

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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Christian Mission

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The prophet Jeremiah had a burning zeal in his heart! A message had been given him to deliver, and he was consumed by its importance. Israel had rejected his earlier declaration of God's Word. That rejection and the nation's scorn thoroughly disheartened him.

Whenever I speak, I have to cry out and shout "Violence! Destruction!" LORD, I am ridiculed and scorned all the time because I proclaim your message. But when I say, "I will forget the LORD and no longer speak in his name," then your message is like a fire burning deep within me. I try my best to hold it in, but can no longer keep it back." (Jeremiah 20:8,9 GNB).

Jehovah's message had to be spoken. The Lord instructed Jeremiah to tell Israel that they were going to be possessed by their enemies.

What would have happened if Jeremiah allowed fear to overwhelm him? What if he did not preach his message? Undoubtedly, he would have been set aside as God's mouthpiece, and another would have been commissioned to deliver his message. The prophet's burning heart would have diminished like a fire untended, and eventually the fire would have died out. This happens to any fire. When it is shut off from air, it is extinguished. This is true spiritually, morally, and physically. This is why the Apostle Paul urged: "*Quench not the Spirit*" (1 Thess. 5:19). The holy Spirit of God might die out in our hearts for a couple reasons. We might fail to do our duty. We might fail to keep our covenant. The light within us, that holy fire, would smolder for a time and eventually die out.

Jeremiah could not hold back what God had told him to speak. He could not quench the fire within his soul without losing his relationship with the Father.

It is the same today. God shares the secrets of his counsel with believers. He grants them wonderful spiritual illumination. He has given them an important message to deliver. What message? He has a great change in store for this world. The present age is about to end, and the dominion of this world will be given to another: he whose right it is to reign (Ezek. 21:27). The kingdoms of this world are soon to become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever (Rev. 11:15). Believers are not to be rude in making this proclamation, but they are to make it.

The great king whom God has appointed is about to come in. In Jeremiah's time, the message was different. The typical kingdom of God was going to be overthrown. The period during which the gentile governments would prevail was beginning. That arrangement of gentile superiority was to last a specified time. That time is ending. The King's Son will soon receive his long promised inheritance (Psa. 2:7-9). Today's message is not the overthrow of God's kingdom but the opposite. The kingdom of darkness is to be overthrown, and the kingdom of God established upon its ruins.

Tell this glorious message! Tell it in action and in word. Print it upon pages, and picture it for the eye in every way that the Lord gives you opportunity.

If we refuse to tell the Glad Tidings, the result will be the extinguishing of God's spirit within us. If the light within you become darkness, how great will be that darkness (Matt. 6:23)! God's message is always truth. When God gives truth, he also gives the responsibility of living up to that truth. Shall you and I be faithful to the truth we have been given? Shall we show God our appreciation for what he has given us by sharing it with others? He has given us an understanding of his plan of salvation and of the times and methods through which it is to be completed. What shall we give to him?

The Lord's spirit is one spirit, but it is not always manifest in the same way. His spirit operates differently today than it did in the days of the Prophets. We have reason to suspect that in former days the spirit's operation upon his handmaids and servants was more mechanical than today. Today we have both his illuminating spirit and his written Word. Thus is possible an understanding beyond that enjoyed in earlier ages. The mysteries of God are opened to his children, and they understand the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:10). Some of these features were never before understood, even by the most faithful of the Lord's saints.

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, "Peace and safety"; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober (1 Thess. 5:1-6).

What does the Apostle Paul say regarding the writings of God's servants in times past? He says that those things were written for our admonition. Who is the "our"? *"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come"* (1 Cor. 10:11). *"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness"* (2 Pet. 3:11)? How earnestly should we heed what the Word says! What painstaking care it should bring into our

lives! Let us faithfully speak the words that he puts into our mouth. It makes no difference to our responsibility whether others hear or forbear. Our faithfulness to God must not be judged against the favor or disfavor of men.

When we speak, let our words be words of meekness and love. Leave the results with the great Chief Reaper. Behold, *"The Day is at hand!"*

The Fruit of the Spirit

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law" - Galatians 5:22,23.

Paul here speaks, not of the fruits of the Spirit but of fruit just one fruit here -- love.

Dwight Hervey Small describes how those qualities add up to one quality -- love.

"Joy is love singing. There can be no joy apart from love; there may be enjoyment, but what a difference between joy and enjoyment! Peace is love resting. There is no peace without love. Only love can cast out fear. Longsuffering is love enduring. Nothing else in the world will suffer long and remain kind while it suffers but love. Gentleness is love's true touch. Goodness is love's true character. Faithfulness its habit. Meekness is love's self forgetfulness. Self control is love holding the reins."

So love is the sum and substance of the life that God gives. His love is his life, and his life is love.

Do not have your concert first, and then tune your instrument afterwards. Begin the day with the Word of God and prayer, and, first of all, get into harmony with him.

-- Hudson Taylor

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.

"I press on toward the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus."

-- Philippians 3:14

His is a power sufficient for us. It requires all our courage, all our hope -- every helpful element that we can put into the fight -- in order to bring about the most successful issue. The Lord supplies sufficient grace that we may be overcomers. This does not mean that anyone will live a perfect life -- he may make partial failures from time to time. Our Lord is leading us on, and we learn valuable lessons from our failures.

-- R5330.

Under His Wings

"Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me; for my soul taketh refuge in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make refuge, until these calamities be overpast."

-- Psalm 57:1 AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION by: P. E. Thomson

Caves abound in Palestine. The limestone formations of that area are ideal for their formation. Caves were both available and ideal for havens of refuge in Bible times.

David frequently fled from Saul, and found shelter in these caves. Neither the howling tempest, nor the roar of the prowling lion could terrify the *"man after God's own heart"* while he remained in the stillness of one of nature's fortresses. His meditations in the twilight hours, covered as he was by the arched roof overhead, could turn his poetic instincts towards the vast overcovering wings of God.

A cave is only a temporary place of safety; but the safety to be found under Jehovah's wings is eternal. Moreover, the faith that seeks refuge in God when the storm has past and life returns to normal *is* more to be valued than that which only flies to God with the storm's onset. We need faith in him during normal life even more than we do during the fiercest gale.

Blest is that heart whose faith is nurtured by God's past faithfulness. "As the leaves of bygone summers make rich mold for a new generation of flowers," so God's faithfulness to his children becomes their strength. God's protection extends even further. Those who trust in God have a right to his protection because God has promised this to them. *"O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him" (Psa. 34:8).*

The Cost of God's Favor

What is the cost of receiving favor from God? You must humbly approach God, and confess yourself as a sinner. This is exactly what David did. His honesty and humility are seen in the form of words he used. Following the Hebrew idiom, he repeats his expression to denote the fervent urgency of his petition: *"Be mercer unto me, O God, be merciful unto me."*

This trust that God will hear and answer must not be partial. One must believe with their whole being in the reality of an answer to their petition. David did. *"My soul trusteth in thee" -- it is a habit I have formed.* This is a rare blessing! He traces all of his trying experiences, and, through this mental rehearsal, he draws upon that trust until those very experiences be passed over.

He is not describing a fleeting, temporary trust. No! That expression described the totality of his life, just as it describes our lives.

What would those early readers have thought upon hearing the words of this psalm? No specifics describe the kind of wings. In a religious setting like this, what would the "average" Jew have thought about? Might it not have referred his mind to that scene that he had never seen, but which was notorious in Israel because it was described by the priests who alone were allowed access to the Holy of Holies?

Imagine yourself a young Levitical priest on his first visit to the holy surroundings. First, he must pass through the gate into the court, leaving the camp of Israel behind. Still human, though he

was, he thus symbolized the leaving behind of all human ties and methods. Before reaching the Holy, he must pass the altar of sacrifice, and then the brazen laver for the washing away of the filth of the flesh.

An imposing barrier stood before the young priest. A veil filled the end of the Tabernacle. He has heard stories about what lies beyond. a room thirty cubits long and fifteen cubits wide so veiled and draped that not a single ray of light enters from the outside. Yes, that large room was dependant upon a single source of light, he had been told: a candlestick with seven branches and a lamp atop each branch.

What a surprise it is when entering for the first time he finds a brilliantly illuminated room. Oh, the lamps are not extraordinarily bright, but every ray of light is preserved. The ceiling and the inner veil are constructed of the purest white fabric, reflecting most of the light that falls upon them. The walls are of pure gold. As soon as a ray of light strikes this polished surface the light is reflected back to where it came, and beyond. Striking another wall the same reaction occurs again. How much like the sincere student of the Bible in our days this is. Every ray of light that strikes the heart of today's sincere believer is reflected back to others so that they too might see the glory of God!

The beauty of it all is enough to cause a man to stop in his tracks. The young priest remembers that he must "walk in the light." Taking advantage of his privilege, he enters the holy and finds himself beside the table of shewbread.

Upon the table are loaves, giving strength to take him forward from this place. Walking further, he comes upon an incense altar with smoke ascending to God just like the prayers of the saints of this age. Oh, what better place could there be upon earth than this? What more pleasant surroundings could he ever expect? What more beautiful surroundings could he imagine? Surely, this is the place where he would like to spend the rest of his life: in proximity to God. Or would he? Not if he remembered the psalmist's words: *"In thy presence there is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore* (Psa. 16:11). Here there is no indication of God's presence.

Beyond the incense altar hangs another veil and beyond the veil another room. Might this bring him into the presence of Jehovah? Yet, is it permitted for any priest to enter? No. He knows that the High Priest alone enters this chamber once a year only. Even then, he enters only after having prepared the way by burning so much incense that a cloud enters the room before him. The veil is like a giant stop sign. If only some miracle could transform him into a part of the High Priest, then all would be easy.

Must that same veil stop us too? We have learned that beyond the second veil is the Holy of Holies. It is the most sacred of all places because it represents heaven itself, a place we can reach only through death and resurrection.

Does this picture tell us that full joy in God cannot be had in this life? Is this something reserved only for those who have passed from earthly life through actual death and resurrection into heaven itself?

