus at Nazareth said was then fulfilled (Luke 4:18-21). He offered this garment of praise to those in Israel who were heavy in spirit, downcast, and despondent. We receive it through the Gospel message, it having been passed on to the Christian church. Deprived of the hopes which the gospel engenders, we would be a dejected people. But this garment "satisfies our longings as nothing else can do."

Heaviness of spirit is a worldwide sickness, and the Christian will fall victim to it if he undervalues the source of all goodness. Put the garment on! Wrap yourself in it! Note how happy you are in the Lord! Remember the two dejected disciples who trudged to Emmaus and were given the garment by the stranger who joined them; and back they hurried to Jerusalem to find the others similarly clothed.

Why is praise referred to as a garment, while its truth deals with a condition of heart? One reason may be that it is a protective covering for the whole being; and another that it gives each a standing with all the heavenly host who praise their Creator night and day. Still another reason may be that the Christian is judged by his fellow men, who look on the outward appearance. That being so, if men see the garment of praise they will have to admit that the Gospel promotes happiness. And still another reason: The old creature is not so visible when clothed in garments supplied by heaven.

A Christian may wear the garment of praise for many years. Is it as bright now as when received? Does it show signs of wear? Are those joys and satisfactions which we received from the Lord (as the alternative to the world's spirit of heaviness) as bright and unfailing as before? This garment of praise is meant for a lifetime of wear. It's warmth and protection can always be ours. Even if one's thought of praise is limited to the singing of thanks and hymns, the wearer may have much comfort. If our thoughts take praise at its earliest meanings (of price, valuation, or appraisal), then even more satisfaction of heart, more warmth of spirit may be ours by rightly valuing our Father and his wonderful works for all his subjects. These gift garments from our Father will fit us well and will never wear out; but how deplorable it would be were we to echo in our hearts the words of Isaiah 4:1:

"...We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach."

The Robing Not Complete

One garment remains to be worn which is not supplied by God. We are to be clothed with humility (1 Peter 5:5). This is the most uncomfortable of all the garments which the Christian must wear. But, it must always be worn, and it will fit as well as the others. Remember, the well dressed man is not conscious of his clothing; in fact, it is a habit to him. The Christian, clothed with justification, praise, and humility, is dressed for every occasion.

Future Garments?

For the near future, we take the promise made to the Church at Sardis.

"...they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" (Rev. 3: 4,5).

What an honor to walk with him in white: no more defilements, no specks of dust, no more laundry. White garments were the normal clothing of those heavenly servants assigned special duties, representing eternal God himself. This is the standing the church will be given in the resurrection, and a crown will complete the picture:

"...hold that fast which thou hast..." John urges, *"...that no man take thy crown."* (Rev. 3:11). According to the old couplet of "no cross, no crown," it appeared that the Christian must retain his hold of the cross and himself bear the cross in order to receive the crown of the faithful. That has its truth, but we could also say, Hold fast what you have -- retain the garments which give you your standing in Christ now, and in the resurrection you will be clothed in white and enduring garments, with the addition of the crown. We will be *"...clothed with our house which is from heaven"* (2 Cor. 5:2).

- B.J. Drinkwater, England

Worldliness....

What then is worldliness? Worldliness is life without ideals, life without moral vistas, life devoid of poetic vision It is imprisonment within the material, no windows opening out upon ethereal, moral, or altruistic ends. It is the five senses without the moral sense. It is quickness to appetite and dullness to conscience It is rank materialism.

- J.H. Jowett

Not Your Work, But You

It is not so much your work as you that God wants; at least he wants you first, and then your work. Service from hearts that are not really consecrated to God is not pleasing to him. We are in danger of forgetting this in our busy, bustling days. It is easier to offer God a few activities than to give him a heart. The tendency of the religious life at present is to work, to service, rather than to loving God. So we need to remind ourselves continually that loving must come before doing and serving. The largest and most conspicuous work will find no acceptance with God if our hearts are not his.

Tis not thy work the Master needs, but thee --
The obedient spirit, the believing heart,
The child obedient, trustful, glad to be
Where'er he will, to stay or to depart.

- Selected.

Covenant People

I will make a compact of peace with them, a lasting compact ... and when my sanctuary remains among them forever the nations shall learn that I am the Eternal who sets Israel apart.

- Ezekiel 37:26 - 28; Author's translation

Today's global news stories speak of those events which must immediately precede the messianic kingdom of Jesus. We are witnessing the end of the Gospel age: Israel's dispersion has turned into a homecoming. Her blindness has obscured God's favor towards her for nearly two thousand years; but now, his Word is being fulfilled: *"...before they call, I will answer"* (Isa. 65:29).

When God removed the crown and diadem from Zedekiah he put an end to the man-kings in Israel. God never planned for Israel to be ruled by kings. We do not deny that God had ordained that David's throne would be occupied by the Lion of the tribe of Judah -but the fulfillment of this promise was not to be any man, but rather, the promised Messiah. But when the people grew envious of their neighboring gentile nations' pageantry, pomp, and show, God permitted them to experience life under a king.

Israel was warned, however, that her request for a king was a rejection of God. Because of their lack of faith God would increase their sorrow and distress. Perhaps this permission to Israel (like the seven times of gentile dominion) was to demonstrate to them the futility of ambition and insufficiency of human ability. The wisdom of God is far above that of men. All will soon realize that Moses spoke the truth when he said, *"...Every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed"* (Acts 3:23, 22-26).

God's First Covenant People

The first covenant people was Israel. That covenant was described in Scripture as a marriage with God. Israel broke the covenant, but God did not put her away permanently (cf. Isa. 50:1; Jer. 31:31-34). Gentiles (the word means "stranger") have never had a covenant with God. All who come into the favor of God must become Israelites. The promised blessing of all earthly families greatly concerned Israel; they anticipated the privilege of becoming the "blessed nation" under the Law. Being imperfect humans it was impossible for them to keep the Law, even though they were permitted year after year to make the attempt. But, the blood of bulls and goats could never bring perfection (Heb. 10:4).

Israel failed her covenant and failed to see the new and living way which was opened when Jesus, a Jew, offered himself. They rejected him then, but thanks be to God that their rejection did not affect his status as their prophet, priest, and king. Jesus retained the power of life. He came to his own: he did not come to the gentiles; and obviously he does not return to the gentiles. He said, *"I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"* (Matt. 15:24, RSV). The Lord was not contradicting the angels who announced to the shepherds on the Galilean hills that the birth of Jesus was *"good news ... to all people"* (Luke 2:10). The fact is that there is a due time for the gentiles, but the gentiles cannot receive God's favor and blessing until they come into that kingdom for which we have prayed *"...thy kingdom come."*

Within Israel's covenant God provided for the adoption of strangers into full privileges and fellowship. This pictured the fact that all men will be incorporated into Messiah's kingdom. The word "gentile" means outsider. The tabernacle of David (cf. Amos 9:11; Acts 15:16) is of God's chosen people. It has fallen down, but God will set it up again with Messiah upon the throne and it will be the desire of all nations (cf. Hag. 2:7). There is no gentile or Jewish Christian church in

the sight of God. There is simply a church - the body of Christ. There is one arrangement for all: "...one mediator between God and men..." (1 Tim. 2:5). Every subject of the kingdom who receives eternal life will become an Israelite or prince with God. for one reason: to find the peace and safety promised by God.

Why Israel Returns Home

Israel's return to the homeland is prima facie evidence that the earthly phase of the stone kingdom (Dan. 2:35,44) is in preparation. The gentile dominions must give way. Jeremiah puts the matter concisely:

"A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for Jehovah hath a controversy with the nations, he will enter into judgment with all flesh: as for the wicked, he will give them to the sword, saith Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great tempest shall be raised up from the uttermost parts of the earth. And the slain of Jehovah shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the face of the ground. Wail, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow in ashes, ye principal of the flock; for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are fully come, and ye shall fall like a goodly vessel. And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape. A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and the wailing of the principal of the flock! for Jehovah layeth waste their pasture" (Jer. 25:31-38).

In scriptural language, Israel was a lovely spreading olive tree, of God's planting (Jer. 11:16,17, Moffatt). Paul calls the gentiles wild olives (Rom. 11:17), thus indicating that they were outside of a covenant relationship with God. The Lord never changes his plan. The covenant made with Abraham was bound with an oath. The faithfulness of God is sure, despite human unfaithfulness.

Israel has been a people of sorrows. They have been dispossessed of prophet, priest, and king. The equipment for their atonement through the ritual sacrifices of the temple is missing; but nevertheless they return to their homeland. They come from every country, speaking strange languages; but they return to their homeland for one reason: to find the pace and safety promised by God.

Is not this return an evidence of the kingdom's proximity! Doesn't it seem miraculous that such strides can be made against such odds? Israel is returning; the lame, the halt, the blind find sanctuary, food, and clothing. They are not yet prosperous, for they are plagued with inflation and heavy debts for their security. Yet, what they now possess is infinitely more than was received from gentile hands in the concentration camps of Europe forty years ago. The Eternal has promised,

"...though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, I will not make a full end of thee" (Jer. 30:11). Israel's return is providential. Isaiah says: *"Here is the Eternal coming in power, maintaining mightily his cause!"* (Isa. 40:10; author's translation.) God commissions some of his servants to assist his returning Israel. In this context, the prophet says:

"Console my people, console them - 'tis the voice of your God - speak to Jerusalem tenderly, proclaim to her that her hard days are ended, her guilt paid off, that she has received from the Eternal's hand full punishment for all her sins."

"Hark! there is one calling, "Clear the way for the Eternal through the waste, level a highroad for our God across the desert: every valley must be filled up, every mountain and hill lowered, rough places smoothed, and ridges turned into a plain and the Eternal's glory shall be revealed before the eyes of all; such are the orders of the Eternal."

{Up to the high hills, O herald of happiness to Zion! raise your voice loudly, O herald of happiness to Jerusalem, raise it fearlessly, and tell the towns of Judah, "Here is your God! Here is the Eternal coming in power, maintaining mightily his cause! Here he is bringing what he has won, bringing what he has gained! For he feeds his flock like a shepherd, and gathers them in his arms, he is carrying the lambs in his bosom, and leading the ewes gently" (Isa. 40:1-11, Author's translation).

Jeremiah has this to say (Jer. 31:7-9):

"Shout aloud on the hilltops, ring out your praises, cry, "The Eternal has saved his people, the remnant of Israel!" I am bringing them from the northland, gathering them from the ends of the earth; blind and lame among them, women with child and women in travail - they come back, a great company. They went away in tears, I lead them back consoled. I guide them to streams of water, by smooth roads where they cannot stumble; for to Israel I am a father and Ephraim is my firstborn son."

Strong Testimony!

What God has abundantly recorded concerning Israel and his covenant with her demands the careful study by those who claim have made a covenant with him by sacrifice (Ps. 50:5). Israel is blind to the manner in which Elijah illustrates the church, particularly in this end of the age. It would seem, however, that others have also overlooked the full picture.

