

THE HERALD

of Christ's Kingdom

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EDITORS' JOURNAL

*"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise:
be thankful unto him, and bless his name "-Psalms 100:4*

The close of the year is a busy time with Thanksgiving and Christmas following so close together. This year the presidential elections also fill the minds of men with uncertainty as they try to determine what the future holds in store.

Six articles in this current issue are directed to these events. *"God's Election"* contrasts the complexity of the American electoral system with the simplicity of God's election of the Church of Christ. In that election the answer is not decided by a popular vote but by the judicial decision of God as he weighs each individual's character against the standards the Bible holds for this elect group.

The article entitled *"What Shall I Render Unto the Lord?"* pertains to the theme of the Thanksgiving season. In a practical manner the author details how the giving of thanks involves partaking of the *"cup of salvation"* and paying personal vows daily to the Lord in the presence of the Lord's saints.

"The Alphabet of Praise" is a verse-by-verse Bible study in the 145th Psalm showing the relationship between thanksgiving, praising God and blessing his name.

Three articles deal with the subject of Jesus' birth. *"The Visit of the Magi"* investigates the many puzzling questions that surround the visit of the wise men as they followed the star of Bethlehem. *"The Name of Jesus"* analyzes how Jesus' death brought salvation to three different groups of people: mankind in general, the Church and Israel.

A new regular feature, "Archaeology and the Bible," begins in this issue and will give a background to Biblical archaeology as well as probe recent discoveries in that field.

NEWS & VIEWS

Also in the current issue we are beginning our first series of *"News and Views."* This feature will appear in every other issue of THE HERALD and replace the *PBI Newsletter*. In addition to news about the *Pastoral Bible Institute* it will carry news of the activities and publications of various Bible Student groups not directly associated with the PBI.

Selected letters which discuss the merits or demerits of specific articles will also be published. We welcome your correspondence concerning the material which appears in *The Herald*.

Capsule summaries of world events as they pertain to the Word of God will be included in this section.

We would appreciate feedback from our readers as to this new approach to *The PBI Newsletter* and your suggestions for improvement. This new format, and the material therein, will be under the direction of one of our editors, Leonard Griehs.

AN EXCITING YEAR

The year 1992 has been an exciting one from the standpoint of world events. The breakup of the Soviet Union continues apace, with ethnic rivalries threatening any hope of permanent stability in the area for the foreseeable future.

Reports of civil rights abuses in Bosnia and other areas of Yugoslavia have emphasized once again the inhumanity of man to man, and serve as a dramatic illustration of just how much we need God's kingdom. While we must remain ever alert not to become prophets instead of prophetic students, it certainly seems that the final Armageddon crash cannot be too far in the future.

Israel has continued to occupy center stage in the news media with both the change of government and the stalled peace talks. It was God who said "*this land is mine.*" It was God who deeded it by covenant to his people. (Gen. 15) Yet the Palestinians clamor loudly that it is **their** territorial rights that have been abused. With a new government willing to listen to "land for peace" arguments, it becomes questionable whether Israel will give up some of her God-given land for short term gains. Whatever the immediate future holds, we can be sure God's covenants will be fulfilled and his chosen people will eventually enjoy all their "*promised land.*"

Saddam Hussein continues to shadow box with his conquerors, and they seem helpless to meet his threats without embroiling the world in another "Desert Storm."

What a comfort to know that the present turmoil is only a transition from the dark clouds of today into the Edenic beauty of God's tomorrow. How we all need to join fervently in the Christian's continual prayer: "*Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*"

LIVING FAITH

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Timothy 3:16, 17

Condensed from a discourse

In the end of the Gospel age our challenges from the Adversary have been increasingly complex, whether *doctrine itself is* necessary in proving our faithfulness and whether our love for one another is sufficient, especially when we differ in the demonstration of our faith.

A living faith is vital. A living faith is acquiring as accurate a knowledge of the Truth of the Scriptures as possible, and demonstrating it by changing our characters.

God, through Paul, deals with this in the pastoral books of First and Second Timothy and Titus. Paul's charge to Timothy was to have a clear conscience, to study and feed on the Word of God.

To study the Bible with a clear conscience is to study it with the single purpose of knowing and doing God's will. If studied with other goals, the principle upon which we consecrated, to walk as Jesus walked is violated. Once we refresh at the well of Truth, we have an obligation to lift up our brethren.

Paul's second letter to Timothy, chapter 3, warns of perilous times that shall come in the last days, and we recognize these conditions today. Paul further warns us that these conditions would also be present in the Church.

ALL SCRIPTURE IS PROFITABLE

Wilson's *Diaglott* version of 2 Timothy 3:16 and 17 tells us that *all* Scripture that is inspired of God is important to be studied and applied.

All Scripture, divinely inspired, is indeed *profitable*. Strong's #5624 defines this as *helpful, serviceable, i.e. advantageous*. Most translations use *profitable or is useful* as in the New English, Phillips, and Weymouth. Fenton uses *intended*. Paraphrasing it, we say the Lord has supplied us with the Scriptures necessary to prove faithful and, in order to prove faithful, we need these Scriptures. Their teachings constitute the food whereby we are nourished.

Examining *doctrine*, Strong's #1319 we find that it means *instruction*. Most translations use *teaching*. Some add *"the truth"* or *"the faith"*. True theological instruction is a doctrine or a teaching applying the principles of God.

"Reproof," taken from Strong's #1651, means *to confute or admonish*. The New English and Jerusalem Bibles use *refuting error*, Phillips says *correcting error*, while Fenton uses *attestation*. Wilson's *Diaglott* translates this word *conviction*. The Apostle uses the same Greek word in Heb. 11:1 when he describes faith *"Now faith is a confident assurance of that for which we hope, a conviction (the same Greek word as 2 Tim. 3:16) of the reality of things which we do not see."* (Weymouth)

We can see that all inspired Scripture is necessary for us to be convinced in our beliefs. We cannot use only those we favor, but are obliged to use and to harmonize the entire Word of God.

The third facet of the value of Scripture is *correction*, Strongs #1882, and means *a straightening up again, i.e. (fig.) rectification or reformation*. Some translations use the following: New English: *reformation of matters*; Phillips, *resetting the direction of a man's life*. Thus we see it carries the thought of correcting or self-correction.

"By natural *tendency we* would all be inclined to go wrong; therefore we need to give careful heed to the admonition to set our affection on things above. We are here . . . for the purpose of learning certain principles, certain lessons, . . . so that we may more than ever shape our lives in harmony, therewith, that we may be able to see all the things of life from God's viewpoint. God's Word dØ not go into every detail of life; but it lays down important principles that touch our lives at every point; and it is far us to see what we need to restrain, what we need to cultivate, etc. The Lord wishes us to be intelligent children."

Lastly, we have *instruction* in the KJV. *Strongs* interprets it (number 3809) as "tutorage, i.e., education or training, disciplinary correction."

The same Greek word is found in Heb. 12:7. In 2 Timothy 3:16, the NAS, RSV, and Phillips translate *instruction* as *training*. Fenton uses *education* and Wilson's Diaglott uses *discipline*., while the New English adds "discipline in right living." The Truth instructs us in holy living, demonstrating that all inspired Scripture is profitable for chastening from God.

This may be good from an academic standpoint, but how does it work in real life? Let's examine three basic points of scriptural doctrine and see if we can apply Paul's four principles to them.

THE RANSOM

Two fundamental passages are John 3:16 and Romans 5:17, 18. We see that God, through Jesus, gives all an opportunity for life, first the Church and then mankind.

We are taught, instructed, in the perfection of the divine character of God as we learn how his four attributes work in harmony, none overshadowing the other.

We learn that Justice cannot deviate, even to the extent that God cannot deny himself. When God says it, it is so. So, man had to die, the just penalty for his sins.

This teaching is beautiful in its simplicity with regard to the principles of justice, and yet the complexity of its results are felt upon every living being that has ever existed! Justice gives us a perfect foundation for our faith, solid, immovable. Yet love is interwoven, tender to the giving of his precious Son on our behalf.

Thus we are convinced that God is the same, yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Being thus convinced, we can place our very lives in voluntary consecration, knowing that Justice will not fail, Love will tenderly find a way, Wisdom will protect, and Power will execute.

Self-correction is achieved through the ransom in guiding us to imitate the attributes of God. We strive to apply the aspects of a divine character, learning-often through trial, error, and heartache to balance justice and love, wisdom, and our access to the power of God in our daily dealings with one another.

And, lastly, we are chastened by our failures and our roughness in the harmonizing of our fledgling godly attributes. We struggle to adhere to a justice that condemned mankind to death, yet to emulate a mercy and love that is totally selfless. We are disciplined when we realize the vastness of the chasm between our abilities and God's.

We find our characters altering as we thrill to the reality that *all* will have an opportunity for life. In reviewing the philosophy of the ransom and its sister doctrine, the sin-offering, we are moved to greater sacrifice in our efforts to copy Jesus.

As did Jesus, we begin with prayer, a deep and regular study of the Scriptures, and daily meditation on the ramifications and applications of the details of the plan of God.

GRACE

One doctrine that many are appreciating greatly of late is Grace. As we wander the glad streams that feed the river of life (Psalms 46:4), we tend to become very familiar with territory covered in our early Christian walk. It is good to re-examine the beauties of such a teaching because of the gladness it will bring.

Since we did and can do nothing to merit life, it is by grace that we live at all. It was grace that led our Father to create us in the first place. He had no obligation to create man; and then, once man sinned and was condemned, God was under even less obligation to continue the race. (Titus 2:11-14; Rom. 5:8)

Grace is to be clearly distinguished from justice and from obligation. If when reading the Scriptures these two thoughts are kept separate, it will enable us to more correctly interpret the Bible, so that we would not be entangled with a false notion. As we continue up and down the various streams of truth, we are impressed with the mercy and grace God has shown repeatedly and are *convicted* that grace is a part of the divine character. Who can doubt the gracious provision of the ram to replace Isaac, the overwhelming grace of the details in the types of Israel, that every jot and tittle is attended to so that the nation would be blessed "in *basket and store*." (Deut. 28:5) What amazing grace when God's Grand Jubilee frees captives and ushers in the restitution proclaimed by every prophet!