A Way for Us -- His Flesh

By a miracle of grace, death itself has solved our difficulty. When Jesus "...cried with aloud voice and yielded up his spirit, behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom" (Matt. 27:51).

But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place [*Diaglott.* "into the holies"], having obtained eternal redemption for us.... (Heb. 9:11, 12).

Having therefore, brethren, boldness [freedom] to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (Heb. 10:19-22).

This last citation is apparently a reference to the laver, symbolizing the "...washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:26).

What was signified by the High Priest entering the Holy of Holies only once yearly? Was it not the fact that there was not yet a permanent atonement made for our sins so that we could have access to God?

"...but into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the holy Spirit this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing..." (Heb. 9:7,8).

This thought is carried forward by another citation from Hebrews:

"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 6:19,20).

We are told (Heb. 6:13) that this anchor, this hope, is the promise made to Abraham, the "Gospel" of Galatians 3:28, "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither nude nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*" This gospel, the Apostle says, he gave to his disciples (1 Cor. 4:15), and it is according to the "...truth of the Gospel" (Gal. 2:14) that one must walk uprightly to be pleasing to the Lord.

Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you (James 4:8).

God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace are ye saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:4-6).

The literal heavenly places are understood by many to be the two compartments of the tabernacle, which prefigure the present and future life of the Christian. Evidently, the two are too closely associated for there to be any hope of sharing the future together if we cannot learn to enjoy present privileges together.

That future is not intended for those who are *content* with a life of enjoying the light and eating the bread. To enter the Most Holy by faith is to enter it actually, one must "*go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation*" (Heb. 6:1) of doctrine. However essential doctrine is, it is no substitute for the life that is lived in the presence of God. This makes it clear why there have always been many Christians who give evidence of knowing nothing about fullness of joy which is now largely attainable even before we awake in his likeness. These, instead of having "*pleasures forever more,*" are only occasional sources of rejoicing in tribulation. Can these honestly claim to give thanks in everything (2 Cor. 6:10)?

Whom shall the Lord teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts (Isa. 28:9).

No Trial Too Great

David developed a faith capable of trusting God's care in the severest of life's experience. His was a faith sufficient to endure even the unparalleled time of trouble which we anticipate to come (Dan. 12:1). Hear the words of Isaiah:

"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. for, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain" (Isa. 26:20,21).

Could anyone escape God's wrath by hiding behind closed doors? Obviously not. The prophet is not speaking of doors. Those who are new creatures in Christ Jesus know whereof the prophet speaks:

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2 Cor. 5:1).

Our dwelling place is Jehovah himself, and we can consider ourselves to be under his wings.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not to thine own understanding... " neither adding to nor taking from the precious promises of his protection in every time of trouble.

The "time of trouble" prophecy most often quoted closes on this marvelous assurance: "*At that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book*" (Dan. 12:1). When Jesus referred to this verse, he added a thought to the text, saying that it would not only be unique in human history but that there never would be another like it ("*no nor ever shall be*").

What do we learn about this trouble from the assurance of deliverance? First, we assume that the translation is accurate, because subsequent translations bear out the same thought. Note that the verse does not say that the saints will be delivered in the trouble (after it had begun), but at it. This promise does not apply only to David's people, as we find from the context: "*everyone whose name is written in the book*"

This reality we should have expected. The same four winds that produce the time of destruction which nothing can withstand are described as being restrained until the saints are sealed in their foreheads -- the new creature's intellect, otherwise symbolized as the heart. What is the sealing? The indication of the Father's approval, an indication that the character has been perfected and

that they are *"prepared unto every good work"* (2 Tim. 2:21). Nothing would be gained by leaving these upon earth any longer. Like the Apostle Paul, they finish their course with joy. External influences have no effect on that joy if it is the fullness of joy that belongs to those living in the presence of God.

Different Wings

David uses the wing symbolism on other occasions also. He varies it slightly in Psalm 91: *"He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust."* Who can read these words and not think of the country barnyard replete with a mother hen and her chicks? Perhaps a hawk has passed overhead, and the mother has given her peculiar warning sound. The babies' little feet carry them as fast as they can. Where do they run? They run, not to the corner of the barnyard to confer as to how they should get under the mother's wings, or what order they should enter her shelter. Such foolishness has been heard of, but not among chickens. As quickly as they can, they snuggle up to their mother's breast. No violently beating hearts are heard there -- there is no danger under those wings.

However, before long, one of the little ones pokes its head from under the safety of mother's care. How much like humans these chicks can be at times. How foolish the little chick has been for the head is among the most vulnerable parts of the body.

We are told (Rev. 3:5) about the possibility of having one's name erased from the book of life. It may be that such erasures are made necessary because of such actions as the foolish chick. How many believers have "done their own thinking"; adding or subtracting to the words of the book of life; not holding their head? Brethren, the thoughts of our God are not ours, nor are our thoughts his (Isa. 55:8).

Christians have no place of safety aside from the wings of God. Some time ago a newspaper reported on a hailstorm with stones of extraordinary size. The article told of a farmer who had surveyed the damage incurred by the storm and how he had found several families of geese, each with her own family. They had all gone to the place they knew would provide protection, to the place that divine love had provided. So it was that all the little ones had been saved alive, but all of the mothers were dead. A life had been given so that others might live.

"Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). The master prefaced these wonderful words with a warning, *"Take no [anxious] thought, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?"* (Matt. 6:25). How often have you seen foolish actions wasted because a person does not have a faith appropriate to a promise? Jesus said, *"all these things shall be added unto you."* Can you measure the folly of disregarding the accessibility of such a faith? If the Creator of all things has issued the promise, should he not be in the position to fulfill it?

Some who are weak in faith refuse to pray about such trifles as bread and water. Yet, why did the Lord tell the parable of the numbered hair and the falling sparrows? Was it not to instruct those whose faith was weak!

When we quote the words of Jesus from this parable, we often misquote the Master. We usually hear something like this: *"Not even a sparrow falleth without your father noting it."* Should not a new creature in Christ expect more than this from God? Turn to Matthew 10:29 to see what this parable says:

"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground *without your Father*. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

The last words in the verse as it is commonly quoted do not appear. Our heavenly Father does not limit himself to knowing about our experience. This promise has God with us in every experience, even to its very end: "*Not a sparrow falleth without your Father.*"

Consider a common experience. A class of Bible students is meeting in study. A text comes up for consideration. Satan is present at the meeting and suggests this question: "Is it literally true that God numbers the hairs of your head?" Then, if there is not someone present to call attention to the purpose of Bible study, the hour is spent arguing over the point; and probably some will go away to tell what a wonderful study it was because the hour was spent on one point. Did Jesus say, "The Father himself loves you because you have argued so much or with so much determination?" No, it is "*The Father himself loveth you because you have believed.*" This text was given to inform us that there can be nothing so small in our lives but that the Father is willing to be a partner in it. This is how close those under his wings are to his loving breast.

Physical Starvation or Spiritual

Does the promise of food and clothing mean that if anyone is starving to death he is not a Christian? We would say, NO! The promise to new creatures is that they will have all the natural blessings that are good for them as new beings in Christ. We do not know whether any true disciples have ever actually starved to death. One thing we know: if this has happened it is because no better experience could teach them the final lessons of the schooling in Christ.

To this answer a brother might quote the promise that "Your bread and water shall be sure." First note that there is no such promise. There is one similar in Isaiah 33: "*He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his water shall be sure.*" We ask whether he can explain the balance of the verse.

He attempts to do so and interprets the rocks as figurative and the bread and water as literal. Surely, all will agree that this is a dangerous way to study the Bible. It is much safer to explain both clauses as either figurative or literal. No one could desire to make the rocks literal when there are vastly superior symbolic ones in which we can take refuge. Lord Jesus Christ and God himself are represented as Rocks by divine inspiration.

Anyone who considers this promise at length will hardly prefer the promise of natural sustenance to an assurance that there will never be a day without spiritual strength and the complete covering of Christ's righteousness. Physical fasting is highly recommended, but there are no spiritual dieticians who advise that you deprive yourself of spiritual food. "*The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.*" "*No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly,*" not even forms of tribulation that are good for them. Even the most faithful of saints may sometimes hunger, for one of them testifies of it as having been his experience. "*I know how to be abased ... and to be hungry.*" (Phil. 4:12; Psa. 34:10; 84:11).

Habakkuk uses this illustration of food deprivation (Hab. 3:17) as a test through which the poorest Christians should pass successfully.

Look at it first as a literal statement, a mild test for most of us. If Habakkuk's farm were describing ours we would find ourselves without a morsel of food.

"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

With only starvation in prospect, can we go the rest of the way with Habakkuk? *"Yet will I rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation."* Suppose that all have passed that test successfully. Try substituting each item of food with something more precious to us -- a more searching test. We will not attempt a complete interpretation in this short space, but will use some substitutes close to our heart.

If the Jewish nation, the fig tree, should not show the slightest suggestion of turning to God for forgiveness, neither should the ripened fruit of the spirit be found in the church as we anticipated long ago. If the labor of the nations for peace (the olive) should dismally fail ("shall have deceived" -- Rotherham), if the earth should not give up its dead, though the resurrection was confidently expected years ago, though it cannot be said, "all true Christians are in this group (this fold), though no ancient worthies (bullocks) are installed in office even at this late date, though every feature of the plan has failed to come at the time we hoped it would -- *"Yet will I rejoice in the Lord I will joy in the god of my salvation."* This is the faith of one securely resting under his wings, the faith of one who can say with Job (Job 13:15): *"Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."*

The reason for such faith is apparent. The Christian knows that God never fails. Failures are common. Our plans fail. God's plans will be carried out, in God's time not ours. God's will is more important than our interpretation of it.

"Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name; the upright shall dwell in thy presence,"
under thy wings.

