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The Pharisee In Us

"But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees..." - Matthew 16:11, NAS

"Pharisee" means "separated ones." Of the three sects that made up the Jewish religious realm, the Essenes, Sadducees, and Pharisees, the Pharisees were the most strongly rebuked by our Lord for many of their actions and especially for their attitudes.

The Pharisees believed that some things were the work of fate. Other human events were thought by them to be under the control of the individual. The Essenes believed that fate ruled all things, and that nothing happens to man except by the decree of fate. The Sadducees removed fate as an influence from their discussion of the human condition altogether. They believed that all things were under the control of man.

As a group, or association, the Pharisees separated themselves from every kind of levitical impurity and were united together as a force to preserve the Mosaic law of purity. Two essential conditions enacted upon potential members of the sect were these: firstly, man should observe all the sacred tithes (in relation to the production of the land), and refrain from eating anything which had not been tithed (or anything in which tithing might be called into question); secondly, man should observe the laws of purity which so materially affected the eating of food and all family matters.

We will discuss nine manifestations of Pharisaism which relate to life at all times and in all generations.

1. The Pharisees considered themselves to be the guardians of the divine law and of their ancestral customs.
2. The Pharisees physically separated themselves from people of questionable integrity.
3. They prided themselves in denouncing impurity or ungodliness.

4. They were so determined not to break the law that they set up fences of pharisaical rules for themselves and others that would guarantee, if obeyed, a safe distance for man from the transgression of God's laws.
5. These pharisaical rules became so entrenched in their everyday living that they became indistinguishable from scriptural commandments.
6. The Pharisees, as a power bloc, were very influential. When Jesus confronted them during his first advent they were second in power only to the Roman governor.
7. They were rigid and unyielding.
8. They took pride in being recognized as Pharisees by other men.
9. In their piety they looked down upon others whom they viewed as being inferior to themselves.

In fairness to the Pharisees it must be noted that they were not lukewarm, nor indifferent to God's word. They did, in fact, care a lot and gave it their all. However, their zeal became so unbalanced that it affected their judgment, for it excluded the spirit of the law and thus it resulted in spiritual destruction -- rather than self-preservation.

Many other items could be listed. Some can be found in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, in which Jesus pronounces a series of "woes" upon the Pharisees based upon their erroneous ideas. For the sake of our discussion we will limit ourselves to these nine.

How These Attitudes Could Affect Us

The Pharisees were concerned for God's word and law as well as for righteous living. If such things happened to them could they not also happen to we who share their same concerns?

Then some of the Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying, "Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." And he answered and said to them, "And why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition" (Matt. 15:1-3, NAS)?

Could Jesus be asking us who are living the same question? Let us look at these nine points in connection with this possibility.

Divine Guardians

The Pharisees considered themselves to be guardians of divine truth: the Word, its Law, and the Jewish traditions. They assumed this responsibility thinking that only they were qualified to perform this duty. Thus they set themselves in the position of controlling other men's customs as well as the correct interpretation of the Law. They came to believe that their traditions and superior wisdom were essential to the guidance of God's people. They came to truly believe that God was dealing only with them and that it was their duty to keep their neighbor straight in what was truly the divine word and practice. The reality of these beliefs is seen in the Gospel records. Their words and actions betrayed their attitudes.

While this article was being prepared an event which seemed quite providential occurred. I received in the mail a letter containing 191 points which were presented as scriptural truths. I was

asked to reply to each point on that list, stating whether I subscribed to it. We quote from that letter:

We are planning to prepare a directory which will include every prospective speaker to whom this letter is mailed. Along with his name, it will show whether he believes all the items, or if he rejects some, the items that he rejects will be listed. If he does not respond, he will be designated "non-responder." Please help us complete the directory by informing us in which of the above categories you wish to be placed. This directory *will* be made available to all the brethren so that they can know how every prospective speaker stands on every point of "present truth."

We have been unable to find scriptural precedent for this type of request. The writer of this letter is clearly assuming the responsibility of screening and publishing whether other persons believe as they do on one hundred ninety-one points of truth. I will leave it there for you to evaluate.

Some of us use the term "nominal church" or "member of the nominal church" in both our dialogue and discourse. The word "nominal" means "in name only." While it may be true that this term applies to many, the way in which the phrase is uttered is often quite objectionable. In many cases, the expression is used expressly to indicate one's own superiority to others who are believers "in name only" (as defined by the person speaking thusly). It is proper to appreciate what we have, and even to express that appreciation openly, but let us be sure that our motivation for expressing it is not tinged with even the least bit of pride.

If we are proud of ourselves -- that God has specially given us some measure of his truth are we then any better than the Pharisees? If we think that we alone have exclusive rights to divine truth or if we believe that only we have the holy Spirit of God, are we any better than the Pharisees? If we are so positive that God could not be dealing with anyone outside of our circle of truth -- especially among those we term "nominal Christians" -- are we better than the Pharisees? If we believe that no one outside of our truth circle could possibly possess God's holy Spirit, are we better than the Pharisees? Or if we seek to limit God (by our interpretations and traditional convictions) are we any better than they of old?

We should appreciate our understanding of God's word and of his high calling in Christ Jesus, but let us do so in all humility. And let us share the truth which has so enriched our lives in a spirit of meekness and compassion for others. Let us not erect barriers to the altar of God. If we do we will be following in the footsteps of the Pharisees. Their improper attitudes lead them up a staircase which they had erected; because of its elevating effect they could only look down upon others whom they had left behind. They had forgotten the Word of the Lord, "And you *shall not go up by steps unto my altar, that your nakedness* [the sin of pride] *may not be exposed on it*" (Exod. 20:26, NAS). In their misguided zealously, they repeatedly transgressed this commandment.

Physical Separation

The Pharisees were very careful with whom they associated. According to McClintock and Strong, the name "Pharisee" was first used by the Sadducees in the Mishna. By their use of this word towards this sect they were not being complimentary. The term may well have described their "separated" lives. And at first they were "separated ones" for the purpose of ridding themselves of any Levitical impurity. But they erred when they began to view themselves as being "holier" and as being on a higher level.

Can this happen to the child of God today? Can we view others in the same way as the Pharisees viewed their contemporaries? Do we view those outside our fellowship as unworthy of our time or attention? Some of the Pharisees used their separation as a visible sign to others that they were special in God's sight. They thought this fact was self-evident. Further, they came to believe that their example of separation and their appearance of holiness was of utmost importance to the guidance of God's people. They thought that somehow this show of holiness would have a preserving influence upon the conduct of others. This raised their sense of self-worth. They became important -- in their own eyes. The more they practiced this the more they enjoyed the feeling. This power became addictive, a need to feel special, a need for personal recognition of one's holiness and piety.

