

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## This is That

*"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" - Acts 2:16; 1-37*

Sometimes the smallest words pack the greatest wallop! These three words are among the simplest in the English language, yet they establish a principle governing Bible prophecy. There are such things as divine equivalents. Certain things equal others so far as God is concerned. Some things are of the same "order" or "kind." Full communion with God demands that we understand God's law of correspondences. "This" IS "that."

The Hebrews' writer grasped our difficulty. He wrote,

"... when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Heb. 5:12).

It became necessary for him to conduct a class (through his letters) in what we might call remedial Christian teaching. What should have been understood had not been grasped. His contemporaries did not understand many things, but one misunderstanding was in the relationship between "prophecy" and "current events" as shown in our Acts theme text.

Such a simple statement, "This is that." But wait! The facts seem confused, don't they? Peter spoke of the Pentecostal experience and compared it to the prophecy of Joel. Compare these two records and you will find significant differences!

(A) Was the Apostle mistaken in saying that "This is that which was spoken"? These two records are not the same!

(B) How do we account for the differences between what Peter saw and what Joel prophesied?

(C) If Peter was correct, and these two dissimilar entities are somehow similar, then how do we understand these words: "this is that"?

### **(A) Was the Apostle Mistaken?**

If one is to retain their confidence in the authenticity of divine revelation this question can scarcely cause more than a moment's doubt. Every evidence of faith tells us that Peter was influenced by the spirit of God in the same manner as those other men of old who spoke as they, too, were moved by the Holy Spirit. His words being a part of the holy Writ, we must cast off as impossible the possibility that Peter erred and seek instead an understanding of the words as they were written.

## **(B) What were the differences and how do we account for them?**

The account of the Pentecostal experience is too long for us to cite here. Yet, carefully comparing the details of the Pentecostal experience, you will find that they differed significantly from the prophecy of Joel. Pentecost opened the Christian era. There was a noise. That Noise filled the house. There was an appearance-"cloven tongues like as fire." These "tongues" sat on each of them. The believers were "filled with the Holy Spirit" so that they spoke in tongues. Jews of every nation took part (not just Judean Jews or Galilean Jews).

Notice the details Peter cites from the account of Joel. The prophecy concerned the "last days." At that time God would pour out his spirit upon ALL flesh. Some would prophecy. Young people would see visions. Old men would dream dreams. The spirit would enable prophesies. There would be displays of wonder in heaven, signs in the earth, blood, fire, and smoke. The sun would be darkened. The moon would turn to blood. Whoever called upon the name of the Lord would be saved.

Clearly, some of these facts do not apply to the Pentecostal experience. Recognizing this difference, those believers who abide in fear are tempted to harmonize Peter's statement by analogizing all the details of the account. They have sought symbolic fulfillments which fit in varying degrees with the experience and the prophecy. But by yielding to the letter of the word rather than to the spirit of the word, they miss a great blessing.

The Apostle clearly says, "*This is that about which Joel spoke.*"

## **(C) How do we understand these words "this is that"?**

If the similarity is quite obviously NOT in the details, then where is there any similarity? It is in the "order" or "magnitude" of the occurrence. What happened at Pentecost was as monumental as the prophecy uttered by Joel. The signs were different. The manifestations were not the same, yet Peter does not hesitate to call this an experience of the same order of magnitude as that described by the prophet. Peter and those with him recognized Pentecost as resulting from the outpouring of God's power into their lives.

The Master's ministry offers a parallel example. He used this illustration of "likeness" with Nicodemus, saying, "so [like the wind] IS *everyone that is born of the spirit.*" The wind is like everyone born of the spirit. This IS *that*.

These examples (Hebrews, Acts, and John) point out the difference between the natural mind and the spirit. The human mind seeks "equalities" because of its inherent weakness and limitation. The Spirit of God demonstrates that there is a power that lies behind various manifestations or signs, and it is the power that is more significant than the manifestation. It was more important to all of mankind that Jesus had the power to do miracles, than it is to any one person that Jesus chose to heal them. Until one recognizes the power, through the spirit of God, there cannot be any "*spiritual*" mindedness because there is no recognition of the spirit or its work. Consequently, there can be no submission to the spirit of God. How can one submit to something they are unaware of? As powerful as God is, he does not influence us against our will.

Jesus occasionally manifested a shortness with those who continually whined for a "sign" from God. Such incidents are on the same order as our previous illustrations. Showing natural men miracles would not bring about their conversion (that is, their recognition of their own sinfulness and their need of him). He knew that he had shown them enough. They should have been able to

understand that he who possessed the power to perform such miracles was Messiah! They should have known that he deserved their attention, their discipleship, yea their worship.

The lesson of "this is that" is as important in 1990 as it was in A.D. 33. Today we face questions about unfulfilled prophecies. We hear of messengers who claim to have come from God. We face the scoffing and scorn of unbelievers. Current events swirl around us while the natural mind seeks something solid to lay hold upon. Relying upon their flesh, some can be satisfied only with those human equalities between each little detail of events which justifies their understanding of how these things were to be "fulfilled" according to various writings. In pouring over the details (Jesus might have called them "signs") many become so engrossed in fitting natural events to spiritual truths that they fail to recognize the source of power which lies behind all signs.

Pray God that he teach us to rely upon his spirit. Seek, in your own studies, to recognize the power which empowers the miracles and prophetic fulfillments that surround us. Then it will be true that you are able to do all things through Christ who will be strengthening you. Grasp the spirit of God like one would grasp a sword-to be used in His power (not our own) in the dividing of all the experiences of life. While always acknowledging the guiding power of God, even *"by his eye,"* as the psalmist expresses it (Psa. 32:8), go further on to perfection, i.e., maturity. If you are satisfied merely to recognize the importance of tiny details in your life, you will be grasping a puny little penknife instead of the sword of the Spirit. Such a tool is fine for excising little imperfections from your food, but it leaves you unprotected from the attacks of the great Accuser.

There are times when "this is that" in our own lives. One would scarcely expect all of the so-called "progress" of the past twenty centuries to vanish away so that the battle of the "last day" could be fought with literal horses and literal chariots (as described by the prophets). How, then, can the prophets be understood? Can we only discover their importance by analyzing and re-analyzing the literal details recorded? Or do we need faith's vision to recognize when "this is that." *"Where there is no vision the people perish"* (Prov. 29:18).

Can we not, in our times, recognize the order of magnitude of events around us? Can we not see the marshalling of opposing forces for the battle of the great day? Is it necessary to explain every recorded detail in the Word of God in order for us to sustain faith in his plans and purposes? If so, Paul would not have warned us that not many wise or noble are called. Contemporaries of Jesus sought knowledge: the wisdom of the Fathers. Their insistence upon answers from God in the format that they had specified caused them to stumble over the identity of the long promised One. In our day, we face the same problem.

Much has been received by the people of God. The Scriptures appear at times like an open book. But of that day and hour no man knows, not even the angels in heaven (Matt. 24:36).

We know that Peter spoke under the influence of God. How do we know? He recognized by the eye of faith what the eye of natural sight did not see. Joel did describe what Peter saw. Peter recognized the same power at work in what he witnessed as Joel had described in his day. Faith gave him this victory, not 20/20 eyesight. The Spirit of God overcame what reason and logic could not perceive. It seems that in this instance Peter also endured as "seeing him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27). He left us a clue to the deciphering of events in our days through those three little words: "this IS that."

- Peter J. Pazucha

## Faith on Trial

The trial of our faith to which the Lord and the Apostles refer is a trial, not only of our intellectual recognition of Divine Truth, but also our heart reliance upon God. In both respects, every true child of God will find his faith severely tried. As a soldier of Christ let him not fail to be armed for the conflict. If an attack is made upon the intellectual foundation of our faith, we should see to it that we have a "thus saith the Lord" for every item of our belief. If the foundations of faith become unsettled, the superstructure cannot stand when the winds and floods of adversity and temptation beat against it. It is your faith that is on trial now.

In the calmer days when the sun of favor shone brightly upon you, you were quietly laying the foundation of a knowledge of the truth and rearing the superstructure of Christian character. Now you are in the furnace to be proven: summon, therefore, all your courage; fortify your patience; nerve yourself to endurance; hold fast to your hope; call to mind the promises, they are still yours; and cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. In quietness and confidence shall be your strength. "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him," and faith has gained her victory.

## The Inelegance of Haste

There is a prevalent idea that says to be busy is a sign of importance in large business and large achievements. This is a serious mistake. An experienced person always mistrusts the man who hurries, for he fails in emergencies. Serenity of mind and leisurely action are necessary to fine work of any kind. It is in leisure that the mind assimilates best.

Scipio Africanus said, "I am never less at leisure than when at leisure." This is a rare bit of wisdom which reflective minds may take to heart. If we admit to the truth of this statement, we begin to understand the inelegance of the hurried manner. Haste is wasteful and inconsistent with fine, enduring results. Haste is often caused by a man losing control of himself. It is suggestive of an uneasy, indecisive mind.

A distinction, however, should be recognized between activity and excited hurry. Slowness is not the same as being self-possessed. Activity with self-possession is the desirable condition.

## "Instant in Season"

If while I walk the busy mart,  
I find there one whose fainting heart  
By some kind, sympathetic word  
To new life might be stirred,  
Lord, help me say it now!

Or, if upon the thorny road  
I meet another 'neath a load  
Of sorrow, which my tears might share,  
And thus the burden bear,  
Lord, help me shed them now!

If any ointment, rare and sweet,  
I long to pour upon his feet,  
To rest and soothe them by the way,  
My hand let nothing stay,  
Lord, help me bring it now!

- G. W. Siebert

## Peniel

*"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day."  
- Genesis 32:24*

So remarkable is this incident which befell the patriarch Jacob on his journey home from his long service in Padan-aram, that it has caused a diversity of opinion regarding its exact nature. Some contend that we here have the account of a vision, such as befell Jacob at Bethel; others, maintain that the narrative can be resolved into a myth or poetic fable. This view supposes it enshrines some spiritual truth, portraying a spiritual conflict in the soul of Jacob. Neither of these suggestions appeals as being the true explanation. A careful consideration leads to the conclusion that this was an actual happening, that a man was really there with the patriarch during that memorable night.