The Date of the Book of Daniel

by: H. Grattan Guinness

[Modern critical theology is almost united in assigning this book's authorship to an unknown writer of the second century B.C. They do not attribute it to the actual Daniel living in the sixth century, as accepted by conservative Bible students. Obviously, the critical conclusion vitiates the prophetic claims for this important portion of the Bible. For the following presentation, which espouses the traditional view of Daniel, we are indebted to H. G. Guinness' "*The Divine Program of the World's History.*"?]

The prophecies of Daniel stand preeminent among all others in the value of their evidence pointing to the existence of a Divine Being. Not only does his brief book predict twenty -- five centuries of Jewish and gentile history, including the first and second advents of Christ, it also fixes the chronology of various episodes of the then unknown future. It does this with a simple certainty which would be audacious if it were not divine. Would any man dare to foretell, not only a long succession of events lying far in the remote future, but the time at which some of them would occur and the periods they would occupy? This Daniel did, and the predictions have come to pass.

This fact can be explained only on one of three grounds.

- I. The accord between prediction and fulfillment must be purely accidental and fortuitous; or,
- II. The events must have been manipulated, so as to fit the prophecy; or,
- III. The prophecy must have been written to fit the events, i.e. after them. It must, in other words, be a forgery of a later date.

None of these explanations account for the agreement between Daniel's predictions and history, as reflection will show. For,

1. Such an agreement cannot be merely chance. It is too far reaching and detailed, too exact and varied. Chance might produce a few coincidences of fulfillment out of a hundred predictions, not a hundred or more *without a single exception*. Common sense perceives this at a glance. As far as time has elapsed, *every single point* predicted in Daniel has come true, and there remain but a few terminal points yet to be fulfilled.

2. *The events were certainly not made to fit the prophecy by human arrangement.* The rise, fall, and succession of monarchies and empires, the conduct and character of nations, for over two thousand years, are matters altogether too vast to be manipulated by man. Such a notion is clearly absurd. What! Did Babylonian and Persian monarchs, Grecian and Roman conquerors, Gothic and Vandal invaders, Mediaeval kings and popes, *conspire for centuries* to accomplish obscure Jewish predictions, of which the majority of them never even heard?

3. The third solution is consequently the only *alternative* to a frank admission of the divine inspiration of the book, and of the divine government of the world amid all its ceaseless political changes. Can the prophecy have been written to fit the events? Can it be a forgery of a later date? This is the theory adopted by all the unbelieving critics, who start with the assumption that prophecy in any true sense is impossible. They attempt to assign to the book a date later than the true one, a date towards the close of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, who died in the second century before Christ. Then they attempt to compress all four empires into the four centuries to that date, excluding from the prophecy any allusion to the Roman empire and the first advent of Christ. Their attempts on the fortress of this Book of Daniel have been myriad. Skeptics realize

that so long as it stands impregnable, a relic of the sixth century before Christ, all rationalistic theories must fall to the ground, like Dagon before the ark.

However, the fortress stands firm as ever, its massive foundations revealed ever more clearly by various assaults it has repelled. The assailants have been repeatedly repelled by one champion after another, earnestly contending for the faith. The superficial and shallow nature of the linguistic, historic, and critical objections has been demonstrated, and each line of assault has been, in order, abandoned.

Even if this were not the case, and the later date could be substantiated, it would not establish the skeptical -- denial of the existence of prophecy in the book of Daniel. The predictions of the first advent and of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem would not be affected by a later date, nor those of the tenfold division of the Roman empire, and of the great Papal and Mohammedan apostasies..

Honesty cannot deny the possibility that real, true, and marvellous foreknowledge *is* beyond all question indicated by the predictions of the book. Why? Because twenty five centuries *of* history can be proven to correspond with it accurately, in chronological and other features. *If this is so*, the question of inspiration is settled for honest minds. Nor is it that alone. The rule of God over the kings of the earth is also established beyond controversy (i.e., history is working out God's purposes. All the changing kingdoms of the gentiles are merely introductory to the eternal kingdom of the son of man and, of the saints).

Skeptics allege that the late *origin* of Daniel is demonstrated by the presence of Macedonian words, and of impure Hebrew expressions. Further, they allege that its spurious character is proven by its position in the canon -- not among the prophets but among the *hagiographa* (the writings of the lives of the Old Testament saints). They contend that it contains historical errors and irreconcilable contradictions; that it had traces of later ideas and usages and that this was evidently the head and front of the *book's* offense. All these things they claim on the grounds that the predictions were so clear and definite that they must *have* been written after the events.

Argument in Defense

The defense has been twofold. First, a demonstration which leaves nothing to be desired of the utter baselessness of the objections; and second, an array of unanswerable arguments in support of the authenticity and date of the book. The contention has given rise to a whole literature, too which we can merely allude in a few sentences. Those who wish to examine the subject for themselves will find the works of Hengstenberg and Dr. Pusey thorough, candid, and learned, giving not the results of investigation *only* but the process and the fullest, reference to original documents. We must indicate briefly the nature of the defense, though we cannot do more.

Porphyry (third century) in his attack on Christianity, as a whole, devoted one of his fifteen books to an assault *on* Daniel. He asserted that it must be the work of a Jew of Palestine, written in Greek *in* the time of Antiochus. He assigned as the thesis' *of* his theory the exact correspondence of events with the prediction, asserting that Daniel "did not so much predict future events *as* narrate past ones:' As Jerome remarked,

"...this method of opposing the prophecies *is* the strongest *testimony* to their truth, for they were fulfilled with such exactness that to infidels the prophets seemed not to have foretold things future, but to have related things past,"

Thus, critic's arguments bear a noble testimony to the prophet! Porphyry's book was by imperial command condemned to the flames, and we know it mostly from fragments, preserved in the writings of Jerome. Spinoza, the infidel Jew, was the first modern to renew this old attack. Then Hobbes and Collins, and other English deists followed suit. It was J.D. Michaelis who made' the first scholarly attempt to undermine confidence in the authenticity of Daniel, and even he maintained the genuineness of the greater part of it. The names of more recent critics are numerous. Their arguments, however, simply prove the futility of their allegations.

To a Christian mind, the most conclusive testimony lies in the fact that our Lord Jesus speaks of Daniel as a prophet and quotes from him. The name' by which Jesus" most frequently speaks of himself, "the Son of Man;" is taken from Daniel 7:13. Many of his descriptions of his own coming and kingdom are also distinctly connected with Daniel's predictions *of* them (cf. Dan. 7:13-14, 26-27, with, Matt. 10:23; 16:27,28; 19:28; 24:30; 26:64; John 5:27; Dan. 12:2). Our Lord *would* not have thus endorsed an impostor! Josephus tells. Us that the book *was* eagerly studied *in* Christ's *days*. Would *Jesus* have treated it as Scripture, and allowed his disciples to regard it as such, if it were a forgery?

Apostles Uniformly Recognize Daniel As A Prophet.

Peter alludes to Daniel's inquiries as to the "times" and states that he was inspired by the spirit of Christ. Paul (2 Thess. 2) builds an argument -- based on Daniel's prediction of the man of sin and the apostasy. Hebrews (Heb. 11:33) alludes to Daniel and his companions and their heroic deeds. The entire book of Revelation is so closely connected with that of Daniel that we might style it the Second Daniel.

Ezekiel was contemporary to Daniel, and he alluded to the prophet calling him *one* of the wisest and holiest of God's men. This shows how Daniel had attained his high position in the court of Nebuchadnezzar and how far the fame of his blameless, holy life had spread in his own days. He repeatedly claims to be the author of his book and writes much of it as an autobiography. Therefore, the holiness of his character makes the thought of deliberate forgery revoltingly inconsistent.

That the book of Daniel was widely distributed and well known by the pious in pre-Maccabean times can be demonstrated. The very accurate and reliable First Book of Maccabees makes exact, though brief and simple reference to the stories in Daniel. The dying words of Mattathias to his sons are recorded in which he encourages them to fidelity to God amid persecution by recalling various Bible histories. Among the rest that are listed are the stories of the Hebrew children in the fire and Daniel in the lions' den. It is evident that the book was known and regarded as Scripture at that time.

Josephus makes remarkable and explicit statements about Daniel. Speaking of one of his predictions he says, "Now this was delivered 408 years before the fulfillment," recognizing the received date as unquestionable and as generally admitted to be so in his day. In a still more conclusive passage, he asserts that Daniel's prophecy was shown to Alexander the Great when he visited Jerusalem. This monarch took the prediction about a Greek who was to overthrow the Persian empire to mean himself. Alexander was much encouraged thereby and favorably disposed to the Jews as a consequence.

Josephus was impressed by the fulfillments of Daniel's predictions -- evident in his own day. After expounding several of these he says, "All these things did this man leave behind in writing, as God had showed them to him: so that those who read his prophecies, and see how they have

been fulfilled, must be astonished at the honor conferred by God on Daniel" (Antiquities, 10:11,7).

This educated man, whose works were published towards the close of the first century, and who lived significantly nearer the days of Daniel than do we, broadly asserts the date of Daniel, expressing the conviction of the learned of his day. That opinion, apparently, had never been questioned. He affirms the predictions of the book to be of extraordinary character and challenges attention to their fulfillment. He was unlikely to have been taken in by a forgery and surely ought to have been better informed about the matter than modern critics can be.

Additional Arguments

A strong argument in favor of the received date may be drawn from the languages in which the book is written: Hebrew and Aramaean. Both were familiar to the Jews of the captivity era and to those of no later date. The one was Daniel's mother tongue. The other was the language in which he had been educated and by which he was surrounded for the greater part of his life. Hebrew ceased to be used by the Jews in and from the captivity, except as a sacred learned language. It had been entirely superseded before the Maccabean days, and no writer of the time of Antiochus could have counted on being understood had he written in that language!

Daniel counts on such a familiar acquaintance with both languages that he seems not to care which he uses.

The use of the two languages, and the mode in which the prophet writes in both, correspond perfectly with his real date. They are severally and together utterly inexplicable according to the theory that would make the book a product of the Maccabean times. The language is a mark of genuineness set by God on the book. Rationalism must rebel, as it has rebelled; but it dare not now with any moderate honest abuse philology to cover its rebellion (Dr. Pusey: *Lectures on Daniel*).