How subtle is the love of recognition. It clouds the mind and heart with feelings of pride and self-interest. *"Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the front seats in the synagogues, and the respectful greetings in the market places"* (Luke 11:43, NAS). Is it possible that that could be said of us? Could this happen to the elder of an ecclesia of Bible students? Ask yourself, how strong is my desire to be recognized and appreciated? Do I need to be recognized and accepted in the prominent ranks of brethren, or of speakers? Is it important that our works receive recognition from the brethren? Is it important to us that others can point us out as being fine examples of those who are faithfully walking the narrow way? And is it necessary for our own well-being that others should be aware of our soundness in doctrine or wisdom; that they should seek our counsel? Do we feel that for a work to be done properly we must do it ourselves? Do we think our presence so important to our ecclesia that if we are absent the group will not function as well? Or if we miss attending a study do we think that our absence will be felt?

Yes, the real question in all of these issues is plain: What is my own motivation? Let it not be any of those just mentioned. Let it be, that we would please and glorify our heavenly Father by doing his will humbly and with our might -- as we serve him and his brethren. Remember the axiom which is well said, "there is no end to the good we can do, if we do not care who gets the credit." If credit is important to us, may it always be because we want to be sure it is our loving God to whom it is given.

Proud Denunciations

Many Pharisees took pride in opposing and denouncing impurity and ungodliness in the actions of others. They thought of themselves as a sort of spiritual police force to the Jews. In one instance we read of a woman of ill-repute entering the house of a Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50) and of his judgmental attitude towards her. This woman had washed Jesus' feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. She had anointed him with expensive ointment and had kissed his feet repeatedly. In the thirty-seventh verse we learn that she was a sinner, publicly known as a woman of the streets. The Pharisee was embarrassed and assessing the situation (Luke 7:39) he said, *"If this man [Jesus] were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner."* The Pharisee would have quickly thrown her back into the street, and would have felt dirty and ritually contaminated had he been touched by her. He had already judged her; she counted as nothing more than garbage; she was beyond help. His abhorrence of outward sin had removed all his compassion and he was unbalanced. This imbalance blinded him to any good that this woman might do and kept him from seeing that she had come in contrition and repentance. He saw only the dirt of her reputation. He looked down upon her and revealed his own self-righteousness.

How differently Jesus treated the woman. He recognized her repentant heart and the love her actions manifested. He perceived her desire for forgiveness and encouragement. Compassion moved within him as he watched the display of her faith.

"For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little," And he said to her, "your sins have been forgiven"(Luke 7:47-48, NAS).

Which style of judgment do you follow? Jesus' or the Pharisee's? The Pharisee would have expelled her, would not have helped her, and she would have continued her sinful ways. But because of the love and compassion of Jesus we may logically conclude that the woman never reverted to her pathway of sin. Jesus could separate the sinner from the sin, an ability that most of us find difficult. Jesus hated the sin but he could still love the sinner. What a worthwhile trait to emulate in our lives!

Fence Makers

The Pharisees were compelled to keep the law. They felt it necessary to take further steps to insure that the law was not broken. So they set up "fences" which were designed to keep them at a safe distance from any point in which they might break the law. These barriers, or fences, incorporated into the traditions of the elders became as important as the law itself.

We, too, may set up rules, fences, and barriers that we feel will keep us on safe ground in keeping the Lord's commandment. Do we regard some of our traditions with as much authority as Scripture? Is it possible that we have set up fences of conduct for ourselves by which we also judge the conduct of others?

This is an important consideration. It is one thing to establish restrictions or standards for ourselves. It is quite another to expect others to do the same and if they do not to judge them as not living up to the principles of Scripture. Hardly anyone would dare admit such an attitude, but do our thoughts or actions sometimes reach this very judgment? Answer for yourself.

Another tradition of the Pharisees was to establish loopholes that would work to their own benefit. Jesus reproved them for this (Matt. 15) in connection with their responsibility to their aging parents. By declaring their own possessions as reserved for the Lord they relieved themselves of the responsibility to care for their parents. Jesus calls this practice a commandment of man (Matt. 15:9). Later on the Apostle Paul would preach contrary to this "accepted practice." *"But if any one does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever"* (1 Tim. 5:8, NAS). There is no doubt as to the intent of this verse. But could there be a wider interpretation also? In his letter to the Hebrew Christians he says that Christ was faithful over his own household. He adds that we are that house. (cf. Heb. 3:6). In Galatians we are admonished to do good to all men and *especially* to do good to those of the household of faith (Heb. 6:10).

These verses clearly place a responsibility upon any who claim to be of his household. If we ignore the needs of any, whether they be parents, dependent children, or other members of the body of Christ, we are in danger of breaking God's Word. Let us not rationalize this matter away. It is not acceptable to say that we were going to use this substance, this time, this money, this land, for the Lord -- in some area that we think more important. If we are inclined to do so are we any better than the Pharisee? *"He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will also cry himself*

and not be answered" (Prov. 21:13, NAS). Conversely we read, *"He who gives to the poor will never want, But he who shuts his eyes will have many curses"* (Prov. 28:28, NAS).

The principle which Jesus described in the Parable of the Sheep and Goats (Matt. 25:31-46) applies to us today as well as to all of mankind in the Millennial Kingdom of our Lord. Let us not be among those described in these angry words:

"For I was hungry, and you gave me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite me in; naked and you did not clothe me; sick and in prison, and you did not visit me." Then they themselves also will answer, saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of you?" Then he will answer them, saying, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me" (Matt. 25:42-45, NAS).

Responsibility towards others is an important part of the Christian's walk. The parable shows that we are required to be careful both of the physical and spiritual needs of those around us. Let us look often at the examples of Jesus so that our judgment will be balanced and that we will resist all attempts at improper rationalization. We have received freely from the bounty of the Lord. Should we not be as free to give to others? Let us give and share with joy, as though we were giving or sharing with the Lord himself.

Rules that Stifle the Spirit

One side-effect of pharisaical rule making was that it quenched the teaching of the Scriptures, especially the spirit of truth. Traditions sometimes became so important that they were equal -- in their ritualistic lives -- to Scripture. Is it possible that such could happen to modern day students of the Bible?

Tradition is the way that we have always done things. It can become so important that we take tradition as a "principle," and defend it so tenaciously that we too behave improperly in its defense. Some traditions may be proper. But they may also take on so much added meaning -- in our mind -- that they become the basis of contention. We can get ourselves in trouble when we insist on imposing our traditions on others who learned different traditions.

The Pharisees provided an interesting case in point in the seventh chapter of Mark's Gospel: "...*Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands*" (Mark 7:5, NAS)? By way of comparison I wish to use a current day illustration with no intent here to second guess the actions of some ecclesias -- nor to suggest that they withdraw these traditions. The point of this comparison is to demonstrate that in these matters there is no scriptural dictate to be followed and that we should be careful in our attitudes towards others who do things differently than we.

Many ecclesias of Bible Students apply a vote of seventy-five percent for the election of elders, visiting speakers, or convention speakers. There is no scriptural authority for this. It is a tradition. We find that C. T. Russell commented on this practice saying,

"It is not our thought ... to lay down an invariable rule on the subject. The Bible gives none, and no one has a right to establish such a rule. Our suggestion was that wherever possible, the election should be unanimous, and unless seventy-five percent of the class, or more, favored a brother's election, it would be rather unwise for him to accept the office."