When we appreciate the grace of God, we notice our own failings and judgmentalism. We can be better aligned with the graciousness which God's Divine Plan of the Ages demonstrates in every particular. We discipline ourselves to beautify our behaviors and love others as we love ourselves.

In this, too, we are disciplined by the inspired Scriptures themselves. Our failings humiliate us. How can we have committed that sin again? What can we say to the Father that will make up to Him for our repeated failings? Grace demands nothing more than an acceptance of that which has been provided. Our humiliation becomes humility, providing yet more tools to use in our dealings with others, both now and as joint-mediators with our Bridegroom.

Sometimes Bible students are criticized for having too much "head knowledge" and not enough "heart." This is a serious indictment, for we know that while knowledge is a fruit of the spirit, knowledge without love is as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. This is the value of the proper application of 2 Timothy 3:16, 17. We are *required* by Jehovah to utilize *every* Scripture inspired of God. Yet, Paul tells us here that there is heart value to be gained through the deepest studies.

GENTILE TIMES

Lastly, we wish to examine the Gentile Times. This doctrine can seem to be merely dry intellectualism. Yet, Paul tells us that it is profitable to us for doctrine, conviction, self-correction and chastening. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) How?

According to many students of the Bible, the Times of the Gentiles is a period of 2520 years. The Gentile Kingdoms of this world have been permitted to have dominion over the nation of Israel and its capitol, Jerusalem. (Luke 21:24; Ezek. 21:25-27)

In studying this doctrine we find many dates, facts and figures. To some they might be very stimulating. However not all of the Lord's people have the mind to enjoy a subject of this kind. (Lev. 26:21, 24, 28)

We are instructed that God's plan for mankind is controlled. Lengths of time, though seemingly endless, have both beginnings and ends. We learn that God in his wisdom has given man every possible chance to improve himself and his condition that he might become thoroughly convicted of his total need of *God* to bring about a perfect society here on earth

Even the Adversary himself, who thought to work his own plans, is in fact working out God's plan. Faith's foundation has yet another stone of sureness.

How do we receive our correction from our understanding of the details of the doctrine of the Times of the Gentiles? We learn to apply patience in our long-term experiences. They, too, will have a beginning and an end. Satan's seeming victories in our lives will work to our good, and we can exercise confidence in the assurance that this condition is not permanent. We can lift up our heads and rejoice that our deliverance is nigh.

Yet we are disciplined and chastened when demanding *our* way, when we do not wait in faith for the sure outworkings of God. As we falter and are lovingly punished, we learn that we, like the rest of the human race, need God and God alone.

How do we feel about this doctrine?

We are here at the crossroads of two ages, when The Messiah has returned and is in the process of setting up the Kingdom. How can we think of it as an intellectual fact alone, something to feel smug about knowing but having little effect in the day-to-day workings of our lives? Surely we are driven to tell others, to comfort the weary, and to proclaim the incoming Kingdom!

MOTIVATION

Having information is one thing. But it has to motivate and burn within with a white-hot flame. As Jeremiah of old, we too must say:

"But His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay!" -Jer. 20:9

Yes, we are in perilous times here in the last days. Men love themselves, and few love God. There are ambitious men, those who act as though the credit of the truth were due to them.

There are many who are proud of the knowledge which should be received only with humility and thankfulness. In the last days men shall be blasphemers; disobedient to parents (both literal and spiritual,) unthankful, unholy, . . . covenant breakers, false accusers, sexually immoral, ungentle, traitors, despisers of those that are good (those that cannot be trusted,) heady, high mindd, lovers of pleasure more than of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, false brethren who have erred in the truth and become teachers of false doctrines who will become the greatest peril in the last days.

How could we stand without the whole counsel of God? How could we hope to become perfected, thoroughly furnished unto all good works without the inspired and holy Scriptures many of us have known since we were children.

May we each be taught and instructed by God's spirit; be convinced of the truth of the Bible and its sure foundation for our faith; be quick to correct ourselves as we learn each new detail; be responsive to the discipline in righteousness with the chastening that is sure to result if we approach our studies in the Scriptures with pure and honest hearts. **May our faith live!**

GOD'S ELECTION

"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." -1 Peter 1:2

As the quadrennial political election process in the United States draws to a close we are constantly amazed at the complexity of the procedure. The political conventions of both parties spend hours haggling over rules for delegates and in the hammering out of a platform.

In marked contrast, Peter spells out God's election process in one simple verse. In this text he outlines the principle of this election. According to the foreknowledge *of* God the Father. He describes the method-sanctification of the spirit. Then he outlines the objectives-*unto* obedience and the sprinkling *of* the blood.

GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE

This principle of God's election is detailed in Rom. 8:29

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image *of* his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

According to Strong's Concordance (number 4267), the word used by Peter, prognosis, means "to give forethought." Like a wise businessman, God, in organizing his plan for human salvation, gave forethought to the type of personnel he would need to assist in this great sin-removal project.

Those for whom he thus foresaw a need-the Church-he did also predestinate. The word Paul uses here has the thought of a setting of boundaries or borders. In other words to complete our analogy to the businessman, he sets up a job description and qualifications for this class whom he knew he would need. He groups all of these qualifications into one-"to be conformed to the image *of* his Son."

This is the main principle of God's election. His Son was set aside to be the Redeemer. He, too, was foreknown-the Lamb slain from before the foundation *of* the world. (Rev. 13:8) Since his associates were to work so closely with God's Son, the Father planned that these must be in the same image-having the same character and goals.

Summarizing this principle: God foresaw a use for associates with his Son, Jesus, and he predetermined that those who would be elected to fill this job would be the ones who would be conformed to the image of his Son.

THE METHOD -- SANCTIFICATION

Peter then proceeds to describe the method by which God would achieve his desire of having a people conformed to the image of his Son--*through sanctification of the spirit.*

Sanctification has within it two thoughts--purification and the setting apart for a holy task. Both of these are integral to the method of God's selection of the Church as a Bride for his Son.

The purification concept is emphasized in 1 Thess. 4:3-4 --

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour."

Here sanctification is set in contrast with fornication, though that sin is only one of the foes of the sanctifying process. Any deviation from the principles of righteousness is an influence working against sanctification.

This method of sanctification is further spelled out in 2 Thessalonians 2:13

"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved *of* the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification *of* the Spirit and belief *of* the truth "

Paul adds another concept to the sanctifying process-belief in the truth. This thought is enforced by the words of Jesus himself in his prayer with the disciples before Peter then proceeds to describe entering Gethsemane.

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." John 17:17

Without a careful study of God's word we cannot know the Son of God. Without knowing the Son of God we cannot understand the image we are to copy.

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing *of* your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. "Romans 12:2

We "renew our minds" by replacing our thoughts with God's thoughts. We gain God's thoughts by studying God's Word. This process, Paul says, results in our transformation - our *metamorphoses* and our ability to determine what is that *good*, and *acceptable*, and *perfect*, will of *God*.

"Study to *shew thyself approved* unto *God*, a *workman* that *needeth not to be ashamed*, rightly *dividing the* word of truth. "-2 Tim. 2:15

FIRST OBJECTIVE-OBEDIENCE

"Casting *down* imaginations, and *every high* thing that exalteth *itself* against *the knowledge of God*, and" bringing into captivity *every thought to the obedience of Christ*. "2 Cor. 10:5

It is this type of instant obedience that Peter talks of in our theme text as being one of the objects of our election. It was obedience that God required of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. It was obedience that God required of the Jewish nation under the Law Covenant. It is obedience that he requires now of the Church class.

The election of the Church is for the purpose of choosing joint-heirs with Christ himself, co-regents to share his throne. Eventually this class will be the instructors of the world in the requirements of righteousness. But first they must learn what it is to obey.

The story is told of the ship captain who piloted a great ocean liner with hundreds of people under him. He returned in his later years to visit his aged father. One night he went out with some of his old friends for a convivial evening with old buddies. At 10 p.m. he started saying his good-byes before departing for home. "But the evening is young," his friends protested. "I know," the captain replied, "but I promised my father I would be home by 11." "But you are a grown man," they continued their protest. "One of the first lessons I learned," the captain responded, "was that he is not fit to command who has not first learned to obey."

This is precisely the lesson God would have his church to learn. Their fitness to take a commanding place in his Kingdom is dependent upon their learning obedience now. The same was true for their Lord and Master.

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." -Heb. 5:8,9

Having learned obedience, Jesus could expect it from his followers. His obedience qualified him to teach obedience to others, much as a student teacher must learn his subject before he can teach it.

This, then, is the deeper objective of our election. The Church must not only learn obedience, but how to pass along the lessons of obedience it has learned to the world of mankind in the Kingdom for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy *will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*"

SECOND OBJECTIVE--SPRINKLING OF THE BLOOD

The final objective of the Christian's election is *unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*. They have no part in providing this blood, but a vital part in its sprinkling. This *blood of sprinkling* is connected with the sacrifice of Abel in Hebrews 12:24:

"And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. "

The sacrifice that Abel offered (Gen. 4:4) was the first example of animal sacrifice in the Old Testament. It showed the recognition that an acceptable sacrifice would involve the death of an animal - pointing forward to Jesus, whose death effects the redemption of the entire human race.

The *blood of sprinkling* speaks *better things* than that of Abel in that it is the blood of the antitype the blood of Jesus Christ. Provided solely by the Son of God, it is an object of the Christian's election to have a part in its application on behalf of the entire world of mankind, resulting in their resurrection from the grave into the glories of Christ's Kingdom.

SUMMARY

What a glorious election is the election of God! How beautifully and simply Peter sums up its various components!

ITS PRINCIPLE: God's foreknowledge and pre-planning for salvation. His conceiving of the need for a church and his setting forth the conditions for their selection forms the basis for the entire concept of an elect class being selected at the present time for a future work with their Lord in the future.

ITS METHOD: The achieving of the goal of Christlikeness by a process of sanctification-setting apart this elect class by purifying them with both the knowledge and practice of holy living.

ITS OBJECTIVES: First, the learning of complete obedience to an all-wise God; and, second, the teaching of that obedience in the Kingdom. The second objective is that they will have a share in the resurrecting of the human race by participating with Jesus in *the sprinkling of the blood*.