Further, the exact knowledge of contemporary history evidenced in Daniel is such that no writer of the time of the Maccabeans could possibly have acquired it. Almost every single circumstance mentioned in the book is confirmed directly or indirectly by contemporary historians, and proved to be absolutely and minutely correct. In the Maccabean age, as existing remains show, the utmost ignorance of the history and geography of foreign countries prevailed among Jews in Palestine. A comprehensive knowledge of a period so dark and already so remote as the captivity did not exist. The same may be said of the accurate knowledge exhibited in the book of the institutions, manners, usages, and entire state of things, existing in the Babylonian and Medo-Persian times.

It has been remarked that,

"...the complexion of the prophecies of Daniel corresponds so exactly with what is related in the historical part of the circumstances of his life that even the most crafty impostor would have been unable to produce this agreement artificially. Daniel occupied high state offices; he witnessed great revolutions and changes of rulers and empires; and this circumstance is very significantly reflected in his prophecies. The succession of the various empires of the world forms their principal subject. In the representation of the Messianic idea, he borrows his colors from his external relations. Throughout there is a religious, as well as a political gift, such as we meet with in no other prophet."




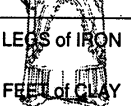
Lastly, the canon of the Old Testament contains the Book of Daniel, and that canon was closed by Ezra the scribe, and Nehemiah, the second Moses in Jewish estimation, about 400 B.C. Hence the prophecies of Daniel were already at that date recognized as inspired writings. True, the book does not appear in the list of the prophets, because Daniel was not officially a Jewish prophet, but a Babylonian statesman. David also, though a prophet, was officially a king, and thus his writings, like Daniel's, are classed among the *hagiographa*, or sacred books, rather than among the prophets. The principle of the Jewish arrangement of the canon was that sacred writings by men in secular office, and not occupying the pastoral or prophetic position, were put in a class apart from the prophets. Hence, Daniel does not appear in the list with Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, but rather with David and Solomon, and Mordecai the writer of Esther. The Jewish rabbis hold his prophetic revelations in the highest esteem, and the Talmud places him above all the other prophets.

There is no question at all for candid minds that the book is authentic and rightly attributed to the time of the Babylonish captivity. If so, it must be granted by all that it contains prophecy -- definite predictions which have been marvelously fulfilled.

The importance of this conclusion can scarcely be overstated, even though it seems less appreciated by Christians than by skeptics. Skeptics regret their inability to wrest a mighty weapon out of the hands of the church. Yet, we -- what use are we making of it? What are we doing with it? Is it not a pity if we allow so great a witness to lie idle?

Eight of nine centuries of fulfilled prophecy drove Porphyry to feel that he must admit Divine inspiration or prove the Book of Daniel spurious. Ought not the twenty five centuries of it to which we in our days can point be even more effective in confounding prejudiced opponents? The battle of authenticity has been fought and won. No fresh objections can be invented. Archaeological discovery may yet find Daniel's name among the Babylonian records; it will certainly produce no evidence against the book which it has already done so much to authenticate.

It rests with Christian teachers and preachers to use the miracle of the last days, fulfilled and fulfilling prophecy, for the conviction and conversion of men.

Identifying the Four Kingdoms			
Vision in Ch. 2	Vision in Ch. 7	Vision in Ch. 8	
HEAD of GOLD 	Lion		Babylon
CHEST and ARMS of SILVER 	Bear	Ram	Medo-Persia
BELLY and THIGHS of BRONZE 	Leopard	Goat	Greece
LEGS of IRON FEET of CLAY 	Terrifying and Frightening Beast		Rome

The Directors Report

"Our God is a Consuming Fire"

Hebrews 12:29; Deuteronomy 4:24

If your life is truly devoted to Jehovah and if you spend your life in his service you should experience this text's awesome prediction. The God of the universe consumes all that is devoted to his service. Those who dwell *in* his presence cannot help but be captivated by his beauty and humbled at their own limitations. He preoccupies them, he controls them, he consumes them. If you are entirely devoted to him, then to spend and be spent for him must be your greatest joy.

The Lord Jesus pointed us to this joy, found in God's universality, in his "high priestly prayer" (John 17). He said, "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (vs. 3). Has this been your experience? Haven't you found that each day discloses more about God's power working in your life? If a single day passes in which those words are not true for you, it is a warning that your fellowship with God is not as intimate as God promised you it would be.

God described himself to Moses like this, "*I am that I am*" [otherwise translated "*I will become whatsoever I will become*"]. He effectively called himself a God of continuing revelation. The truth of that name was so striking that ten times his people named places by using God's name and then describing what he had been to them at that place:

Jehovah -- *Jireh*, Jehovah will see, or provide (Gen. 22:14);
Jehovah -- *Ropheka*, Jehovah that healeth thee (Exod. 15:26);
Jehovah -- *Nissi*, Jehovah my banner, (Exod. 17:15);
Jehovah -- *Mekaddishkem*, Jehovah that doth sanctify you, (Exod. 31:13);
Jehovah -- *Shalom*, Jehovah -- [send] peace, (Judges 6:24);
Jehovah -- *Zebaoth*, Jehovah of hosts, (1 Sam. 1:3);
Jehovah -- *Zidkenu*, Jehovah our righteousness, (Jer. 23:6);
Jehovah -- *Shammah*, Jehovah is there, (Ezek. 48:35);
Jehovah -- *Elyon*, Jehovah most high, (Psa. 7:17);
Jehovah -- *Roi*, Jehovah my shepherd, (Psa. 31:1).

God is as much a god of continual revelation as each day is new and as the number of stars grows with our ability to reach into space. God is not growing, our understanding of him is growing. Jehovah challenges us to discover him and his standard of obedience. He hides his power (Hab. 3:4) and only displays himself to those who seek him (Acts 17:27).

The world has not yet realized God's role in its history. Believers know what he is about, but the world is learning slowly. Today it is learning extraordinary lessons. Entire societies that long had subsisted under totalitarian control are discovering that it is in their power to throw off the shackles of oppression. This is a continuing phenomenon. Having set themselves free, however, they are enslaved once again by problems larger than they imagined. What astounding power we hear in the Son of Man's words:

"When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it *says*, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more

wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. This is how it will be with this wicked generation."

There was a time when many of our brethren thought that by proclaiming liberty to the captives they themselves would help free mankind from oppression. But remember the law of the prophets! When we speak presumptuously we do not speak for the Lord. Look at the immense problems that beset world leaders! See the signs of God's inevitable judgment upon man! Man took the cause of liberty and corrupted it to his own purposes.

So called "free societies" continue to evolve as man's great experiment with self government progresses. What are they discovering? That the hard, fast rules which governed their authoritarian predecessors no longer work. Why? Because humans have no right to oppress their fellows, nor to cheat them, nor to deal in any way unfairly with them. Humanity awoke to new and idealistic hopes and aspirations, but those hopes were wrecked on the shores of financial, moral, political, and religious bankruptcy. Those institutions that today totter on the brink of disaster are but a sample of what lies ahead for this present evil world. Humanity rejected the standards of previous generations and is forging a new world order -- which will prove no better than the old. Only God, by putting new hearts in men and writing his law in them, will change human society!

What has this to do with the Pastoral Bible Institute and with our Annual Report? Consecrated believers in God and of Christ Jesus face lessons just as difficult as the world's, but commensurate with their position of grace. The world is being prepared for its humbling at the feet of Jesus, but those who have accepted life through Jesus and have gone beyond, to dedicate their lives to his service, have other lessons to learn.

Jehovah, the God who reveals himself in the form that his people need him -- and not in the form that even they "want" him -- continues to reveal himself today. Our brethren around the world are taking up the challenge of "enduring as seeing him who is invisible" -- with mixed success. Our work, then, progresses, because we are set for the assistance of his people.

Learn from the world's lessons lest God see fit to repeat them. Our brethren are struggling to find new forms and modes to express their belief, in a day when many believers are paralyzed by the fear about their unfulfilled expectations. Strange, isn't it, how much like the world our experiences are! Secular society faces the challenge of a new century, and so does the spiritual community! How will we respond? The world has no choice, it must adapt or perish. The New Creation, too, has no alternative but to respond. Hesitation and neglect cannot pass as a favorable response to these challenges. They are the responses of ambivalence and fear. They do not proceed from the Father of lights who is the source of all goodness.

We may feel a little uncomfortable as we pursue God and find that his perfection pushes our mind, heart, and senses of values and timing to limits hitherto unknown. He is a great God and his perfection is absolute. It exceeds our own and we may frequently feel very much like Isaiah (Isa. 6:5) if we allow him to expand our limits.

God often requests that men do and say things that stretch their ability. The faithful, like Abraham, Noah, and Jesus, obeyed joyfully. Others did not find obedience so easy. The Pharisees stumbled over Moses' authority in the face of greater authority. Even the disciples stumbled, for a time. Circumcision tested early believers who tried to preserve their comfort in the known and understood Law, rather than deal with the discomfort of God's continuing revelation. Its easier to

keep what you have -- feeling self satisfied -- than it is to pursue a closer relationship with God that keeps revealing more of himself. Not only is it easier, it is also human to think that not trying avoids the chance of failure! God does not reward sloth, however. We must be faithful to God's gifts.

The Institute functions in this kind of world. We are seeking improved ways to carry out our commission (refer to *This Journal and Its Mission*). We pray that you are pressing forward to know and to do God's will, just as we are. Like yourselves, what transpires is not always evident to observers. Let us take a moment to comment upon them.

a.) Public witness advertising has increased, with gratifying response. Those who do not witness say that this is precisely the last moment in human history and there is no purpose to continue preaching the harvest message. Those who shine as lights have another testimony to consider. Anyone who speaks to a sincere seeker after God knows that a work remains to be done among our believing and unbelieving friends and neighbors. The Institute's primary interests have been to build up the household of faith, but the Lord blessed these efforts more than we expected.

b.) The age of Institute members has been growing. It was time to remind younger brethren who know about the Institute and its work that they not only can support the Institute through prayer, but can also join others in setting the Institute's course for coming years by becoming members. Our brothers' and sisters' interest delights us and they offer a source of fresh ideas and long -- term partnership.

c.) The ministry of the written word goes on. One hindrance is a lack of manpower. There is a need for research assistance on various topics, prior to article and booklet composition. Individuals with library skills, available time, and an interest in sharing the gospel are invited to contact the Institute.