Regarding this mysterious personage, Jacob himself says, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." The Prophet Hosea, alluding to the narrative before us says, "Jacob had power over the angel; he wept and made supplication unto him" (Hos. 12:4). While this was both a literal and historical occurrence, yet, as has well been said, "though the form of this wrestling here was corporeal, the essence and the object of it was spiritual." Without question Jacob was in deep distress when he crossed the brook Jabbok that night. In the mysterious man who came to him, Jacob recognized the Bethel angel upon whom he threw himself for help once before—help which no mere human power could render. The same angel to whom he cried with passionate earnestness for a blessing was with him again. The physical wrestling was but the agonizing of an earnest heart, which took this manner of expressing itself from the recognition of a spiritual presence manifesting itself under a human form. Considered from this standpoint, four great lessons reveal themselves, with blessings for the spiritual Israelite who diligently considers them. In thus considering, one will find himself pictured in the experience of Jacob.

### Loneliness in Distress

Here is an illustration of the loneliness of all real distress. Who has not experienced that terrible solitude when sorrow or struggle isolate us from our fellows? There is a certain solitariness about every man, though we may be gregarious by nature. There is a secret closet in every heart where the soul keeps its "skeleton," and to which, after sending wife and children across the brook, as Jacob had done, it retires in times of sadness and isolation. Another has well said,

"There is something in every soul that is never told to mortal, but which, as if to make up for its being withheld from others, has a strange fascination for ourselves; and in every moment of silence it is heard sounding in our secret ear. Even those nearest and dearest to us know not of these things. They are kept for solitude; nay, such is sometimes their power over us that they draw *us* into retirement that they may speak to us awhile."

The character of the things thus hidden in the secret chamber of men's hearts differs exceedingly, both in different individuals, and in the same individual at different times. Perhaps it is the memory of guilt. One thinks of Cain, who in dreadful isolation wandered over the earth with the mark of God's imprinting for all to see. Perhaps it is the pangs of sorrow as when David, leaving those by who surrounded him, went to the solitude of the chamber over the gate of Mahanaim, and paced its floors in anguish, saying, "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

In others, it may be moments of temptation, as when Jesus went forth from his baptism into the wilderness that he might confront and vanquish the prince of darkness. Again, they may be times of anguish as when Jesus, in Gethsemane withdrew from his disciples, and threw himself upon the ground to weep and pray alone.

These experiences reveal the loneliness of grief. In the case of Jacob, guilt and suspense were the troublers of his soul. He is about to meet his brother once more, and does not know whether the interview is to be one of reconciliation or revenge. He cannot forget how, years before, he had obtained Esau's birthright. Though he has taken all proper precautions to preserve the members of his company from harm, has used all likely means to soften his brother's heart, has committed his case in simple, fervent prayer to God, yet the suspense of his heart is such that he can endure no society for the time. Having seen his encampment safely settled for the night, he recrosses the ford to be alone with his God, to let out all the bitter waters of his deep anxiety.

Is it not so with us all? What of that act of thoughtlessness which we committed, which drew in its train consequences of the saddest sort of which we had not for a moment dreamed? What of that terrible temptation which even now, as it comes surging on, seems as if it would sweep us from our foothold?

Can we forget that impending danger, which appears to be hanging over us like a cloud laden with ruin? These are not themes which we can speak of at the meeting-place, or to the casual acquaintance, or even to our most intimate and confidential friend. We crave human sympathy and consolation, but at the very moment of craving we realize how vain the longing is. The sympathy and consolations of others, though kindly meant, are often off the mark. Every deep sorrow or struggle isolates us from our fellows. The keener the suffering, the more thorough its isolation. We are thus, so to speak, islanded by spiritual distress. Like Jacob here, sleepless in our solitude, we look out through the darkness for some Peniel angel to come to our relief. In the words of another:

"When we have gone through in the imagination the whole circle of our resources and found them nothing and ourselves powerless, there comes a strange, a nameless dread, a horrible feeling of insecurity, which gives the consciousness of a want and forces us to feel out for something that is mightier than flesh and blood to lean upon."

There are no more weird lines in literature than these in "The Ancient Mariner":

Alone! alone! all, all alone!  
Alone on the wide sea!...  
So lonely 'twas that God himself  
Scarce seemed there to be!

That is the very climax of distress! Only they who have passed through it can fully understand the importance of these words: "Jacob was left alone." At such time may no one approach us thoroughly save he who once did walk over the very billows of trouble, to his suffering disciples' help, our Lord Jesus.

## **My Help Cometh From the Lord**

In this dreary solitude, our only effectual resource is God. Just so, in his loneliness and perplexity, the patriarch is approached by a mysterious stranger, in whom God is in part concealed, and in part also revealed. Jacob saw a man whom he could freely approach as a fellow man. There was that about the man which made Jacob feel that he was more than man, and that he had in him the very element of strength which at the moment Jacob so sorely needed. The divine presence was not manifested as it was with Moses in the terribleness of Sinai. Jacob's heart would have been appalled; the fear of Esau would have been swallowed up in his terror of the Lord. He would have fled from the awful Presence. But now there is a man before him to whom he can speak with confidence. There is more than a man, even one to whom the chamber of Jacob's heart is no secret and who is omnipotently able to help him. Here is the very helper whom he needs; and so he casts himself upon him and cries out for succor.

How beautifully this foreshadows Jesus Christ, the helper sent from above in a form that can be understood by the needy one. As a man he came to earth and dwelt among us. He revealed the matchless love of his father and taught us, when in agony and crisis, to cling to him. We might fear to seek help from the Majesty above if that majesty did not reveal his boundless love and mercy through the gift of his son. Jesus comes to us as a brother and yet mightier than any human brother.

Homer relates a story in connection with the parting of Hector and Andromache. The hero was going to his last battle. His wife accompanied him as far as the gates of the city, followed by a nurse carrying in her arms their infant child. When he was about to depart, Hector held out his hands to receive the little one. Terrified by the burnished helmet and the waving plume, the child turned away and clung crying to the nurse's neck. In a moment, divining the cause of the infant's alarm, the warrior took off his helmet and laid it on the ground. Then, smiling through his tears, the little fellow leaped into his father's arms. Now, similarly, Jehovah of hosts, Jehovah with the helmet on, would frighten us weak and guilty ones away. In the person of his son Jesus he has, as it were, laid that helmet off. Now the guiltiest and the neediest are encouraged to go to his fatherly embrace and avail themselves of his support. The blood of Jesus speaks peace.

What in the heart lies deepest ever,  
Unbreathed by mortal lip abroad,  
And heard by ear of mortal never,  
Takes voice before the throne of God.  
The silence of our spirit tells  
Its tale aloud where Jesus dwells.

To him therefore, O burdened soul, repair, and he will give relief. Is it *sin* that is aching at the conscience? He knows it and can give thee pardon through his sacrificial blood. Is it sorrow that is wringing thy heart? Then, though its cause may be unknown to them who sit beside thee, he is already familiar with it and can give thee solace. Is it the fear of some impending calamity that is darkening thy spirit? He is acquainted with it and can sustain thee through it. Is it temptation that is beleaguering thy soul? He has already seen it and can garrison thy heart's fortress against every enemy. Is it the meeting of some offended brother, harder to be won than a city, that is weighing down thy life? He understands thy case and can give thee deliverance. Yea, brother, sister, whosoever thou art, and whatsoever be that suffering which has today sent thee across the brook in solitude, Jesus Christ is thy resource. He will give thee perfect sympathy and effectual help. To him therefore, betake thyself. Throw thyself on him with the wailing cry of Hezekiah on thy lips "O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me," and he will give thee strength.

## Importunity Will Prevail

The narrative teaches further that our first application to this divine friend may be met with seeming repulse but that believing-importunity-will ultimately prevail. One gathers from the record of this peculiar incident that when the patriarch cast himself upon the mysterious one, the stranger tried to shake him off. The more he attempted to do this, the more Jacob clung to him, until at length, touching the hollow of the patriarch's thigh, he deprived him of all power to stand. Jacob, though his limbs were paralyzed, would not be turned aside, but throwing his whole weight upon the heavenly stranger, cried, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Faith receives its reward! The moment of extreme helplessness becomes that of richest victory. To have God's strength, Jacob must lose his own. He prevails, and the answer comes, "Thy name shall be no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and hast prevailed."

The lesson of importunity recalls the New Testament story of the Syrophenician woman. In deep anguish of soul she came to Jesus, saying, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." There was no response. Those ears that never before were deaf to the *cry* of suffering seemed closed to her: "He answered her not a *word*." She *would* not be thus shaken off! She renewed her appeal so urgently that even the disciples seemed to be ashamed and said, "Send her away, for she crieth after us." To this he replied, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." One would have thought that such a speech would have repelled her. But no. She came nearer than ever, and fell at his feet and worshipped him, saying, "Lord, help me." To this he makes response, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs." Ah! there he touched the hollow of the thigh, and seemed almost to cast her to the earth; but no, she clings more than ever to him.

From his rebuff she draws a plea, as she meekly makes reply,

"Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their master's table. I did not ask the children's bread; what I seek is but to thee as a crumb from off thy table, which even *a. dog* may eat."

Then came the commendation of her faith, as of Jacob: "O daughter! great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Her daughter was made whole from that very hour (cf. Matt. 15:22-28).

This beautiful lesson of importunity is also found in the incident when, walking over the waters toward his worn-out disciples, Jesus made as if to pass them by. He did this in order that he might evoke their earnest request that he should come to them. Again, on the way to Emmaus, Jesus made as if he would have gone further, just that he might draw out their earnest request, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent."