God is not mocked, he established Israel to be a lovely spreading olive tree. As a group they proved unfit to become joint heirs with Jesus But Christ was the promised seed of Abraham, and so the high calling of God (Phil. 3:14) went out to believers in Christ Jesus -- regardless of their nation, race, color, or sex. We now see that the lovely spreading olive tree (the true seed of Abraham), is Christ Jesus and his church (elsewhere called the "bride"). *"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"* (Gal. 4:29). This has been a mystery, an idea which was hidden through the ages. Paul tells us that now it is plainly proclaimed: *"Christ in you, the hope of glory"* (Col. 1:27).

Because the Jews had possessed the exclusive favor for such a long time the apostle could hardly convince them that gentiles were to share in divine favor. Peter first recognized this unusual fact; he was the first to see that the door of the high calling was opened to all believers in Christ Jesus. He says:

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy (1 Peter 2:9).

God's purposes would not be thwarted by human failure. The covenant of sacrifice (or, using the exact words of Psalm fifty verse five: *by sacrifice*) had been initiated by our Lord. This covenant would continue until the church is complete. If Israel would not enter into it then God would

fulfill his promise through other peoples. Thus it was that a grafting process began with Cornelius, a gentile centurion.

God's Second Covenant People

The church, the second covenant people, is to be ruler over the first. This arrangement was illustrated in the two sons of Isaac. Esau, the elder, served Jacob the younger. Their parents, Isaac and Rebecca, were told by the angel (before the twins were born) that the elder would serve the younger. The question of their inheritance was a touchy subject and temporarily alienated them, but in the end the brothers were reconciled. Similarly, there has been a breach between the two *covenant* peoples. It will also be healed.

God called this second group to joint heirship with Jesus in his kingdom. Paul explains (Rom. 11) that God worked within his own universal rules. Employing what could only be described as a spiritual (or figurative) form of the gardening procedure "grafting," God arranged for benefits of the Abrahamic promise to be channeled to other peoples. These were, collectively, the "gentiles". Picturing this with the cultivated (or "tame") olive tree, Paul explains *to* men what God is doing in men. This second group are men of faith just like Abraham. Thus, they share a kinship with Abraham which is separate from, and more important to God than their physical genealogy. Because God chooses to reward their faith, he enables them to share the promise given to Abraham with Abraham's natural children.

This is God's method of fulfilling of his promise to Abraham and the apostle, in explaining it (Rom. 11), handles the subject of this inheritance with finality. In his day there were those who claimed that the gentiles had replaced Israel. Scoffing at their boastful spirit, he reminded his gentile brothers that they could only partake of the fatness of the root and stem of the tree by becoming part of it; that is, by becoming Israelites. The tree had not been uprooted; only some of its branches were broken off. He showed further that the branches were not necessarily permanently removed:

"After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree! I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob'" (Rom. 11:24-26, NIV).

What a joy to know that eventually all eyes will be opened, sincere good will, love, and satisfied acquiescence will prevail! The gentiles will then be happy to receive God's blessing through the tabernacle of David which will be re-established with the true seed of Abraham. Imagine the surprise of Israel and the chagrin of the gentiles when they realize that there has never been a Christian nation; and that Israel will be the first, the last, and the only Christian nation.

Israel will be favored by God as she aligns herself with God. Today's Israeli government is a human attempt to join the galaxy of nations. We marvel at their progress in view of the fact that they are, apparently, still resistant to him. Israel will discover that treaties only increase her trouble and embarrass her leaders. Her only safety lies in accepting God's will and in acting for themselves as a nation. Now their only reliable sources of help now are the words of Moses, the prophets, Jesus, and his apostles. But their statesmen and wise men of old will soon return from the grave. They will be appointed by God to straighten out Israel's affairs and bring them under the promised Messiah.

God warned against trusting any union of nations (Isa. 30:15, 16, 18-21):

"The Lord, the Eternal, Israel's Majesty, he had declared, 'Your safety lies in ceasing to make leagues, your strength is quiet faith.' But this you would not have, you answered 'No, we must have a cavalry to

make a charge!' ...So the Eternal longs to favor you, and moves to show you pity; for the Eternal is a loyal God; happy are all who long for him! No more tears for you, O fold of Zion in Jerusalem! For he will show you favor when you sigh, and answer you as soon as he hears your cry. Though scant and scarce may be your bread and water from the Lord, yet he your teacher never leaves you now; you see your teacher for yourselves, and when you swerve to the right or left, you hear a voice behind you whispering. 'This is the way, walk here.'"

Zechariah also prophecies:

"...they shall look at him whom they stabbed and lament for him bitterly, as a man laments for his only son; bitter shall be their grief for him, as bitter as a man's grief for his first-born child" (Zech. 12:10).

The Bible, from Moses to John, was written by Israelites for Israel. The church is no exception because they become Israelites indeed. No Christian can have racial prejudice and they must love even their enemies. More dependence must be placed upon the Bible and less upon leaders around whom there is a tendency to build fences, keeping outsiders out and insiders in. Jeremiah says: *"I am against prophets who pick up my words each from his fellow"* (Jer. 23:30).

The privilege of prayer belongs to those of faith. How can one say: *"Our Father"* if he is outside God's family? At one time Israel had access to God through the Aaronic priesthood, with the ephod, the Ark of the Covenant, and the furnishings of the tabernacle. Now they have no priest and no ephod (with its jewels by which the "yes" and "no" answers can come). Israel can have no atonement without Messiah. The tabernacle of David is Israel's contact with heaven, and even before it is set up the Lord recognizes them saying, *"Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear"* (Isa. 65:24).

Building Again the Temple

Material is being gathered. The tabernacle will be re-established. The present Israeli government is an interim government. When the Lord takes over, he will repair its failures and establish a kingdom, not a democracy as they now boast: They shall then call Jerusalem, "the throne of the Eternal," and all nations shall gather to it, living no longer by the stubbornness of their evil minds. In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel, and they shall come out of the northland together to the land that I have as a heritage to your fathers (Jer. 3:17,18).

Israel knows that her destiny is directed by a power beyond her own. This is perplexing because she also knows that her restoration and blessing shall be at the hand of the Messiah - and they have not yet recognized him. Open your eyes, O Israel! Look up! He is above and possesses all power; he is no longer a sacrificing priest but your king. For your Father's sakes he will extend the arm of power in your behalf; yes, he is already extending it!

Remember Moses' words that God would bless those who bless Israel and curse those who curse Israel. The good will and fellowship between God's two covenant people should follow the example of Elijah and Elisha. *"The law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem"* (Micah 4:2).

- C.H. Meadors

He Held His Peace

The day when Jesus stood alone
And felt the hearts of men like stone,
And knew he came but to atone --
That day "he held his peace."

They witnessed falsely to his word,
They bound him with a cruel cord,
And mockinly proclaimed him Lord;
"But Jesus held his peace."

They spat upon him in the face,
They dragged him on from place to place,
They heaped upon him all disgrace;
"But Jesus held his peace."

My friend, have you for far much less:
With rage, which you called righteousness,
Resented slights with great distress?
Your savior "held his peace."

Eventide

"... So he bringeth them unto their desired haven." - Psalm 107:30

How restful and serene was the Master's heart. Nothing could disturb its peace and trust in God! Look at his quiet confidence at the close of that searching day when he said to the Twelve, "Will you also go away?"

Dissatisfied, the crowd had ebbed away. Only these twelve stood near him. Would the searching words he had spoken prove too hard (John 6:60) for these to hear and understand?

Yesterday he had fed the hungry multitude. He had given them satisfaction in an hour of need. Out of a handful he had created more than enough. *"Surely this is the prophet who is to come into the world"* (John 6:14) was the verdict that passed from lip to lip. Like Moses, whose words they had in mind, he had provided bread in the wilderness.

With hunger appeased, approving tongues began to talk. "This is the man we need for our King" - this was the conclusion of all. Only Jesus' withdrawal from amongst them frustrated their plan (John 6:15).

They had found him in Capernaum again, but instead of breaking bread, he drew yesterday's deeper moral for them. He told them that he was the Bread of God (John 6:50) -- of which, if they would eat they would have life indeed within them. With yesterday's repast in mind they eagerly exclaimed, *"Lord, give us this bread"* (John 6:34).

Jesus said, *"I am that bread of life, he who comes to me shall never hunger; he who believes in me shall never thirst"* (John 6:35). In conversation the Jews pondered his words. Taking up the theme again in their synagogue (John 6:59), Jesus amplified the former utterances, and said that the bread which God would give would be his flesh, and the drink would be his blood (John 6:52-58).

A hard saying indeed! How could it be done? "Bread and fish religion" they could well understand, but food for the deeper nature was too hard. He was not after all the man to be their king! And so with scornful lip, they turned away and went back to their drab way of life, while he was left with none but the Twelve attending him. Was Jesus perturbed? Not a bit. Enthusiasm created by loaves and fishes was not the kind he had come to create. He wanted men who were ready to take up a cross and follow in his steps.

It was not an easy thing for Jesus to watch them depart, for he knew what the end of this would be. The man of compassion who could feed them with bread had to stand by, because of their unbelief, watching them drift towards the rocks of doom. The thoughts which led them to take his life had already set in - and in due time led them also to clash with the might of Rome.

Jesus stood among them as the "...*gift of God*" (John 4:10). Yet, there was nothing he could do to save them from that impending crash. No word nor act of his could change the trends of self-interested religious thought. It was not easy to stand beside the quickening currents and watch them accelerating down the rapids to their final plunge - and be himself at peace and unperturbed. Only a heart at rest in God, and in his promises, can look forward from the darkening scenes, and know that an "afterwards" is provided for in which the broken hearts, beyond the cataract, can be hushed to quietness and sanity again.

We, too, have that experience today. Another generation, amid the closing scenes of another age, with that same inability to believe, is rushing with quickening impetus to its final plunge. We, who know the Gift of God, stand powerless to avert the inevitable. No effort of either tongue or pen can turn aside the deep-drawn tide that bears our generation on its crest.

What of ourselves? Does it sap our peace of heart and mind? Have we learned, like Jesus did, to leave our people (with our own loved ones, perhaps in the midst) to the hands of God? It is a lesson not easy to be learned, to have to stand by and see the fateful drift, down steepening rapids, yet unable to lend a hand. Day by day we see and feel the cold reaction to God's gifts in grace. Everywhere, awakening nations say, "Give us bread, give us fish" here and now -- not in God's way! Whether the channel be democratic or totalitarian, the sequel is the same. The Son of God is not wanted either as the Bread of God or as a sacrifice for sin!

If we would know the peace which in his day kept the Master's heart at rest, we must also abide within the sovereign will of God, knowing that his way is the best. At the close of day, let us therefore retire for a little while with him to permit the fret and worry from the world's cold callousness to subside. Has this been a day of worry and perplexity? Let the "blood of Jesus whisper peace within." Have we been "by thronging duties pressed"? "To do the will of Jesus -- this is best."