Free booklets are being edited and reissued. The advertising campaign, even though it is small, brings in both initial and follow up requests. It is a challenge to anticipate future topical needs and to prepare suitable literature for them. The directors and editors are eager to position the Institute for the needs of our day, within and outside our direct fellowship. When we ask for suggestions it is not because we have no ideas ourselves, but in the hope that your ideas may help make our ideas more effective for our Lord. Join us in applying the spirit of the Master's lesson to our own day,

"When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, 'It's going to rain,' and it does. And when the south wind blows, you say, 'It's going to be hot.' and it is. 'You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time... (Luke 12:54-56)?"

The Herald's ministry continues without interruption. The editors report new features under development and readers have helped in suggesting ideas for future investigation. This is an example of the body being built up by the supply of each individual member and we thank you. The subscription list is growing again, after several years of keeping it closely trimmed.

We want everyone who is interested in the Herald to receive it. Funds are available for those who cannot afford the journal, and if you write to us each year requesting continuation we will gladly send it. Those who can afford to help are reminded that there is a separate fund to pay for these subscriptions. You can donate to it by checking the appropriate box on your renewal form.

Herald renewals no longer occur automatically on October 31st each year. The subscription list is regulated by the date of your renewal. Your expiration date can be found on the second line of the mailing label on your Herald envelope.

d.) The ministry, of the spoken word continues in proportion to requests for service by local ecclesias, for conventions, weddings, and funerals. The Lord continues this ministry. It is ever more, expensive to travel, but for the Christian, the bottom line can never be the bottom line. Often, it is time spent, alone with one or two other persons that accomplishes the unique work of grace that has been the Institute's special ministry for nearly three quarters of a century.

The one-on-one work of sharing the Gospel lies at the heart of the Christian faith. It is a hard and frustrating work -- if done by human strength. This is important to remember. The Institute can and should set an example of how to work with others who love the Lord and who are not able or inclined to meet with other believers. But an example is only good if followed. Trust in God -- he will give you words, or show you when to be quiet -- so that the work of sanctification can progress in yourself and in those you contact.

In recent years the Institute has stepped up its cooperation with our foreign brethren. We have long had lasting relations with the English Bible Fellowship Union and the Australian Berean Bible Institute. Today's efforts continue largely through them. This has been a spiritually profitable enterprise. Each national fellowship has distinct blessings and trials. Accordingly, we each have insight and experience to offer others in the pursuit of mutual growth. We handle each of these circumstances individually and rejoice both to have contact with them and also to assist them in conducting their own ministry. We do not have the personnel to send overseas for six months at a time, as in the past, but the Institute's cooperation continues to be blessed.

The U.S. pilgrim work continues to be dear to our hearts, but various pressures have limited recent activity. By his grace this may change so that increased efforts can be put upon this work which has blessed, both the visiting brother and the visited brethren.

e.) We had hoped to offer an audio version of the Herald for visually impaired brethren. This project was abandoned because of insufficient demand.

In closing we relate to the work of sanctification progressing in the body members of Jesus. Brethren, have faith in God and express it, to him in intimate prayer. Questions are asked of the Institute's directors and editors during personal contacts. These questions remind us to encourage all brethren to actively seek answers from God, prayerfully, not just from the Bible. Today, knowledge and education are often excessively regarded. Even many believers seem to have no time for prayer because they are too busy studying. It is "...not by might, nor by power, but by [God's] Spirit" that we approach him. If we teach the right doctrine but fail to teach the value of a bended knee and of a submissive heart we have only laid heavy burdens on our brethren. Do something to help others carry their burdens. Teach and practice the need to pray. Yoke oneself with Jesus and feel his easy yoke., Join us in this purpose so that we can bring others to Him who can teach them all things (John 14:26), and to him who offers the gift of eternal life to all who accept him as their savior.

The 1991 Annual Meeting

On June 8, 1991 the membership of the Pastoral Bible Institute, Inc. assembled at the Berean Bible Students Church for its seventy -- first annual meeting. After opening the meeting with prayer, Br. T. M. Thomassen was selected as meeting chairman and Br. P. J. Pazucha was selected as meeting secretary.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved. The Directors' report and financial statements were presented with discussion from the membership. Member attention was drawn to the fact that the majority of Herald recipients are unaffiliated with the local study groups or the Bible Student movement. Mention was made of the new nomination procedure for directors, and the utilization of a bio -- graphical sketch for member information about director nominees.

The names of deceased members, new members, and resignations were read. More new members were added during the 1990-1991 fiscal year than in any single year in memory. Members were reminded that the '92 meeting will be the first in which the effect of the new membership policy will be noticed.

Br. M. Rutkowski and Sr. A. T. Lange were appointed as election inspectors. While they tallied ballots the members joined together in praise, prayer, and testimony. The names of those brethren elected as directors were read at the conclusion of the count: C. A. Czohara, A. Gonczewski, A. Jarmola, P. J. Pazucha, L. Petran, T. M. Thomassen, J. B. Webster.

During the membership discussion which followed, the following topics were discussed and suggestions received for board action: That member newsletters be mailed to all subscribers once annually to promote new membership; That strong efforts be undertaken to provide a role and ministry for younger brethren; That decreasing literacy rates be reflected in the Herald; That consideration be given to ministry possibilities in Africa; That the 1992 membership meeting be held in Wasau Wisconsin [The Board subsequently accepted the Wasau invitation and proposed a June 13th date -- details to be provided in a future Herald].

Members were also reminded that the Post Office box has been closed and that all correspondence should be addressed to our street address: 4454 S 14th Street, Suite 2, Milwaukee, WI 53221-2357.

The meeting adjourned with prayer. Members fellowshiped together during the remainder of the day.

The new board of directors met following the Annual Meeting. Among the actions taken was the election of officers and the selection of the editorial committee.

The names of officers and editors follows:

Chairman -- T. M. Thomassen; Vice-Chairman -- A. Jarmola; Secretary -- P. J. Pazucha; Treasurer -- L. Petran

Editors: F. Earl, A. Jarmola, M. Knapp, P. J. Pazucha, K. D. Phillips.

On Sunday the members worshipped together with the Cicero brethren.
Respectfully submitted, Peter J Pazucha, Meeting Secretary

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FISCAL YEAR ENDED APRIL 30, 1991
(1) Balance Sheet as of April 30, 1991

Assets

Cash on hand		\$ 12,543.51
U. S. Treasury Bills		100,000.00
M & I Partnership Savings Account		34,289.38
Accounts Receivable		330.00
Prepaid Expense		500.00
Inventory:		
Divine Plan	\$ 19.00	
J. T. Read Tapes	\$ 677.50	
Miscellaneous Items	\$ <u>105.30</u>	
Total Inventory	\$ 801.80	<u>801.80</u>

Fixed Assets

Office Equipment	15,209.32	
Accumulated Depreciation	<u>13,348.00</u>	1,861.32
PBI Library	3,000.00	<u>3,000.00</u>
Total Assets		<u>\$152,963.01</u>

Liabilities

Berean Bible Institute, Australia	\$404.00	
Herald Subscriptions Paid in Advance	<u>\$510.00</u>	
Total	\$914.00	<u>\$ 914.00</u>
Net Worth (as per analysis below)		<u>\$152,049.01</u>

(2) Statement of Income and Expense and Analysis of Net Worth
Fiscal Year Ended April 30, 1991

Income

Contributions		\$15,171.91
Herald Subscriptions		8,177.00
Legacies		54,781.00
Interest Earned		8,543.69
Herald Gift Subscriptions		322.20
PBI New Members		<u>150.00</u>
Total Income		\$87,145.80

Operating Expense

Pilgrim Expense		\$ 3,752.10
Herald Expense		9,912.36
Office Staff		17,000.00
Postage - Other than Herald & Free literature		1,149.60
Administrative and Office Expense (Milwaukee & Racine)		2,383.30
Office Rent & Utilities		3,480.79
Depreciation of Office Equipment		2,023.00
Library		392.58
Free literature and Herald Subscriptions		<u>2,999.08</u>
Total Operating Expense		43,092.81
Net (Loss) or Fiscal Year Ended April 30, 1991		\$44,052.99
Net Worth, May 1, 1990		<u>107,996.02</u>
Net Worth, April 30, 1991 (as per Balance Sheet above)		\$152,049.01

Respectfully Submitted by Loyal Petran, Treasurer

The Master's Work

"I have glorified Thee on the earth. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." - John 17:4

Philip Melanchthon, the Reformer, said: "There has never been any voice more holy or sublime than this of John 17:4:

The words of the Master raise the question, What did Jesus' life mean? What was his work?

In Jesus, his life and his work, we learn that love lies at the center of creation. Love is *an* everlasting principle that *is* co-eternal with God. Jesus himself was the most complete expression of this love, and he could say, *"He that hath seen me hath seen the father"* (John 14:9). Who but the Master could say this in the fullness of its meaning? Who else claims to transmit through his life the full measure of the radiance of truth? Who else claims absolute completion of his work?

Victor Hugo, the author, during the fifty years of his writing career poured out great thoughts to the world. He touched practically every phase of human life. However, he said of himself, "I have expressed myself in prose, in verse, in song, in tale, in history, but have not said the one thousandth part of what I had to say."

Mozart, the great musician, was called "music made' man.' He electrified audiences, by the strains of his compositions. He seemed to translate the very universe into the power and glory of sound. At the time of his death he said that he had *only* come to see what might be done.