GAIN REQUIRES PAIN

"Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. "-1 Pet. 1:9

Notice that the second word *your* is in italics in the Bible, which means that it is unsupported by a Greek counterpart. This verse should really read:

"Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of souls."

This is the goal of the Christian faith, to have a role to play in the salvation of the souls of others. This is the grand outcome of the election, truly a prize worth running for.

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.-2 Pet. 1:10

WHAT SHALL I RENDER UNTO THE LORD?

"What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? "-Psalms 116:12

Condensed from a discourse by: Tim Thomassen

Many people take their blessings for granted. Luke records the account of Jesus and ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19). The lepers were victims of a terrible and ultimately fatal disease. ALL cried for mercy. ALL were cleansed. But only one, a Samaritan, returned to give thanks.

Does such gross ingratitude puzzle us? How can anyone be so thankless? If we closely examine our own lives, we may not rate very highly, either.

Shakespeare wrote:

*Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude.
Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
Thou dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot.*

It is written in Psalm 103:2: *"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."* The word *bless* here carries the thought of giving thanks and praise. The Hebrew word includes the idea of kneeling and blessing God, as an act of adoration. We should bless, as on bended knee, Jehovah, who out of his own divine resources can supply all of our needs.

UNDER OR ABOVE

A man asked his Christian friend how he was getting along. With a drawn, expressionless face the other answered, "Oh, fairly well, under the circumstances."

The first man replied, "I am sorry that you are UNDER the circumstances. The Lord wants us to live ABOVE all our circumstances, where he himself can delight our hearts and meet our every need."

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews abounds with examples of how God's people in past times overcame and lived ABOVE conditions of all kinds.

Our conditions may not correspond exactly to those of God's people in past ages. Yet we often find ourselves confronted with situations that test our faith and reveal the true climate of our heart.

The present circumstances of life, whatever they may be and however hard they may press against us, are the best shaped tool in the Father's hand to chisel us for eternity. We should trust him and thank him and not push away the instrument, lest we lose its effect.

IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS

The Apostle Paul wrote in I Thessalonians 5:18: *"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."* Not only is such a disposition a good and healthy one, but, more importantly, it is God's will for us.

Alexander Whyte, a famous Scottish preacher, always began his public prayers with an expression of gratitude. One cold and stormy day, when his congregation wondered how he could be grateful under such conditions, he began by saying, "O Lord, we thank thee that the weather is not always like this."

An appreciative heart brightens a dreary day and shortens the longest night. It not only makes our life, and the lives of those around us, so much more enjoyable but it is more pleasing to the Lord.

A person whose heart is full of praise and thanksgiving is willing to accept whatever the Lord has given him or wherever he has seen best to place him. He turns his liabilities into assets, making them work for him instead of against him.

Such a person can say with the Apostle Paul:

"I have learned in whatever condition I am to be contented. I know both what it is to be abased, and I know what it is to abound: in every place and in all conditions, I have been disciplined . . . I am strong to endure all things with Him who strengthens me. " (Philippians 4:11-13, Diaglott)

THE OAK AND THE PANSY

A well-known fable tells about the king's garden where the trees and flowers began to complain.

The oak was sad because it did not bear flowers. The rose bush was feeling low because it did not bear fruit. The vine was downcast because it had to cling to the wall and could not project any shadow.

"I am not any use in the world," said the oak. "I might just as well die; I do not yield any fruit," said the rose bush. "What good can I do?" added the vine.

Then the king happened to see a little pansy holding up its happy face.

The king asked, "What makes you glad, when all the rest are so sad?"

"Well, I thought," said the pansy, "that you must have wanted me here, because you planted me. So, I made up my mind that I would try to be the best little pansy that I could be."

A JOYFUL NOISE

The Psalmist rejoices in Psalm 100:

Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.

Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

Know ye that the LORD is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture

We have a Maker, and He cares for us. He has his hand upon us and he knows the steps that we take. We should trust him and thank him for all that he has done for us

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and in his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

This text applies to the priestly class. Their thankfulness to the Lord for his mercies and blessings should lead them to lay down their lives cheerfully in His service.

Their hearts should be filled with praise; having entered the courts of the Lord to be seated with Christ in heavenly conditions, the heavenly light and food should enable them to rejoice exceedingly even in tribulation.

Because they have entered into this fellowship with the Lord in his sufferings, with his spirit of appreciation, they are joyful in the house of their pilgrimage. When the pilgrimage of the present life is ended, they shall pass beyond the veil; there they will find fulness of joy as they enter into the joys of their Lord in the full and complete sense.

"The Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations. "

That is a promise we can rely on!

WHAT SHALL I RENDER?

How can I offer thanks to the Lord? What does our Heavenly Father desire of me?

Psalm 116:12 answers us: *"What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?"* What can I give in return for the benevolent treatment that I have received from Him?

The question is a proper one. What have we to render that we have not received of him? **NOTHING!**

The Apostle Paul **tells** us that *"We are not our own—we have been bought with a price. Therefore we should glorify God in our body."* (See 1 Cor. 6:19, 20)

Additionally, Paul states (1 Cor. 8:6): *"But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him."*

This is illustrated in the building of the Lord's temple. In I Chronicles 29:5, we read: *"The gold for things of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and for all manner of work to be made by the hands of the artificers. And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord."*

In verse 14, David states: *"All things come of thee, and of Throe own have we given thee."*

Consecration means to fill our hand from God's hand, and then offer it to him again. We have nothing of our own to offer, only what our Heavenly Father gives us.

THE CUP OF SALVATION

Note verse 13 of this 116th Psalm: *"I will take the cup of salvation."* The words *I will take* seem to be a strange response to the question: *What shall I render?* Yet, this is what the Lard desires of us.

He wants us to show our appreciation by accepting his salvationthe gift of his love purchased for us at great cost, the death of his only begotten son. Therefore, the truly thankful will obey his voice and take the cup of salvation through faith in Christ.

This cup of salvation has an additional significance. As grapes must be crushed and broken before the juice is produced, so must we suffer and die before we are made complete and produce our final product.

The Apostle Paul wrote: *"If we endure, we shall also reign together."* (2 Timothy 2:12, ROTHERHAM) If we partake of the difficulties and bruising incurred for the sake of Christ, then we shall also share in the glory to come.

This is what Jesus referred to when he told his disciples at the last supper that he would not drink thereafter of the fruit of the vine until the day that he would drink it anew with them in his Father's kingdom.

So let us take our cup and lift it up to the Lord. We shall render unto him our reasonable service-a full consecration of heart and life.

This is how the Lord wants us to express our thanks, and render the payment due him. It is a *sacrifice of thanksgiving*. (Psalm 116:17)

We read in Psalm 116:13: *"I . . . will call upon the name of the LORD."* The Hebrew word for *call* includes the thought of *call out to*. The writer is saying: *"I will call out to the Lord for help and for blessing."*

He knows he can trust in and rely upon the Lord. He had discovered what the Apostle James later said: *"Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh unto you."* James 4:8

He who redeemed us at a great price is both able and willing to perfect in us his great salvation. We should take him at his word and step out on his promises.

Only our heavenly Father and his truth, represented by the golden vessels of the temple, can fill us. We can be content with none other.

PAYING OUR VOWS--NOW

Looking further into this Psalm, we find the writer saying that he will pay his vows *"unto the Lord now, in the presence of all His people."*

He speaks of solemn promises made to God to perform or abstain from performing a certain thing. Vows were entirely voluntary but once made were regarded as compulsory.

We can understand why the Psalmist should pledge his vows to the Lord. They were expressions of gratitude and devotion.

So it is with us. To render our dedicated lives and talents gladly and voluntarily is but a reasonable return for all of God's goodness. *To pay our vows* implies reciprocation for all that the Lord has done for us. But, once we make a vow, God expects us to fulfill it.

Ecclesiastes 5:4, 5 states:

"When you vow a vow to God, do not delay in paying it.. Pay what you vow. It is better that you do not vow, than that you vow and not pay. "

Proverbs 20:25 tells us: *"It is a snare to man that he should rashly cry Holy! And after making vows, to reflect."* (Rotherham) One should think before he promises.

The Psalmist said that he would pay his vows. When? Now!! Likewise, the Apostle Paul wrote, concerning the Church, that it should not hesitate or delay in paying its vows.

His words were: *"Behold Now is the day of salvation."* (2 Cor. 6:2) This is the only time that the Church can drink the cup of suffering and death that Jesus offered. This is the only acceptable day of so great a salvation.

IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS PEOPLE

Not only is the time significant, but the place also. We are to perform our vows *"in the presence of all his people, In the courts of the LORD'S house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem."* (Psalm. 116:18, 19)

Is this not one way of rendering thanks to God by fellowshiping with our brethren and doing good unto them, by serving and sacrificing for them?

*"Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another. And all the more as you see the day drawing near. "*Hebrews 10:24,25

The word *exhorting* means to *call near, invite, invoke and comfort*. The Greek word is derived from another which signifies *near, from beside, in the vicinity of, in the sight of*. We are to assist one another by being together physically as well as in spirit.

A church-Boer told his minister that he would not be present for the next Sunday's services but he would "be there in spirit." Strangely, his body went fishing at the lake.

Of course, such a situation happens only among non-Bible Students-it is not true of us! Right? Or wrong?

Do we make up excuses for not attending a meeting or a convention? Perhaps the real reason is that we do not like the topic of the study or the leader in charge? Or it may be we do not care for the particular slate of speakers or the type of meetings offered. There may be other things that we prefer to do instead.

1 John 3:16 tells us that *"we understand the meaning of love from this, that he laid down his own life on our behalf, and we ought to lay down our lives on behalf of the brethren."*

A CUP OF SACRIFICE

The *cup of salvation* of which we partake is full of sacrifice and giving up of ourselves. The Apostle Paul reminds us to do good unto all men, but especially the household of faith.

Hebrews 13:15, 16 summarizes:

"By him [Jesus], therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. "

Note Rotherham's translation of verse 16:

"But of the doing good and of fellowship, be not forgetful; for with such sacrifices as these is God well pleased. "

We cannot do good to others except at a cost to ourselves; sacrifice is the price we pay for the expression of our love. We cannot attain to the highest degree of love without tasting of the cup of which Jesus drank-without submitting to the baptism wherewith he was baptized.