Perhaps our path has had "sorrows surging round"! "On Jesus' bosom naught but calm is found." Have we "loved ones far away"? "In Jesus' keeping we are safe, and they."

Let us leave them there, assured that Jesus has vanquished death and all its powers -- and that he is on the throne!

It is enough;
Earth's struggles soon shall cease
And Jesus calls us
to heaven's perfect peace.

"O rest in the Lord, wait patiently for him, and He shall give thee the desires of thy heart."

- Bible Students Monthly, England

The Directors Report

"Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands..." Isaiah 49:16

The members of the Institute have placed upon the directors the responsibility of reporting once each year on the state of the Institute. Bearing Jesus' words, *"If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true"* (John 5:31) in mind, we prayerfully present our 68th Annual Report.

Our loving God said through the psalmist: *"...open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it"* (Ps. 81:10). Joshua, (looking back over the years during which fleshly Israel wandered in the wilderness) said, *"You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed"* (Josh. 23:14, NIV).

We too gratefully acknowledge the generosity and grace of our divine Father and the reality that he actively intervenes in the lives of those who diligently seek to serve him (Heb. 11:6). We are not surprised if tasks which, to us, seem difficult are but the work of his fingertip. -- No, when we let our minds ascend into the presence of the Almighty there is room only for thanksgiving and praise upon our lips, for the prostrating of our bodies in obedience to his Word, and for devotion and acquiescence to his will. All those involved with the Institute have found it so this year.

The Precipitation of Change

The year began reflectively. Br. Will Siekman retired, both as a director and as managing editor of the Herald. Br. Earl Villman too retired from his post as director. Two beloved editors, Brs. Lester Kynion and Charles Odell, added their names to the list of retirees. Lastly, and late this year, Br. Herb Hoglebe was forced to resign due to health and personal considerations. These changes notwithstanding, this year has proven to be a year in which we affirm: *"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us"* (1 Sam. 7:12).

Just as God brings light out of physical darkness (2 Cor. 4:6), even so has he done (through Christ) for those to whom this mantle has passed. Forced by circumstance to consider matters which had long been forestalled, the directors have been greatly blessed - and greatly tested.

Human minds rebel at such seasons of change as being too troublesome. We all know the ease which settles upon our lives when affairs have progressed smoothly, an ease which transcends the weariness and labors of daily tasks. Though our bodies be weary we are comforted by our home and familiar surroundings -- we feel as though we belong.

But pilgrims and strangers in this world (like the faithful of the past - Heb. 11:13) admit that such feelings of comfort are, of themselves, ample reason to question their lives. *Do they square up to our professions? Is there any enmity between our flesh and our spirit* (Rom. 8:7; James 4:4)? Such questions as these gave the directors ample cause for thought this year.

As children, we laid hold upon his promise that he would make his dwelling with us. We have found with time that God had already solved problems which we had not yet conceived. At such a time when we have seen his abundant over-rulings we can only own the fact that any man is (at best) an unprofitable servant to God. Such a self-evaluation only enhances our contentment in him; there is strength for all in Jesus' words: *"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness"* (2 Cor. 12:9).

"How Good and How Pleasant..."

An assembly of men faced with decisions not likely to be soon repeated are choice prey for the adversary. Seeds of discord and rancor are easily sown -- but God is greater than all that be against us, and this year we witnessed his handiwork. Where there was room for trouble amongst us, God brought us into places apart and gave us peace. At avenues where discord might have crossed our purposes, he directed our paths and produced accord. We echo the Psalmist: "*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth [God]*" (Ps. 50:23), for praise is all we can sing to his name.

To dwell amongst the spirits of harmony and cooperation is to dwell in the presence of God. As there can be harmony in music even though each instrument plays it's own notes, so harmony is possible amidst the diverse views of our brethren. There is fullness of joy in discovering Christ-like hearts which relinquish their preferences for the good of others. Such is the nature and character of Jesus' life and the pattern to which we are called.

Our Prayer

Above all other prayers, this year ends with the recognition that Jesus' spirit is sadly lacking in the world. At the time this report is being compiled we are hearing news stories of global significance about the impunity with which small nations hold larger ones and also of the willingness of large nations to intrude into the affairs of the small. We can only pray for the establishment of his kingdom, which will soon (we believe) remedy all these situations.

While we wait for that day we do with our might what our hands find to do, hoping that those with whom we come in contact, whether in person or through the pages of our journal, might glimpse something of our master in us -- not to our praise, but to his. So it is that we are particularly thankful for God's grace in providing fellow burden-bearers in this ministry: those elected from your midst and those who support and serve without recognition.

We repeat one thought. Were we to have begun this year looking through human eyes we would have been overcome by the problems which lay ahead. But *problems* are only such to those who have no answers. He with whom the Christian has to do (Heb. 4:13); he to whom darkness and light are both alike (Ps. 131:12), has solved every problem before his child expresses the worry to him in prayer. God proves this individually to his own.

A Year of Transition

Much has changed in the years since the Institute's inception and it was time that physical aspects of our ministry should be updated. Always aware that our ministry is largely supported by "widow's mites," we took care about our changes, updating procedures as deliberately and economically as possible. Such a course resulted in some changes being more noticeable than we would have liked. -- But that is the "blessing" of being human, we make mistakes and God gives us the privilege of asking your forgiveness. We appreciate your prayers and understanding during this year of transition.

Our move suggested changing printers. God revealed his wisdom in this matter when we were later advised by our former printer that they were phasing out such services.

Postal procedures suggested other changes. These have been made and we ask that you note this issue's mailing label. Advise us of any changes to your address.

The donation of several thousand books gave rise to long term plans for a book lending service. The project *is* underway but not yet complete. Special thanks to those who rendered volunteer help during the year.

We recently purchased computer equipment, primarily so that we could do our own typesetting. Previously, we depended upon commercial services. We rejoice in the newfound ability to produce materials that would otherwise have been too expensive in the quantities we require.

These steps have not only controlled the spiral of costs, but have actually lowered our cost per issue (in spite of substantial postage increases). The HERALD's subscription price remains set at \$1.00, free to those who cannot afford it or who cannot make foreign currency exchanges. However, printing and mailing alone cost approximately \$4.00 per subscriber per year, so we would be remiss if we did not express our appreciation for the generosity of those who subsidize it's production.

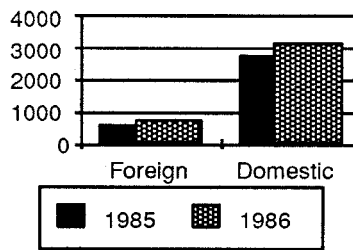
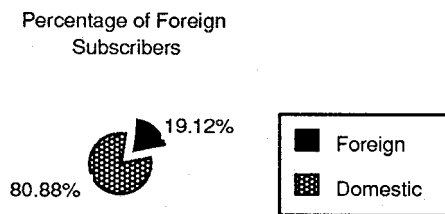
During the year we improved our liaison with others engaged in similar works. This work is the Lord's, not ours -- we would serve him wisely and without regard to our personal pride. It is unnecessary to duplicate materials which others provide, but we continue to offer them for our purchase through our offices, as we have in the past.

THE HERALD

The Institute's original resolve to prevent it's control by a few individuals was sound. To this end we have sought greater involvement from our editors. As we reexamine Jesus' teaching methods we note that content and approach both have their place. With such a reminder to our editors, our readers have watched as the form in which we present the Word has changed -- to suit the eyes of today's readers. We pray that those who read the message with Bible in hand will also recognize that the thoughts have remained the same. We encourage our brethren to examine their methods of witnessing to God's grace in order that we may all be *"...made all things to all men, that [we] might by all means save some."* (1 Cor. 9:22).

Various journals proclaim the Gospel differently: some present thoughts for those who have not heard the gospel; others devote their pages to doctrinal dissertations; a third group concentrate on prophetic and chronological dissertations -- All of these are important. However, for ourselves, we seek for words which will encourage those who have already heard the message, those who are sound in doctrine and who wish to spend time with their Lord, thinking and learning about him through practice, through doctrine, and through the experience of others. There *is* such food to be found and it is meat which will speed all along their Christian path: *"...the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness."* (1 Tim. 6:3).

Subscribers to The
HERALD



Each year readers suggest subjects which they would like to see considered on the pages of the HERALD. We may not always seem to act upon these, but your suggestions do not go without consideration. Our readership has grown this year (after several years of decline). The journal circulates in sixty-three countries. Our purpose and views are not changing, but our readers are. Young and old, domestic and foreign (now about one out of five subscribers) read our small journal. We attempt, by grace, to provide a little something to help each of them on their way. We pray that the words which find their way onto the HERALD's pages will teach us to respect and love him and his holy Word, just as Moses taught: *"The secret things belong unto the Lord your God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of [his Word]"* (Deut. 29:29).

We urge those who appreciate the HERALD to send us names of those they believe would profit from a free trial subscription. This is a form of witnessing and one in which even those who are not apt to teach may participate.

Our booklets on various Bible subjects are free. HERALD back issues are still available, for the price of ten copies for \$1.00.

The Pilgrim Ministry

The ministry of the word has remained occasional for several years. Conventions, local service, and funerals account for the majority of appointments during 1985. Directors or editors may be called upon for such service as the need arises.

Two brethren made extended trips during the year: one to Australia; the other to the Northwestern United States and Canada.

Pilgrim trips are being planned this year into the following areas: the northwest, south, southeast, southwest, and north central states. If you are interested in being included (as an ecclesia or individual) please contact our office. Remember, please, that lead time is necessary.

An Opportunity Common to All

Advances in medicine have prolonged life. This "aging of mankind" presents new opportunities for service. Our brethren are among those who live longer, but they are often neglected during their added years of restricted isolation

Do not overlook the opportunity to visit those who are shut-in. This service from one person to another is a special privilege and one which surely has the approval of our Master.

Our Correspondence

Letters continue to be a major blessing -- both incoming and out-going. Hundreds are received annually, and nearly as many are answered. For some of our brethren this is their only opportunity to fellowship with others of like faith. It is a privilege from the Lord to share with them in this special way, and we wish that our answers could be longer.

A year of transition behind, we look now to the future. He promised that he would never leave, nor forsake us. We take him at his word! Strength and wisdom for today will be forthcoming - not ours but his. This being true, how can we look back with anything but praise, or forward with anything but confidence! We say with our brother and apostle, *"I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day"* (2 Tim. 1:12, NIV).

The Annual Meeting

The sixty-sixth Annual Meeting of the members of the Pastoral Bible Institute, Inc., was held Saturday, June 7, at 11:00 a.m. at 4454 S. 14th Street, Milwaukee WI.

After the customary devotions, Brother J.B. Webster was elected chairman of the meeting, and Br. A. Jarmola, secretary.

Next followed the reading and approval of the minutes of the previous meeting.