What would our reaction be today if some one were to suggest that we change this rule. Note, if you will, that many classes have already modified this suggestion to a considerable extent. He had placed the responsibility on the elder to not accept an office if he did not receive adequate support. We, in common practice, have changed that so that it is not the decision of the individual. Again, we do not say that the practice is wrong and should be changed. But, what would our attitude be towards any person who suggested that we change it? If someone suggested a majority vote of only fifty one percent would we think him unwise or spiritually immature?

Another tradition in many classes is that of requiring visiting speakers to be an elected elder of a class. Br. Russell did not hold this idea; to the contrary he suggested that an ecclesia select anyone that they thought qualified to serve them. What would our attitude be if we were to attend a convention where one or more of the platform speakers was not elected elders of a class? Would we judge the sponsoring ecclesia skeptically or disapprovingly?

Some ecclesias have adopted the idea that aptness to teach -- as required by Paul in his definition of elders and deacons -- means that an elder must be able to serve in all categories of service. But Paul does not seem to agree with that interpretation (Eph. 4:11,12, RSV). He says,

"And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ..."

We quote again:

"Elders may have special qualifications in one or another particular -- some excelling in exhortation, some in teaching, some in prophesying oratory, some as evangelists in interesting unbelievers, and some as pastors -- taking a general oversight of the flock in the various interests, local or general. The Apostle Paul's address to the elders of the ecclesia at Ephesus gives us the general scope of the ministry to which each individual must adapt and fit his talent as a steward ... His words are well worthy of careful and prayerful consideration by all accepting the service of an elder in any department of the work" (C. T. Russell).

How careful we ought to be that we do not substitute our own ideas for what the Scriptures teach. If we do we may deny others of talent the privilege of service in an area in which God has given him ability.

There may be other areas where traditions have crept in. Let us consider what they might be and be cautious that we keep these in their proper sphere: let us keep the authority of Scripture high and the traditions of men low.

Spiritual Power Brokers

The Pharisees were among the early "special interest groups." They were ready to use all that they had to acquire what they thought right and necessary. Can this attitude be at work among brethren or elders today? Could certain ones who share an opinion be exerting combined influence among brethren so as to give rise to the spirit of sectarianism? Could such insist that all who do not agree with their opinions are not "clear in the truth?" Could elders effectively caution others not to associate with others whose views were less than their own standard? What about others who would refuse to have contact with any who do not agree, who have separated on a matter of what they see as principle, who are influencing others to do the same?

Brethren, is Christ divided? The apostle asked this question in astonishment! How careful we need be that we learn and maintain the spirit of Jesus and our beloved brother the Apostle Paul. Sectarianism arose in the early church. It was, evidently, felt between Jewish and gentile Christians.

But when Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And with him the rest of the Jews acted insincerely so that even Barnabas was carried away by their insincerity (Gal. 2:11-13, RSV).

Has it ever happened that we have not wanted it known that we associate with some "other brethren?" Have we ever feared what "our" brethren would say or think? This fear creeps into our conduct subtly, just as it did with Peter. Let us guard our spirit and recognize the oneness of the body of Christ. Let us keep the spirit of sectarianism far from us and not even look at another with that disdain which so often accompanies sectarianism.

Self-Assured Protectors Of the Word

The reason that the Pharisees were so sure that they were right about things is because of their self-assumed position as protectors of God's Word. They were rigid, unyielding, and intractable. They let pride replace meekness and humility. Hence they could not accept Jesus' message. Their rigid attitude (Paul calls them "stiffnecked") polluted and hardened their hearts. This was the accusation that Stephen made against them, saying, *"You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you"* (Acts 7:51,52, RSV). Their pride closed their ears to this reprimand; his accurate judgment of their character. In their self righteous anger they stoned him to death -- feeling justified in their actions. How far the spiritual leaven had penetrated the hearts of the Pharisees. Brethren, let us be as meek and teachable as we are able and especially so when the word of truth condemns us. A meek, contrite heart will refrain from such over-reacting. May we pray that our minds not become so fixed that we cannot be taught or changed. Change is a daily essential if we are to be "conformed" to Jesus' image.

Pleasing Recognition

What a telling symptom was the pleasure the Pharisees derived in being recognized and looked up to as holy. This is a very subtle and present danger, one especially dangerous to elders or any in positions of prominence. Jesus' example was so far different from that set by his detractors. In his victories he pointed to God. In his actions he pointed to the Almighty. Praise and glory always ascended to his heavenly Father for all that had come to pass through him. But the Pharisees had an appetite for praise and it filled their hearts with pride.

"For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it" (1 Cor. 4:7, NAS)? Is this not the proper attitude? Obviously, it is the attitude of those who had been with Jesus. Let the praise and glory be directed toward our loving heavenly Father always.

The Pharisees thought of themselves as being special. They loved the best seats in the synagogue. In comparing themselves to others they placed themselves on a pedestal, leaving all others on a lower level.

And he told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, 'God, I thank thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like unto this tax-gatherer. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get' " (Luke 18: 9-12, NAS).

Had this Pharisee forgotten the lesson of not building steps to the altar of God (Exod. 20:26), or had he never learned it? He was naked before God, proud and aloof before men; all this was clear to see from the words of his prayer. But could we too take a similar position towards others outside our circle of truth? Do we look down upon those whose professions are in name only, or who attend other churches, because we live a life so much different than theirs? Do we, in attitude or thought, put ourselves on a pedestal of our own making? Do we feel we have a more superior understanding of the Scriptures because we have spent years studying the Sacred Word? Let us beware the leaven of the Pharisees. Let us watch for it in our thoughts and in our lives, but especially in our heart.

We do not mean to discourage any. Rather we mean to encourage all to a condition of awareness of our need to stay close to the Word of God. All Scripture is given to us for instruction. Jesus intended for us to learn by the reproofs that he spoke to the Pharisees. They were lessons to us, just as to them, that we should be careful lest we fall into the same pit as they. If we know that this is a possibility, we can be alert. If we are alert, we can examine our hearts and minds and seek the Lord's help in purging out any leaven that we find so that we may be pure and unspotted before God.

- E. Weeks

Not Ashamed of the Gospel of Christ

Let us not be ashamed of the true Gospel, nor of any of its agents or agencies. Whoever is ashamed of the brother or sister or tract or book, through which God sent him the truth, demonstrates that had they lived in the days of our Lord's humiliation they would have been ashamed of him, and of the humble men through whom he promulgated his Gospel. The truth is not intended for the proud or the dishonest. God hides his truth from the worldly wise and prudent and reveals it unto babes. (Luke 10:21; 1 Cor. 1:19). Let us keep ourselves in the love of God by candor and humility, and so let us walk in the light of his truth. R2026

The Privilege of Consecration

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God -- this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is -- his good, pleasing, and perfect will." - Romans 12:1,2, NIV

Dear Friend,

I thought that I would write to you about the thrilling privilege of consecration. Yes, thrilling is the right word, for when God invites us to consecrate our lives to his service, he does, I am sure, hope that we will be thrilled to receive so great an honor from the Almighty God of the universe. God does not want us to regard our consecration as a duty (although in one sense it is so), but rather to respond to the spirit of his call and to recognize how great a privilege it is to become sons of the heavenly Father. For this reason consecration is a matter for the mind as well as for the heart.