Jesus died young. Yet, he had completed his work. John Keats died young too, but he had not completed his work. Tennyson said that had Keats lived, he would have been the greatest of all poets. Keats was but reaching out after something that he could not find. It seemed a will-o-the-wisp that ever eluded his grasp. So he craved death, with his life's work not really begun.

Raphael, one of the most brilliant of all artists, was cut down at *an* early age when he could see the possibilities that lay in art.

It is character, not time, that does great things. A poet said,

We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart throbs; he most lives
Who feels most, thinks noblest, acts the best.

Jesus died at the age of thirty three, and he could look up to God and say: *"I have glorified thee on the earth. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"* (John 17:4).

There was no guesswork in the life of Jesus. He did not spend half his lifetime seeking God's will. At twelve years of age he is in the temple discussing learned questions with the doctors of the law. On this occasion he said to Joseph and Mary, *"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business"* (Luke 2:49)? At this early age Jesus realized that he was on earth for a special purpose. He was determined not to be swerved from that purpose. After his immersion in Jordan, when he sojourned in the *wilderness*, Satan tried to distract the Master from his purpose. In every point the Adversary was foiled. From then until the end of his earthly career, Jesus walked a path defined for him. He knew exactly his purpose. No one else on earth shared that knowledge.

Jesus' Life Work

Jesus' life *may* be divided into five parts:

- (1) the truth -- that he taught,
- (2) the miracles that he performed,
- (3) the Law that he fulfilled,
- (4) the death which he died,
- (5) the resurrection hope that he guaranteed

The Truth He Taught

Jesus' teachings mark a transition in the development of God's plan of salvation.: He dealt with the truth past, present [in his day], and future. In treating the truth past, he referred to the prophets. He upheld the Word of God as truth possessed of a sanctifying power. He did not refer to the philosophers of Greece or Rome, but to such persons as Abel, Moses, Abraham, David, Elijah, and John the Baptist.,

Moreover, Jesus' teachings swept aside tradition and pierced to the very heart of his listeners. No teacher had set forth truth in such crystalline form. The "Sermon on the Mount" is "a mountain of truth in a signet ring:' Every statement in that discourse cuts a straight path to a definite end. Jesus was not verbose. He offered no flowery show of words. The prayer which he taught his disciples to say, beginning, "*Our Father, which are in heaven...*" can be offered in about thirty seconds -- but it is doubtless the most complete prayer offered by any person at any time (Matt. 6:9-13).

Jesus acknowledged the value of practical illustrations. He used birds, fish, foxes, flowers, trees, harvests, grapes, water,' bread, sheep and other pictures to bring home his lessons. By using many comparisons, he illustrated many perspectives on truth. The vine and branches parable teaches unity; the sheep parable portrays the great shepherd set forth by God and the need to follow him (John 10:5). All of his illustrations were necessary in order to present the truth in its fully rounded form. His terminology was drawn from common life, a language which would have appealed to the humble people to whom he preached. He did not speak to kings and princes but to such as his own words describe: "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*" (Matt. 5:3,5).

Jesus did not disparage. In setting forth new truth, he upheld the old. "*One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled*" (Matt. 5:18). To the rich young ruler he said, "*This do [keep the law] and thou shalt live*" (Luke 10:28).

Jesus upheld decorum, order, and law. He was not an eccentric. He did not oppose the government of his day, even though it had won its place by the power of the sword. Regarding the paying of taxes he plainly said, "*Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's*" (Matt. 22:21). He taught submission to earthly authority so far as the law of God allowed. Yet, while living in the world, his followers were not to adopt the spirit of the world. They were to put truth first, and live their lives as witnesses to truth. They were to be lights shining forth in a period of darkness, so that men might in due time see their good works and glorify their Father which is in heaven.

The Miracles He Performed

Jesus' miracles may have been the most important part of his life. They arose from the need of mankind. Not once did they follow the pattern suggested by Satan in the wilderness. He would not provide food for himself, or jump from the pinnacle of the temple and thus astonish the multitude. Evidently, the spectacular element was avoided by the Master in the performance of miracles. He saw people around him in need, and he healed them. When they were hungry, he fed them. In certain cases -- three -- he raised the dead. He was the great pragmatist: he did the thing required at the required time. He always held in his mind a vision of earth's coming glory and the future flow of blessings to all mankind.

Jesus availed himself of opportunities as they arrived. Thus, he left us an example. The Master's fleeting days were valuable. He did not put off to the future what the present required of him. He knew the magnitude of his work. He was alive to its privileges, and all his activities were directed by one law and one purpose. He moved majestically towards the goal that shone before him.

Consider one act as illustrative of the "law of necessity" obeyed by Jesus. Jesus crossed the lake of Galilee in a fishing boat. Then, in the quiet wilderness, our Lord sought a period of relief from the multitude that followed him. The people walked around the shoreline and before long he was in the midst of the crowd once again. The day slipped by, evening spread over the region. The disciples suggested sending the people away so that they might find shelter and food in the neighboring towns and villages. Jesus said, "Give ye them to eat." They replied, "We have but five loaves and two fishes." The Lord answered, "That will do."

This story is familiar. The miracle meant that the Lord took a small thing and made it go a long way. No one among the multitude knew how this had happened. Were not the Lord's other miracles of similar nature? On one occasion, he took clay and made it go a long way to serve as a cure for a man born blind. Another time, he took a towel and some water and washed the disciple's feet. That act remains with us today, illustrating the humility of a man who did what should have been done by others.

Jesus extended his own vitality, and he imparted it to others in healing. We are told of the woman who upon touching him had drawn virtue (vitality) from him. He extended his prayers on behalf of others. When he wrought his greatest of all miracles, the raising of Lazarus, he prayed to his heavenly Father and was heard. No miracle was performed for show. Some necessity lay behind each.

The Law He Fulfilled

How Jesus fulfilled God's law is one of the most interesting aspects of his life. The Jewish people subscribed to a moral code given on tables of stone. When Jesus was on earth, another young man thought that he himself had kept the divine law perfectly. The Master quickly removed his illusion, saying, "*One thing thou lackest.*" That one thing was a full measure of love. Not only did Jesus do no ill to his neighbor, but "*he went about doing good.*" He was the embodiment of positively fulfilled law. He truly paid Israel's debt to the law, and on this basis he could call disciples to follow him. On this basis Paul could say,

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus ... for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of

sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit (Rom. 8:1-4).

Had Jesus not fulfilled the divine law, he could not have been accepted as a sacrifice. Where would our salvation have been then? What of the salvation of the whole world? It has been said that Jesus had three perfections, namely: his perfection as a spiritual being before he came into the world, his perfection as a man, and his perfection as a high priest. All of these were essential. Concerning this last "perfection," we quote the words of Hebrews':

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the high calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him as also Moses was faithful in all his house.

As a high priest of a higher order than the Jewish priesthood, he was qualified to offer up himself. He then could offer the church, which is his body -- the latter offering has consumed the Gospel Age.

Why is it important that Jesus fulfilled the law of righteousness and died on our behalf? By Jesus' obedience, we have justification from the Adamic transgression and a standing of acceptability before God. Whereas his perfection was absolute, ours is reckoned. So then, the merit of the sacrifice of Jesus has been applied to the Church for nearly two thousand years. The merit of the Lord has been used by the believers of the Gospel age, but it has not yet been received by the world at large.

The church is being prepared to bless the world by the sanctifying effect of the truth in their experiences. The world is not being blessed now, at least not in the ultimate prophetic sense. First, the bride to be selected for Jesus must be completed. Then, those who have suffered with Christ will reign with their Lord and head.

The Death He Died

All other accomplishments of Jesus would have failed had he not died the death that he did. To die as a ransom was crucial to our salvation according to the plan God had devised. In dying, Jesus fulfilled two pictures -- the bullock of the Day of Atonement, and the Passover Lamb. That he fulfilled other types is also true. Yet, these two lay at the center of his mission. Israel received typical atonement through the first; that is, they obtained a standing of acceptance with God for the coming year. By virtue of the second, Israel recognized and memorialized her deliverance from Egyptian bondage and the saving of her firstborns from death. The bullock was as perfect an animal as could be secured and formed the basis of all other sacrifices. Its blood was taken into the Most Holy by the High Priest and was there sprinkled on and before the Mercy Seat. Its fat was burned on the brazen altar in the court, and its hide and hoofs were consumed with fire outside the camp.

So it is that the Hebrews' writer tells us that Jesus *"entered not into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us"* (Heb. 9:24). He has been the head of the church during the Gospel Age, dispensing truth as John the Revelator says, *"The lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof"* (Rev. 5:5). How did he prevail? By . doing the will of God, which in his case was that he should die a sacrificial death, he prevailed. The doing of God's will, even though it lead to death, meant final victory for Jesus, just as it means victory for every member of his body, the church.

The Resurrection Hope He Guaranteed

Jesus assured all mankind of a resurrection hope. The Jews had a resurrection hope from early times. It was set forth by the prophets, as for example Hosea: *"I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy destruction."* Elsewhere we read the Lord saying, *"I will open your graves, O my people, and will bring you up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel."* Concerning Lazarus, Martha said, *"I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."* While the Sadducees had fallen away from this hope of resurrection, the people at large still adhered to it.

Jesus the Firstfruits of the Resurrection

Jesus was the first fruit of the resurrection and is called *"the firstfruit of them that slept."* When the disciples saw him and realized that he was the same one that had been crucified, it must have seemed to them that he had opened the very gates of life. So indeed he had. We are told that *"he brought life and immortality to light."* Elsewhere, it is said that he has the keys of death and of hades (the grave). *"If Christ be not risen,"* said the Apostle, *"Then our preaching is vain, your faith is also vain; ye are yet in your sins ...and they that sleep in Christ are perished"* By this reasoning, Paul proves that he knew the sacrifice of Christ had been a perfect one, and therefore, God could not leave Jesus in the state of death. The right that Jesus had to life was vested in his perfection, and while he gave up his life as a human being, he did not forfeit his right to live on the spiritual plane.