The annual report of the directors was then presented. This, including the financial statement, is published in full on pages 58 - 60 of this issue of the HERALD. The names of recently deceased members were read, as were the names of new institute members during the preceding twelve months. Next followed the election of a new board. Br. Milton Hardin and Br. Brian Kuehmichel were appointed tellers. While the ballots were counted the rest of the friends enjoyed a season of fellowship in praise and testimony. The names of those brethren elected as directors were read at the conclusion of the count: J.L. Buss, A. Gonczewski, A. Jarmola, P.J. Pazucha, L. Petran, J. B. Webster, L. R. Webster. *A devotional service concluded the meeting.*

The new board met following the Annual Meeting. Among those actions taken was the election of officers whose names follow: J.B. Webster, Chairman; A. Gonczewski, Vice-Chairman; L. Petran, Secretary-Treasurer; P.J. Pazucha, Assistant Secretary Treasurer. Editorial Committee: A.L. Jones, P.J. Pazucha, L.Petran, T.M. Thomassen, L.R. Webster.

On Sunday the eighth of June the members assembled with the Milwaukee Ecclesia for a continuation of fellowship and spiritual encouragement.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FISCAL YEAR ENDED APRIL 30, 1986

(1) Balance Sheet as of April 30, 1986

Assets

Cash on hand		\$ 2,244.20
U. S. Treasury Bills		72,745.19
Accounts Receivable		99.00
Interest Receivable		1,250.35
Prepaid Expense		500.00
Inventory of Books, etc.:		
Pocket Edition-Divine Plan	(487)	\$487.00
Miscellaneous Items		<u>28.50</u>
Total Inventory		<u>515.50</u>

Fixed Assets

Office Equipment		1,250.55
Total Assets		\$ 96,511.83
Liabilities		<u>24.00</u>
Net Worth (as per analysis below)		\$ 96,487.83

(2) Statement of Income and Expense and Analysis of Net Worth
Fiscal Year Ended April 30, 1986

Income

Contributions		\$11,428.20
Herald Subscriptions		3,133.00
Legacies		2,000.00
Interest Earned		<u>6,127.98</u>
Total Income		\$22,689.18

Operating Expense

Pilgrim Expense	\$ 7,727.91	
Herald Expense Including Printing, Mailing and Clerical	12,689.75	
Office Staff	15,400.00	
Free literature	531.38	
Administrative and Office Expense	<u>4,190.21</u>	
Total Operating Expense		<u>40,539.25</u>
Net Expense for Fiscal Year Ended April 30, 1986		\$ 17,850.07
Net Worth, May 1, 1985		<u>114,337.90</u>
Net Worth, April 30, 1986 (as per Balance Sheet above)		\$ 96,487.83

Our Association Together in The Ministry **The PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE, INC.**

Sixty-eight years ago, when the Pastoral Bible Institute was chartered, it began publishing *The Herald of Christ's Kingdom*. Ever since, certain themes have featured prominently upon its pages. They are:

the Bible teaching regarding Christian liberty;
the basis of Christian fellowship;
the present mission and work of the church, church organization.

Although these issues are central to Christian belief they have been poorly understood during the Gospel age. Those who search the Word of God for guidance recognize that there is a call to organizational separation (2 Cor. 6:17). Through the life, the crucifixion, the death, and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ all have the assurance of eventual release from death (if they will accept such release).

It is understandable that those who have felt the bonds of servitude would jealously guard their new-found liberty in Christ as well as their right of individual judgment in matters of faith and teaching. It is also understandable that some have swung to an opposite extreme; to separation from every association - even from meeting with an group of friends. Precautions to prevent re-entanglement in this world *are* advisable, but we suggest that a sober and moderate view of this matter best harmonizes with *both* the word and spirit of our Lord.

Regarding the Institute, we are asked:

Why does it exist?

What is its mission?

Is there a Conflict between scriptural '*freedom in Christ,*' and identifying with an association of this kind?

For the benefit of new readers we will review these questions.

Looking At History.

The history of Associated Bible Students classes (and hence of the Pastoral Bible Institute), begins in Allegheny Pennsylvania, during the period 1870 to 1875. A group of devout Bible students lived in that area. These realized that God's oath

bound covenant to Abraham (that in his seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed) must surely be fulfilled. Yet, millions have died without receiving that blessing. These students observed the apostle Paul's teaching (Gal. 3:8, 16,27,29) that Christ is the primary seed of blessing, but that those who are Christ's have become heirs of Abraham's promise. They are to be associated with Christ as kings and priests in ruling and blessing all the families of the earth (2 Tim. 2:12). They saw further, that in order to receive that blessing *all must come out* from their graves, be taught the truth of God, and come to an opportunity to gain everlasting life (John 5:28,29, RV; 1 Tim. 2:3-6; Acts 3:21).

The church is called to joint-heirship with the Lord in the Millennial kingdom. This is a clear scriptural teaching. But prior to that time they had failed distinguish between the reward of the

church now on trial, and the reward of the faithful of the world (whose trial is at the close of the Millennial age). The church is to be rewarded with a spiritual glory, the divine nature. The world receives a restitution glory - restoration to the human perfection once enjoyed in Eden by their progenitor, Adam.

Charles Taze Russell, a Pittsburgh and Philadelphia businessman, became the outstanding leader of this movement. As time tests us all, so some of his associates began to deny the teaching of a ransom price for Adam and all his race. Mr. Russell maintained that this teaching was the foundation for Christian faith.

His first published pamphlet was *"The Object and Manner of Our Lord's Return"* (50,000 copies). It was written to show that the object of our Lord's return is to bless all the families of the earth. Mr. Russell showed that Christ's coming would be thief-like. He would not return in the flesh, but as a spirit being, invisible to man (John 14:19), and that the gathering of his church and the separation of true and false believers would continue during the end of this age without the world's being aware of it.

In 1876, at the age of 24, Mr. Russell closed his Philadelphia business. Thereafter, for the next forty years until his death in 1916, he devoted his time and resources to traveling, preaching, and writing. The first issue of his magazine appeared in July, 1879. *"Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence,"* continued as a monthly publication until December, 1891 and semi-monthly thereafter until his death. In 1881 he published *"Food for Thinking Christians"* and *"Tabernacle Teachings"* (1,400,000 copies). These were followed by six volumes originally issued under the title *"Millennial Dawn,"* later renamed, as a series, *"Studies in the Scriptures,"* as follows:

Volume I. 'The Divine Plan of the Ages,' 1886 (nearly five million copies issued, in 20 languages, during the author's lifetime);
Volume II. "The Time is at Hand," 1889 (more than one and a half million copies);
Volume III. "Thy Kingdom Come," 1890 (more than one and a half million copies);
Volume IV. 'The Battle of Armageddon,' 1897 (over 460,000 copies);
Volume V. "The At-One-Ment between God and Man," 1897 (over 440,000 copies);
Volume VI. "The New Creation" 1903 (over 420,000 copies);

also the booklets,

"Tabernacle Shadows" (one million copies);

"What Say the Scriptures about Hell?" (three million copies);

and numerous tracts.

The movement grew. At his death he was pastor of more than twelve hundred congregations in various parts of the world. His writings were translated into more than 35 different languages. His weekly sermons, handled by newspaper syndication, were published in more than two thousand newspapers with a combined circulation of 15 million copies. He directed a lecture bureau which employed traveling lecturers on Bible subjects. This summary of the activities of Pastor C.T. Russell is necessary to trace the history of the today's Associated Bible Students classes.

Associated Bible Students

In his public work, Mr. Russell used the corporate name "International Bible Students Association." This name was often applied to the classes of Bible students. Earlier the name "Associated Bible Students" had also been used by such groups. The organization continued to use the name International Bible Students Association for several years following the death of Mr. Russell. The groups which drew away from the organization have generally assumed the name Associated Bible Students, or in some cases Berean Bible Students.

After his death the organization changed many of its teachings from those presented in *Studies in the Scriptures* and ceased to distribute Mr. Russell's writings. Many individuals held to their understanding of God's word and withdrew from the organization at this time. Those who did were the beginnings of the Associated Bible Students classes and, as a whole, they adhere closely to the views presented in his writings.

The Consequence of Crisis

These events in mind, it can be seen how the passing of Mr. Russell resulted in a crisis in the work of ministering to the household of faith. Changes in the management of the organization meant a change in the spirit, policy, and methods of administration. Brethren who had served with Mr. Russell and who occupied positions of trust and responsibility were dismissed for no reason other than their stand in defense of the principles of truth, love, justice, and righteousness and the lifework and ministry of Brother Russell.

Brethren all over the world were called upon to answer questions involving truth and the liberty of the people of God. These friends, who faced similar tests of loyalty to Christ Jesus their Head, saw advantages in cooperating among themselves. Through the efforts of small groups of Associated Bible Students, the PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE came into existence in 1918.

The Associated Bible Students are congregational; that is, individual Bible classes are independent, self-governing bodies, while maintaining fellowship with other like congregations. Their ministers are termed elders, but assume no ecclesiastical titles. They recognize as brethren in Christ all who profess faith in his ransom sacrifice and full consecration to God in response to his invitation (Romans 12:12) and who give evidence thereof by their course in life.

The apostle Paul declares that:

"Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16,17, ARV).

On this basis the Associated Bible Student's do not attempt to build another sect by creating tests of faith. They ask only for complete acceptance of God's Word and conformance of the life to its teachings. Thus, they are one with all who are truly the Lord's. They have formulated no creed as a condition of fellowship, their position being that expressed in *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. VI, page F241:

The real need of the church of Christ is *still more liberty* - until each individual member shall stand free and independent of all human bonds, creeds, confessions, *etc.* *With* each individual Christian standing fast in the liberty wherewith he was made free by the Lord (Gal. 5:1; John 8:32), and each individual Christian united in loyalty to the Lord and to his Word, very quickly

the original unity which the Scriptures inculcated would be discerned, and all true children of God, all members of the New Creation, would find themselves drawn to each other member similarly free, and bound each to the other by the cords of love far more strongly than are men bound in earthly systems and societies. "*The love of Christ constraineth us*" (2 Cor. 5:14).

One other passage from the pen of Mr. Russell on this matter:

"...the wisdom that cometh from above ... entreats and exhorts for unity only in the Lord and along the line of questions positively settled by the Lord in the Scriptures - which generously leaves with each full liberty to act and to judge on all questions not positively settled by the Scriptures. We urge that all of the Lord's dear flock copy the wisdom of the apostle in this matter" (*Zion's Watch Tower*).

The most concise summary of what Associated Bible Students understand the holy Scriptures to teach is that which from 1895 was published in every issue of the *Watch Tower* and is now printed in every issue of the two larger magazines published by Associated Bible Students, under the heading:

To Us The Scriptures Clearly Teach

That "*the church is the Temple of the Living God*" -- peculiarly his workmanship; that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel Age -- ever since Christ became the world's Redeemer and the Chief Corner Stone of this Temple, through which when finished, God's blessing shall come to "*all people*" and they find access to him (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:20-22; Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:29).