PRECIOUS DEATHS

Note Psalm 116:15: *"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."*

Death is the cup of salvation of which we drink. So Jesus asked the two brothers: *"Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?"* Jesus knew that his cup was one of suffering and death. Yet he drank it willingly.

So if we desire to serve the Lord we must pay our vows voluntarily unto him. The Apostle Paul asked the Church at Rome:

"Are you ignorant, that as many as have been immersed into Christ, have been immersed into his death? We have therefore been entombed with him by the immersion into that death; . . . "
(Romans 6:3, 4, WILSON'S DIAGLOTT)

A thankful heart will see sacrifice as but a small price compared to God's love and provisions. Immersion into Christ's death involves a burial of one's own will, including everything he has.

The death of the Lord's people is a precious thing in his estimation and sight. This thought is beautifully expressed in James 5:7 (Rotherham):

"Lo, the husbandman awaiteth the precious fruit of the earth, Having patience for it until it receive the early and the latter rain "

Our heavenly Father is the great husbandman (John 15:1) who is waiting for the harvest of a very special crop-the Church. This crop is in the process of development. It is being planted in the likeness of Christ's death now. Later, it will share in the likeness of His resurrection.

"But ye [the Church] are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a people for a peculiar treasure. "-1 Peter 2: 9 (Rotherham)

Here, Peter tells us that the Church is a select group. It has been picked by God. The Psalmist says that *"blessed is the man whom the Lord chooses"* (65:4). He has the divine approval.

We add our voices to the Psalmist's:

"O, Lord, truly I am thy servant. I am thy servant, and son of throe handmaid. Thou hast loosed my bonds Praise ye the Lord. " (Psalms 116:16, 19)

I choose to be thy servant. I am thy servant and thine alone. Let others serve whatever master they will-false gods, dogmas of men, worldly pleasures, the acceptance of the world, a prestigious career, or anything else. As for me, I will call upon the name of the Lord. Amen!

A SPIRITUAL BOUNTY

We have so much for which to be thankful. We, like the early American colonists, can praise the Lord for shelter, for clothing, and for a bountiful crop. But our shelter is so much superior to theirs; we have the refuge of our heavenly Father. We have his care, his protection, his love, and his promises. These far surpass any earthly advantages.

We also have clothing, too; of a kind and substance unlike any other. We are clothed with the righteousness of Christ. This covers our imperfections and makes us presentable before God.

This is not all. If we are faithful, we will receive clothing of gold when glorified with the divine nature. Psalm 45:13, speaking of the bride. of Christ, states:

"The King's daughter is all glorious within. Her clothing is of wrought gold [cloth in which gold is woven]. She shall be brought to the King in raiment of needlework. "

Those who seek it may have the privilege of becoming part of the most choice crop ever to be harvested. They have been given the opportunity of becoming members of the heavenly body of Christ, the first fruits. If we who seek faithfully drink our cup and pay our vows, we will share in the harvesting of all the willing and obedient during the Kingdom age.

Help us, Lord, to render our due payment of thanks and not forget our many, many benefits.

THE ALPHABET OF PRAISE

"Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright." -Psalms 133:1

A verse by verse study of Psalm 145

Praise is the theme of many of David's psalms, just as it is of a large number of poems and hymns. It is fitting that it be so, because the creature stands in awe at the largesse of the Creator. Not only are his necessities provided but the quantity, the variety, and the beauty in the design of man's environment leaves the thinking man groping for adequate adjectives.

ACROSTICS

Acrostics is a literary device used frequently in the Psalms. In an acrostic psalm each verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Perhaps the best examples of this device are Psalm 119 and the book of Lamentations. In the former, every verse in each octet (or set of eight) begins with the same letter of the alphabet, progressing in 176 verses through the entire alphabet of 22 letters.

In Lamentations, chapters one, two, and four contain 22 verses each, progressing through the alphabet; the middle chapter, has a total of 66 verses, three verses for each letter. The acrostic breaks down in the last chapter; though containing 22 verses, it is not an acrostic.

The device is used for three purposes: to discipline the mind of the writer, to set his thoughts in a composed order, and to present a formal outline. In the Lamentations example we see how Jeremiah disciplines his mind before uttering his extreme grief, a lesson for all who walk the depths of sorrow's pathway. In the last chapter the grief overwhelms the author and the acrostic breaks down.

Psalm 145 is an example of an acrostic psalm. Although it has only 21 verses in our English language Bibles, the original Hebrew contains 22 verses, supplying a verse just where the missing letter, *nun*, would come in alphabetic order-after verse 13.

THE OUTLINE

The 145th Psalm can be divided into four subsections:

Verses 1,2 - Introduction
Verses 2-7 - Praise for Creation
Verses 8-13 - Praise for the Kingdom
Verses 14-21 - Praise for God's Wisdom

HIGH PRAISES

"Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two edged sword in their hand" Psalms 149: 6

The term *high praises* suggests gradations of praise, a contrast with lower praises. There are at least four areas where we can see this contrast:

1. Praising God for his spiritual gifts-wisdom, insight into his word, salvation-is a greater praise than the praise for his natural gifts-food, raiment and health.
2. The praise of a believer is certainly fitting and comely; but the praise of a fully dedicated life is an even higher praise.
3. Praising God with our works, the way we live our lives, is certainly a higher praise than merely lifting the voice in words of thanksgiving.
4. Appreciating what God does is fine and appropriate, but appreciating what God is is an even greater expression of praise.

It is this last area that Psalm 145 emphasizes. The poet constantly contrasts what God does with what God is. A wise man once asked, "Do you know about God or do you know God?" Here the psalmist wants to acquaint us with what God is . . . so that we might give him greater praises.

Each of the four main subsections is divided further into three areas, answering successively the questions: (1) WHY is God to be praised? (2) WHO should do the praising? (3) HOW should the praise be given?

With these preliminary remarks let us proceed to a verse by verse study of Psalm 145:

INTRODUCTION

"I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. "-vs. 1, 2

In the three verbs *extol*, *bless* and *praise* we have an ascending scale of glorifying God. To *extol* is to proclaim, to tell to others what God has done for us. This is not just a good thing for the believer to do, it is essential:

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. - "Rom. 10:10

But we must go even further, we must bless his name. To bless is to make happy. How can we make the name of God happy? By honoring it with a life worthy of that name. One of the ten commandments is *"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."* In claiming to be God's people, Israel had to live up to that claim. If we claim to be a Christian, do we honor that name by living a Chris

tian life? A recent saying put it this way, "If you were put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?"

Going still further, we are to praise his name. Praise differs from thanksgiving. Thanksgiving appreciates what God does; praise appreciates who God is. Praise is an act of intelligent worship, connecting the acts of a mighty God with the glories of his character.

The introduction of this psalm also gives us the duration of the praise *for ever and ever-and its frequency-every day.*

"But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. "-Heb. 3:13

"For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day. "-Exod. 32:29

Promptness in expressing our praise is encouraged. "How long halt ye between two opinions?" (1 Kings 18:21)

Finally, the object of our praise is specified as being *his name*, his character. The psalmist concludes his hymn of praise with that same thought, and we will elaborate on this expression in dealing with the final verse.

PRAISE HIM FOR CREATION

"Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. "-v 3

WHY?-The unsearchableness of God's creative greatness is the first thing that attracts our attention. Who can gaze at the magnificence, the order, and the silent display of the starry sky without acknowledging the unsearchable wisdom and power manifested thereby.

"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. "-Isa. 40:26-28 (See also Psalms 8 and Psalms 19)

One speaker after showing the immense wisdom and power required to provide for the sustenance of the human race posed the question: "Why did God go to so much trouble for mere man?" And the answer came quickly-God responded "No trouble at all." In the same chapter of Isaiah we have this contrast made for us:

"Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the spars, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? "-Isa. 40:12

As incomprehensibly huge as the heavens are to us, they are so small to God that he can measure them *with the span*. How great is our God! It is just this unsearchable greatness that gives us our first insight into his character.

"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. "-Rom. 1:20 NIV

"One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts." - v. 4

WHO? *"One generation . . . to another"* Two thoughts can be derived from these words. Primarily they refer to the carrying out of the parental duties of teaching the children the reverence of God.

"The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth. "- Isaiah 38:19

Since it is obviously a parent's responsibility to pass along the knowledge that will enable his child to face life, he must start with the foundation of knowledge:

"The fear [awe, respect] of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: as the knowledge of the holy is understanding. " Prov. 9:10

In yet another sense, the Church of Christ as a co-parent with their Lord of the human race will have a similar responsibility:

"A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this. "-Psalm 22:30, 31

The Church, as the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:29), will indeed serve him and, in the kingdom age declare his righteousness to those who will be given a resurrection birth at that time.

"I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness. "-vs. 5-7

How? The answer to this question is presented in dialog form, between "I" and "they." The "I" class notes the honor and majesty of his works, while the "they" **group** call attention to the might manifested by these works. The "I" responds by highlighting the greatness [of character] displayed, causing the "they" to respond with an appreciation of God's "goodness" and "righteousness."

What a beautiful picture of God's kingdom when the church, the "I" class, educates mankind in appreciating the character behind the great and mighty power of God, producing the reaction in men of sincere appreciation, not only of omnipotent power but of goodness and righteousness as well.

PRAISE FOR HIS KINGDOM

"The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, as of great mercy. The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works. "-vs. 8, 9

WHY? Verse 11 shows that the subject matter of this section is the kingdom. However the praise is not for the fact of the kingdom, but for what God is-he is *gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger and of great mercy*. The Psalmist sees God's kingdom as the crowning of *all his works* with his *tender mercies*. As the hymnist has phrased it: *His lovingkindness, O how great!*

"All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee. "-v. 10

WHO? *All thy works* and *thy saints*. Psalm 148 contains a lengthy catalog of the works which shall praise God. The kingdom will see the earth returned to the pristine beauty of the Garden of Eden. With the animals -including man-living in perfect harmony and in unison with their environment; truly *all thy works* shall praise him. It will be true praise, for they will show to men

the goodness, the graciousness, the compassion, and the mercy of God. They will demonstrate the truthfulness of the scripture, *"God is love."*

The *saints* here referenced are the New Testament church. The succeeding verses go on to describe the kingdom function of these saints in informing men about the attributes of both God and his kingdom.