All this should teach us to guard against misunderstanding the Lord. When our earnest applications appear to be met with indifference, our importunity seems only to call forth repeated repulse, the yearning earnestness of the entreaty in our heart feels as if it has lost all strength, even as Jacob's limb went out from beneath him at the angel's touch, let us remember. Remember that God thus designs, by the discipline of resistance, to develop our faith into greater strength. He makes us cling to him all the more, so we say, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." That is a wholesome weakness which throws our entire weight on Christ. Then we are in a fair position to realize Paul's paradox, "When I am weak, then am I strong."

Not only for the strengthening of our faith may the answer be deferred. Jesus may design thereby to open our eyes to our real need. We note in Jacob's case that although it was suspense concerning Esau that first oppressed him, there is no mention of Esau in this wrestling. Jacob discovers that he needs something far more important than reconciliation to his older brother. He wants to know God's name, that is, his relation to him. Thus, through the apparent denial of the minor request, he is brought to feel his need of something greater than he had at first thought of asking.

This still occurs with God's children. When we, in temporal trial, cross the Jabbok to plead, God seems only to push us away from himself. Our trial becomes heavier until we are driven at length into our deepest need. There, we are constrained to ask "What is Thy name? O that thou wouldest bless me indeed!" The earthly emergency is forgotten in our spiritual extremity. The higher blessings of holiness engross all our earnestness. So it happens that the delay of God to answer our prayers in earthly distress has been the beginning of his answer. To that constant craving for the knowledge of himself, which is the deepest aspiration of every consecrated heart, he finally gives answer. Let us give God time. As the result of our earnestness, we shall find that while the delay has permanently benefited our own souls, the offended Esau has also been appeased. Let us never forget that if we would secure these results, we must hold him fast and refuse to let him go.

### **Peniel - the Face of God**

Our final lessons teach that such an experience as we have been tracing always leaves its mark on the individual. It also renders the place where it was undergone memorable. Jacob possessed several memorials from his night of wrestling. First, he "halted upon his thigh." As the earth bears the mark of the tremendous upheavals and flames it has endured, so does the spiritual soul show rents and chasms like the steep mountains. The spirit of a man is marked by the fires of those trials through which he has been made to pass. We may see in the character and disposition of an individual the indications or results of those inner struggles through which he has been brought.

Who can fail to see the difference between Israel and Jacob? The halting was but the corporeal indication of a spiritual result. All the years before, Jacob lay stranded on the sandbank of seeming deceit. On this Peniel night there came such a spring tide of devotional feeling and fervor that it lifted him up and floated him off. From this point on *the Jacob* -- or "supplanter" -- in him disappears and the *Israel* -- or "prince with God" -- comes into view.

This difference is noticeable by considering his history to this point, and comparing it from here to his death. Now named Israel, he becomes more lovable, more meek, more holy. Whereas before we are not drawn particularly to him, now he attracts us as to a father. When his children stand around his deathbed to receive his dying blessing, we feel almost as one of them and are disposed to join in their lamentations. That brief night of wrestling left an impression on the patriarch which time, instead of effacing, only chiseled into deeper relief and brought out in deeper outline.

This has been the case with ourselves. Does not some crisis in our own experience set, as it were, our disposition so that its individuality is at once recognized by those around us? While the metal is heated, the die comes down upon it and stamps its image permanently there. It is the work of a brief space, but the impression lasts while the metal endures. So in the white heat of the soul during some time of inner agony, it becomes soft and impressible. Then comes God's image upon it, making an impression which neither time nor change can efface. This is well understood, and whenever we see a man of very marked Christian individuality, whether for tenderness or ruggedness, we instinctively conclude that some Peniel nights have made him what he is.

These hallowed places are memorable indeed. Like Jacob who "called the place Peniel," but did not as at Bethel set up a pillar, so we need no outward memorial. The remembrance of "seeing God face to face" is indelibly burned upon our hearts. These are places that mark our progress heavenward. These are places, the trials of our spiritual way, when in a very special manner God in Christ has come to us with strengthening and cheer. They are the battlefields where Christ enables us to overcome self and sin. Each trial leads to that blessed state where our conflicts shall be over; when the final victory has been won. "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

- W. J. Siekman

## **The Offering Of Jesus**

The perfect spotlessness of Jesus and his devotedness to God was a sweet feast to the God of heaven. Here was something according to his taste. Here, at least, he found satisfaction.

We err when thinking of the offering of Jesus without thinking of his life. We look but little into his ways. Yet it is his ways throughout his pilgrimage, even to the way he laid down his life, in which God so delights. Our views are so selfish and meager. If we are saved, we seek no further. Most saints, therefore, have very little thought of Christ's offering, except as for sin, "*delivered for our offenses. God*, however, puts the burnt-offering first: for this was peculiarly his portion in Jesus. And just in proportion as a believer grows in grace, we shall find him turning intelligently to the Gospels; from them adding to ' the knowledge he has of the work of Jesus' greater knowledge of his ways and person; with earnest desire to know more of the Lord himself, and how in all things he was a "*sweet savor to Jehovah*."

- A. Jukes

## **Membership In the Institute**

The By-Laws for the government of the Pastoral Bible Institute provide that membership in the Institute shall be extended to donors of the membership fee who are in harmony with the purpose, spirit, and policy of the Institute, and who will support the Institute in all reasonable ways as he or she shall deem to be the Lord's will. The Institute has continuously expressed its purpose that all who desire it shall receive the magazine, "*The Herald of Christs Kingdom*," and provision is made for all who find it impractical to pay the regular rate of subscription shall receive the "Herald" without charge upon request. The membership roll of the Institute contains names of some who have not been receiving the Herald as far as our subscription lists disclose, and who have taken no part in the election of directors.' It is believed that some of these names represent brethren who are deceased or have ceased to maintain an interest in the work of the Institute.

In order that the membership roll may be kept current, the rule has been adopted that when persons holding voting memberships in the Institute shall for twenty four consecutive months continue as nonsubscribers to the "Herald" (by nonsubscriber is meant one whose name does not appear on the subscription list, and has no reference to whether or not payment is made for the "Herald"), their names shall be removed from the roll of membership, unless they shall within that time inform the Institute that they are receiving the "Herald" through someone else and reading the same and desire that their names shall be continued on the roll of membership, in which case their names shall be so retained on the roll.

## The Spirit of True Reform

Nothing is more essential to any work of reform than that it be conducted in a manner that will appeal to those whom it is seeking to influence. In other words, reformers should reform with a spirit aimed at producing the desired result. This is important, especially to believers, engaged as we are in a work of reformation which affects the welfare of mankind.

With what spirit should one promulgate God's Plan of the Ages? By its nature, the activity perpetually places the workers at controversy with popular theology. Discrimination and patience are necessary to confine that controversy to the ideas that are involved. We must not involve the persons who hold those ideas in our battles. We are not fighting against persons but against the false ideas which they teach. How naturally we adopt the attitude of the two disciples who wished to call down fire upon the ungrateful Samaritans. Christ rebuked them saying, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of."

The spirit of reform is always identical to a Christian spirit. It leads persons to maintain an inoffensive spirit towards those whose erroneous opinions he feels called upon to oppose. The spirit of reform does not use ridicule or contempt, nor does it indulge in sharp challenges for the purpose of showing one's opponent their weaknesses. It never leads to a lack of respect for authority, even though their characters may not be the best, nor to forget that degree of deference due to those in positions of eminence. The spirit of reform offers "honor to whom honor is due." Firm and uncompromising in its zeal for truth, it combines zeal with humility and charity towards all. It is, in short, the spirit which develops the fruits of the spirit, among which are long-suffering, gentleness ... meekness.

Many persons mistakenly suppose that an absence of moral principle in any individual makes them a proper subject of hatred. This is supposed even though results in the heart of the hater is inevitably evil. There is a certain respect due to all earthly authority, regardless of character. Just as "Michael the archangel, when contending with the Devil he disputed concerning the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, 'The Lord rebuke thee, "' so with us. It cannot be proper to accuse our earthly opponents, whose motives we cannot judge and with whom we are on a par in receiving God's unmerited favor. Such a course is not in keeping with Christian dignity and integrity. The cause of truth does not need such doubtful aids.

Christian reformers do well to study the spirit and methods of the Lord and the Apostles. They were patient under provocation and persecution. They addressed authorities with moderation. They treasured truth. They avoided giving needless offense. These men left examples worthy of imitation. With these characteristics they combined Christian love; abstaining from judging the characters or motives of even their opponents. By such a spirit and using such methods the truth can be best commended to thinking minds.

- Bible Study Monthly

## Jesus' Departure Foretold

I am going away to my Father --  
My Father is greater than I.  
The world shall see me no more,  
But you shall see me on high.

In my Father's house are many mansions,  
As yet there is no place for you.  
You are a new creation,  
I will prepare a place for you.

I will return to receive you  
to myself in the resurrection day.  
Now I must take my departure,  
It is expedient that I go away.

And I will send the comforter,  
The holy spirit, at Pentecost.  
If I go not to present the merit  
Of my sacrifice all will be lost.

My Father will glorify me  
With more glory than I had before;  
You shall be spirit beings  
And be with me forever more.

- A. Lazarus

## The Admonitions Of Peter

Jesus had just partaken of his last Passover, instituting the Memorial Supper. After supper, he and his disciples went to the Mount of Olives. They neared a place called Gethsemane, and Satan must have been right there with them invisibly present. He would certainly want to be on the scene of his great triumph which was about to take place -- the betrayal of Jesus with a kiss, by his own disciple Judas Iscariot. If the disciples had known that the Prince of Darkness was at their side, they would have been terrified, but Jesus knew he was there.

Here Jesus did an astonishing thing -- he read Satan's mind! We know this because he turned to Simon Peter and said, "Simon, Simon; behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." This must have startled Peter; so the Lord reassured him, saying, "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Then he added something which Peter would remember and act upon in the days to come -- "And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31, 32). To be converted means to "turn," "to change." Peter's triple denial of the Lord and the remorse that followed converted his headstrong and impetuous will to a humble and contrite heart (Psa. 51:17). We read, "And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."