That meantime the chiseling, the shaping, and polishing of consecrated believers in Christ's atonement for sin, progresses; and when the last of these "*living stones*," "*elect and precious*," shall have been made ready, the Great Master Workman will bring all together in the First Resurrection; and the Temple shall be filled with his glory, and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium (1 Pet. 2:4-9; Rev.20: 4,6).

That the basis of hope for the church and the world lies in the fact that "*Jesus Christ by the grace of God, tasted death for every man*," "*a ransom for all*," and will be "*the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*," "*in due time*" (Heb. 2:9; John 1:9; 1 Tim. 2:5-6).

That the hope of the church is that she may be like her Lord, "*see him as he is*," be "*partaker of the divine nature*," and share his glory as his joint-heir (1 John 3:2; John 17:24; Rom. 8:17; 2 Pet. 1:4).

That *the* present mission of the church is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God's witness to the world; and to prepare to be kings and priests in the next age (Eph. 4:12; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:6; 20:6).

That the hope for the world lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ's Millennial Kingdom - the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified church -- when all the willfully wicked will be *destroyed* (Acts 3:19-23; Isa. 35).

A New Creature

The Scriptures are clear: it is a new creature that counts; to be a new creature is everything; membership in Christ is everything. But getting into Christ is an individual matter and is not effected by any device, institute, or organization that we as the Lord's people may form. We are accepted into Christ by a personal knowledge of God and by hearing the call from him to believe on his dear Son and to surrender all to him. This is the only way of becoming enrolled as a member of Christ's church. Such are said to have their names written in heaven.

Membership in the Institute Membership in our Institute is intended to preserve in the hands of those who are contributors the right of deciding how their funds shall be used. Membership implies no subscribing to any belief, and no one in becoming a member is in any sense of the word joining a church.

Anyone contributing five dollars is eligible for membership, entitling him to a vote in the management of the Institute's affairs, its business meetings, elections, etc. This procedure was followed to prevent any individual from controlling the Institute's activities.

We have not pursued a course designed to build a movement or attract a following. We feel certain that the end of the age is at hand and that the true saints are few; one here and one there. Any so convinced, who think to create a great organization composed of true footstep followers of Christ would surely be disappointed.

Nor do we propose a great work among men. As we have pointed out in the HERALD the church in the flesh have never been authorized to do a great work of witnessing or of reformation that would affect either the masses of the world or the multitudes of professing Christians. On the contrary, we were told only to feed his sheep (John 21:17).

When asked about the Scripturalness of such a business arrangement for a service amongst the churches our reply is simple. We know of nothing in the Scriptures forbidding such an organization. The Lord's people are exhorted to use the spirit of a sound mind in all things, and to do whatsoever they do unto the glory of God. The Apostle assures us that "...the *end of the commandment is [love]....*" (1 Tim. 1:5) and that "*Love worketh no ill to his neighbor* (Rom. 13:10).

The preaching of the Gospel is a ministry of love. Any device that encourages such holy service in harmony with the principle of justice and love is to be lauded and not condemned.

Admittedly, we do not read of a corporation being authorized in the early church, nor for the church subsequently; but neither do we read of Jesus' contemporaries riding on airplanes or using telephones or television. Who of us would abandon the use of such devices because the early followers did not have them? No one! The human family has increased in size and civilization has introduced legal devices by which the world's business is transacted in an orderly fashion. Incorporation is one of those. It is a tool which the Lord's people may use as freely as they would board a plane for a trip. They should feel no guilt that their lot has been made easy while their predecessors journeyed hundreds of miles on foot or by boat.

The present work of the church was never intended to be large: the message has only to reach those who have ears to hear. These are to be gathered out of the world; a people for his name (Acts 15:14). The Gospel has never been popular -- darkness still hates the light (John 3:19). The great work of the church, as the Scriptures clearly point out, will take place after all the faithful

called out saints of this Gospel age have been glorified. Then they will be together with Christ and compose the kingdom of God. This will occur after Satan is bound and the time for the restitution of all things is ushered in. Meantime "the present work and mission of the church is that of the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service, to develop in herself every grace, to be God's witness to the world and to prepare to be "kings and priests' in the next age."

Neglectful Workers

It is obvious that some are seized with the idea that their mission, as God's people, is to do a work or to engage in a great outward movement. These lose sight of their real work. As humans, we are not suitable to God's purpose without growth and development in spirituality. If we would follow him we must develop the fruits of the Spirit: virtue, patience, long-suffering, meekness, gentleness, brotherly kindness and love. These qualities personify that complete Christian character which will be *qualified* to undertake the work or mission of the coming age, that of instructing and uplifting all humanity.

Men offer ecclesiastical activity as proof of divine sanction. Such evidence is turned by the true Word of God into the occasion of their own condemnation. Jesus foretells how some will ultimately come to Him "*in that day*," claiming the right of entering into the inheritance of the saints on the basis of their activities,

"*Have we not done wonderful works*" (See Matt. 7:22 ff.)? Jesus declares that their wonderful works will receive no recognition, inasmuch as they had neglected the work of grace, the work of the Spirit in the heart, the work of producing a character like his own. Only this will constitute a person fit for membership with Christ in the kingdom and fit to share its responsibilities and honors with him.

In keeping with this scriptural teaching, this Institute was formed. Looking over history, it should be apparent that its purposes have been those stated:

to be spiritually helpful to scattered friend in various parts of the world;
to encourage and assist them in edifying
and building up others of the Lord's people in spiritual things;
to encourage the friends to maintain a state of spiritual poise and balance (which condition is scripturally recognized as the "peace of God") amidst the present perplexities and confusion;
to testify to God's truths and minister the Good News to the extent which God allows during the their lives;
to preserve these purposes we present pure, simple teachings of Christ and the apostles and we uphold Bible truths in general.

A New Commandment Given To Us

The major tool of the Institute is the bimonthly journal, *The Herald of Christ's Kingdom*. We distribute the divine message by means of books, leaflets, etc.. We also assist capable brethren to travel, ministering the word of grace to large or small groups of friends who desire and request such service. The Lord has blessed these activities. Finally, we communicate with brethren around the world, many of whom tell of their pain and heartaches and of the grace of the Lord that has so sustained and kept them through their experiences. Some write of their appreciation of the Truth: the knowledge of the Lord, the knowledge of the principles of truth and righteousness, and that this knowledge is truly their shield and buckler at the present time.

Some Walk Not With Us

Quite obviously there are other brethren who are not associated in the ministry of the Institute. We have no quarrel with these. Furthermore, we exercise the spirit of our Lord Jesus, praying the lord of the harvest that he send forth more laborers into the vineyard (Matt. 9:38). We therefore refrain from controversies with anyone who desires to pursue other lines of Bible interpretation and service. The work at hand is not ours but the Lord's. We urge all so engaged to reflect our Master's spirit (Mark 9:39-40).

Those who accept Jesus' commission to his church have no time for strife. Our hands are to be filled with carrying out his commission. The Apostle Paul said, "...Let *all things be done unto edifying*" (1 Cor. 14:26). The spiritual interests of the Lord's people deserve first consideration - above the interests of those who engage in the work. Spirituality - the demonstration of the Lord's spirit of love, forbearance, and tolerance in our lives is sorely needed. "*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another as I have loved you* (John 13: 34). Let us join Paul in his study of this subject, in his analysis of love -- that it is kind, does not seek her own interests, is not easily provoked, bears all things, endures all things, and never fails.

This love of Christ and of God is central to the character of the Son of God. All who would become joint-heirs with Jesus Christ must possess this love before they can share in the riches and glory of the kingdom of heaven. Then they will redound unto the glories of their Lord and Master and our Heavenly Father.

For More Information

If you would like to learn more about the Associated Bible Students we refer you to the six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*, and particularly to Vol. I, "*The Divine Plan of the Ages*," now published by:

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What is Truth?

This question is one which every sincere Christian should ask and seek to answer. We should learn to love and value truth for its own sake; to respect and honor it by owning and acknowledging it wherever we find it and by whomsoever presented. *A truth* presented by Satan himself is just as *true* as *a truth* stated by God.

Christians at fault

Perhaps no class of people are more apt to overlook this fact than Christians. How often do they, in controversy, overlook and ignore truth presented by their opponents. This is particularly the case when arguing with unbelievers. They feel at perfect liberty to dispute everything said on religious subjects. This is not the correct principle. Many unbelievers are honest -- as anxious to speak and believe the truth as are Christians - and if in conversation with them we ignore truths which they may advance, we not only fail to convince them of our truths, but put to an end all hope of reaching them; for our failure to admit the evident truth which they advance begets in them contempt for the one who is not honest enough to admit one truth because he does not see how it can be reconciled to another. Accept truth wherever you find it, no matter what it contradicts, and rely for ability to afterwards harmonize it with others upon the *"the Spirit of truth, which shall guide you into all truth,"* as Jesus promised.

The Flower of Truth

Truth, like a modest little flower in the wilderness of life, is surrounded and almost choked by the luxuriant growth of the weeds of error. If you would find it you must be ever on the lookout. If you would see its beauty you must brush aside the weeds of error and the brambles of bigotry. If you would possess it you must stoop to get it.

Be not content with one flower of truth. Had one been sufficient there would have been no more. Gather ever, seek for more. Weave them together as a garland - *"Bind them on thee as a bride doeth."* *"Bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart; so shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man."* (Prov. 3:3.)

- C. T. Russell

What is Present Truth?

To be established in the Truth signifies that we have carefully studied and thoroughly proved it by the law and the testimony (Isa. 8:20), and that as a consequence we are convinced of its accuracy, so that our faith is steadfast and immovable: we know whom we have believed; we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good; we have partaken of his spirit of meekness, faith and godliness to such an extent as to be led into a joyful realization of the fullness of his grace as manifested in the wonderful Divine Plan of the Ages; and we have been permitted to see, not only the various features of that plan, but also the necessity and reasonableness of all its various measures in order to the full accomplishment of its glorious outcome in the fullness of the appointed times. This is what it is to be 'established in the Present Truth.' It is indeed a most blessed condition, bringing with it such peace and joy as the world can neither give nor take away.

- C.T. Russell

A Saving Salt

"Let your talk always have a saving salt of grace." - Colossians 4:6, Moffatt

How clear a plea for positive virtue is contained in those words. Our "talk" (or conversation) should be worthwhile -- a saving salt. Our speech should be *"edifying ... that it may minister grace to the hearers"* (Eph. 4:29).

Conversation is self-revelation, and our words speak to the quality of our lives. We think about what interests us. What we think about we talk about. Our minds cling to what pleases them and the objects of our thoughts influence our characters. We become like the things we contemplate.

Herein lies the importance of choosing our thoughts. The apostle Paul admonishes the church of God to *"...think on these things"* (Phil. 4:8). What things? The true things of God, those that are noble and honorable, just and pure, lovely and of good report. An uncontrolled mind will gather much that is unprofitable and unworthy. Ugly things will nest where there is no guard, but beauty will abide where it is invited and cherished.