What does the resurrection hope mean to us? Truly it means everything; what would life amount to without the prospect of a resurrection? Additionally, there is a sense in which we are risen with Christ even in this present time. The Apostle says, *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God For ye are dead [to sin and to the world], and your life is hid with Christ in God"* Sitting with Christ in the heavenly places, we can see the futility of earthly things, and we can behold the glories of the truth. We know that the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. This, of course, means that those who possess the Spirit will search the deep things of God. Why? So that they may more fully understand the length, breadth,, depth and height of divine life, so as to acquire more of that love themselves.

Love that Never Fails

There is nothing deeper than love, nothing grander than love, nothing more desirable than *love*. *"Love never faileth."* Is it not the love of God that we are continually studying? The more one studies art, the more he appreciates it. The same is true of music, science and other studies. When we study the plan of God, we are chiefly studying the love of God as the highest and most complete expression of his character. *"This is life eternal, that they may know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."* To know God, we must enter into his love. If we do this, his wisdom, justice, and power will surely become manifest to us. It is love engendered by the truth that lifts us up into the heavenly places, so that we can realize that we are risen with Christ and that all things have become new (2 Cor. 5:17). Love is the power of the resurrection which is passing over us now, leading us from death to life. Truly, without love there would have been no resurrection, no hope of the future, no satisfaction in the truth.

Such were the things that Jesus came to do. Such are the things which he accomplished for us. Some things no one else but he could have done. In an overall sense, he left us an example that we should follow (1 Peter 2:21). It is a privilege to follow Christ and to show our appreciation to him for all that he has accomplished for us. As his followers take up this privilege, they feel the power of his guiding hand and realize his blessing on their lives (Matt. 7:14).

Joy is distinctly a Christian word and a Christian thing. It is the reverse of happiness. Happiness is the result of what happens of an agreeable sort. Joy has its springs deep down inside. And that spring never runs dry, no matter what happens. Only Jesus gives that joy. He had joy, singing its music within, even under the shadow of the cross. It is an unknown word and thing except as he has sway within.

-- Samuel Dickey Gordon

In the day of prosperity be joyful; but in the day of adversity consider.

-- Ecclesiastes 7:14

He who labors as he prays lifts his heart to God with his hands.

-- St. Bernard of Clairvaux

One may be humble out of pride.

-- Michel Eyquem de Montaigne: Of Presumption

It is a sign of greatness of mind when one is able under trying circumstances to think less of himself and more of others.

- R2787

The world's highest standard is the golden rule. The Christian's highest standard is self -- sacrifice, doing God's will at any cost.

- R 5426

True repentance means not only a heart broken for sin, but from sin!

If my religion is only a formal compliance with those modes of worship which are fashionable where love, if it costs me no pain or trouble; if it puts me under no rules and restraints; if I have no careful thoughts and no sober reflections about it -- is it not foolish to think that I am striving to enter in at the strait gate? How can it be said that I am working out my salvation with fear and trembling?

Weak and imperfect men shall notwithstanding their frailties and defects -- be received as having pleased God if they have done their utmost to please him. We cannot offer to God the service of angels. We cannot obey him as if we were in a state of perfection. But fallen men can do their best, and this is the perfection that is required of us.

-- William Law

The Question Box

Is it appropriate for a Christian to have low self esteem?

We define low self esteem as not having a favorable opinion of oneself. A person who does not think well of himself does not have self respect. We are to respect our character and our position in the body of Christ, with a corresponding recognition of our obligation of worthy conduct.

We are told to love our neighbor as ourselves, loving to do an abundance of good for our fellows as we would for ourselves. Can one have low self esteem and love others enough to serve them rather than self? Having low self esteem would prevent one from performing properly as a body member of Christ.

Every member of the body of Christ has certain talents or abilities.

"For just as in a single human body there are many limbs and organs, all with different functions, so all of us, united with Christ, form one body, serving individually as limbs and organs to one another. The gifts we possess differ as they are allotted to us by God's grace, and must be exercised accordingly: the gift of inspired utterance, for example, in proportion to a man's faith; or the gift of administration, in administration. A teacher should employ his gift in teaching, and one who has the gift of stirring speech should use it to stir his hearers" (Rom. 12:48, NEB).

We are to exercise our abilities for the building up of other members of the Body. When we sow sparingly, we reap sparingly, and when we sow abundantly, we reap abundantly. We believe that this applies to temporal and spiritual gifts. Romans 12:3 says *"For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment"* (NIV). If we think too highly of ourselves we become conceited. Rather, we are to think of ourselves soberly. If we cannot help ourselves according to the abilities given us by God, how can we contribute to the needs of others? We are highly esteemed by God. He loves us and is working in us to transform us into the image of his son.

Once one has consecrated to God, their self -- respect should improve because they then enter into the self -- respect bestowed upon us through God's love. Then, we can recognize the obligation of self transformation -- crucifying self -- that we may perform as a body member of the Christ.

-- John Karavas

Low self esteem does not result from one's Christianity, regardless of whether it is properly or improperly practiced. Low self -- esteem arises from causes deep within the psyche of the individual. Yet, that does not change the fact that it is particularly frustrating for believers who are taught to seek humility. In pursuing humility, one finds the dichotomy between humility and pride to be like a great chasm, at the bottom of which one can find themselves crushed on the rocks of low self esteem.

Our concerns over self esteem focus on relationships with men.

Only by extension do they relate to God. When we accept the theories of men and love their praise, we try to harmonize man's ways with the doctrine of Christ. We ask ourselves "Should we do this -- at the cost of criticism; should we say that -- at the cost of ridicule"? We thus are finding our justification in man, not in God. Before God, who is the righteous judge, there need never be any fear of being mistakenly judged. If we fear (i.e., respect) God more than men, we will both learn and discipline ourselves to do what he says, not what humans propose.

Whatever our faults may be, the promise of salvation is extended *to all* -- including ourselves: "*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time*" 1 Tim. 2:5.). To persist in self -- deprecation is to tread underfoot the value of the blood -- bought sacrifice which is our life. To insist upon retaining our guilt after seeing the perfection of his sacrifice is to reject as unholy, as ineffective, the precious blood of the son of man.

-- Peter Pazucha

How Can I Help Myself Remove My Low Self -- Esteem?

We all start here, with low self esteem, before we come to God. We lack esteem because we are alienated from God. As long as we are without God's leadership, we are aimless and insecure in the world. We abide in sin.

We were created for the purpose of reflecting God's character and obeying him. When we fail in these purposes, we cannot feel that we belong to him. This sense of ownership, of belonging to God, is what should give every man, woman, and child direction. This is one aspect of self esteem.

God loves us as his creation. He created us with the ability to reflect his character. In acknowledging these two facts, we find a second aspect of self -- esteem. We are worthy in the sight of God. Why? Because he redeemed us at the cost of a great price: the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, his Son. No one rescues something unless they consider it of value. God has shown us that we are worth his time and labor.

However, our lives are still empty if we have not entered into the work of God. To realize that we are able to please God requires that we value and honor the skills he has given to us, individually. God gives us talents and abilities that can forward the kingdom of God.

Here are four steps to aid you towards God's intended level of self esteem.

First: Look up scriptures and memorize those that show God is your Maker and that he provides for you. With this, we build our sense of belonging to God.

Second: Look up scriptures that describe the price he paid to bring us back to himself, and that he is active in his care for us. Memorize these verses which build our confidence in his investment of time and labor for us.

Third: Look up scriptures that show God's handiwork and the work of his servants *as* they labor for him. Note also the parable of the talents, and recognize that God expects us to be productive.

Fourth: Ask your Father during your prayers to help you develop a new pattern of thinking. Ask him to fix in your mind that you belong to him, and that your direction in your life is only to reflect his character and to obey his will. Ask him to further convince you of the fact that you are worth his time and that in this realization you are special, important, and grateful. Ask him to teach you to recognize your own talents and to refine them and faithfully use them. Finally, ask him to show *you* how you can begin doing that today.

-- A. Jones

His Leading

He led me forth from an under way
Into the breadth of the golden day,
Into the sense of a glad release,
Into a higher domain of peace,
Into the joy of changeless calm,
Into the temple of light and psalm.

He led me forth, through faith, I ween,
To flowery meads where the grass is green,
To where I behold in the love divine
A wealth that out-values the richest mine --
Love as fathomless as the sea,
Yet singing its song to the heart of me.

He leads me still, and I follow him,
Although the shadows at times are grim.
Up above is a patch of blue,
And there the glory of God shines through.
A little way, and the toils are o'er,
And love will sing on forevermore.

We never know how much one loves till we know how much he is willing to endure and suffer for us; and it is the suffering element that measures love.

The characters that are great must, of necessity, be characters that shall be willing, patient and strong to endure for others. To hold our nature in the willing service of another, is God's idea of manhood, of the human character.

-- Henry Ward Beecher

Shut In!

" *Thou maintainest my lot.*" - Psalm 6:5 by: A.A. Hart

How frequently we hear this term applied to those suffering some physical infirmity which prevents their participation in the activities of daily life. We assume that such an experience is an affliction. The sympathy of friends is called for, and we are apt to judge by outward appearance rather than by the eye of faith which sees the invisible (Heb. 11:27).

The first scriptural reference to shut-ins is found in Genesis (Gen. 7:16). After Noah and his family had loaded the representative animals into the ark for their preservation, we read that "*God shut him in.*" Who would not want to be "shut-in" under such circumstances? Noah and his family were shut in the ark for seven days during which time they suffered the derision of the world. However, when the Flood came and swept away that world, with all their acquaintances, the ark's inmates began to realize the blessing designed for them by God.

Noah's being shut IN implied that the rest were shut OUT. This was no hardship for the world's sinners for that first week -- but then...

"The fountains of the deep were broken up and the windows of heaven were opened and the rain was upon the earth for forty days and forty nights ... and all flesh died that moved upon the earth... all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land died" (Gen. 7:11, 12, 21, 22).