Knowledge And Responsibility

Before we can have any faith in God we must have some knowledge. Paul referred to this in the first chapter of his letter to the Romans. He said in effect that men have no excuse for their opposition to God when his power and glory are evidenced in the wonders of creation. Paul did not mean that all are called to be sons of God, of course. He was showing that apart from man's original inherited sin there is a large measure of willful ignoring of God. Paul wrote that men were not thankful, but vain in their imaginations; as a result their hearts were darkened. Briefly, the Apostle tells us that any knowledge of God gives us a measure of responsibility. If we have had extra privileges due to birth or situation which have resulted in a greater knowledge of God's plan, then our responsibilities are increased accordingly. If we do not realize how privileged we are to learn something in advance of God's secret purpose, we run the danger of allowing our hearts to be darkened (Rom. 1:21). On the other hand, if we recognize that the Almighty God has been gracious to us and if we show our appreciation by devoting our lives to him, he promises to do marvelous things for us through his holy Spirit, which he has promised will live within us from that time forward.

The purpose of our first glimmers of understanding about God and his plan for the recovery of man from sin are to warm our hearts toward him. Who has not heard at least something about God from the earliest days of childhood? But the clichés of Christendom tend to disguise the beauty and overwhelming kindness of our Father. Jesus said that God is kind even to the unthankful (Luke. 6:35) and what an amazing kindness that is! God has allowed men to run their own course for thousands of years. He has allowed men to sin, to impugn his holy name with blasphemies, and he has done so in order that they will learn the futility of their own selfish plans. Even this is but a trinket by comparison with the supreme act of love on the part of God. He sent his *son*, his *only* son, to earth and allowed men to put him to a cruel death as a part of the plan that wisdom had chosen as the means to save men from themselves.

You do not need to be told how Jesus gave his life as a ransom, nor to have repeated the wonderful love of the Father and the amazing demonstration he has given of his constant purposes. But repetition is good and these are the keynotes of our faith.

Reasonable Service

The understanding of God thus far described is wonderful. There is much more, however, to be known of him. This additional knowledge can be had only upon a condition. That condition is that we present our lives to God as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1, Rv, margin). Paul adds that this is merely our *reasonable* service (Rom. 12:2).

Treasured Possession

Before the world began God "foreordained" that Christ should come to redeem the human race (1 Pet. 1:20). It was also decided that some would be invited to share with Christ in the atonement work of the divine plan. In the beautiful parable of the Hidden Treasure Jesus describes these devoted followers as being very important to him: "*the kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field*" (Matt. 13:44, ARV). From Jesus own explanations of his parables it is clear that he is the "man" and that the field is the world (Matt. 13:38). The various parabolic metaphors for the kingdom of heaven (including the Hidden Treasure) refer to the beginnings of the kingdom as represented in the true church -- composed of Jesus' devoted followers. The faithful are, therefore, a treasured possession. The gathering of the saints from among the world stands among the primary reasons for Christ's great sacrifice for which he gave all that he had.

A New Creation

Another feature of the privilege of consecration is that we are to become a part of a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17, Rv, margin). Neither angels nor men had any say in their original creation. But God has arranged that his *new* creation shall be composed of those who wish to become part of that creation -- of their own free will. God wanted *new* creatures: who would love him because they were attracted to him; who would do his will by choice and have complete trust in him. God's wisdom foresaw that there would be such people, even in this evil world. He knew that a "little flock" (Luke. 12:32) would answer his invitation and it has been a great "joy" (John 17:13) for the Son to assist in bringing these to the Father.

Jesus' mission was to be the foundation of this great plan. He too was a new creation and became the "*firstborn among many brethren*" (Rom. 8:29). He was tested and tried by God so that he could qualify as our forerunner. And now he has been set as our example -- our pattern to be imitated -- so that we too might qualify to become sons of God -- his *new* creatures.

Blessing All Men

God knew that if men were ransomed from death and freed from the sentence which they inherited none would survive an individual trial. There was a work of atonement (of restoring men to a condition of being at one with God) to be accomplished if mankind was to be saved. A sacrificial offering was needed, a sin offering. This voluntary offering was made by Jesus through his suffering and sacrifice. God invites his saints to share in Jesus' suffering, and in so doing to build up their own characters (Col. 1:24; 1 Pet. 4:13). This accumulation of sacrifice from Jesus and all his footstep followers is an offering of thanks to God for all his mercy. It is accepted by him as the beginning of his plan for all men to be brought not merely *out* of the grave but *into* harmony or at-one-ment with him. If we become truly consecrated believers, he has promised that we shall share with his son in the great work of blessing all mankind. We are, in fact, to help to train all men to come back into harmony with God so that they may live in a perfect earth forever.

How God Prepares Us

The climax of God's lovingkindness is the manner in which he develops us for his work. He asks for our perfect love (1 Cor. 13). It is fortunate that he understands our imperfections, and so he does not judge us just according to our achievements. God understands the weaknesses of our fleshly nature. He knows too the campaign which the Devil is waging against men. He promises to work in us if we will only let him. He will provide the strength to meet all of our difficulties so that we may go on to

perfection (Phil. 2:12,13; Heb. 6:1). This is the sense of Paul's words when he wrote, "*I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me*" (Phil. 4:13, ARV). God does, however, require whole-hearted loyalty and absolute sincerity. And seen in this light is it any wonder that Paul calls it our reasonable service? Could any service be more reasonable? Glory, honor, and privilege greater than that offered to any creature in the universe, and all he asks in return is our undivided love -- a love to which he is in fact entitled even on the grounds of common gratitude.

This is where sacrifice comes in. Sacrifice means giving up those things which tend to draw us away from the Father, which dull our appreciation of his love. It is impossible to give up everything immediately. In fact, it is only as we grow spiritually that we even understand what things we need to shed. Sometimes we may find it difficult -- but remember that the Lord loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7).

Sacrifice sometimes happens like this. We begin to realize that "something" is diverting our attention from God. Commonly, this "something" is not harmful by itself; it just requires too much of our time and thought. When we promised to "sacrifice" our life to the Lord we gave him all of our time, talents, energies, thoughts. And so we now have to face up to the real "sacrifice." In practice it becomes a choice between something we would *rather* not give up and Christ, whom we *cannot* give up so it has to go. We learn to follow Jesus' example through practice and the help of the holy Spirit (without which we can do nothing). It was Jesus of whom the psalmist prophesied saying, "*I delight to do thy will, O my god; Yea, thy law is within my heart*" (Ps. 40:8).