After the crucifixion, the resurrection, and several appearances of Jesus to his disciples, there was a time when the disciples did not know just what to do. One day about seven of them (including Peter), who used to be fishermen, gathered at the seashore. They enjoyed the familiar sights and sounds of the sea. They were of the same mind as to what they would do, but each hesitated to make the first move. You can well imagine who did make the first move. We read, "Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth and entered into a ship immediately" (John 21:3). Do you see what a natural leader Peter was? He said, "I'm going fishing!" The others said, "We'll go fishing with you!" They all went fishing.

This incident illustrates how easy it is to lose direction -- to misplace one's energies when the leader is gone and the objective is not clear. These were the ones Jesus had for over three years made "fishers of men." He left them for a few days and now, once again, they were back to being "fishers of fish!"

All that night they caught nothing. They tried repeatedly. No luck. Perhaps in the silent watches of the night they began to have some doubts as to the wisdom of going back into the fishing business. Early the next morning, Jesus appeared to them for the third time since his resurrection. He revealed himself in a characteristic way, by a miraculous incident. This they could instantly recognize because they had witnessed his miracles for three and a half years. Objects were indistinct in the early morning light, but at the direction of a man on shore, whose face they could not recognize, they let down their net once more. After catching not one single fish all night, their net now contained over one hundred great fishes. They knew it was Jesus on shore. They knew by the bounty of his gift. "Great fishes" must weigh at least thirty pounds each. So, one moment they had nothing; the next moment they were practically engulfed by two tons of fish. It took a miracle to keep their net from being torn by the weight of the catch (cf. John 21:11). Beside being a gesture of recognition, why did Jesus allow them to make this stupendous catch? Was it to encourage them to remain in the fishing business? I think not; quite to the contrary -- two tons of fish would have a considerable market value, the money could be used to finance their return to the ministry as "fishers of men."

When the disciples came ashore, Jesus had food prepared for them. He invited them to eat, and he served them the food. Think of it! This was no longer the man Christ Jesus. This was the

resurrected Jesus! A mighty spirit being, a being who said of himself, "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). He made them sit down, and he served them! No, he had not changed in character. He was still the same Jesus, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. This was the same Jesus who taught them that the chiefest among them should be a servant (Matt. 20:27,28), and demonstrated it by washing their feet. He still serves us our spiritual food today if we have not left his table.

Now we read from the record in John 21:15, 17, "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these" (these boats, these nets, these earthly interests)?

"He saith unto him, Yea Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him: feed my lambs. Jesus saith unto him again, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him: Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him: feed my sheep [or tend my sheep, as the *Diaglott* has it]. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved, because he said unto him the third time: Lovest thou me? And he said unto him: Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, feed my sheep" (author's emphasis).

Yes, when Jesus asked Peter the third time, Peter understood. Three times he had denied the Master even though he loved him deeply. He had been remorseful and heartbroken, and now he was required to affirm his love three times as if to expiate. This was the punishment his Lord imposed, the only punishment he imposed, a gentle punishment indeed. With it, Jesus imposed a duty upon Peter -- a duty by which Peter could prove his love. The duty was threefold: "...feed my lambs; tend my sheep; feed my sheep." Under these circumstances, would not Peter have a tremendous incentive, an eager and consuming desire to comply with the Lord's wishes? He had miserably failed his Lord before; now he was accorded a chance to prove his love and devotion. This time he would not fail! He must not fail!

He did not fail! In his years of faithful ministry, he fed the Lord's lambs -- those immature in the truth. He tended the Lord's sheep as they matured, warning them against false teachers and damnable heresies, and denial of the ransom (2 Peter 2:1,2). He fed the Lord's sheep -- those established in the truth -- with meat in due season for them. He stirred them up and stimulated them to progress in the race for the prize of the high calling. No, you may be sure he would not let the Lord down again! As he said:

"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance" (2 Peter 1:12,13).

We are going to consider some of Peter's admonitions to us -- we who are the Lord's lambs and sheep. These admonitions which are a part of Peter's efforts, to feed and tend us, to prove his great love for his Master.

We are told in our text to add to our faith certain things. This implies that we can't even start to carry out these instructions unless we have this faith. This automatically weeds out a lot of people -- even good people. Some people in the world are naturally noble and good, of excellent character. They prefer righteousness to evil and so order their lives. Are they thereby qualifying for the prize of the high calling? No! Not for a minute! There must be a foundation of faith, a faith of a certain kind, before the structure built upon it can be recognized by the Lord.

Peter addresses the words of our text, "To them that have obtained like precious faith with us" (2 Peter 1:1). Not just faith, but "like precious faith." Mere faith in God is not enough. James 2:19 says, "The devils also believe and tremble." What is required is an absolute faith in the redemption accomplished through the precious blood of Christ. A firm belief in the application of that blood to ourselves is required. By such belief, we have a standing before God being justified, accepted, and begotten in the race for the high calling. We have an abiding confidence in God's plan for salvation, not only for ourselves but for the whole world. It is upon this precious faith, a faith like the faith of the apostles, that we are to build.

Then we read, "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue..." (1 Peter 1:5). The word "virtue" here is better translated "fortitude." This is strength of character in righteousness. This implies the cultivation of the strictest integrity in all our dealings, both with God and with our fellowmen. It means scrupulous honesty, justice, and truth. The Psalmist defines this characteristic in Psalm 15:

"Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoreth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved ... He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart."

The same thought is expressed in Proverbs 11:20, "They that are of a froward heart, are abomination to the Lord; but such as are upright in their ways, are his delight."

One who has "escaped the corruption that is in the world" and is qualified to become a partaker of the divine nature walks uprightly and works righteousness. He does even more than that! He speaks the truth in his heart. His motives are pure. He takes the truth to heart; and: "Out of the fullness of the heart, the mouth speaketh." He speaks the truth gently and without malice.

Again from Psalm 15, "He backbiteth not with his tongue; nor doeth evil to his neighbor; nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor." One that is striving for the prize of the high calling should not indulge in evil -- speaking or character assassination. One who knows the importance of developing character will not destroy another's character. There is a poem, translated from Arabic, which contains some excellent advice: "If you are tempted to reveal a tale someone has told, about another, make it pass, before you speak, three gates of gold. These narrow gates: First, 'Is it True?' Then, 'Is it needful.' In your mind give a truthful answer. The last is narrowest, 'Is it kind?' If to reach your lips at last it passes through these gateways three, then you may tell the tale, nor fear what the result of speech may be."

The frightening thing about evil speaking is that the harm done is usually irreparable. There is a story illustrating this point: When a man asked the Moslem prophet Mohammed how he might make amends for falsely accusing a friend, he was told to go and place a goose feather on each doorstep in the village. He did this. The next day Mohammed said, "Now go and collect all the feathers." The man protested, "That's impossible! A wind blew all night, and the feathers are scattered beyond recall." "Exactly," said Mohammed. "And so it is with the reckless words you spoke against your neighbor."

Along the same line, we read in Ephesians 4:29-32,

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted; forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you."

### **"Bitterness, and wrath, and anger."**

Anger has been compared with drunkenness and insanity. The speech and actions of a drunkard or an insane person are no longer under the control of logical mind. This control is also lost when angry. We lose our tempers -- we lose the power that tempers and logically controls our actions. Aristotle is quoted as saying, "Anybody can become angry. That is easy. But to be angry with the right person, and to the right degree, and at the right time, and for the right purpose, and in the right way -- that is not within everyone's power, and is not easy."

The only person I can think of who could qualify in these respects, was Jesus Christ. When he was angry with the Scribes, Pharisees, and money -- changers he could read their hearts, minds, the motives, and innermost thoughts. We can not! Someone may say, "My anger is righteous anger, as Jesus' anger was." Perhaps it is, in a measure. Jesus' anger was truly righteous anger because he himself was truly righteous. Not being righteous, how can my anger be righteous anger?

"There is none righteous, no not one" (Rom. 3:10).

Then we read, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted; forgiving one another." The fallen human nature is a bundle of perverse and illogical contradictions. For example, we can be our most charming and gracious selves to utter strangers. However, familiarity breeds contempt, and we often become careless in our attitudes to those who are closest to us. As the poet expresses it:

But there's one truth in life I've found,  
While journeying east and west;  
The only folks we really wound are those we love the best.  
We flatter those we hardly know,  
We please the fleeting guest;  
And deal full many a thoughtless blow to those we love the best.

More from Psalm 15,

"Oh Lord, who may abide in Thy tent? ... [He] in whose eyes a reprobate is despise, but who honors those who fear the Lord..." (NAS).

It is easy to love them that love the Lord. They are our brethren, our spiritual associates, fellow-partakers of the precious promises, joint-heirs of Christ and of God. But to love an enemy, a vile person, that is different! True, we are told to love our enemies, but we are not told to love the vileness of our enemies. There is a big difference. I remember that when I was first told that I must hate a man's bad actions but not the man, I thought it a silly, hairsplitting distinction. How could I hate what a man did and not hate the man? Years later it occurred to me that there was one man for whom I had been doing this all my life -- myself. In loving my neighbor as myself, I must extend the same consideration to him.

This is true of the vile person. It is true also of our brothers and sisters in Christ. They too sometimes act wrongly, sometimes hold different views, sometimes disagree with us. We must love them in spite of their bad actions, just as we love ourselves, knowing that there is more in us than what our actions would indicate. We do well to take heed to Jesus' admonition that a man's foes would be those of his own household (Matt. 10:36). Knowing this, we are inexcusable when it actually happens. We dare not find reasons to feel ill against our neighbor nor our brother. However much they offend us, we can only hate the sin they commit. We must always seek the good of such persons, just as Jesus sought our good when he surrendered his life for our sake.

Again from Psalm 15: "He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not." An honorable person who has made a contract and later finds it to be to his disadvantage, will nevertheless perform it, even if it means a loss. This is basic integrity. This Scripture has a deeper significance. All the consecrated have "sworn to their own hurt." We have vowed to "suffer with him, that we may be glorified together." Let us not change in this. Let us add to our faith fortitude, to continue in the footsteps of Jesus.