What can we do about this? The words of the apostle come to mind: *"Ye have put off the old man"*... (Col. 3:9). All that can be done with the old man (Eph. 4:22) is to keep him under our feet by the power of that new life which we have in union with our risen Lord. This means more than holding our tongues and re-straining evil impulses. Our words are controlled by the meditation of our hearts. We must begin there, with the source - our hearts.

We profit by taking stock of our thoughts. There were no trivialities in our Lord's conversation, only strong, helpful words; no unkindly speech, but gracious, healing, and helpful words. It was said of our Lord Jesus that *"...words of grace fell from his lips"* (cf. Luke 4:22, NEB) -- grace, a lovely graciousness that flows from a heart of love and understanding. If followed, his words will eventually lead to life: *"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life"* (John 6:63).

One must be spiritually minded to live with deep and abiding satisfaction. One must "think" of the things of the spirit, things we cannot see. These are the greatest factors in our life. They include love, hope, and God. We must think much on these things of the spirit if we would know life at its best and the peace that passeth understanding. *"To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace"* (Rom. 8:6).

Salt, to be of value, must have savor and be a preservative. As we learn and as we then seek to help others by the strengthening power of our words, our *"...speech is with grace seasoned with salt"* (Col. 4:6). *"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver"* (Prov. 25:11).

Jesus said, *"Ye are the light of the world"* (Matt. 5:14). Light has two missions:

to enlighten our way
to disclose the beauty of the hope within us.

Any religion which lacks these qualities is vain; people who follow such religions are like lamps that are so covered with shades and beads that no light shines forth. The Scribes and Pharisees suffered from such religion. Light is more important than the lamp, but Satan encourages us to magnify the lamp, discount the light, and busy ourselves with such frills.

In the sermon on the mount, Jesus outlined the facts of a true Christian life. It is a comprehensive statement of one's duty as a footsteps follower. Jesus links salt and light. *"Ye are the salt of the earth"* (Matt. 5:13). But if the salt has lost its savor it is worthless, good for nothing.

The vacillating Christian is like a ship *"...blown from its course and swayed by every passing wind of doctrine..."* (Eph. 4:14, Author's translation). Indecision, instability, and beating the air are the inevitable result. Determination, concentration, and focus are always necessary. A man's work must be tested both as to foundation and material. That which is storm proof and fireproof will stand. But, if we adopt a loose leaf frame of mind, we shall always be swayed by the last word of change and newness. This filing-cabinet approach leaves the Christian unstable. It is such who wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction and will find their spiritual foundation in the sand.

God reveals two imperative truths to his own:

Christ must be our foundation, because *"...other foundation can no man lay"* (1 Cor. 3:11).

God's word must be obeyed -- If any man obey not the Word he is none of his. *"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness"* (Rom. 6:16).

Our obedience must be from the heart.

Paul says, *"...God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you"* (Rom. 6:17).

Through bitterness and opposition our Lord never lost his sense of direction. He kept his godward way and lived in a spiritual atmosphere, in the presence of his Father. He came not to do his own will but the will of him that sent him (John 6: 38). When we consider the life of Jesus, we note the abundance of those qualities symbolized by salt and light. If our Lord had lacked these qualities, he never would have become Jehovah's instrument in the salvation of the world. Therefore, the worshiper is admonished, *"...with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt"* (Lev. 2:13). The Master said to his disciples, *"Salt is good Have salt in yourselves and have peace one with another"* (Mark 9:50).

Look at the symbolism. If we have no salt in ourselves, how can we be the salt of the world? Jesus used salt as a symbol of his faithfulness and loyalty to his heavenly Father. Salt was a symbol of purity and righteousness. So then if we are not truly righteous how can we help others? A profession of righteousness will not substitute for the salt of true holiness. *Profession* has no healing properties. But, having the salt of holiness in ourselves, we shall be known and read of men to the praise of God. *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"* (Heb. 12:14).

The Christian attitude toward all, including our enemies, is not one of pride and indifference. Our attitude ought to be that of a noble, generous, loving spirit, ever ready to bless, and by precept and example to point to the way of life and holiness. Jesus in his sermon on the mount let it be known that more should be expected of Christians than of other people who make no profession. *"...What do ye more than others"* (Matt. 5:47)?

The law which required an eye for an eye (Ex. 21:24) no longer applies. We now hear, *"...whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also"* (Matt. 5:39). Forgiveness no longer requires us merely to love our neighbor and hate our enemy, but *"...love your enemies, bless them that curse you."* (Matt. 5:44). It is not, then, that attitude which proudly says, I am holier than you, but which, on the contrary, says, By grace I am what I am, and all things are mine. Unlimited resources are at my command and I need not fail; *"For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God"* (Rom. 8:14).

Grace, Mercy, Peace

These are the three keys to the Christian Gospel. We begin with grace. It is the heart of our faith. The Lord pours the riches of his grace into our lives.

Mercy is another key word, and no truer statement was ever made than: We have *"all sinned and come short of the glory of God..."* (Rom. 3:23). There is only one hope for us: the infinite mercy and forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Next follows peace. The Bible says much about peace -- "sweet peace, the gift of God's love."

O God, Father, giver of peace, grant us the grace to submit our hearts and minds to your blessed will, that we may obtain the peace which the world cannot give nor take away, for in our troubled and tangled world there is so little peace Only as we yield ourselves to you in trust, and that means an uncompromising commitment to your will in our daily living, can we enter into an experience of *"peace that passeth all understanding"* (Phil. 4:7).

Mid all the traffic of the way --
Turmoils without, within,
Make my heart a quiet place,
And come and dwell therein;
A little place of mystic grace,
Of self and sin wept bare
Where I may look upon Thy face
And talk with Thee in prayer.

Looking Inward

Jeremiah tells us,

Happy is he who relies on the Eternal, with the Eternal for his confidence! He is like a tree planted beside a stream, reaching its roots to the water: untouched by any fear of scorching heat; its leaves are ever green; it goes on bearing fruit in days of drought, and lives serene (Jer. 17: 7,8, Moffatt).

Ask yourself the question, Am I a Christian only under certain circumstances? Have I learned, whatever my condition, to be content (Phil. 4:11)? Or are we like one of four men who climbed a mountain? The first complained of discomforts. The second had a greedy eye and kept wishing for this and that. The third saw clouds and feared that it might rain. Only the fourth really saw the marvelous view, and his mountain-top experience was to look away from the valley out of which he had just climbed to higher things. Am I forgetting those things which are behind (Phil. 3:13)?

God has called his people from the valley of sin and death. He gives them a pleasant view. Yes, their eyes have seen the King of Glory and a world in which the government will be upon the shoulders of the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

It is not easy to forget without surrendering to God's will. There is no rest in the battle for righteousness and faith. The enemy is near, and ready to leap upon us if we momentarily drop our guard. Before we are aware of him, he has sprung and struck his paralyzing blow. It helps, therefore, if we know our weapons. We are well equipped with weapons and need to keep ourselves skilled in their use. It is always true that "...*they that be with us are more than they that be with them*" (2 Kings 6:16).

If we know the reserves at our disposal there is a tremendous source of strength available to help us on to victory. God's reserves are always at hand, even in our darkest night of need.

Standeth God within the shadow,
keeping watch above his own.

Opening his letter to Ephesus, Paul calls our attention to the threefold environment of the Christian:

a Christian must live his life "*in Jesus Christ*";
a Christian must be in fellowship with the saints;
a Christian must be in "*this present world*."

We must have the mind, will, and the spirit of Christ. We must fellowship with others whose lives are centered in Christ Jesus. Lastly, we must live in this world without becoming a part of it. We must refuse to allow its filth to be upon us.

Look to God. He is the complete one, the perfect one. He is perfect in love, in power, in purity. Looking at ourselves, we know how weak and inadequate we are. But, if we would be like him, Paul says, we must fill our minds with whatever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (Phil. 4:8). These things are of God, and thinking upon them brings us closer to him. We can be so filled with the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19) that we will manifest him to others. Yes, we can know the joy and strength of a life lived in victory over self, the world, and the Devil.

God's work in us is like the ancient refiner of gold. He would sit with bowed head beside the white-hot blaze of his coals. Holding a long-handled skillet containing the scraps of impure metal, he would watch them slowly melt in the intense heat. He patiently moved the skillet back and forth across the fire. Gradually, the black streaks of dross were burned out of the muddy, sluggish liquid until it turned to a pure and molten yellow. When the image of his own face was undistorted in the clear liquid's depths, his work was finished. Affliction finds God's grace sufficient. Sorrow taps the hidden springs of comfort, and fellowship in his sufferings is the key to the power of his resurrection (Phil. 3:10).

We have heard of the blind woman who only had a few friends but who always radiated with cheer. She never spoke of her troubles, only of the joy she found in her Christian faith and her Bible. She was asked, "How do you keep so bright and hopeful? What is your secret of victory over despair?" She pointed to an old *phonograph, gaping*, "When life is hard I turn on that record and it helps to lift the load from my heart." She placed the needle on the recording, and a golden tenor voice flooded the room:

Jesus, Savior, pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea;
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rock and treach'rous shoal;
Chart and compass come from Thee,
Jesus Savior, pilot me.

A song in the night! How often this thought is found in the Scriptures. At times we are shut in by darkness and that lonely feeling of silence. Sorrow deepens. Disappointment becomes more keen. Yet, we have the testimony of those who have discovered a source of joy that enabled them to sing in the night watches. What is this source of joy? It is faith in the never-failing promises of God, our Father. "*Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him and he shall bring it to pass*" (Ps. 37:5).

There are no more comforting words than these, "*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me*" (Ps. 23:4).

Shadows hurt. They break the spirit, blind the eyes, and burden the heart. But, our Shepherd passed through the valley. He refused the drugged wine as a stimulant. Though betrayed, he kept the course of love. He kept his dignity and patience through everything and now he guarantees our safety. Therefore,

Do not doubt, do not fear,
When the shadows appear;
Just remember that dark, lonely shadows
Cannot hide God's dear face
If we trust in His grace --
They are only shadows.

Let us keep in mind the simplicity of Christian faith. Let our conversation always have a saving salt of grace, realizing that,

Moment by moment I'm kept in His love;
Moment by moment I've life from above;
Looking to Jesus till glory doth shine;
Moment by moment, O Lord, I am Thine."

We read the words, "*Have salt in yourselves and have peace one with another.*" (Mark 9:50) And again, How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth. (Isa. 52:7).

It is not our privilege to anoint the head of the body, the Lord Jesus - others had that privilege. We do have the privilege of anointing the feet members of the body of Christ, and it will be along this line that we shall be tested.

Avail yourself of this privilege. Anoint the feet members of the body, realizing that whatever is done unto one of the least of these, his brethren, is done unto him. The more we honor our

brethren, the more we will be approved by the Lord. They have trials enough without our adding to them. We must not neglect them. We now have the opportunity to show our love and devotion to the Lord and his brethren. Kind words, looks, and assistance may be the means by which some may be restored to new beauty in the Lord. *"Let the beauty of the Lord be upon us"* (Ps. 90:17). Let us *"stir into flame the gift of God"* (2 Tim. 1:6, RV.)