A life of devotion to God has been described as a narrow way. God called us to it through Jesus. When we accept this call by dedicating our lives to him, he sets us apart from the world -- or sanctifies us. At the beginning we need to have a special standing before God, because until Jesus applies the merit of his ransom sacrifice to us we are still enemies of God (Rom. 5:10). We know that Jesus died for all men. But during this Gospel

Age we find that the merit of his sacrifice has only been effective for his consecrated followers. These have been released from the sentence of death in advance of the remainder of the world. His work for the others of mankind will follow in the next age. We have, as it were, an advance opportunity to come into harmony with God. He regards us as being part of Christ, and on that basis he has begotten us as sons -- together with Christ. In order to continue as sons we must remain *in* Christ and must go Christ's way -- the narrow way which leadeth to life (Matt. 7:14). As long as we remain *in* Christ and follow his example God can and will continue his work in us, perfecting (developing) us as new creatures.

It might be appropriate to call this a "narrowing" way. As we progress we find that there is less room for us to carry things along with us in this life. As our strength and knowledge increase God shows us how to shed the burdens which slow our spiritual progress until, as one poet has said, "there is only room for Jesus and me." Our sanctification is primarily God's work, but in his Word

he enjoins us to contribute our efforts too: "*Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy*" (Lev. 20:7). Our part in this work is to keep ourselves separated from the world by progressively divesting ourselves of the interests which draw us from the narrow way. This way is narrow; that is, it is contrary to the course of our friends and associates. The trials which we face when we must stand against our fellows are necessary in order to develop a character which is like Jesus Christ. Further, by facing these with resolution we show God our loyalty to him.

The Apostle lets us know that trials will be aggravating (Heb. 12:11). He assures us, however, that trials are merely light afflictions (2 Cor. 4:17) by comparison with the reward of eternal glory awaiting those who overcome this world (John 16:33).

As we progress in the way of sanctification our Father blesses us. He and his son accompany us, guiding our feet, strengthening us, and helping us to recognize his care over us. He promises to order (direct) our steps if we will let him

lead us. What's more, we have his assurance that all things will work together for the ultimate good of those who are called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28).

Like Christian in "Pilgrim's Progress" we have God's Word as our guide book. From it we learn how to continue along the way: "*Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth*" (John 17:17, ARV). Who cannot help but be encouraged by those words of our Master in his great high priestly prayer to God!

Not only are we "set apart" for God's purposes, we are also "set apart" from the disturbing influences of this world. He gives us a spirit of contentment and a "*peace which passeth all understanding*" (Phil. 4:7). What a blessing that is to us when we live in a world where men's hearts fail them because of the anticipation of those things which are coming upon the earth (Luke 21:26).

Briefly, this is what we mean by the wonderful and thrilling privilege of consecration. Whatever difficulties we may face, we are confident that God will bring us to our journey's end -- if we will trust him: "*...being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ*" (Phil. 1:6, ARV).

Your brother in his service,

- L. Bunker

The Question Box

Is there any antitypical significance related to the events in Genesis 8:13: "*The waters were dried up ... Noah removed the covering of the ark ... and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.*"

With this issue we return to a feature which has been immensely popular in earlier issues of the HERALD, but with a modification. These questions will be submitted to a variety of brethren for their comment instead of answering questions strictly among our editorial staff.

No, I do not find "antitypical" significance in Genesis 8:13; however it seems fitting at this point to research "type," since we Bible students are notorious type-makers and no doubt there will be many questions on this subject.

C. T. Russell set up a very fine rule: "A type should not be used to teach a doctrine but merely to illustrate one already clearly taught." Funk & Wagnall's dictionary defines two words this way:

Type: (theology) That by which something is prefigured.

Antitype: That which a type or symbol represents; the original of a type. A person or event in the New Testament prefigured by one in the Old.

The word "type" (*tupos* Strong's # SG5179) is used in the King James Version in these instances in various ways:

Print: John 20:25

Figure: Romans 5:14

Figures (idols): Acts 7:43

Fashion: Acts 7:44

Form: Romans 6:17

Example: 1 Cor. 10:6; 1 Tim. 4:12

Ensample: 1 Cor. 10:11

Pattern: Titus 2:7; Phil. 3:27; Heb. 8:5 *; 1 Thess. 1:1

Manner (3:25; 2 Thess. 3:9; 1 Pet. 5:3

Another Greek word worthy of examination in this context is *hupodeigma* (Strong's 5262): "an exhibit for imitation or warning." This word has been translated as "example" (John 13:15; Heb. 4:11*; 8:5* James 5:10*); "pattern" (Heb. 9:23*); Ensample (2 Pet. 2:6*).

The Scriptures noted by an asterisk use the word "type" as Bible students conventionally use it. *Hupodeigma* appears to be a stronger word than *tupos*, because of the six times it is used it can be translated "type," or better yet, "copy."

The word "Antitype" is not used in the English Bible. This Greek word [*anrirupon* (Strong's # SG4991)] is translated "figure" in 1 Pet. 3:21 and in Hebrews 9:24. We would be correct in using the word antitype in these two places.

Types should be used with caution. There has been much abuse; in time this could lead to a situation where the Bible becomes like "an old fiddle upon which one can play any tune."

- A. Jarmola

While we must be careful not to assume that every Old Testament incident has antitypical significance there seems to be good reason to look for a larger signification to the flood episode. It is referred to prophetically in three places in the New Testament.

In the Olivet prophecy of Matthew 24:37,38 (and also in the Luke account), the general unawareness of coming catastrophe is likened to a similar ignorance of the impending judgments of the second advent.

More specifically, the passing over of the flood waters into a new world is likened to the passing over of a "fire" to still a newer heavens and earth.

In a different vein, the flood waters themselves are likened to the baptismal waters of the Christian dispensation in (1 Pet. 3:20,21). The relationship between these diverse applications lies in the fact that in each case there is a planned, voluntary departure from an unsatisfactory condition to a new one with better prospects, a new beginning -- whether it be the new beginning of the Christian life now or the Millennial life of the future.

The impact of the questioner's verse seems to indicate that in whichever salvation we find our personal deliverance, it will be so complete that even the effects of the flood waters will no longer be in evidence. Noah might have expected to step out on muddy ground after such a long period of inundation, but instead *"the face of the ground was dry."* The same is true of both the church's present salvation and mankind's future one -- the muddy waters of the past will not be around to hinder further progress.

- C. Hagensick

The events preceding Genesis 8:13 were these:

- 1.) the world was found to be evil;
- 2.) that evil world was destroyed by a flood of water;
- 3.) after the destruction of the evil world, the water was removed and *"the face of the ground was dry."*

Water is utilized symbolically in a number of ways: restless humanity, a destructive agent, fear, a cleansing agent, a life giver, complete dedication, compassion, truth.