Returning to our text, we read that we must add to virtue (or fortitude) knowledge (vs. 5). It is written in Proverbs 4:7, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting, get understanding." Does this mean that we must be "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22)? Should we all pursue the higher education? Not so. The knowledge we require is that which makes us "wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. 3:15).

A sound knowledge of truth -- this is "the principal thing." Scientific knowledge and wisdom can release the power of the atom and unleash tremendous physical forces. It can put men on the moon, but it cannot invoke the "power of God unto salvation." (Rom. 1:16). The mighty power that takes the foolish, weak, base, despised, those who in the eyes of the world are nothing (1 Cor. 1:27, 28) and exalt them to the pinnacle of life -- the divine nature -- is real power!

In gaining knowledge, we should, as Peter says: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that seeketh you a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15). We should acquire a sound knowledge of the fundamentals of the divine plan, especially the ransom. There are other fundamentals of truth revealed to us. Many who once walked with us, and failed to add to their faith fundamental knowledge have been deceived, falling from the way.

We are told to add to our knowledge temperance, or self-control (1 Pet. 1:6). This is one of the most important elements of good character. The wise man said (Prov. 16:32), "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city." Self -- control has application to our every activity. It has to do with all our sentiments, thoughts, tastes, appetites, labors, pleasures, sorrows, and hopes. Its successful cultivation means a high order of character development. The fruit of self -- control is moderation. Paul exhorts in Philippians 4:5, "Let your moderation be known unto all men." Moderation requires strength of character. It is contrary to the world's spirit, with its depraved tastes, appetites, and excesses. This is exemplified in the wry humor of a little sign sold in some gift shops. It reads: "Everything I like is either illegal, immoral, or fattening." Moderation balances all the other virtues. A philosopher named Osburn has written this:

"Moderation is the only virtue. The other so-called virtues are virtuous, only insofar as they are joined with moderation. To be over-courageous, is to be foolhardy. To be over -- thrifty, is to be parsimonious -- miserly. To be over-loving is to be doting. To be too unselfish, is to weary the world with the spectacle of your martyrdom. To give a child, a mate, or a friend too much attention, or too little, is equally disastrous. Self-abnegation and self-glorification are both vices.

To be too thoughtful is to be incapable of action, and to be overactive is self defeating, and likely to prove fatal. Moderation is what counts."

As Christians we know that there is one thing in which we must not be moderate, to which we must give no restraint -- "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37). Here we must go all the way!

Again to our text -- we must add to temperance, or self -- control, patience (vs. 6; "steadfastness," RSV). In Romans 15:5 Jehovah is called a "God of patience." How true this is! He has plenty of time. The psalmist has written in Psalm 90:2, "From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." Extending from everlastingly into the past to the everlasting future without the necessity of hurrying to meet a deadline, as humans are always doing. He took millions of years to create the universe, and ages upon ages to create the world. 2 Peter 3:8 tells us: "Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is, with the Lord, as a thousand years; and a thousand years as one day." Think of it! Man's creation, fall, redemption, resurrection and restitution, all happen in a week, as far as God is concerned! Let us remember this the next time we are impatient with the seeming delay in the outworking of God's plan.

There is a scripture which indicates that patience will be one of the final and most shaking tests upon the church at the end of the age where we are now. We read in Hebrews 10:35-37:

"Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward, for ye have need of patience that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry."

The faith of many has been shaken in response to prophetic disappointments during the past century. Many have said, "We have done the will of God. Is it not time for our change? Is it not time for Christ the Lord to appear and to manifest his kingdom on earth in power and glory?" Lacking patience, some cast away their confidence, and with it, the recompense of reward. They lost interest in truth. Others impatiently took action. They tried to hurry things up. They tried to hasten the work of the Kingdom by their own efforts.

The changing of times and seasons should be left to the Lord! We know that spring follows winter, and summer follows spring. Just which day will see spring's first flower we do not know, even though we now the time is near. So we read in Zephaniah 3:8, "Wait ye upon me, saith the Lord." Wait! This applies equally to our development as new creatures. Anything worth while takes time to mature. Hastily picked fruit is unripe, hard, sour, and bitter. Time, pruning, fertilizing, cultivating, and exposure to sunshine and rain produce ripe and luscious fruit, which delights the taste. This is confirmed in James 5:7, 8:

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth; and hath long patience for it; until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts."

So, the child of God must have patience.: patience with the poor blinded world, patience with our enemies because they know not what they do, patience with the "babes in Christ," patience with the excitable and blundering, patience with the overconfident Peters and the skeptical Thomases. By applying time to our lives, patience will perfect our characters in love. We read in James 1:4, "Let patience have her perfect work." There is no substitute for it, no quick and easy way no short cuts. Once, when James Garfield was president of Hiram College, a father asked him if the course of study could be simplified to enable his son to "go through by a shorter route." "Certainly,"

Garfield replied, "But it all depends upon what you want to make of your boy. When God wants to make an oak tree, he takes a hundred years. When he wants to make a squash, he requires only two months." We are being schooled and prepared for an exceedingly high position. It takes time! We are of "them who, by patient continuance in well -- doing, seek for glory, and honor and immortality: eternal life" (Rom. 2:7). Again we read in Matthew 10:22: "He that endureth to the end, shall be saved." And Paul counseled us in Hebrews 12:1, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

Next, we are told to add to patience, godliness, or Godlikeness (1 Pet. 1:7). This comes with Christian maturity. As we learn of God's plans and ways, we conform our plans and ways to his. We taste his goodness and see positive evidences of his leadings and disciplines in our lives. Through communion in prayer over the years we become close to our Lord. As a son, who loves and admires his father, seeks to emulate him and copy his ways, we pattern ourselves after God and Christ. We reach the point when, even with our finite minds, we reason like God does. He has said in Isaiah 1:18: "Come now, let us reason together." We learn to love him with all our heart, mind and soul. We heartily, cheerfully and lovingly conform to his will. Just as an earthly father loves a son who emulates him, God loves us for it!

This godliness is a later development of Christian character, and a very vital one if we are to gain the prize. It is what Paul describes in Hebrews 12:14 as the "Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Let us not be discouraged by the stringency of this requirement. We are not required to be sinless. Please notice that the same verse of Scripture that invites us to "Come, let us reason together," is the one that assures us "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18). Confirming this, John wrote tenderly and reassuringly in I John 2:1,

"My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Praise God for such a wonderful provision!

"Then we are counseled to add to godliness, brotherly-kindness. Does this mean that we are to be kind only to the brethren? Not so! The prefix "brotherly" describes the quality of kindness and not its scope. This choice variety or degree of kindness known as brotherly kindness we are to manifest to all. As any other good thing, we are especially to show this to the household of faith. In this we are being godlike. God is described in Nehemiah 9:17 as "A God ready to pardon; gracious and merciful; slow to anger; and of great kindness."

Someone may say, "He is merciful and kind to his own people -- to those who are in covenant relationship with him -- but others can expect no mercy, for them the second death awaits." This view falsely limits God's goodness. Jesus said of the heavenly Father in Luke 6:35, 36: "For he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful."

We are of all men most fortunate to be called and enlightened. Our hearts should be tender toward the less fortunate than ourselves. The Lord will some day manifest his kindness and mercy to the world through those who are believers in this Age. If we would be among them we are expected to demonstrate kindness and mercy now. However, in this the world will misunderstand us. Many people cannot comprehend unselfish kindness. Do good to such, and he will say or think: "What's your angle? What's in it for you? What's the gimmick? Nobody gives something for nothing!" Doing good without hope of return is incomprehensible to such. How astonished they will be when during the kingdom the windows of heaven are opened, and they are deluged with good

things beyond their imagination! Then "whosoever will" can take freely of the rich blessings provided (Rev. 22:17). Applying the principle that "It is more blessed to give than to receive," the instruments of dispensing good things, will be blessed indeed!

Finally, we are told to add to brotherly-kindness, charity or love. The kind of love here referred to is the highest form of love (1 Pet. 1:7). It is higher than brotherly love. It is the love spoken of in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." This love of God is the kind he sets before us as the standard we must attain. This standard of love is impossible to our fallen flesh. It is only attainable by our renewed minds, wills, and hearts. We read in 1 Timothy 1:5 that "the end of the commandment is love" -- this highest form of love. The object of God's counsel and discipline is to make our character like his. As we read in 1 John 4:16, "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Love to God alone is not the full manifestation of this grace. A corresponding love to man must follow. John wrote (1 John 4:20), "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" Jesus said in John 13:35: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

So, diligently add to your faith virtue (or fortitude), knowledge, temperance (or self -- control), patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and the highest form of love.

"For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off; and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (1 Peter 1:8). Someone may say, "There's a big If here. The Jews could have attained life, too, if they had kept the law perfectly."

Yes, but there's a big difference here. With us, the contingency is not in doing these things perfectly as it was with the Jews. The righteousness of Christ is available to cover our transgressions and shortcomings. If added to our faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ, we have cultivated these graces we shall not fall!

That is a positive statement: "Ye shall never fall." You shall never cease to be in line for the prize of the high calling. "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:11). An abundant entrance! There is nothing grudging about that! It brings to mind a wide open door, open arms, a hearty welcome home, with those we love the best after a long and weary journey.

- Condensed from an article by R. Seklemian

## **The Best Order**

A man of high character but ordinary education was addressing a class of school children. He said, "All of you know the verb which says, 'I am, thou art, he is,' and all of you know that verbs in English, French, German, Italian, and Latin run in that way. But do you know that it is a very bad way for a verb to run? Do you know that the Hebrew people arrange their verbs the other way around -- 'He is, thou art, I am'?"

Then he added: "That is the way to look at life. Say to yourself, looking up to God, 'He is.' Then look at your neighbor and say, 'Thou art.' Last of all think of yourself and say 'I am.'"