These recognize the character of God, and *bless* his name as well make his name happy by living in accordance with the same character. They bless him by copying him.

"They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations. "-vs. 11-13

HOW? The praising of God by the united voice of *all his works* and his *saints is* through their proclaiming with strong and loud voices to *the sons of men* about the kingdom then at hand-its glory, its power, its glorious majesty, and its eternal duration.

At this juncture we come to the missing verse in this psalm, the verse beginning with the Hebrew letter *nun*, the fourteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This verse is supplied in the *Septuagint* translation, a translation made by Egyptian Jews before the birth of Christ. This verse reads:

"Faithful is Jehovah in all his words, and holy in all his works."

This short verse summarizes the praise to be given for his kingdom. It is a recognition of the faithfulness of God in fulfilling his promises to the sons of men *faithful in all his words*. They also acknowledge that he is *holy*, absolutely perfect, in the accomplishment of his works.

PRAISE FOR THE WISDOM OF HIS PLAN

"The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down. The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest throe hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them. The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy. " vs. 14-20

Why? In seven steps he outlines the basic elements of God's plan for man's salvation:

- 1. THE ADVOCACY OF CHRIST: *"The LORD upholdeth all that fall."* How reminiscent is this expression of the promise made to his church in 1 John 2:1

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

- 2. GLORIFICATION OF THE CHURCH: He *"raiseth up all those that be bowed down."* Again we note the similarity with another of God's promises, this time in Matt. 5:3

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "

- 3. EDUCATING BOTH THE CHURCH AND MANKIND: *"Thou givest them their meat in due season."* The *due season* for the Church is the present time; for the world it is in that future kingdom. Note the promise of Matt. 24:45

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?"

- 4. INTRODUCING GOD'S KINGDOM: *"Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing."* (v. 16) All that man has ever *desired* all he could hope for, will be supplied in that kingdom-and even more. The assurance of this is beautifully phrased in Haggai 2:7

"And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts."

- 5. PERFECT STANDARD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS: *"The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works."* (Verse 17) The laws of that kingdom, the standard God will hold up to be obeyed for men to maintain life for ever, is nothing less than absolute righteousness, complete perfection.

- 6. MERCY TO THOSE WHO FAIL: *"The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him."* Mankind will be raised in the same sinful condition as they were when they died. It is an almost certainty that they will often fail, then, of the perfect standard required of them.

"A just man falleth seven times, and riseth again. " (Prov. 24:16) how much more an unjust man. The provision of a mediator to stand between man and this righteous standard until man has regained the perfection Adam enjoyed in Eden is one of the greatest features of God's mercy in his divine plan of the ages.

A remarkable parallel passage to this is found in Job 33:24-30. We quote in part:

"He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. "-Job 33:27, 28

- 7. SECOND DEATH: *"All the wicked will he destroy."* At the conclusion of that kingdom the Bible speaks of *"a little season,"* a short period when Satan, having been bound for the 1000 years of the kingdom, will be loosed to once again tempt men to rebellion. Those whom he succeeds in deceiving will be destroyed in *"the second death."* (Rev. 20:14)

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire aØ brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. "-Rev. 20:7-10

Thus, with the Church exalted with her Lord in heaven, and with all men raised to perfection on the earth below, and with Satan and all those whom he is able to deceive forever destroyed, God's plan will have reached its finale and the will of God will finally be fully accomplished.

"[God] will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth "1 Tim. 2:4

"My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever."--v. 21

WHO? This time the praise is uttered by God's mouth, or his mouthpiece-the Church. (Contrast Rev. 3:16) They now praise him by noting the kind of character he displays in the final outworking of his plans and purposes with man. And mankind, in turn-"all flesh"-will respond by "blessing," emulating, his glorious name, his character, *'for ever and ever.'*

HOW? In addition to copying his character, they will "bless his name" in many other ways. Three of these are described in Psalm 20.

DEFENDED BY HIS NAME: *"The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee."-Psalms 20:1*

DISPLAYING HIS NAME: *"We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the LORD full all thy petitions."-Psalms 20:5*

DELIVERED BY HIS NAME: *"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God." - Psalms 20:7*

With such a mighty God and such a magnificent plan for man, let everything that bath breath praise the Lard.

"Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that bath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD."-Psalms 150:1-6

PRAISE YE THE LORD! BLESS HIS HOLY NAME!

THE NAME OF JESUS

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a sort, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. "-Matt. 1:21-23

This instance is one of several in the Bible where the naming of a child was dictated by God and not left to the selection of the parents. Whenever this happens it always signifies that the name has a special meaning.

In this case it is unusual that he is to be named JESUS. The prophecies stated that he would be named EMMANUEL. Since the names are so different it is worthy of inquiry to see how the name Jesus is related to the name Emmanuel.

The prophecy referred to is found in Isaiah 7:14

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. "

The name of Jesus is often interpreted as meaning Savior. It is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua. However the name Joshua does not mean "Savior;" that is the meaning of the Hebrew name Hosea. The relationship between Hosea and Joshua can be seen by looking at Numbers 13:16 where Moses renames Oshea [or Hosea] Jehoshua [meaning Jehovah saves]. Therefore the name of Jesus means Jehovah saves. In this way it corresponds with Emmanuel, God with us, merely adding the thought, "God is with us to save us."

HIS PEOPLE MANKIND

"He will save his people from their sins. " "His people" are all mankind.

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. "-2 Cor.5:14

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. "-1 Tim. 2:5, 6

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. "-1 Cor. 15:21

All of humanity belongs to Christ by reason of purchase.

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. "-1 Cor. 6:20

The sins from which humanity is saved are clearly spelled out in the above quoted text from 1 Cor. 15:21-"As in Adam all die."

As the progenitor of the race, the imperfection Adam incurred as a result of his primal sin was passed on to all his posterity.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5:12

But, as Paul continues in 1 Cor. 15:21, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. There, in simple language, is the doctrine of substitutionary atonement. Adam sinned and brought death on all. Christ died for Adam and brings life to all.

The Greek word translated ransom in 1 Tim. 2:6 further bears this out. It is the word anti-lutron, meaning "a corresponding price." It presents to the mind the picture of a balance scale. On the one side is the perfect man who sinned, Adam; and offsetting it on the other side is the perfect man who died for him, Jesus—a perfect balance, a corresponding price.

JESUS

But this salvation from sin is only the first step. In the context of the Scripture in Timothy we find the will of God for man expressly stated:

"[God,] who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. 2:4

After they are saved they are to come unto the knowledge of the truth. The implication is clear. Mankind is to be educated in the laws of righteousness after he has been raised from the dead. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of this time, calls this educational program a highway of holiness—a highway that leads to holiness. (Isa. 35:8-10)

The success of this educational program is so complete that the prophecy Jeremiah summarizes it in these words:

"And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, with the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." -Jer. 31:34

Isaiah states it in this language:

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." Isa. 11:9

Yes, Jesus will save his people from their sins! Hallelujah!

HIS PEOPLE THE CHURCH

There is yet a deeper meaning to the expression "his people." Jesus is to have a people to share his name and his throne—a bride. This bride is poetically described by the Apostle John in the book of Revelation:

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband . . . Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." Rev. 21:2, 9

They are peculiarly *his people* because they have been specially called to this position out of every nation and denomination. Theirs is a unique relationship. These are they *who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.* (Rev. 14:4)

These are not only saved from the original Adamic sin-having *now received the atonement* (Rom. 5:11)-but they are also saved from subsequent shortcomings and sins.

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. "-1 John 2:1

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins "-Col. 1:14

This advocacy of Christ, presenting our case to the heavenly Father, is a special privilege for this church class. He not only made them acceptable in *the beginning*, but he maintains that acceptability.

"To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. "-Eph. 1:6

HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL

There is yet another sense in the Jewish phrase "his people." Jesus was born a Jew and bore a special relationship to that race.

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. "John 1:11

The Jewish people were God's "chosen people." But that did not always work to their favor.

"You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. "Amos 3:2

The Law, which God had given them at Mt. Sinai by the hand of Moses, promised them life if they kept it. (Lev. 18:5) But, because they could not keep a perfect law, being imperfect men, they found it to be a curse instead of a blessing.

"And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. "Rom. 5:10

This curse made the Jew doubly condemned-once in Adam and again under the Law. Once again Jesus comes to the rescue. His death not only removed the Adamic curse, but the curse of the law as well.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.- Gal. 3:13

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross"-Col. 2:14

If Jesus had been born of some other race and not been born under that Law, he could not have removed this curse from the race. How great is the economy of a God's plan which permits one savior to accomplish so much.

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. "Matt. 1:21

WHAT A SAVIOR!

What a Savior! He saved Israel from their sins under the law! He saves the church from both Adamic condemnation and from continuing sins as well! He will save ALL mankind from Adamic death and then educate them in the laws of righteousness so that they can maintain that salvation forever!

What can we say, but to join heartily in singing:

*Man of sorrows, what a name
For the Son of God who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim*

HALLELUJAH! WHAT A SAVIOR!

THE VISIT OF THE MAGI

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. " - Matt. 2:1, 2

The identity of these wise men has been a puzzle that meets with many answers from biblical scholars. Without question, they came from the east-supposedly Persia. Most agree that they have a connection with the prophets Daniel and Jeremiah.

BABYLON'S HIERARCHY

An understanding of the governmental order of ancient Babylon and Persia is of help in answering this question. We have a clue to this order in Jeremiah 39:3

"And all the princes of the king of Babylon came in, and sat in the middle gate, even Nergalsharezer, Samgarnebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris, Nergalsharezer, Rabmag, with all the residue of the princes of the king of Babylon. "

At first reading it appears that there are six names listed in this verse. However, three of the proper nouns are not names, but titles of offices. The listing should read: *"Nergalsharezer, the Samgarnebo [or, Shamgar]; Sarsechim, the Rabsaris; and Nergatsharezer [a different one than the first name], the Rabmag."*

The **Samgarnebo, or Shamgar**, was the cup-bearer to the king. This office put him in charge of the entire palace staff and was responsible for the king's personal safety. At one time this office was filled by Nehemiah. Today, in the United States, we would call this the head of the Secret Service, the bodyguards for the president.