It would be necessary to select a symbolic meaning and apply it consistently within the full subject text to draw a valid conclusion. For example, if water is the symbol of a "cleansing agent" or "truth," then it could be claimed that all evil will be destroyed. But if water is used in this symbolic way, would this not also indicate when the waters are dried up and the "face of the ground was dry" that all of the "cleansing agent" or "truth" will be completely done away with?

We should always view picture making with this question: Do the Scriptures support this thought entirely? Unless we have a definite "thus saith the Lord" associated with it, one should reject picture making assumptions.

Throughout the Scriptures one vital truth is shown: God has been consistent in his dealings with worldly situations; when a situation arises, he deals with it in a manner similar to the way with which it has been dealt before. With God *"there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning"* (James 1:17). Therefore, we should be extremely cautious in projecting our thoughts into any picture making that the Lord has not made; when one does, one is apt to make an erroneous assumption and thereby lose sight of God's true message.

- T.A. Herz

The question, as stated, implies more than is asked and will only be treated in broad terms. Peter does not refer to the "typical" nature of the Ark but to the "antitypical" nature of baptism (see A.Jarmola's answer). Peter does not refer to other "types" in connection with those events. His illustration relates to the baptism of the believer, saying that we have some form of salvation (summarizing a rather lengthy subject) by our expression of confidence in the *"resurrection of Jesus Christ."*

Types illustrate limited aspects of a reality, just as a painting can illustrate only specific details of the scene portrayed. Every detail of the reality may be expressed in a series of illustrations, but each illustration can depict only a limited aspect of the overall. For example, a painting of a waterfall may illustrate many details very well, but it can never justly depict the torrent's mighty roar or the gentle trickling sound of the water's flow as it falls upon the ear.

While I may personally find details which to me seem to illustrate various aspects of my own relationship to God through Christ Jesus, at the same time there is no contextual reason (either in Genesis or in Peter's Epistle) to extend the defined scriptural meaning of this verse beyond Peter's application. Our personal applications are not always supportable as universally applicable principles. It is interesting to note how many Old Testament ideas the New Testament writers borrowed as singular illustrations of points being made by the later at a given time. All are not "types" however. Neither were all presented to believers as "types."

One needs to guard against making types to cover every detail of life. This may seem "harmless" extensions of scriptural statement but the end of that course is to assume a special divine approval over a person's life which borders upon infallibility. Such an attitude carried to its extreme was responsible for the tortured death of true saints throughout the Gospel Age and is to be guarded against lest we become like the taunting of Job against his "comforters," when he said, surely, you are the People, and wisdom will perish with you.

- P. J. Pazucha

Ruth's Wise Choice

"Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." - Ruth 1:16

While the Book of Ruth is not prophetic it is a valuable asset.

1. It furnishes us with an important link in the chronological chain leading us to King David. Hence it is a part of the chronological line of the man Christ Jesus.
2. It gives a glimpse of the habits and customs of the Israelites in general as an agricultural people. In this respect it is in marked contrast with the books of Judges, Kings, and Chronicles which deal more particularly with the rulers, generals, and wars.
3. The story of Ruth points out a lesson of fidelity, sympathy, and love among the people of the time. It encourages similar lessons of kindness among spiritual Israelites -- guaranteeing them blessings for the present and the future.

Around the time of Gideon, God's people had grown cold towards him, departing from the covenant and their faithfulness. As the judgment of the Lord a scarcity of provisions prevailed in the land, almost to the point of famine. In the midst of these circumstances Naomi's husband decided to emigrate from the land of promise to the other side of the Dead Sea, the Land of Moab. The Moabites were descendants of Lot. This fact notwithstanding, God commanded his people to separate from them. They were not considered part of the seed of Abraham. Nor were they to share in the Abrahamic promise. They had no special privileges before God and were not participants of the promises or privileges of such a relationship as were the children of Israel.

Naomi and her sons left Israel with her husband. Apparently without regret at having left Israel, they hoped to improve the family's prospects. Naomi later realized that it was a mistake for them to have attempted to regulate their own affairs when they had already been under the special guidance of the Lord.

They lacked faith.

As Israelites they should have valued God's promises highly enough that they would not have left the land of promise or the people of promise so as to mingle with those who were strangers to those promises. They should have had a greater appreciation of the privilege of being God's people than for their earthly riches. We should not blame Naomi in this matter, however. The responsibility for the family rested in her husband. It is evident that she was never entirely content with the decision to move. This we find demonstrated in her actions immediately upon the death of her husband and sons two years later. She quickly decided that she would return to the Lord's people and to the land he had given.

How similar human nature is at all times and in all places. How many there are in 1988 who mistakenly seek to plan their lives without regard to the Lord's promises and their relationship with him. How many forget that the Lord's arrangement with his covenant people is one of supervisory care and that he has promised to cause all things to work together for their ultimate good! Instead of such concern for their physical comfort, Naomi's husband should have been making their religious interests of greatest concern. He should have been in such a state of mind that even if they had been living in Moab under conditions of great prosperity he would have

chosen to leave that land and live instead in the land the Lord had given to the children of promise.

Preferring Spirituality

The true children of Abraham -- those who possess his faith -- will do well to remember this thought. Spiritual things should be preferred over earthly ones. Our family and professional interests are to be arranged for the purpose of promoting our everlasting welfare -- our spiritual growth, development, and prosperity for ourselves and our children. Any who are seeking to please God should not only hesitate to place themselves and their families into ungodly surroundings, they should determine not to consider other suggestions. On the contrary, knowing that the friendship of this world is enmity with God (James 4:4), they should recognize that the Lord's people should be their people, even if this means having fewer possessions in this life, because we are assured that we will receive greater spiritual blessings. To persevere in this course means attaining a glorious reward which our Lord has promised to his faithful -- to those who would love him more than family, friends, houses, and land.

Naomi's Good Example

Naomi had an effect upon her daughters-in-law. Both women decided that they would return to Canaan with their mother-in-law. The journey back to the land gave Naomi time to think. In doing so she realized that these two younger women would be making a very great sacrifice. They would be leaving their family, friends, and customs to go with her to a land in which they would be considered foreigners and probably suffer discrimination. Naomi urged them to return to their people and the religious worship to which they had been accustomed. She worried that their resolution now would turn eventually into disappointment.

Are we not reminded of another by the seemingly "disinterested" course which Naomi takes? How did our Lord act toward some of those who would have been his disciples? Did he not advise them to sit first, considering the cost that they would endure as the result of such a decision? He did not want to discourage anyone to turn them back in a decision firmly made. No, rather, he applied the principle that people should not undertake things that they did not understand and in which they were not fully interested. To do so would guarantee failure. Only those who followed him willingly, full-heartedly, knowing that they would suffer and be tried could expend enough of themselves so as to succeed in their purpose. Those who followed him without being moved by the spirit of sacrifice would miss the prize. Their sacrifices would become burdensome and miserably disappointing in the process.