One who heard this story was so struck by it that he sought out a Hebrew scholar and asked whether it was true that Hebrew verbs were conjugated in this way.

"Yes," said the scholar. "But why do you ask?" When he was told about the story he exclaimed: "Well, I have been studying Hebrew for forty years, and it never once occurred to me that Hebrew verbs have that wonderful and beautiful significance."

That is the way to think and to live. First God, then your neighbor, then yourself.

-- People's Paper, Australia

## **Great Hindrances to Prayer**

Satan sentinels the gateway of prayer. Andrew Bonar has left it on record that he never entered into a season of pure prayer without a fierce battle at the threshold. Satan dreads nothing like prayer. He knows he cannot frighten the saints with hideous features or overcome them by coarse enticement. He stands at the portals of the Holy of Holies as an "angel of light." He does not attack openly, he diverts. The church that lost its Christ was full of good works (Rev. 2:24). Activities are multiplied that meditation may be ousted and organizations are increased that prayer may have no chance. Souls may be lost in good words as surely as in evil ways. The one concern of Satan is to keep the saints from prayer. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray.

## Who is Watching the Flock?

A poll conducted among 10,000 Protestant ministers raises an interesting question. Among the 10,000 polled only 7,441 responded. Of those responding, the summary of two questions are notable:

Do you believe in the virgin birth of Jesus?

Answering NO were:

44% of the Episcopalians  
44% of the Baptists  
49% of the Presbyterians  
60% of the Methodists  
19% of Amalgamated Lutherans

Do you believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God?

Answering NO were:

89% of the Episcopalians  
81% of the Presbyterians  
82% of the Methodists  
57% of amalgamated Lutherans

Can we be surprised at the words of Paul who prophesied just such a condition? *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears"* (2 Tim. 4:2).

*"When the son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth"* (Luke 18:8)?

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We came across an interesting translation on our Lord's prayer, by Dr. Lamsa, who was born and reared in the ancient world where the Aramaic language was spoken,

*Our universal God, father of all. Thy name is holy, we must not take it in vain. Earthly kingdoms are temporal, but thy kingdom is everlasting. Thy wish is that our lives on earth be harmonious as it is harmonious in heaven.*

*Thy divine presence supplies our needs from day to day, when we forgive our neighbors, we receive thy forgiveness, thy light and thy truth leadeth us to the true paths of life, thou protectest us from the dangers of this life, for thou art the mighty ruler of this universe.*

*Earthly kingdoms are the work of thine hands, thou art the source of eternal power and truth. Thy majesty and thy glory fill the universe for thou art from everlasting to everlasting, all your creation acknowledge and adore them.*

*Eternal God, make me willing to ignore slights and abuse meted out to me by those who take thy name in vain. Fill me with thy spirit so that, instead of being influenced by them, I may be a witness to thy love*

## Questions to our Readers

What is the "second watch" and "third watch" mentioned in Luke 12:38?

*"Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, and if in the third, and find them so, blessed are those servants."*

It is dangerous, when answering this question, to confuse this text with a similar discussion found in Matthew, chapter twenty-five. A review of the details show this to be a distinctly separate incident. The context can be applied as a general lesson of watchfulness, or as a specific lesson to indicate the Lord's approval of a specific messenger, messengers, or message. Interpretation is further complicated because the verse can be read alternately to emphasize either:

- (1) the coming of the Lord at whatever time, or,
- (2) the blessing of more than one group, each of which receives him at a different time.

We offer a few elementary observations in opening up this subject for comment by our readers.

This story distinguishes itself from the Parable of the Wise and Faithful Servant. It is also unlike the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins.

References to the object of the parable are plural: servants. Whether to the servants (plural) of the thirty seventh (Luke 12:37) verse (by assumption, the first watch) or to the servants (plural) of the thirty eighth (Luke 12:38) verse (presumably, the second or third watch), the effect upon the servants is identical. The returned lord blessed those servants who recognized him.

Verse forty (Luke 12:40) is not strictly part of this parable, and yet it seems to summarize the lesson intended in this parable and that of the thief in the night. Verse forty emphasizes the watchfulness of the servant(s). Thus, Luke stresses the individual readiness of the servant rather than the time of coming of the lord. The time of arrival was beyond the servant's power to alter, but the readiness of the servant for his lord was within the power of the individual servant to control. The simple lesson of this verse is clearly that whatever hour (in the first case an hour unspecified, and in the second case in the second or third watch) the servants that recognized the Lord they were blessed.

Larger questions still remain. What are the "second" and "third" watches during which the servants of the Lord, recognizing the return of their Lord, are blessed?

## **Remember the Lord, Thy God**

### **Deuteronomy 8**

Never in the centuries of the past was the warning to "Take Heed" so apt as today, when the temperament of the age is illustrated by amazing technological advances in all fields of human endeavor. Yet, the light and liberty of our day have unbalanced many of the best minds of the world and led them into materialism and secularism. Evolution and other ideas contrary to the Scriptures are rampant in Christian churches, and as a result, faith in God and in the Bible as the revelation of His plans and purposes has been greatly weakened. After all, to believe both in evolution and in the God who says he created all things is one of the great contradictions of popular Christianity.

Of course, if Christendom had taught nothing but errors, its loss would be beneficial. Such has not been the case. With the errors are truths derived from the Bible, and their faith rested on the foundation of a Savior, even though, otherwise, their tenets of faith are often contradictory.

It is interesting to reflect that people in the world have awakened, not necessarily to the light of truth, but to the chains of ignorance and superstition which have been upon them for millennia, and of which, they are striving to rid themselves. Many intelligent people have arrayed themselves, not on the side of Satan to do evil, but in opposition to all the darkness and bondage everywhere: all those things which are products of Satan's rule. Such are exercising an influence that is antagonistic to the darkness that Satan has heretofore used for the restraining of thought, liberty and progress. It would seem that Satan can effectively operate through these liberation movements, intellectual and otherwise. Even so, they do not willingly act as his tools. By changing his tactics, Satan tries to lead such movements into other extremes and thus to control men.

For years we have seen influences loosed in the world that are shattering the shackles of superstition and ignorance. Apparently, during the worldwide trouble with which this age is closing, Satan is making a great commotion in the hope of retaining his dominion. The Bible assures us that he will fail and that, by the grace of God, a kingdom will be established under Christ, the King, for the suppression of sin and death and its concomitants. This kingdom will uplift every one of the human race. This was the gospel of good news announced at the birth of Jesus by the company of angels (Luke 2:9-11) and the earnest prayers of devout believers down through the past 19 centuries. In the events of our day can be read Christ's command: "Repent, turn from your sins, and accept the provisions of my kingdom."

As we read the Old Testament record, we note the frequency with which God urges his people (natural Israel) to remember all his mighty acts on their behalf. They are urged to keep before their minds the great deliverances experienced beginning with their coming out of Egyptian bondage. He speaks of his supervision of their interests on the way to Canaan, reflecting such ideas in many ordinances enacted by Moses at Mount Sinai, whereby the memory of these things would be perpetuated through succeeding generations. By keeping these things constantly before Israel, it would sustain them in times of trial and deepen their appreciation of the care and power of God.

The New and Old Testaments provide a marvelous balance to each other. The Old Testament records the fact of man's first creation and first dominion, followed by his disobedience and the reign of sin and death as a result. The New Testament uses these facts to illustrate the growth and progress of the spiritual life of the Christian throughout the Gospel Age. Doing so, the reasons for

success or failure are pointed out. Professor Drummond, in his book *The Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, expresses a similar thought whereby nature speaks to us of other and higher things. St. John discerned in the person of Christ, not so much the son of Abraham or Adam, as "the only begotten of the Father," and speaks of himself as "the disciple which testified" (John 21:24). Testimony, not proof, is all that believers can offer to the world on those subjects which eye hath not seen, but which are revealed by God's spirit. Our hope is that the testimony will find its witness in other hearts "feeling after God if haply they can find him" (Acts 17:27).

Many profess to see spiritual things. They see the letter of the spirit in the same way that the Jews at the first advent of Christ saw only the flesh of Jesus. Those Jews even yet do not love him nor follow his ways, and who sit in judgment and justify to themselves their own narrow view of the eternal Word. Not without reason, therefore, is the prayer: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Psa. 119:18).

Gratitude is a most delightful grace. One asks themselves, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me" (Psa. 116:12). We will eagerly apply life's lessons if we appreciate the way our savior leads us. He wants only our growth as members of Gospel Age spiritual Israel. To that end the experiences he allows should enlighten and strengthen us. Who cannot help recall the helpfulness of brethren, since passed on, who have been towers of strength to us and who have had eyes to see and hearts to apprehend all this? Here is illustrated the search for truth as its own authority in contradistinction to others who want authority for truth. No truth is valuable until we make it our own by diligent research and serious study. Controversy tends to narrow the vision and gives to forms of language a rigidity of outline which is fatal to the presentation of living truth.

There was a time when *we* all were blind to the beauties of the God's Plan. The Bible was a difficult and perplexing book, yet we loved and revered it. God's character was shrouded in mystery and his dealings with mankind were beyond comprehension. Traditional theology made matters worse. Many of its tenets were unreasonable and others illogical. Believing that all temporal and spiritual promises related to the godly in the present life raised serious questions, such as: "If the human family were doomed to the burning flames unless Christ be accepted as Savior and Lord; why did God wait 4,000 years after Adam's condemnation in Eden to send a Savior?" "What happened to people during those years whose only misfortune was being born before the Savior's birth?" "Could God be declared just and loving if He knowingly condemned people to the burning flame, as the creeds of Christendom would have it?" "Would we not fear, instead of love, to 'be the hangman's whip' to make converts accept salvation?" Out of this conflict over Christianity's erroneous teachings, the providence of God provided the clue to removing the darkness.