Do God's people have any greater need than this kind of encouragement? The approved Christian is one who will joy in the blessing of our God and Father. Jesus taught us to pray for his Kingdom. If we are consistent, diligent, Christians, we must imitate Jesus - *"...seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness"* (Matt. 6:33).

Our Father is in command. If we trust him, following his commands, we shall safely reach the port of our desire. No winds are too strong, no waves too high, no fog too thick to prevent a successful completion of our voyage if we accept him as our commander and leader. The only way to avoid the shoals and reefs is to be guided by our great pilot. We need faith in his saving grace. We must keep our minds centered upon him. He alone can save to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25). He who said, *"I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33) is able and willing to give us the victory.

- T. G. Smith

The Red Sea

When the children of Israel crossed the sea,
It comforts my heart to know
That there must have been timorous ones
Who faltered and feared to go;

Feared the ribbon of road which stretched
Ahead like a narrow track,
With the waves piled high on either side,
And nothing to hold them back --

Nothing to hold them back but a hand
They could neither see nor feel;
Their God seemed distant and far away,
And only the peril real.

Yet the fearful ones were as safe as the brave,
For the mercy of God is wide.
Craven, and fearless, he led them all
Dry shod to the other side.

And I think of the needless terror and pain
We bring to our own Red Sea.
Strengthen thy timorous ones, dear Lord,
And help us to trust in thee!

- M.S. Nicholson

Immortal Glory and Honor

"To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life." - Romans 2:7

Immortality is an attribute which belongs to the divine nature. Only the church of the Gospel age has been called to share this crowning form of existence. Some suppose that the apostle here refers to the high calling of the church. Assuming that those who seek after glory and honor and immortality must be the church, those who adopt this interpretation are confronted with a difficulty: the reward received by these seekers after immortality is not stated to be "immortality", but "eternal life." The favor of living eternally (because of obedience) will doubtless be enjoyed on other planes of existence as well as that of the divine.

Apart from the word "immortality" there is nothing in the context to suggest that the apostle is referring to the church and its reward. In verse six he lays down a broad principle which is generously supported by the Old Testament: God will render to every man according to his deeds. His following words merely unfold this broad statement.

There is a simpler explanation for using the word "immortality" in this connection. It is true that the same word (*aphtharsia*) which appears in those Scriptures (e.g., 1 Cor. 15: 42,50), unmistakably refers to the church. One eminent expositor writes:

"We may translate the phrase thus: immortal glory and honor, making *aphtharsia* an adjective to the other nouns; or we may render it, glorious and honorable immortality, or honorable and immortal glory. I prefer the first."

Another, paraphrasing the passage, writes,

"Upon those, who in the steadfast practice of virtue under trials and temptations endeavor to prepare themselves for immortal honor and glory, he will bestow eternal life."

This translation and paraphrase are concurred in by other writers. Because it appears to suit the context better we adopt it here.

Our Lord asked "*How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only...*" (John 5:44)? Alas! The aim in life of many is "*...that they may have glory of men. Verily,*" says our Lord, "*they have their reward*" (Matt. 6:2). Those who seek the approval of God seek imperishable honor and glory. They do so by patient continuance in well doing and they are the truly wise.

There are two distinct thoughts:

- 1) The word which is translated "immortality" in the phrase, "glory, honor, and immortality" (Rom. 2:7), does not mean inherent life;
- 2) The context in which this word occurs, far from making exclusive reference to the church of this Gospel age, does not make any reference to it or its members, as such, but is a broad, general statement having application to every member of Adam's race, Jew or gentile.

The Apostle's Argument

In Romans (chapter one), Paul has shown that apart from "his" gospel of a faith righteousness the gentiles are without hope. In this his Jewish readers would readily concur; but they could not believe that the same was true of themselves. They had Abraham as their father (John 8:39), etc. To convince them that their case was as hopeless as that of the gentiles the apostle presents a simple argument, one which could be revealed to babes (Matt. 11:25). However simple it may have been, the argument was difficult for the Jews to grasp because of their own prejudice.

The Apostle's position is this:

"God's judgment will be impartial."

"Questions of birth or other privilege can never enter into his decisions" (Rom. 2:2).

"He will render to every man according to his deeds, including, as the word translated "deeds" suggests, the motives actuating those deeds. Nothing else can be considered" (Rom. 2:6).

"No questions will be asked as to whether an individual is a Jew or a gentile -- the only matter of importance will be as to his aim and course in life."

"Patient continuance in well doing will be rewarded with eternal life"

"The opposite course will be suitably punished" (Rom. 2:7-9).

In order to clinch his argument, the apostle maintains that no matter whether the individual be Jew or gentile, a strict and impartial judgment according to character qualifications must obtain in that day, "... *for there is no respect of persons with God*" (Rom. 2:11).

It seems that the purpose of his argument is to prepare their minds for his gospel of faith-righteousness (or justification by faith). If they could realize that God's judgment will be according to deeds and that they are incapable of scriptural well-doing, their minds will have been prepared for the nearly irresistible appeal of the Gospel. That state of mind, when worked upon by the gospel, would become the power of God (1 Pet. 1:5) unto their salvation.

Such reasoning on the apostle's part is so elementary that it would be unnecessary to elaborate further if it were not for the word "immortality."

"Immortality" Used Three Times

The difficulty lies in the fact that the words "immortality" and "incorruption" are not properly distinguished, but are thought of as synonymous. This is not true of the English words and it is also untrue of the Greek words from which they are translated. These two Greek words are *athanasia* and *aphtharsia*. *Athanasia* signifies "deathlessness." It appears three times in the New Testament. It is properly translated "immortality." The passages are as follow:

This mortal must put on immortality (1 Cor. 15:53).

When this mortal shall have put on immortality (1 Cor. 15:54).

Who only hath immortality (1 Tim. 6:16).

We understand that the first two of these Scriptures relate to individual members of the glorified church, and the third to our glorified Lord Jesus. The Father is here, as elsewhere in the Scriptures, excepted from any comparison.

The other Greek word *aphtharsia* (and *aphthartos*, an adjective from the same root as the noun *aphtharsia*) are rendered "immortality" twice, "immortal" once, "sincerity" twice, "but would more properly be rendered incorruption and incorruptible, and are generally so rendered by lexicographers.

Aphtharsia signifies "incapable of decay." The following are all the Bible passages in which it (or *aphthartos*) occurs:

The glory of the incorruptible [*aphthartos* - incorruptible] God (Rom 1:23).

To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality [*aphtharsia* - incorruption] (Rom. 2:7).

They do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible [*aphthartos*] (1 Cor. 9: 25).

It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption [*aphtharsia*] (1 Cor. 15: 42).

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption [*aphtharsia*] (1 Cor. 15:50).

The dead shall be raised incorruptible [*aphtharsia*] (1 Cor. 15:53).

This corruptible must put on incorruption [*aphtharsia*] (1 Cor. 15:54).

When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption [*aphtharsia*] (1 Cor. 15:54).

Grace be with all them that love out Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity [*aphtharsia* - incorruptness] (Eph. 6:24).

Now unto the King eternal, immortal [*aphthartos* - incorruptible], invisible, the only wise God (1 Tim. 1:17).

Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality [*aphtharsia* - incorruption] to light through the Gospel (2 Tim. 1:10).

In doctrine showing uncorruptness [*adiaphthoria*], gravity, sincerity [*aphtharsia* - incorruption] (Titus 2:7). [*aphtharsia* is omitted by the best authorities - *adiaphthoria* (*aphthasia* according to Westcott and Hort) is very similar in derivation and meaning.]

To an inheritance incorruptible [*aphthartos*], and undefiled, and that fadeth now away (1 Pet. 1:4).

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible [*aphthartos*] (1 Pet. 1:23).

That which is not corruptible [*aphthartos*], even the ornament of a meek and a quiet spirit (1 Pet. 3:4).

Incorruptible Character

The following distinctions will be noted from the texts cited:

Athanasia (immortality) in each of the three passages in which it occurs, refers to sentient beings, whereas this is not always the case with *aphtharsia* (incorruption).

Athanasia not only refers only to sentient beings, but in each instance refers to the life principle by which their organisms are animated.

Aphtharsia, on the contrary, in those instances in which it is applied to sentient being, does not refer to the life principle, but to either their organisms or characters. For example, in Rom. 1:23, the Apostle may be referring to the fact that the organism or body of Jehovah is incapable of decay, or he may be referring (as is our thought) to the fact that the moral worth (or character) of Jehovah is of such excellent quality as to be impossible to corrupt. In any case, the apostle is not referring to God's deathlessness; had he desired to do so, he would have used the word *athanasia*.

Aphtharsia, while sometimes referring to sentient beings, does not always do so, but in several instances refers to in-animate things such as the Christian's crown (1 Cor. 9:25), his inheritance (1 Pet. 1:4), the quality of love possessed by believers still in the flesh (Eph. 6:24), etc. It is possible, gloriously possible, for believers, here and now, to love our Lord Jesus (Yes, and each other too), with incorruptness, but all can see that the word immortality would be quite out of place in this connection.

An Incorruptible Immortal Church

In one passage (1 Cor. 15:53,54) the apostle uses both words,

For this corruptible must put on incorruption [*aphtharsia*], and this mortal must put on immortality [*athanasia*]. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption [*aphtharsia*], and this mortal shall have put on immortality [*athanasia*], then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory".

If the word "incorruption" precisely meant "immortality," the apostle would be repeating himself. On the contrary, we understand him to be distinguishing between two thoughts. It is as though he were to say: When this organism, which is capable of decay, gives place to one that is not, and when this life principle, which is one that is sustained, gives place to one that is inherent, then shall be brought to pass,... etc.

Seek an incorruptible character

With these distinctions in mind and giving consideration also to the context, we are led to the following conclusions regarding Romans 2:7:

The word immortality in the Authorized Version is more properly translated "incorruption" or "incorruptibility" (see Emphatic Diaglott, American Revised Version, Strong's Concordance, etc.,).

Since *aphtharsia* is the word used (not *athanasia*) the apostle cannot be referring to the life principle which animates the organisms of divine beings.

Aphtharsia never refers to a life principle inherent or sustained, but sometimes refers to the organism of living beings. It does not always do even this, but in several instances refers to inanimate things.

As quoted at the beginning of this article, the context in which this verse appears would seem to require that the word be regarded as an adjective employed to qualify the nouns, glory and honor. This suggestion seems reasonable, especially as a paraphrase, even though the noun (*aph tharsia*), not the adjective (*aphthartos*), is used, which is not in its favor as a literal translation.