The **Rabsaris** [*Rab* meaning *chief*] was the chief eunuch and was in charge of all government personnel. We might call him the head of the *Civil Service* division in our country.

The **Rabmag** was chief over the wise men. His domain included the scholars, the astrologers, and the educational system of the country. His equivalent today would be called the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare.

The *wise men* under the Rabmag were divided into four categories: magicians, astrologers [or, Magi], Chaldeans [or philosophers,] and soothsayers. Grouped together, these were called *the wise men*.

The *prophet Daniel* was placed over this entire grouping after interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream. (Dan. 2:48) He was, thus, the Rabmag during this administration.

He still held this office in the days of Belshazzar, some 70 years later. (Dan. 5:11) It is more speculative whether the term *third ruler* in the kingdom (Dan. 6:1, 2) was Darius' confirmation of this appointment or whether this was more of a geographical designation.

NEW TESTAMENT MAGI

The school of Magi did not die out with the fading of the Persian empire. In addition to the account of the wise men in Matthew 2, we read of two *Magi* in the Book of Acts-Simon Magus in Acts 8:9, 18-24 and Elymas, or Bar-Jesus, in Acts 13:6-12. The word *sorcerer* and *sorcery* in these two instances is derived from the Greek word *magi*.

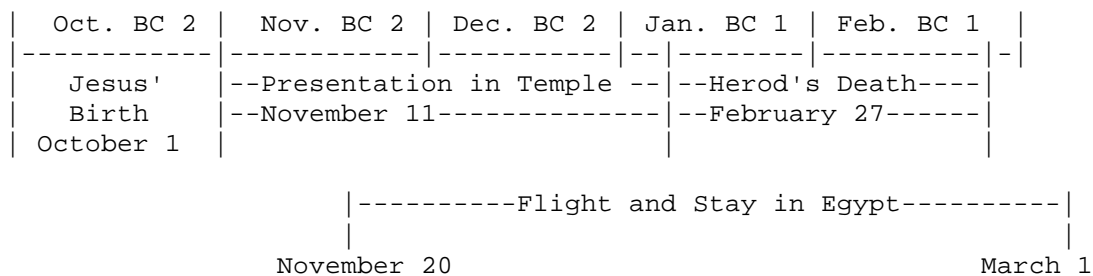
The fact that both of these men were somewhat unsavory does not mean that all *magi* were evil. They were first of all scholars; and, secondly specialists in astronomy, howbeit mixed with astrology.

WHEN DID THE MAGI COME?

The chronology of the events surrounding Jesus' birth has been hotly debated by religious scholars. The majority place the birth in 4 B.C. Holding to the contrary, however, is a scholarly article by William Fihner in the *Journal of Theological Studies* of October 1966 entitled *The Chronology of the Reign of Herod the Great*. In this article he makes a strong case for the death of Herod being in the year 1 B.C.

From the account of the flight into Egypt, we see that the return of Jesus from there was directly connected with the death of Herod. (Matt. 2:15, 19) It seems obvious that they were not in Egypt for a long period of time; therefore, a 2 B.C. date for the birth of Jesus seems probable.

Probable Chronology of Herod's death and Jesus' Birth



THE GIFTS OF THE MAGI

"And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. " - Matt. 2:11

Whether or not they realized the significance of their gifts, they were presenting him with items that pertained to the three offices that the babe would fill in his adult ministry: king, priest, and bridegroom.

GOLD was a traditional gift for kings. Gold was the gift of the Queen of Sheba for King Solomon. (1 Kings 10:2) Gold is the gift prophesied for Jesus in Psalm 72:15

FRANKINCENSE was a spice associated with the priesthood. In Exodus 30:34 it is listed as one of the ingredients of the incense offered in the Tabernacle. It is frequently associated with the offerings. (See Lev. 2:2)

MYRRH was an aromatic herb used cosmetically, especially associated with romance and marriage. Instances of such use are found in Song of Solomon 1:13; 5:13; Psalm 45:8 and Esther 2:12.

These gifts indicated more than a mere acceptance of a noble birth but were indicators that the wise men recognized something of the future of the child whose birth they were acknowledging and honoring.

We, too, in bringing our gifts of love to him, need to accompany them with a recognition; not only recognizing the role he plays in our individual lives, but the roles he is playing in the outworking of the great plan for salvation of all mankind.

PRACTICAL EFFECTS

There were at least four practical effects of the visit of the Magi to the lowly stable in Bethlehem.

1. It served as a warning of the dangers to come and precipitated the flight into Egypt. This journey was important not only for the child's safety but to fulfill prophecy. (Matt. 2:15; Hos. 11:1)
2. At the same time, it provided the needed finances for this journey. Luke's account indicates that the family was of meager means and would not be prepared to handle the cost of a journey and an indefinite stay in a foreign land. The gifts of the Magi would have been easy to transfer into needed cash.
3. It precipitated the Slaughter of the Innocents which, once again, was necessary to fulfill prophecy. (Matt. 2:17, 18; Jer. 31:15, 16)
4. It provided a graphic demonstration that the expectancy for the birth of the Messiah was not limited to the nation of Israel but was truly worldwide. (Luke 3:15)

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

The prophecy which was fulfilled by this episode in Jesus' life (Matt. 2:15) was undoubtedly that of Hosea 11: *"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."*

This prophecy seems so patently to refer to Israel that it is only natural to question the propriety of its application to Jesus. It is certainly suggestive of the thought that *there is* a unique relationship between Israel and Jesus-that the one is prototypic of the other.

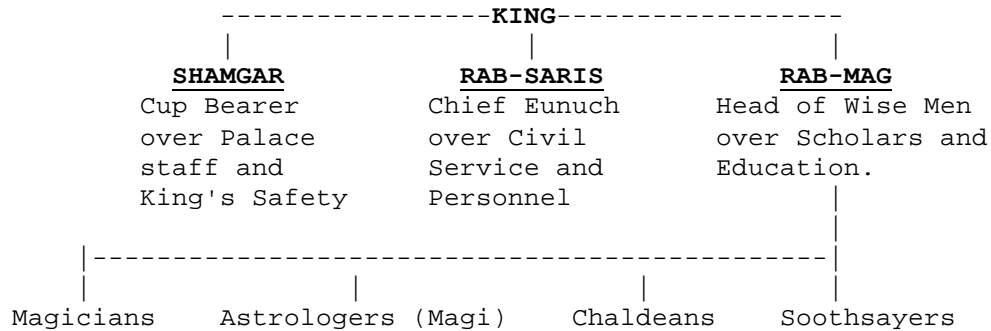
In fact, as we look at the symbology of being called out of Egypt, we see four different levels of application.

1. Israel spent some 400 years in Egyptian slavery for their humbling and preparation for inhabiting the promised land. (Gen. 15:13)
2. Jesus' experiences in Egypt showed, in picture, his entire life on earth. As with Israel, this was for his humbling and preparation for his future work of uplifting mankind. (Phil. 2:8)

3. The Bride of Christ, his Church, also must spend some time in antitypical Egypt, otherwise known as Babylon, for their humbling and preparation for future activities. (Rev. 11:8; 18:4)

4. Mankind, also, must endure their Egyptian experiences of humiliation before being ready to receive kingdom blessings. (Gen. 3:23, 24)

THE GOVERNMENT OF BABYLON



THE SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS

Each of the above four ways of interpreting the flight into Egypt was accompanied by persecution or death.

1. Israel entered the land of Egypt under conditions in which death was imminent through a famine in the land. This brought them into a condition that became to them *the house of bondage*. (Exod. 13:3)

2. Jesus' flight into Egypt occurred in connection with the slaughter of the innocent children in Bethlehem under two years of age.

3. The Church's descent into symbolic Egypt-Babylon-was accompanied by severe persecution, even unto death. (Rev. 2:10)

4. When mankind, represented by Adam and Eve, fell into their Egypt condition they introduced a period of over 6000 years of sin and death.

But, beyond all this, Matthew states that the real reason for this slaughter was to fulfill prophecy. (Matt. 2:17, 18) The prophecy to which he refers is found in Jeremiah 31:15, 16:

"Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and throe eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, with the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. "

Ramah is not located near Bethlehem. Bethlehem is to the south of Jerusalem, while Ramah is to the north. The prophecy of Jeremiah 31 does not deal with the two-tribe kingdom of Judah, but with the ravaging of Ephraim representative of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, by those *from the north country* and their eventual restoration.

Although his prophecies concern great weeping, Jeremiah's prophecy is a prophecy of hope. Note verse 17:

"And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their own border. "

The story of the Slaughter of the Innocents, therefore, is a typical picture of hope and not of despair. It shows that the effect of the death of the babe of Bethlehem as the man on Calvary, would relate not only to the salvation of Judah but of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel as well. In fact, it will mean life from the dead for all mankind.

BALAAM AND THE WISE MEN

In concluding this subject, it is worthy to note the similarity between the New Testament story of the wise men and the Old Testament account of the prophet Balaam. There are at least six similarities between these two accounts:

1. Both Balaam and the Magi were gentiles.
2. Both were probably from the region of Mesopotamia, near the Euphrates-in the east.
3. Both acknowledged Messianic hopes.
4. Both stories relate to a *star*. (Num. 24:17)
5. Both relate to a coming out of Egypt. (Num. 24:8)
6. Both relate to an Edomite. (Num. 24:18, 19; Herod was an Edomite.)