In a work entitled: *The Divine Plan of the Ages* by C. T. Russell, we learned of the wideness of God's mercy revealed in the ransom for all. During the course of a series of dispensations and ages God would reverse the condemnation on our race and cancel the effects of sin evidenced in sickness, sorrow, pain and death. God will provide an age when Adam and all his race would have an opportunity to hear the gospel without creedal overtones (Isa. 11:9). God had yet more wonderful things in store for us all. He revealed the subject of "consecration," its meaning and reward. It was by accepting the call of the holy Spirit and forsaking all earthly things, hopes and earthly ambitions that we entered into a covenant by sacrifice (Psa. 50:5). This, we learned, was the reason for the delay in the world's receiving the benefit of our Lord's death at Calvary, as St. Paul explains (Col. 1:26).

Through the years of our Christian experience out of error into truth, out of human hopes and prospects into the realm of spiritual promises of eternal glory, other blessings came our way. We gathered into a fellowship surpassing in blessedness any known by us in all former association. Repeatedly we sang together:

Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love.  
The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.

Always, we gave thanks to God for the privilege of being associated with his called out ones. It was a time of consecrated devotion to the work of gathering the saints together when we came into the truth. As we remember these precious evidences of God's loving care, we are led to remember other features of our experiences that we cannot review with the same joyful emotions.

Again, we recall that natural Israel was not always faithful to their covenant with God at Sinai. Ever and anon were frequent periods of forgetfulness of the leadership of their God. When God withheld promised protection, due to their departure from his laws, they fell into sad conditions designed to purge them of their disobedience. Regrettably, in spite of these lessons on the pages of Holy Writ, all of this has had its painful repetition in the experiences of spiritual Israel throughout the Gospel age. This is particularly true during the last hundred years or so of the Lord's leading and care. As some departed from wholehearted obedience to God, his special favors were forfeit. Discord and conflict increased; fellowship as brethren was hindered. God's appointed leadership was rejected. The heavenly manna became stale, and flesh was preferred, leaving such at the mercy of those human passions that always leave their aftermath of sorrow, apostasy and disintegration.

The candid follower of Christ has thus been faced with a series of questions relating to his reaction to these conditions, such as:

Are the distinguishing characteristics of the members of the true church the possession of a personal faith in Christ, the profession of a full consecration to him, and the evidence in the life of the power of the Holy Spirit?

Do we recognize all such as our brethren in Christ, even if they differ from us in their understanding of any other Biblical matter?

Since it is impossible for each of us to see truth in exactly the same way and to the same extent we must remember that the Christian grows in his knowledge of the Bible. Would it be scriptural to exclude from our local fellowship any who, by faith and consecration manifest a consistent life in harmony therewith if their views apart from these things differ from ours?

If we add to the qualifications already mentioned the need for subscribing to a creed, written or unwritten, as a guarantee of being a member of the true church, would not this produce division and be evidence of carnality?

On the other hand, would not the presence of the Lord's spirit in the church, and the operation within each member, be sufficient to prevent friction because of differing opinions, keeping the church pure as respects essential truths and ensuring solution of any problems caused by different points of view?

As we reflect upon spiritual Israel's experiences, we see times when we were unitedly occupied in learning, assimilating, and practicing the great truths taught us in the lessons of the tabernacle

picture performed by natural Israel. Through these types, we learned so much about the way of the cross and the life of sacrifice illustrated in the one united offering. In those days, our banners truthfully proclaimed our unity: "one is your master and all ye are brethren."

Isn't there is a difference between "apprehending" and "being apprehended" (Phil. 3:12)? In the first joys of learning God's purpose, our spirit never fears the flesh, not knowing its own weakness. If we get the blessing, we think that we can use it. It does not occur to us that a preparation of spirit is needed for the right enjoyment of what God promised us. There is a danger of resting in attainments, instead of pressing onwards to attain Christlikeness. Experience teaches us to be grateful for the strivings of the flesh, as well as for the graces of the inward man. We should rejoice in infirmities, distresses, fightings, and fears within, as well as in understanding the Lord and our way with him. We know *all* this, and yet, having attained some blessing we attempt to rest in it and so open the way for new discouragements.

In later years, many hearts have yearned for the old -- time spirit of fellowship when all who loved the Lord would be recognized on the basis of faith in Christ and unreserved consecration to him. These earnest souls have been met with slogans; barriers have been erected; battle cries invented; and the assertion is that by such things we shall be delivered and given the victory. Is it any wonder that "there is a famine in the land, not for bread, but for the hearing of the word of the Lord" (Amos 8:11)? Such have been schooled through grief and disappointment to learn their own faults, weaknesses and insufficiency. Thus, even in bondage, the elect are living examples of Christlikeness yet differing in degrees of attainment. Some hear truth and go forth from bondage and yet have not been apprehended by it. Such are not called upon to bear suffering, therefore it is not laid upon them. For the vessel of wood, it is enough that it be washed with water (2 Tim. 2:20).

Christianity, as exemplified in Christ, is comprehended in sacrificial service for others perhaps more than in any other way. Usually we think of gaining God's approval chiefly on the basis of our doctrinal purity, or our allegiance to some real, or fancied, standard of belief. However, the Lord puts the emphasis on our conduct toward one another. This is stated in the form of a principle:

For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me, I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me. (Matt 25:35-36).

What is our attitude toward the world itself? The rulers of this world are troubled with visions of weak things destroying the strong, of hungry creatures eating up the fat and flourishing, in whom is seen no bond of union. The rulers see these things and are greatly perplexed. It represents great trouble which the world unaided cannot meet, one for which "*the wisdom of this world*" can find no remedy. For God himself will bring the world to such self-despair as will render the need of Christ's presence as King plain to all. Sooner or later, despite all its boasting, the world will discover that it needs Christ. Neither its rulers nor magicians can solve the riddle of their existence. Praise be to God that day is near at hand when Christ shall rule. The world has long travailed and been in pain waiting for the manifestation of the son of God (Rom. 8:19).

It should be apparent to those who walk faithfully before the Lord, that we are standing before the bar of Divine judgment, and the words of St. Peter come to mind: "*What manner of person ought we to be*" (2 Pet. 3:11-12). Godlikeness cannot include harmful gossip, unclean or unholy conversation, disloyal or rebellious words. Remember daily to settle your accounts with the Lord, to make sure that no record of idle words, unrepented of and consequently unforgiven, stand

against you (Phil. 1:27). Thus, out of the good treasure of the heart we shall be able to speak words of truth and soberness. We will honor our Lord by a godly walk and conversation and subdue the evil tendencies of our fallen nature (1 Peter 2:12).

- Alex L. Muir D

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It is human to err; it is devilish to remain willfully in error. - Augustine: Sermons, no. 164, sect. 14

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We are often moved with passion, and we think it to be zeal - Thomas a Kempis: Imitation of Christ, pt. 11, chapt. 5

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How can man understand God, since he does yet understand his own mind, with which he endeavors to understand him? -- John Ruskin

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Once in seven years I burn all my sermons; for it is a shame if / cannot write better sermons now than / did seven years ago... -- John Wesley: Journal

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A man ought to know when to pray -- it's pretty late to pray for oars when the boat is on the brink of the falls. -- Anonymous

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When you pray, rather let your heart be without words than your words be without heart - John Bunyan

## Let it Rest

I longed for something -- -- O so much:  
So near it came, I almost touched  
My heart's desire -- when far away  
'Twas drawn. Then seemed a voice to say:  
"There, let it rest -- God knoweth best."  
Like children crying for the moon  
I pleaded for this priceless boon;  
I wanted it within my hand  
How could I then in patience stand  
And let it rest? Doth God know best?  
Then He who calmed the stormy sea  
Came near to soothe and quiet me;  
And to my longing, restless will  
He gently whispered, "Peace, be still."  
I let it rest -- -- God doth know best.

## The Kindly Yoke

*"Come to me, all ye laboring and burdened, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find your souls refreshed; my yoke is kindly and my burden light" - Matthew 11:28-30 James Moffatt Translation*

There could hardly be a more appealing invitation to Christian discipleship than the one presented above. Jesus Christ is inviting us to enter into a most rewarding relationship with himself. It is clear that the "yoke" of discipleship was never intended to be an oppressive thing. Rather, it was to be one of "refreshment" in the service of him who is "gentle and humble in heart." The "burden" that one thus assumes is spoken of as "light" and is set in contrast to the burdensome condition in which most find themselves.

Regardless of our circumstances, there is an area in which all mankind can be spoken of as "laboring and burdened," and that is in the matter of sin. Young or old, rich or poor, we are all held firmly in the grip of sin. Sin is a great equalizer. As the Scriptures say, "There is none righteous" (Romans 3:10).

Some take issue with this precept. They view themselves as good and resent the label of "sinner." This resentment stems from a misunderstanding of what sin is. The basic meaning of the Greek hamartia, translated sin, is "a missing of the mark" (Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words -- W.E. Vine). The Bible explains that our parents, Adam and Eve, were created free of sin, but they became sinners when they disobeyed God. Only after they entered into the state of sin and were condemned to death did they begin to bring forth children. Thus the life they imparted to their children was a dying life with inbred sinfulness. Because they had "missed the mark" of God's righteousness set for them, they could only generate a quality of life that fell short of God's standard. For this reason, all their descendents "come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23; cf. Gen. 3:1-20).

### A Ray of Hope

These events that changed the human condition are documented in Genesis chapter three and are expanded upon throughout the remainder of the Bible. By sinning, Adam and Eve not only lost their precious relationship with God as children made in his image, but also they lost it for their offspring. The sin of a sinner overpowers that person's merit or character as an individual. Even the most noble of the procreated children of Adam suffer the consequences of his willfulness. Note how the Apostle Paul described this: "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned" (Rom. 5:12, NW).