What a tragedy for those within the ark as their neighbors, who had derided them during those seven hushed days, were engulfed in the waters! Shut IN -- Shut OUT! Of course, this was the lesson our first parents had to learn because of Adam's disobedience, shut out from their edenic paradise and their return barred by the cherubim with the flaming sword.

Daniel In the Lion's Den

Quite a different experience befell the Prophet Daniel. King Darius shut him in the den of lions to kill him. The mighty power of God that preserved the inmates of the ark through the swirling waters of the flood preserved the faithful servant from the lions. Daniel was shut in the lions den, true. Yet his enemies were powerless to shut God out! The divine messenger kept Daniel company throughout the night and shut the lion's mouths. The three Hebrews cast into the burning furnace heated seven times its normal temperature likewise had the presence, apparently of the *Logos* himself, to temper the heat and cause them to come forth unsinged.

Such cases are always trying at the time. All provide an "afterward" of praise and thanksgiving. This afterward has greatly stimulated all of God's people who ever felt it.

Many shut-ins are unable to see God's hand in their experiences. Because they cannot see him, they often lose faith and courage, especially if theirs is an on -- going experience. Remember that no confining walls can shut God out of your life nor confine your spirit to a point that it cannot reach him -- as long as our heart remains attuned to him. "*In all our afflictions he is afflicted and the angel of his presence saves us*" (Isa. 63:9). As the poet reminds us:

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
A free and quiet mind can take
These for an hermitage.

J. Hudson Taylor was the founder of the China Inland Mission. He occasionally fell sick, and illness always seemed to occur just when problems pressed the hardest. How did he occupy himself in "infirmity"? He prayed for the mission and for every individual working there. His physical confinement could not confine his spirit. Though his body was restricted to bed, his mind traveled the furthest reaches of China and heaven. In the end of his illness, he always found that affairs had progressed as satisfactorily as if he had been actively attending to business. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." No walls can shut in the power or confine the scope of intercessory prayer.

Madam Guyon bore wonderful testimony to this truth. Shut up in the French prison -- fortress, the Bastille, for four years on account of her religious faith, her health undermined by the hardships of her confinement, she was still able to sing:

A little bird I am,
Shut from the fields of air,
And in my cage I sit and sin
To him who placed me there;
Well pleased a prisoner to be,
Because, my God, it pleaseth thee.

My cage confines me round,
Abroad I cannot fly,
But through my wing is closely bound,
My soul's at liberty;
For prison walls cannot control the flight,
The freedom of the soul.

She added, "I have learned to love the darkness of sorrow; there you see the brightness of his face."

No Second Causes

Our confinements may arise from varied causes. Discouragement and despondency may follow at our heels unless we look beyond immediate circumstances to seek God's hand in all our experiences. The only source of comfort is in truly believing that "*all things work together for good to those who love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose*" (Rom. 8:28). This was Madame Guyon's secret: faith. God placed her in prison, so she could sing his praises even there.

Sickness, physical weakness of age, blindness, deafness: these are the commonest causes of confinement. If chronic, these may prove to be real tests of faith. Even minimal confinement can prove irksome to those who are particularly active. Yet, such situations can open doors of wider ministry than otherwise thought possible.

Frances Ridley Havergal was unable one Sunday morning to accompany her family to worship as was her practice. She had been involved in an accident. Upon the family's return, they were greeted by a brand which the Lord's people are exhorted to close the door themselves.

Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment until the indignation be overpast. For, behold! the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood and shall no more cover her slain (Isa. 26:20-21).

This text hardly applies to the body of Christ during this age who are to be "*caught away to meet the Lord in the air,*" and until that time already " *dwell in the secret place of the Most High*" under the shadow of his protection.

"My people" (Jehovah's people) in Old Testament prophecy are Israel. They are vitally interested in the closing events on the earth. These prophecies warn that they will be the object of hatred at that time. The recurring tide of anti -- Semitism foreshadows this prophetic fulfillment. This is not astonishing for they are Jehovah's true witnesses (cf. Isa. 43:8-13). They are true and irrefutable witnesses to God and the truth of his Word. This testimony they have given in our lifetimes by the reinstatement of the national Israeli state in the same land originally promised to them.

Had Hitler succeeded in his genocide of the Jewish race, all the prophecies of their restoration would have been invalidated. Likewise, were any future party to succeed in what Hitler attempted, the basis of western ideology would be shaken to its foundation.

Isaiah suggests that God's people take things in their own hand. They should remain aloof from outside affiliations just as Noah and his family were separated from their wicked generation so that the storm 'of the Lord's anger upon the nations may pass them by leaving them unharmed.

In principle this has always been true of the Lord's people. Today's so-called Christian nations are so entangled with every form of belief and unbelief in the United Nations and alliances that it is impossible for them to uphold the basic principles of the Christian faith which they profess. Isaiah said further,

"Say ye not, "A confederacy," to all them to whom this people shall say, "A confederacy"; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread" (Isa. 8:12,13).

This world places its trust in alliances and confederations. However, as in ancient Israel, such reliance will prove as futile as a broken reed piercing the hand of one who leans upon it. Only after human organization disintegrates will the western nations come to seek the Lord in reality and to sanctify him as their Refuge.

Our Lord, addressing his disciples on the subject of prayer, instructed,

"Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6:6).

Prayer must be without distraction. We may extend that thought beyond its literal meaning (doors) to the figurative door of the mind and of the heart. Distracting thoughts and affections must be put aside when we approach the Lord. What a picture of complete concentration is

pictured in the life of Elijah. After successfully challenging the false prophets on Mt Carmel, we read these words: *"And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel, and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees"* (I Kings 18:42). First of all the solitude of the summit, and then the shutting out of all sight and sound that would interfere with his intense intercession with his God. The subsequent testimony of the Apostle is:

"Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (James 5:17,18).

Note that Elijah prayed according to the revealed will of God in this matter. Only the prayer of faith is assured of an answer.

Shut Out Of the New Jerusalem

In the next age, there are also to be those who will be shut out from the blessings then available.

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie (Rev. 22:14,15).

And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev. 21:27).

Good judgment comes from experience, Good experience comes from bad judgment

- Anon

"To fear is to believe in evil more than in God."

-- R5488

Up then, and linger not, thou saint of God,
Fling from thy shoulders each impeding load;
Be brave and wise, shake off earth's soil and sin,
That with the Bridegroom thou mayest enter in.
O watch and pray!

Gird on thy armor; face each weaponed foe;
Deal with the sword of heaven the deadly blow;
Forward, still forward, till the prize divine
Rewards thy zeal, and victory is thine;
Win thou the crown.

Crystallization of Character

"No discipline seems pleasant at the time."
Hebrews 12:11, New International Version by: Contribution

"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." What comfort the Hebrews writer has offered us. If we are sons of God we should expect unpleasant discipline from our father. Yet, we read that Paul and silas sang praise to God when they were thrown into a Philippian prison. Peter exhorts saying, *"However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name"* (1 Peter 4:16, NIV).

This apparent contradiction can be explained by examining the Greek word translated "chastening." It means a "child." The original meaning of this word *paideia* is "rearing of a child." Thus, the meaning exactly harmonizes with the preceding thought found in the Hebrews passage. The writer is speaking about the chastening of children. This is quite different from "suffering as a Christian." The former seems to be restricted to the context of father and child. The father forms a particular bent of character in the child through long experience. Parental chastening is often unpleasant. Yet, in one's mature years they must acknowledge that this parental discipline produced in them the result that their parent intended.

We are God's children even when we grow to human adulthood. How many times have we been humbled because of our own failures? We saw God's perfection and tried to be like him, but try as we might we could not do so. We crawl away from such failures terribly discouraged. Does this agree with Paul's instructions to Timothy? Timothy was told that God's command would culminate in a pure, heartfelt love (1 Tim. 1:5). The psalmist lived long before Paul, but he prayed in a similar way: *"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me"* (Psa. 51:10, NIV). Jeremiah had similar ideas, saying that the heart is supremely deceitful and wicked (Jer. 17:9). What happens if we do not know our own heart? Then, when God sets about creating in us this "pure" heart that we seek, he forces us to see some of the hidden darkness and sin in our heart that has escaped our notice. In this light, we seem to ourselves to be hopelessly bad. His perfections tempts us to be discouraged. Indeed, if we think this way long enough we may even surrender our pursuit of the heavenly race. Here, absolute confidence in God is the only solution. Trust that God is willing to do what he promised. Having trusted him thus, cast all your cares upon him.

When you were in school you might have tried this chemistry experiment that nicely illustrates this point. Having been given a beautiful blue, transparent solution of Copper Sulphate we were challenged to produce crystals from it. We began by boiling the solution so that about half of the volume was reduced by evaporation. Then the container was set aside overnight. The next morning, upon returning to the lab, we discovered beautifully formed crystals. How had they formed? As the solution cooled the chemicals sought what is for them their natural state, and the crystals are the result.

The Christian's painful experiences are much like these crystals. Before we know where we are we find ourselves embroiled in some turmoil, some mental distress, some condition we cannot control or understand. Our personality comes to the fore and we boil over. Sometime this condition continues for a long time. Whether God allows us to brood for minutes, days, or years is up to him. At the end of our proverbial "rope," we realize that we have failed the Father. We

are humbled and ashamed. No *good* fruitage comes from our studies, or our fellowship, or our attempts at Christian living. Days, maybe years, pass. The experiences become memories. Then along comes another experience like the first. This time we react differently. What previously angered or frustrated us is a bother no longer. We may even find ourselves quite strong on this new point. Why? Because our character has crystallized. This is the "afterward" (*KJV*) or "later on" portion of the experience. The chastening is the visible part of the experience.. As the conscious mind is exercised by its living, the subconscious mind does its own work quietly, unobserved. From unseen depths the peaceable fruit of righteousness appears. It is another divine paradox that failure is the only pathway to ultimate success. *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness"* (2 Cor. 12:9, NIV).

Entered Into Rest

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