To illustrate the relationship between these two events, we quote selective portions of Balaam's prophecy from the Septuagint version:

*"How beautiful are thy houses, Jacob! Thy tents, O Israel! Like shady forests, and like gardens by a river! And like tents which the Lord hath pitched! And like cedars by streams of water! There shall come forth a man from his seed [Messiah], and he shall rule over many nations: and a kingdom greater than Gog's [Note Ezek. 38 and 39] shall be raised up; and his kingdom shall be enlarged. **God hath led him out of Egypt**, his glory is like that of the unicorn; He shall eat up the nations of his enemies; and he will exhaust their fatness, and pierce his enemy with his darts. Couching down, he is gone to rest, like a lion-yes, like a young lion [Note Gen. 49:9]; who dare rouse him? Blessed are they who bless thee, and they who curse thee are already cursed. "-Num. 24:5-9*

*"I can point to him, though he is not now; I hail him, happy, though he is not near. **A star will arise out of Jacob-there shall rise up a man out of Israel** [Messiah-so deemed by the Jews in A.D. 135 when they misapplied this to Bar Kosiba, changing his name to Bar Kochba, meaning son of the star], and he will smite the princes of Moab, and plunder all the sons of Seth: and Edom shall be an inheritance, and Esau his enemy [no wonder that Herod, an Edomite, was concerned and jealous] shall be a heritage. Though Israel hath done valiantly, yet one shall be raised up out of Jacob, who will destroy him who escaped from a city. "Num. 24:17-19*

"Then, looking at Og, he took up his parable and said, 'Oh! who can live when God shall order such things! For bands of Kitians ["ships of Chittim" KJV] will issue forth and afflict Assur, and afflict Hebrews: and they themselves shall likewise be destroyed. "' - Num. 24:23, 24

This prophecy of Balaam seems to tie it all together, for it tells of a time when the Babe in the manger, as Michael, the chief prince of Israel, will fully stand forth to deliver his ancient people.

WISE MEN STILL SEEK HIM

Consider the diligence of the wise men. They must have spent months in consultation on their stellar evidence of the new king's birth. More time would have been occupied in preparation for their long trip. Consider the hardships of the way-heated desert sands, roving robber bands, weary days on end of dreary wilderness. Yet they cared enough to push onward, ever onward.

Then, reaching Jerusalem at last, they find that the new king is unknown. They are sent from the palace to the priests; then detecting the hypocrisy in Herod's conduct they were forewarned of the danger to the child. It was frustrating indeed. Caught in such a palace conspiracy is it any wonder, that upon leaving Jerusalem, *"when they saw the star [again], they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."* (Matt. 2:10)

Today the search for Messiah may be as hard. It will require the same diligent study as that of the wise men. It may require long journeys of the mind to unknown lands. It may require rejection by others, as they show their jealousy of the rival king. But, whatever it requires, WISE MEN STILL SEED HIM. And their search, if sincere, will be rewarded. Then they may *"their costliest treasures bring"* but the choicest gift they may offer in adoration is their own heart, yielded fully in dedication and consecration. Then, what a reward they find at the end of their search!

Seek And Ye Shall Find'

The Titles of a Royal Babe

*Wonderful
Counselor
The Mighty God
The Everlasting father
The Prince of Peace*

"He will then be (and the church, his body with him) "Wonderful" -Great-beyond the power of human comprehension, as he is indeed the express image of the Father's person. He will be the **"Counselor,"** whose instructions in righteousness will be satisfactory and respected by all the world of mankind seeking a return to divine favor and full restitution He shall be called "Mighty God," or Mighty Mighty One, for indeed in him shall rest all the power and authority of the All-mighty one, Jehovah. He shall be called the **"Father Everlasting,"** because in truth he shall be a Father unto the race, a *Life-Giver* to all who will accept life under the terms of the New Covenant, sealed with his own precious blood He **shall be called the "Prince of Peace,"** for, although his empire will be established by the smiting of the nations with a rod of iron, and the breaking them in pieces as a potter's vessel, in the greatest time of trouble the world has ever known, nevertheless, every blow will be struck in the interest of peace, and so his entire reign will further the ends of righteousness and peace, even though to the very end thereof there shall from time to time be destructions of the wicked."

by: C. T. Russell

THE MIND OF JEHOVAH

"And this is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." -John 17:3

By: Allen Coffman

Let us consider for a moment all those millions who have lived upon the earth. From Adam onward thru Moses to our time; from the beginning of mankind to the complex societies we deal with daily. Individuals, armies, whole civilizations wiped from the face of the world. Is there one who remembers all these? Each with a lifetime of thoughts and memories. Yes-and he is **JEHOVAH**.

BEYOND HUMAN COMPREHENSION

The hypothetical question has been with us since the beginning. It is evident that the fathers knew the answer. Job, was very well versed in the truth of the matter as we look into the Lord's word for confirmation. He asks in Job 11:7, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" In Job 5:9, "Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvelous things without number:" Job freely acknowledges that he is unable to begin to understand the unsearchable mind of **JEHOVAH**.

In fact Israel has long tried to describe the maker of the universe. Their method was centered around the use of a descriptive along with the name. Abraham referred to him as *JEHOVAH-JIREH* or "Jehovah will provide" in Genesis 22:14, when God gave the ram to replace Isaac as the sacrifice that day.

Moses called him *JEHOVAH-NISI* or "Jehovah is my banner" in the victory over the Amalakites described in Exod. 17:15. Gideon follows with *JEHOVAH-SHALOM* or "Jehovah gives peace" quoted at the place where the miracles were performed, which confirmed his mission. Ezekiel used the term *JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH* or "the Lord is there" in Ezekiel 48:35 in the description of spiritual Jerusalem, seen by him in the vision. Jeremiah also uses the descriptive *JEHOVAH - TSIDKENU* or "Jehovah is our righteousness" in Jeremiah 33:16, describing the city of Jerusalem.

These phrases describe God. *JIREH* implies provision for us. We are so blessed to have the opportunity to be soldiers of the cross, to run for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus. Further, that provision will ultimately benefit the whole world of mankind who will have the opportunity to walk up the highway of holiness unto perfection.

NISI or Banner assures us that the Lord will fight for us on the battlefield and that he will not forsake us when we come against the foes of this world, the flesh and the devil.

SHALOM describes the peace that we have in the knowledge that the God of the universe is watching over us and that we can truly rest in that knowledge.

SHAMMAH shows us the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and hints of the relationship which will be ours when we make our "calling and election sure." Surely the "Lord *will be* there."

TSIDKENU-righteousness-is a wonderful assurance of the promise that the kingdom of Jehovah will personify all of the attributes of the mind of our great creator.

THE SCOPE OF GOD'S MIND

Isaiah 40:12-14 begins to define the scope of our study,

"Who hath measured the waters in the hollow *of* his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust *of* the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?"

How dim can we as Bible students, after the thousands of years intervening, hope to attempt what Job freely admitted was an impossible task? If we were left to our own feeble reasoning and desires, the task would be quite impossible. However, we have access to the example Christ gave us and the holy Spirit within us that Job did not have.

GOD IS KNOWN THROUGH CHRIST

"For who hath known the mind *of* the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. "-1 Cor. 2:16

Christ is a perfect example for us-the express image of the heavenly Father-"God manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16). We have the opportunity to know the mind of Jehovah by a study of our brother-Christ Jesus. No better example of the father was ever available to any in the history of mankind. (2 Cor. 4:4) It will be as close as we can get, in the flesh, to understanding his mind and the principles which make up that mind.

We are often reminded of a principle in scripture; namely-that to the extent that we empty our old mind of the things of this world, we are filled by the holy Spirit and the knowledge and understanding which comes from our heavenly Father. I believe this to be a true principle. In order for we, as spirit begotten of the Lord, to be successful in our walk in the "*narrow way*," our minds must be transformed as nearly as possible to the mind of Christ. This requires our continual effort to understand what that mind represents and to follow in those righteous principles.

"BE THOU AN EXAMPLE OF THE BELIEVER"

As individuals, spirit-begotten in Christ Jesus, it is our duty to follow the example given by Christ. (John 13:15) 1 Timothy 4:12, 15-16 provides a framework for that goal.

In word-our speech should reflect the thoughts of Christ. (Prov. 4:23-24)

In conversation and conduct, -doing **all** things as " . . . *striving together for the faith of the gospel.*" (Phil. 1:27)

In Love, (John 13:34-35)-the supreme test of Love in the heart even to the laying down of our lives for the brethren. (1 John 3:14-16)

In faith-an admonition to follow those who have shown us the example, those we have known in the body.

In purity,-note the scripture directs us to a primary point first pure-the highest standards of God. (James 3:17; Matt. 5:8 and Psalms 51:10)

In Doctrine, (Thus 2:7)-a necessary component of every spirit-begotten believer is the responsibility to build a doctrinal superstructure which will not be undermined by the "*diverse and strange*" (Heb. 13:8-9), but that which will stand the test. (2 John 9)

In addition to the example of Christ, we have a promise from the heavenly Father that we will be sealed by the holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13). This same spirit permits us the truth on certain doctrinal matters which enables us to "*make straight paths for our feet.*" We know that the spirit provides knowledge and understanding of the plan of God for all d. That as Christ was made perfect, so aØ, mankind in general will have the opportunity to seek perfection and to stand before Jehovah eventually and worship him. (Joel 2:28; Eze 43:27)

A quote from Matthew Henry's Commentary expresses very well the feeling that we sometimes have. The quote which assesses Paul's position states, "Paul, well acquainted with the mysteries of the kingdom of God as ever any man was; and yet he confesses himself at a loss in the contemplation and despairing to find the pattern, he humbly sits down at the brink, and adores the depth." 1 Cor. 2:16 says:

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. "

We have not, brethren, been the only ones to attempt the consideration of the depths of Jehovah

THE PSALMIST LOOKS AT GOD

The Psalmist also expresses many of the feelings that are ours.

Psalm 36:6 "Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast. "

Psalm 77:19 "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. "

Psalm 139:17-18 "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee. "

Psalms 139:6 "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. "

Surely it is impossible for us to attain, but perhaps the blessing is in the consideration of it.

A LIFETIME OF STUDY

The privilege of understanding the mind of Jehovah will be a gradual one. It will take a lifetime of study and preparation. Our responsibility is clear. Romans 12:1 says:

"Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good aØ acceptable and perfect will (mind) of God. "

We look forward to a full relationship with the heavenly Father. The thought expressed in Ephesians 3:17-19 will be ours

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. "

Archaeology and The Bible

By: Charles Ryba

PURPOSE OF ARCHAEOLOGY:

An Introductory Outline

Archaeology is concerned with human origins as traced through a variety of physical remains. It involves reconstruction of events from earlier times. This column will introduce numerous items in this vein linked with scripture accounts.

Ancient documents, such as the Bible were composed as eyewitness accounts and collections of historical happenings. Composed close to the time of the actual event, they record numerous, but selective aspects of Patriarchal, Hebrew, Christian and secular history.