Were it not for God's intervention in this matter, mankind would remain forever subject to sin and death. However, God offered hope when he promised the coming of a "seed" that would "crush completely" the serpent, Satan (Gen. 3:15, Rom. 16:20, Rev. 20:10). Deliverance from bondage to sin had to await the coming of the one appointed by God to accomplish this crushing. Godly men and women of former times looked for and patiently awaited the one appointed of God. Until his arrival, the details of his life could not be completely understood. The promises of God began to come into focus with the birth of Jesus Christ. His coming brought light and understanding to ideas which previously had been only dimly perceived. He proved to be the "light of the world" (John 8:12) and the one who would give his own righteous life to atone for the sin of Adam.

"...just as the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28) The Apostle Paul explained how the sacrificed life of Jesus affected the tragic results of Adam's disobedience.

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous (Rom. 5:18,19, NIV).

Though Jesus Christ died unmarried and childless, he is the "last Adam" or father of all of the human family who believe. (1 Cor. 15:45). The life that he offered to God on behalf of mankind was no ordinary one. He was originally with God in heaven and through him were all things created. "All things came into being by him, and apart from him nothing came into being that has come into being" (John 1:3).

And he is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things have been created by him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (Col. 1:15-17, NAS).

He willingly divested himself of his heavenly glory with his Father and was born of the Jewish virgin, Mary (Luke 1:26-35). This miraculous act of God enabled Jesus to be born without any taint of Adamic sin and condemnation. He lived a life of faithfulness despite repeated temptations and attacks by Satan to compromise his integrity (Luke 4:1-13). It was this obedient sinless life that he offered in sacrifice as "the lamb of God" (John 1:29). God accepted his sinless offering as a propitiatory sacrifice covering over the indebtedness of Adam's sin which brought upon him and all men alienation from God, condemnation, and death.

Therefore, he had to be made like his brethren in all things, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (Heb. 2:17, NAS).

### **The Son A Priest in Heaven**

God resurrected this holy One and exalted him to heaven. From this place, at God's right hand, he administers the benefits of his sacrifice. He is a priest of God on behalf of all who come unto God through him (Acts 2:22-36, Heb. 2:17, 6:20-7:1). The Apostle John wrote that God's gift of his Son for the life of the world was prompted by love.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him *shall* not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him (John 3:16,17, NIV).

This gift was a costly one for both the Father and the Son. The Father surrendered his son to the wrath of those who hated him. The very ones to whom the son willingly submitted for humiliation, reproach, and unjust treatment were of those whom Jesus was sent to save. Just as we enter into the pain and suffering of those we love, so the Father entered into the pain and suffering of his beloved Son. It is good for us to reflect on this Divine love. Only when we come to appreciate God's love for us can we gratefully respond in kind. Love begets love, and God's love for us begets love for him and his children.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. We love him, because he first loved us (1 John 4,10,11,19).

### **Redemption, Justification, Regeneration**

It is important to understand how *we* appropriate God's gracious gift of forgiveness of sin and justification to life. The simple means by which we gain this reconciliation with him is by believing -- having faith in God's promise of reconciliation. There is no work by which we can be declared righteous except the work of faith. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29). The Apostle Paul is similarly emphatic in Romans:

"This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:22,24, NIV).

During his earthly ministry Jesus declared the Good News, the gospel of salvation through faith. Following his death and resurrection, he commissioned his followers to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth.

"But you shall receive power when the holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NAS).

His disciples soon came to be called Christians, and new believers were baptized in his name (Acts 11:26, Acts 26:28, Acts 2:38). Just as Jesus warmly invited those to whom he preached to come to him, so his disciples have urged people to come to Jesus and accept the kindly yoke of discipleship. They are nurtured and nourished for everlasting life through his teachings. Jesus identified himself:

I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6:35,40, NIV).

### **The Importance of Repentance and Baptism of the Heart**

It is through our faith in Jesus Christ as the Father's means of salvation that we become born of God. "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God..." (1 John 5:1, NAS). We need not be confused by the phrase "born of God." It simply means that a regeneration has taken place in our lives due to faith in Jesus Christ. Once a person sees himself as God sees him and realizes that he needs redemption from sin and death, he experiences a conviction of sin and a desire to be cleansed, to turn away from what is evil. This change of heart is called repentance and is a prerequisite to baptism. Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38, NAS). Those who undertake the baptism of their wills into the will of God are promised the gift of God's holy Spirit. Without this spiritual rebirth one cannot enter the kingdom of God. Jesus words on this are "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3-5, NIV).

Those who accept the yoke of discipleship and the burden of responsibility as Christians will never be overburdened. Christians are not under law but under grace and privilege. "For sin shall

not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). The basic motivation for all works of faith is love; a labor of love is not burdensome. If our hearts are full of love for God and man, we will not do those things that are unloving (Rom. 13:8-10). We need, therefore, to grow in love. To this end, we need to give attention to the Bible as a source of invaluable counsel and insight. Association with other believers is important to the necessary cultivation of affection for the family of God.

In our walk of faith, we are comforted by the hope of everlasting life which God has promised. We can be sure that the one who invited us to shoulder the kindly yoke will never abandon us. He is alive to plead for us before the throne of God.

And the former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers, because they were prevented by death from continuing, but he, on the other hand, because he abides forever, holds his priesthood permanently (Heb. 7:24, 25, NAS).

My little children, I am writing these things unto you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world (1 John 2:1,2, NAS).

When only two or three of his followers meet together he promises to be in their midst. "For where two or three have gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst" (Matt. 18:20, NAS). As we learn from him and live as he would have us live, we will experience joy and satisfaction. To be sure, there will be difficulties, but they will be seen, when rightly viewed, as challenges to our life of faith. Everlasting life awaits those who accept his invitation to discipleship and continue to worship God in spirit through the truths regarding his Son.

"God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that one comes, he will declare all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he" (John 4:24,25).

## A Note On the "Sin Offering"

In respect for the diligent biblical research and the sincerity of Charles Taze Russell, we are forced to the conclusion that he never became aware of an interesting fact concerning what has come to be called the "sin offering." The Hebrew word *khat-tawth* (Strong's # SG2403) is translated in the King James version at Numbers 19:9,17, by the words "purification for sin." This is the same word which is translated "sin offering" nine times in Leviticus 16 when speaking of the bullock and the goat.

The 1901 *American Standard Version*, the *Amplified Bible*, and the *New English Bible* all render Strong's # SG2403 as "sin offering" in the Numbers 19 texts. So does the *American Standard Revised* (1956). The *Revised Standard Version* of 1952, *Farrar Fenton, Rotherham, The Jerusalem Bible*, the *Living Bible*, and *Lamsa* all translate with similar wording, particularly in Numbers 19:17.

Had this detail been understood it can only be supposed that the Tabernacle Shadows discussion concerning the Red Heifer would have been altered. As it is, the text states at page 105 that the red heifer was "no 'offering' at all." These words in the light of recent exposition would doubtless never have been written.

The Hebrews writer evidently understood the meaning of *hkat-tawth* as it is used in Numbers 19 because Hebrews 9:13-14 demonstrate that the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer foreshadowed the blood and sacrifice of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Students of the Bible are aware that there was no punctuation in the ancient manuscripts. The punctuation we have has been added in subsequent years by translators according to their understanding. You may be interested in the thought conveyed by Hebrews 10:12 when the comma is (we think) properly placed. Rather than after "for ever" the comma should appear after "sins." [Note that the words "for ever" are a poor translation themselves of the Greek word *dee-ay-nek-es* (Strong's # SG1336) which means "continually or "perpetually).] The verse would then read: "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God." Many commentators treat this point. The most concise statement may be the note in the Companion Bible:

In the Authorized Version from 1611 to 1630 the comma was placed after "ever." But in 1638 it was removed to after 'sins, thus going back to the punctuation of the Bishop's Bible of 1568. The Greek expression is not the usual one, *eis ton aiona*, but as in Hebrews 7:3; 10:1,12,14 -- *eis to dienekes*, and means "continually, in distinction from "interruptedly. It is not concerned with the offering of the sacrifice, but with his having sat down, so that it does not contradict Hebrews 9:28.

The context of Hebrews describes the typical priest as "standing" and making frequent offerings. This contrasts with Jesus who offers once for all after which he continually sat down on the Father's right hand. This could be done because there was no further need for an offering for sin to be made. The view that another offering for sin of the blood of Jesus waits upon the death of the last member of the church is not compatible with the teaching of the inspired Hebrews' writer.

-- Gilbert Rice

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If you would be blessed, get many seasons of prayer into your busy, harassed, tempted, struggling life. It is in these quiet moments that you really grow.

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He who provides for this life, but takes no care for eternity, is wise for a moment, but a fool forever. - John Tillotson

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It is a comely fashion to be glad, -- Joy is the grace we say to God. - Jean Ingelow: Dominion

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If we truly believe that whenever we touch any of these things that constitute the world we touch the prince of this world, then the awful seriousness of being in any wise involved in worldly things could not fail to strike home to us. "The whole world Beth in the evil one." -- Nor part of it, but the whole. Do not let us think for a moment that Satan opposes God only by means of sin and carnality in men's hearts; he opposes God by means of every world thing. - Watchman Nee

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Our lives are a manifestations of what we think about God. -- Anonymous

## **The Memorial Supper**

*"For as often as ye eat this Bread and drink this Cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."*

According to our usual method of reckoning, the Memorial celebration this year should be held after sundown, Thursday, March 28, 1991.

This, according to the Jewish calendar, is the 14th of Nisan, and the appropriate time for the brethren to meet "in remembrance" of the Lamb who was slain.

*"This do in remembrance of Me."*

## **Notice of Annual Meeting**

Notice is hereby given that the annual membership meeting of the Pastoral Bible Institute, Inc. will be held on June 8, 1991 in Cicero Ill at 10:00 A.M.

We were pleased to receive an invitation to hold our meeting at the Berean Bible Students Church, at 5930 W 28th Street, Cicero. Even though they are in no way connected with the Institute their gracious invitation is to be commended and we gratefully accepted.

We are also pleased that the brethren in Cicero have offered to host a one day convention in connection with the membership meeting. Full details will be forthcoming in future issues of the Herald, but we wanted you to know the date as soon as possible so that you could plan on being with us on June 8, 1991.