We have seen that it is permissible to regard the incorruptibility sought by patient continuance in well-doing to be an "incorruptibility of character." The essential thought, however, would not be very different. Some men seek glory and honor from each other (John 5:44). Such glory and honor is capable of and soon experiences decay. Other men, by patient continuance in well doing, may be said to seek the glory and honor what is incorruptible, incapable of decay. If the other view be taken, they may be said to seek glory and honor and a third thing, namely a crystallized character incapable of corruption. Surely all who are counted worthy of eternal life will possess such a character. If one persists in such seeking they will ultimately meet with the Gospel and receive the grace necessary to embrace it. By embracing the gracious provisions of the Gospel they will secure the incorruptible glory and honor they sought (or if we take the other view, they will secure the glory and honor and the incorruptible character they should). They will also receive eternal life.

It is true that some of these (the faithful overcomers of the gospel age, the little flock, the church) will receive eternal life on the highest plane of existence, namely the divine plane. Such will indeed be possessors of immortality. We think however, that this is outside of the scope of the first two chapters of the Epistle to the Romans.

- P.L. Read

Debtors to His Marvelous Grace

"By grace are ye saved through faith ..." - Ephesians 2:8

The greatest exhibit of God's wonderworking grace will be the glorified Church. No other manifestation of his love and kindness equals the perfecting work accomplished in these saints of the Lord. Graciously, God did not choose the wise, noble, or great of the world, (1 Cor. 1:27,28) so that no flesh may glory in his sight, however highly favored they may have been. God has not been discouraged, even though the material in which he has chosen to work the marvels of his grace is imperfect and prone to resist his will. The human clay has often broken on the heavenly potter's wheel as he sought to form it into a vessel of useful beauty. Lovingly, the resistant clay has been reformed and molded into yet another vessel. God has shown us his patience, according to promise, *"He shall not crush a broken reed, nor quench a wick that dimly burns..."* (Isa. 42:3, Moffatt). The just man may fall seven times, but by grace he rises up again (Prov. 24:16), assisted by a hand which is mighty to save. The Lord truly is *"...longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish..."* (2 Peter 3:9)

Proving God's Love

God's ways are marvelous in our eyes. The marvels of his grace are proofs that God is love. His grace operates toward his people, showing that he not only knows how to steal the bitterness out of life's woes, but he also knows both how to discard the unworthy material which we so often bring in word and deed and to preserve the good and commendable. We are not under law. We are under grace, and what debtors to that grace we are! In the Old Testament, human faults are impartially set forth and we read that Moses left Egypt in fear for his life. But, when the New Testament records the same instance we notice that only Moses' virtues are brought to mind. *"By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king..."* (Heb. 11:27). His fear is forgotten and only the triumph of faith is remembered.

We are under that marvelous grace. By it we are made the righteousness of God through Christ. Our imperfections are provided for in the finished work of Christ for us. He took our place under condemnation, and we take his place, now, in the holy presence of God. He went to the cross bearing our sin; we come from the cross bearing his righteousness. With sins confessed and cleansed from all unrighteousness we know that we are complete in Christ the beloved one. Do we believe this? Do we, by faith, enter into the rest it should bring us? How many of us have experienced this promised rest? We struggle and wrestle to gain it all the while the Word has clearly stated that such as have *"...believed do enter into rest..."* (Heb. 4:3). What a rest this is! *"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his"* (Heb. 4:10).

Our Fitful Rest

Faith often falls short of this rest and quietness of spirit. When it does, life fluctuates between long seasons of self condemnation and moments of happiness when we stop looking inward at self. It is then that the secret of perpetual joy and confidence eludes us, and we confess that periods of depression too often settle over our spirit making our expressions of professed happiness seem meaningless.

We know that we should be happy in our knowledge of God's favor, rejoicing even though outward circumstances are less than calm. Our lives should reflect freedom from fear and testify that we know whom we have believed and are able to fully trust his word. Yet, failing to realize

the peace and assurance we crave, how easily we succumb to the Tempter's arguments, saying, "This sweet boon of rest is not for me." Full assurance is taught in the Scriptures and we see the possibilities exemplified in some who we meet; but we conclude that since characters differ, ours must be the unfortunate type; therefore to continue our efforts to reach our goal is all in vain.

God's Perfect Rest

Such conclusions are wrong. It is well to remember the word of inspiration: "*Let us earnestly endeavor, therefore, to enter into that rest, that no one may fall by the same example of unbelief*" (Heb. 4:11, Diaglott) as did Israel of old. We live in the realm of faith. Our assurance, joy, and peace do not depend on anything we have done or could do, but on the finished redemption accomplished for us by Christ Jesus. We receive the primary principle of true faith from Jesus himself, "*This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent*" (John 6:29).

To believe on him in the sense intended in John's statement is to believe in him as our justification; to appropriate him as our righteousness; to abide in him as our life; to make him our peace; and to accept our victory through him. We may find in him all we want if we will seek everything through faith. Such faith brings us to the conviction that since all we need we have in Christ, we may be hourly victorious, daily victorious, and finally victorious.

Truth Simply Stated

We are not to refuse what God has cleansed. What he has made simple we must not mystify and cloud with words. This life of rest in Christ is often treated with complexity, and excess words have hindered many from grasping its meaning. The simple gospel becomes beautifully practical and surely inspirational. Theological discussions tend toward wordiness, while experimental discoveries of great truths can be presented in language understandable by all. This in mind, we pass on a letter from one who has found the secret springs of this blessing of peace and rest. How simple these possibilities are when the Lord comes in and speaks as never man spake. Quoted in part she says:

"...Instead of spending so much time looking into my own life to find whether I have climbed another rung of the ladder of grace, I spend more time thinking of our marvelous Lord and of his wonderful character. In him we see the perfection of all beauty, grace, love and mercy, the one to whom we may come, finding there one who is perfect in every respect."

"I like to enumerate the qualities in which he is perfect -- not just to glibly skate over the word, but to feel that he is, indeed, perfect in every wonderful quality I can name or understand -- and even then, still to know that we can never exhaust his grace and beauty of character."

"Why should I look at myself in the light of his glory? What do I expect to find in myself that will give me ground for anything but humility and the feeling that it is himself and not me at all. My puny efforts pale - and more than that, I become discouraged, looking inside my heart too closely. When I look at him I see the Sun of all grace, the perfection of hope and joy beyond us to probe to its depths. My heart expands and swells in love toward a God and his Son so worthy of all praise and adoration."

"I find joy in forgetting the failures and continual disappointments of self. I feel strong and mighty when it comes to singing his praise; when it comes to thanking God for the evidence we have of his care and our sonship with him. I become a giant when I enumerate his blessings, spiritual and material, in our lives and thank him for these never-ending things."

"What shall we say when we realize that we have only touched the fringe of these blessings? What a breathless view we have of future times in the presence of such a God! How much time do some of us

spend in thanksgiving for these matchless blessings? Here I do not need to "keep my feet on the ground." We can soar to the heavenlies, feeling that we have fellowship of the rarest kind with true Christians of all ages. This is not an impractical, illusory, or intangible thing. It is a reality in which we can forget this life and its failures and trouble, its few friends who understand, and those who are reduced by restrictions of the human spirit until they cannot understand. We can forget our clumsy efforts to express ourselves, our fear of being misunderstood and laughed at, and our multitude of shortcomings and limitations."

"Here we meet God in true fellowship and worship. Here we find strength: knowing that we have a God who never fails, who never weakens or grows weary of us and our coming to Him. What a God we have! May our thanks ascend like daily incense and our worship grow to full stature. But even in this we shall never reach the end. My God is an inexhaustible storehouse of grace and glory. Thanks be to his holy name...."

A Testimony to Grace

This writer was assured that this happier frame of mind was "not an impractical thing." There is reality in this expression. Such experiences may be new to us when a loving providence first finds us ready to be led, but others have known similar joy. Others have been lifted out of the doubt and depression which alternate with rest and triumphant faith. Others have testified to their experiences, as in another letter:

"...you mentioned 'covenant by sacrifice' and I wonder what it means to you. I used to think it meant something I was doing. I spent many unhappy hours thinking how constantly I failed in doing and in not doing. I surrendered myself to God many times. What I always had in mind was the "I" of the surrender (what I would do or say). That went on for a long time. God gave me many lessons, and I always took some lesson. But, now I see that it was always in connection with something on my part. Oh, I could fill a book with all the gracious things the Lord showed me, and I thought I understood them all, but now, I have entered the valley of blessing so sweet, and there is no more 'I' in the business ."

I was studying Colossians when I saw that Jesus was everything. In him everything in heaven and in earth was centered: God's will for us the church, his plan for the world, and that Jesus was always wellpleasing to the Father. It came to me how pure and perfect, how lovely and allsatisfying to God our dear Savior was. I thought if I were hidden in him, then I too would be well-pleasing to our heavenly Father. It was as if a door had opened! That door was Christ our Lord. I stepped in and was swallowed up in him, lost in him, and God found me in him. What a day I had! All the verses I used to delight in had deeper, sweeter meaning. He had over-come. He counted me as also having over-come. Out of his fullness I am all that he was and is. *'...By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world'* (Gal. 6:14). I see my own weaknesses, but now I follow Paul and glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. The blood of Jesus Christ is always cleansing me. He has taken me into the Holy of Holies, and made me to sit down with him, and his banner over me is love. What a difference! I understand what it means to reckon myself dead in the old nature in a way I never did before. I have entered the joy of the Lord, praise his name! Everything has a different look in a way I can hardly describe. The work is done. All is finished. I follow in his footsteps, seeking to refer all things to him and to lay hold...."

These testimonies illustrate true feasting on Christ. This is the great truth of our standing in grace. If our vision can grasp the provision which Jesus Christ made for us then the days of faltering faith should be over and the garments of perpetual praise put on. Then God's goodness will bind grateful hearts to him, and our song will surely be, "Hear what the Lord has done for me."

- J.J. Blackburn

The Basis of the Believer's Peace With God

Many assume that something within themselves is necessary to combine with the blood of Christ to establish their peace. We are apt to regard the fruits of the spirit within us, rather than the work of Christ for us, as the foundation of our peace with God. The holy Spirit did not make peace, but Christ did. God instituted the Passover using unleavened bread and bitter herbs, but they were not the basis for peace. The Passover lamb was slain. Death had its work to do; and God (in his mercy) found an unblemished substitute for Israel on which the sentence of death was executed. The judgment due them fell upon the divinely appointed victim, and believing this, the Israelite could feed in peace within his own house.

The Israelite not only know that there was safety in the blood: he knew that he was safe. It was nothing he had done, or felt, or thought, but because God said

when he saw the blood he would pass over (Exod. 12:23). It was not his thoughts or feelings or experiences respecting the blood. What gave peace was the knowledge that Jehovah's eye rested upon the blood and that he knew the value of it. Safety from that judgment depended only upon the blood; but the fellowship that flowed from that safety depended upon other things as well.

In the case of the Christian, something within him is also necessary to continue in the fellowship established by the blood, there must be the fruits of the holy Spirit within us if we would be conformed to the image of his dear Son and "...grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ..." (Eph. 4:15), at last to share the glories of his nature and his throne. But after all these are added, the foundation is still the blood.

- Contributed

Entered into Rest

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