Naomi convinced one of her daughters-in-law to return to Moab. She realized the truth of Naomi's wise counsel and the true sentiments of her own heart. But Ruth reacted differently to her mother-in-law's counsel. She loved Naomi deeply. Not only so, this religion of one God (and of a covenant keeping God at that!) had also deeply affected her. Even though it would cost her a tear to leave her home and friends she was resolved that it was the only right course for her. A home -- a true home -- among people who revered the true God and were heirs of his promises was far more to be esteemed than what she left behind. All the world has taken note of her impassioned words to Naomi. What heralds of sympathy, kindness, and devotion they have been. Arranged in their original poetic form we find them thus:

Entreat me not to leave thee,
And to return from following after thee;
For wither thou goest, I will go;
And where thou lodgest, I will lodge;
Thy people shall be my people, And thy God, my God;
Where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried.
The Lord do so to me, and more also,
If aught but death part thee and me. vss. 16,17

Life's Daily Sermon

What a woman Naomi must have been! In order to have so deeply interested Ruth in herself and in her God she must surely have been a good, faithful, God-fearing, God-serving, God-honoring mother-in-law. There is a lesson here that extends far beyond the mothers-in-law of this world. All of the Lord's people can learn from this faithful heart. Not everyone can preach. Not all can teach from the Word of God: either publicly or privately. Ah, but all can teach through their daily lives. They can glorify God in their bodies and spirits which are his (1 Cor. 6:20) by living a godly life and by telling in the simplest of ways about the hopes and promises which control their lives and inspire their courage and devotion. Did the Apostle Paul not commend this thought when he said

"Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ... written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart "(2 Cor. 3:3).

Our Lord echoed these words saying,

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid ... Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14,16).

That Naomi told her daughters-in-law about her God and his promises is evident. But to have told them thus and then have acted without regard to her own words would have been contradictory. So doing she never could have influenced Ruth to give up her people and her father's house so that she would cast her lot with Naomi and the Israelites.

Naomi arrived at Bethlehem, her home. She had not been seen for ten years. Her friends probably thought that they would never see each other again. And so when they came out to greet her there was a joyous scene with many people calling out her name. But she stopped them all. "Call me not Naomi," she rebuked them. Naomi meant "lovable" or "pleasant" in their language. "Call me, instead, Marah" (which means "bitterness"). She told her friends about her experiences. The Lord had allowed severe afflictions to come upon her. He had testified against her actions and she and her family had not prospered as they had thought they might.

One must wonder whether she always felt this way about her experiences. Might she not have come to reflect, as time passed, that these experiences were really for her instruction? Having felt the chastening rod is there any doubt that the last days of her life were probably the best -- as she drank with full appreciation from the fountain of blessings from the Lord to her and her people! The Lord's spiritual children may also find it thus. Chastening from God seems to speak of his displeasure. But when viewed by faith even chastening can be recognized as a blessing in disguise. But how much of that recognition is the result of our state of mind? Had Naomi -- or we

-- allowed herself to become sour or morose no blessing would have followed. By permitting the experiences to draw her to God and to his people these experiences served as a channel for her blessing. Can these experiences not apply to us all?

Customs of the Day

We turn to an examination of the customs of the time. Again we see how the Lord rewarded the faithfulness and devotion of Ruth. It is evident that she did not come to Bethlehem from greed or selfish motive. This is seen in her immediately setting out to find a job and to earn a living for herself and Naomi. She was young and strong. As was the custom of the day she worked as a laborer in the grain harvest. She followed the men into the field. They cut and bundled the majority of the grain, leaving behind some traces in the fence corners and along the edges of the field. According to the Jewish law what remained in the field was left for the poor. In her efforts to provide herself a meager living she was directed (providentially, we believe) to the field of a man who was kin to Naomi. She eventually married this man and became one of the mothers in Israel from whom descended King David and ultimately Mary, the mother of Jesus.

His People: Our People

We are to commit our lives to God. Having done so, we should sincerely and unselfishly follow the course that such a decision indicates. Righteousness should become our only path. If we follow this course of action God will be our God; then his people shall be our people. We will be tested. He will know whether we are willing to do our duty in life's common activities -- laboring, providing for our own, providing an honest living. As we do so the Lord guides our steps; he overrules our affairs and blesses us. But if we fail we miss the blessings.

We learn a lot about the general state of law and order in Judea at that time. The two women traveled from country to country without molestation or interference. Ruth could work in the fields being unknown and unprotected. The Israelites submitted themselves to a general state of law and order, recognizing the divine law and its precepts in their affairs among themselves. From the Scriptures we recognize that the laws, at this time, were liberally administered. So far as we know there was no army or police organization to enforce them. The people were comparatively free and evidently moral, noble, and trustworthy to some degree.

This is further illustrated in the actions of Boaz. When workers of today arrive at their jobs, how many are greeted as were those of Boaz with "The Lord be with you!" How few workers of today would respond as they did, "They answered him, The Lord bless thee." Present day employers and employees could both learn some profitable lessons from the past. When we consider that evolutionists would have us think that each year further back in history we grow nearer our monkey ancestors we are inclined to look to the lessons of history to disprove such speculations.

Notice also the generosity of Boaz. He was not selfish or miserly towards Ruth. He directed his servants to let a little of the grain fall to the ground -- not to be overly careful about reaping all that they could find. So doing, he was merely assuring that Ruth's gleanings would be a bit more abundant and her "earnings" a little greater. But Christian employers and employees need not resort to the Jewish Law for their guidance. We have a higher law, one advantageous in every way over that old covenant. And if the original law lead the Jew to kind greetings and generous actions towards their fellows, how much more should the Christian's greater knowledge of God's will and his holy Spirit enable him to be kind, considerate, and affectionate towards others. Have we not been encouraged to do good unto all men as we have opportunity -- and especially so to those of the household of faith?

We make one final point in closing. It is unsafe to neglect to have the Lord for our God. It is unsafe to neglect to make his people our people. If we accept the Lord we must ultimately change all of our life's motives and ambitions. It is the only way that we can abide in his love and favor. The sacrifices of earthly interests may cost us dearly, at first. Our hearts may break and tears may wet our face. But we will be more than compensated by the Almighty for whatever costs we have borne. Ruth was. So shall we be, but with spiritual blessings.

"Thou openest thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing" - Psalm 145:16.

Our Master

No fable old, nor mythic lore, nor dream of bards and seers,
No dead fact stranded on the shore of the oblivious years --
But warm, sweet, tender, even yet a present help is he,
And faith hath still its Olivet, and love its Galilee.
The healing of his seamless dress is by our beds of pain;
We touch him in life's throng and press, and we are whole again.
O Lord and Savior of us all! O blessed Christ divine!
We own thy sway, we hear thy call, we test our lives by thine.
We faintly hear, we dimly see, in various phrase we pray;
But, dim or clear, we own in thee the Light, the Truth, the Way.
Our friend, our brother and our Lord, what may thy service be?
Not name, nor form, nor ritual word, but simply following thee.
To do thy will is more than praise, as words are less than deeds,
And simple trust can find thy ways we miss with charts of creeds.

- J. G. Whittier

Preach What?

Our Lord told his disciples that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name (Luke 24:47). In Matthew chapter twenty eight he said, *"Go therefore and make disciples ...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you"* (Luke 24:19-20, RSV).

We read that the Apostles followed his instructions: and they went out and preached:

"the Word" - (Acts 8:4; 11:18; 14:25; 16:6; 2 Tim. 4:2)

"the Word of God" - (Acts 13:5; 17:13)

"the Word of the Lord" - (Acts 8:25; 15:35).

They preached

"the word of faith" - (Rom. 10:8),

and Paul spoke of *"the faith he once destroyed"* - (Gal. 1:23).

The apostles knew and preached

"Jesus" - (Acts 8:35; 19:13)

"the Lord Jesus" - (Acts 11:20)

"Jesus Christ" - (Acts 3:20; 5:42; Rom. 16:25)

"Christ" - (Acts 8:5; Phil. 1:18; 1 Tim. 3:16).

They preached that he was

"Jesus, the Son of God" - (Acts 9:20)

"the Son of God, Jesus Christ" - (2 Cor. 1:19)

and further John "testified"

"that God sent his Son to be the Savior of the world" (I John 4:14)

"through this man.... remission of sins ... justification from all things" - (Acts 13:38).

They Preached

"Christ Crucified" - (1 Cor. 1:23)

"Christ died for our sins" - (1 Cor. 15:3)

"the Cross" - (1 Cor. 1:18)

"peace through the cross" - (Eph. 2:16,17)

"Christ arose" - (1 Cor. 15:12)

"Jesus and the resurrection" - (Acts 4:2; 17:18).

Because Jesus died on the cross and arose the Apostles were able to preach

"the Gospel" - (Acts 8:25; 1 Cor. 9:16; 2 Cor. 4:4,5; Gal. 1:8; Heb. 4:2)

"the Gospel of Christ" - (2 Cor. 10:14).

Paul "testified"

"to the Gospel of the grace of God" - (Acts 20:24)

"the grace of Christ" - (Gal. 1:6)

"the hope of the Gospel ... the mystery hid from ages ... which is, Christ in you, the hope of glory, whom we preach" (Col. 1:23-28)

"God now commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent" - (Acts 17:30)

"repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" - (Acts 20:21)

"the unsearchable riches of Christ" - (Eph. 3:8)

"Peace by Jesus Christ, Lord of all" - (Acts 10:36).

Peter "testified" to *"the true grace of God"* - (1 Pet. 5:12).

**The Fourth Biennial
International Convention of Bible Students
July 9-15 1988**

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." - Romans 14:19

The De Bron Conference Center near Dalfsen, Holland, was the location for this gathering of Bible students who traveled far and wide to edify one another. The conference was attended by 551 brethren from sixteen different countries: Australia (4), Belgium (9), Brazil (2), Canada (11), Denmark (1), England (16), France (146), Germany (30), Greece (10), India (3), Japan (4), Netherlands (3), Switzerland (4), U.S.A. (94), Poland (213), and U. S. S. R. (1). The conference center was situated on the bank of one of Holland's many canals-on the other side of which cattle grazed lazily. Brethren fellowshiped in this picturesque setting as well as throughout the grounds.

Name tags identified language proficiencies: blue for English, brown for German, green for Polish, pink for Greek, and yellow denoting ability in French. Lesser abilities were designated by dots of varying sizes.

Multilingual fellowship was possible with the assistance of various brethren and it was a common sight to see small groups of brethren huddled around their translators.

Discourses were pre-translated into five major languages and headphones were available for all attendants. The speaker's remarks were simultaneously read in those languages while he spoke. In addition, English speaking brethren received printed copies of all discourses, allowing them to read along as the messages were delivered. This added attention to the discourses proved a blessing to many.

Topics varied as much as the attendants: The Ministry Of Those Who Have Been Called, The Seventh Day of Creation, Ye Are Not Your Own, Five Important Questions, The Kingdom Preached by Jesus, Ways to Resist the Devil's

Wiles, I Am My Beloved's And My Beloved is Mine, Of One Heart and Mind, Personal Possessions, The Spirit Of Truth, People Anointed By God, Jeremiah's Message and the Second Presence, Friendship, The Importance of Love, Another Heaven and Another Earth, Psalm 19, The Judgment Of The Angels That Sinned, Our Quest For Unity, If Sons Then Heirs, The Word Was Made Flesh and Dwelt Among Us, To Timothy My Dearly Beloved Son.

One meeting was devoted to questions upon which five brethren presented their ideas. 1.) Is the belief that Our Lord is now present a fundamental doctrine? 2.) What is to be accomplished during the harvest of the Gospel Age? and How will that work be carried out? 3.) What is the "high calling?" and When will the "high calling" cease to be offered to anyone? 4.) What kind of life will the great company receive? and What will be their function in the kingdom?

A symposium considered "The Unity of the Faith," dividing the subject into three parts: 1.) The Fundamental Aspect of Unity, 2.) Faith That Works Through Love and, 3.) How to Preserve the Unity Of The Faith.

Three special programs were presented. These included Bible Student Activities In Various Lands, Archeology Proves the Bible, and The Great Pyramid and the Bible. These were informative, interesting, and inspirational!

Testimony meetings were held throughout the week with brethren taking opportunity to express their love, gratitude, thankfulness, appreciation, joy and peace. Personal experiences demonstrating God's providential overruling were shared.

Vesper services consisted of songs and other musical selections. A multi-national choir sang hymns in different languages, blending many tongues and voices into a joyful noise unto the Lord.

Sunday school programs provided spiritual direction for younger Bible students. Meeting together, children from different countries learned a variety of Bible lessons. One session dealt with the Ten Commandments. Material was presented in English, French and Polish, the teacher being assisted by two interpreters. Such multi-lingual teaching is challenging: but with the Lord's help it is possible.

The convention closed with a moving praise service. A chorus, singing the strains of God Be With You in several languages offered opportunity for the various nationalities to rise and wave their farewell greeting to the convention at large. It was a tearful farewell.

It is difficult to express one's reflections after attending such a unique gathering. Many felt that their future prayers for their brethren living around the world would be more personal and meaningful now that they had met some of those brethren. Even though there were language barriers these were overcome by smiles, handshakes, hugs and kisses.

Descriptions of the week varied. To some it was a haven of rest. To others it represented a foretaste of the kingdom. To all it was a dream come true and a privilege to have attended. If we continue faithful to God unto death we are assured that we will have the universe as our home and God's throne will be the grand convention site for all eternity.

"In the sweet by and by, we shall meet to be parted no more." This hope and prospect was frequently mentioned during the convention. May we all strive the more earnestly to attain it.

- T. M. Thomassen

Entered into Rest

Anna Czohara, CA
William H Weyhe, MA
Martha Jacobs, WI
E.E. Martin, AUSTRALIA
Norma Putnam, RI
Thomas Brooks, FL