A major source for both history and exposition of divinely influenced events, these records are of Jewish and Christian origins. Contemporary archaeological research in many lands is doing much to illuminate traditional biblical records within the ancient milieu that the people of God have journeyed. They provide a useful counterbalance to some higher-critical attacks on the Bible by employing the same modern scientific principles as they do.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Archaeological evidence may be gathered from many sources: (1) written records, (2) architectural sites, (3) utilitarian objects, (4) astronomical observations, and (5) synchronisms

- Written records of local authors and historians, scribes, and everyday notations of commercial and religious activities are all directly relevant in establishing the past.
- Dwellings and other sites of special use, such as religious shrines, temples and theatres all have a story to tell. Sites of more mundane use-aqueducts, dumps, roads, city walls and cemeteries-may reveal yet other aspects of the culture of their time.
- Coins, artifacts, pottery, tools, inscriptions on buildings, tablets and statues also furnish clues to the past. For example, a coin recovered at a given site may have an inscription or a picture of a king. These establish a link between the object and what may have occurred on the site.
- Astronomical dating is a calculated method based on written historic records of observations made by astronomers in connection with notable events or time periods. Eclipses and planetary conjunctions are typically mentioned and can be matched with mathematically reconstructed cycles. Events recorded by governments, religious groups, agricultural calendars, and notable environmental happenings provide vital clues.
- Synchronisms provide crucial data concerning events and dating relationships. For example, material in Isaiah 36:1 concerning the attack by Sennacherib, king of Assyria, upon all the cities of Judah during the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign may be linked to the historical first person account of the military campaign as described by Sennacherib. (See J.B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, pp. 287-288).

DATING HISTORY

The year 536 BCE is not the limit of secular testimony as has been stated in times past. Modern archaeology has extended the frontiers of history well beyond the known limits of 100 years ago. Eclipse datings are assigned in some cases to nearly 1000 BCE. Chronicles of Assyria, Egypt and Babylon contain useful records that are traceable back before 2000 BCE. Odd as it may seem, some periods of more recent vintage, 6 BCE to 4 AD for example, in Roman records are somewhat shadowy due to a conflicting base of data. This encompasses the time of Herod's death, important in New Testament dating. A note of caution should often be exercised in lieu of absolute, inflexible datings.

The present day wealth of information also illustrates the limits of archaeology. Adequate scientific (documented and controlled) methods are considered to have begun only within the last 60 years or so. Proof is not usually straightforward, but the subject of intense study, questioning, and discussion. The result is sometimes enlightened puzzlement at mixed or incomplete results. Distortion of evidence (by interpretation or inaccurate techniques) is a constant hazard, which cautions the careful student to examine the several sources frequently available for developing well rounded views. A good maxim is to err on the side of simpler explanations. Often times the Bible account provides a more straightforward reckoning than reconstructions based on incomplete "interpreted" evidence. External evidence can also help illuminate and link puzzling scriptural statements.

MODERN EVIDENCE

Modern evidence can be cited in three ways:

1. Primary Documents, primary sites and excavations, primary artifacts
2. Journals (*The Biblical Archaeologist* and *The Biblical Archaeology Review* are two popular journals) and books (Recommended are *Archaeology and The New Testament* by John MacRay, *The Bible as History* by Werner Keller, *God, Graves and Scholars* by C.W. Ceram, and *Light From the Ancient Past* by Jack Finegan.)
3. Interpretations of biblical texts and relevant archaeological information.

BENEFITS OF ARCHAEOLOGY

The benefits of these studies include:

1. Biblical texts language, phrases, customs are explained in historical context.
2. Historical verification concerning where and how events occurred with geographical relationships.
3. Chronological frameworks can be built to interweave with biblical reckonings.
4. An historical perspective is gained by placing any given topic of interest in the larger social, religious, political, and economic contexts.

Since man's methods are always faulty and temporary, the records are incomplete and fragmentary on many topics of inquiry. The quest for ultimate understanding, truth, and verification of the historical portions includes the miraculous acts of scripture.

We are sometimes able to trace back to corroborating records and evidences. Well known in this regard are topics like the Exodus, the Genesis flood; existence of cities like Ur, Jericho and Megiddo; empires like Assyria, Egypt, and Persia; and people like Abraham, Joseph, or Paul.

The New Testament times are also encompassed in aspects like ancient Christian life styles, practices and buildings, and New Testament document backgrounds.

ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE HOLY LAND

Opening up of the Holy Land to modern archaeological investigations accompanied the renewed political struggles begun in 1798-1799 times. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, followed by his abortive attempt in Palestine was the first western intrusion into Palestine since the time of the Crusades. The French-British struggle for control of this area signaled the beginning of the end of exclusive Islamic (and non-Jewish) power. France's military and scientific expeditionary forces began what became a century long quest for political control, archaeological "treasure," economic leverage, and religious missionary zeal. The Christian European nations renewed romantic and spiritual passions at their sources.

As Ezekiel 38:12 states, Israel *"lives at the center of the World."* NASB. The recent book *Digging for God and Country* by N. A. Silberman highlights the political interplays that were preceded by several aspects of prophetic fulfillment.

The stones proclaim to us an abundant legacy of historical evidence that amplifies the message of the Scriptures. They are not dead records of a lost era, they still speak to us today.

News & Views

• ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Pastoral Bible Students was held at the Mission Evangelical Church in Wassau, Wisconsin on June 12, 1992. After opening prayer, Bro. Tim Thomassen was elected meeting chairman and Sr. Arlene Jones was elected meeting secretary.

Directors present prior to the official count of the ballots were Timothy Thomassen, Alex Gonczewski, and Loyal Petran. After the ballot count, James Caudle and Francis Earl were counted as directors present. There were eight other members of the Institute present for the meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held June 8, 1991 were approved as presented. Procedures were discussed for nominating and voting on candidates for PBI directors and the events were related that led to the move of the PBI offices.

The directors noted that this year marked the 75th anniversary of the publication of THE HERALD.

The financial statement as of April 30, 1992 was presented. It was noted that, despite a loss shown for the fiscal year, the Institute is solvent and should remain so for the current fiscal year. The proposed budget for fiscal 1993 was discussed.

The inspectors of election were appointed and the ballots were counted. Elected to the board were: J. Caudle; C.A. Czohara; F. Earl; A. Gonczewski; L. Petran; T. Thomassen; J. Webster.

PBI membership changes were noted as follows: one deceased; two resigned; 14 dropped; 15 joined.

A review was presented of the survey conducted among the membership which indicated that the PBI should continue to

publish THE HERALD. A review of editorial qualifications and a reading of the By-laws pertaining to that question followed. With respect to the By-laws concerning membership in the PBI it was concluded that membership in the PBI was not contingent upon subscribing to THE HERALD and that removing members' names from the membership roster solely on that basis should be discontinued. A discussion of the PBI *Newsletter* ended with a recommendation to incorporate it into issues of THE HERALD.

Praise and testimony followed and the meeting was closed. Following the Annual Meeting, an organizational meeting of the Board took place. The following elections were made: Chairman of the Board-Tim Thomassen; Vice-Chairman-Alex Gonczewski; Secretary-Jim Caudle; Treasurer-Loyal Petran. Elected to the editorial committee were: Francis Earl, Len Griehs, Carl Hagensick, Tim Thomassen, Dan Wesol.

Respectfully submitted,

Arlene Jones, acting Secretary

• CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE •

The past year has witnessed major changes at the *PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE*. However, our mission has not changed. The new board of directors is dedicated to continuing the work of the Institute begun some 75 years ago.

As you will note from the change in mailing address, the Milwaukee office was closed on July 31, 1992. The equipment, literature, books and other items have been redistributed to various locations around the country.

The Lord's hand has been evident in everything that has occurred. While change is not easy, it is inevitable. We all draw strength from the promise that the Lord will never leave nor forsake us if we trust Him. James 4:8 is as relevant today as it was when it was penned: "*Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh unto you.*" Certainly we have found this to be true.

I am grateful for the response of our membership to the PBI Membership survey that was mailed last Spring. Letters poured in from Australia, Canada, England and the United States. The consensus was overwhelming: the work of the PBI should continue. With the Lord's help, we will do just that.

We appreciate the assistance of those of you who have held out a helping hand. It has been gratifying to receive such an outpouring of support and offers for help.

Please continue to pray that the efforts of the PBI will be pleasing to our heavenly Father. As always, your input is welcome. Our goal is to disseminate biblical Truth. We are grateful for your help, suggestions, and collaboration.

Tim Thomassen,
September 12, 1992

• 1993 ANNUAL MEETING •

According to the PBI charter, the annual meeting should be held on the first Saturday in June, which is June 5, 1993. A host is needed for the 1993 meeting. Any group having an available meeting spot should contact Tim Thomassen. The meeting place is needed for a meeting of the board on Friday night, June 4, and Saturday morning and afternoon. It has been the custom to hold a one-day convention on Sunday in connection with the annual meeting. While not a requirement for the host class, preference will be given to those classes able to accommodate this request.

• PILGRIM SERVICE •

Would you like to hear a speaker from the Institute? We will sponsor a pilgrim trip where possible. All directors of the Institute and all editors of THE HERALD are available as their schedule permits. Contact the secretary if you think a trip is feasible in your area.

In future *News & Views*, we will highlight discourses from various pilgrim activities. A tape or transcript may be made available for interested readers.

LETTERS

Letters to the PBI will be published, along with replies where necessary, provided they comment on material published in THE HERALD, or deaf with PBI issues. Letters should be brief and clear. The editorial committee desires to publish in the writer's own words but reserves the right to edit for brevity and clarity.

"Retirement" Article stirred thinking

The difference under a theocracy was the climate of dedication which does not apply today. Young people are attracted to elders, but get frustrated and soon depart. The younger person sees the elder as not being able to cope with present day complexities. The situation exists today to repudiate the Bible as a norm of conduct and advice. It is claimed that the "cosmos" was made in 144 hours some 6,000 years ago. The religious guides do not know that the seventh creative Sabbath was a millennium. Therefore, the Bible begins with the last creative week of final preparation of earth's surface for ADM (sic) man, with no sex distinctions everlasting. Scriptural meditations and reflections like these come to older persons. They may not sound the jubilee loudhailer (sic) throughout the land, because present truth does not belong to them. Yet their spiritual gift has to be exercised against **all odds, all** the time.

Neil Bruce, Australia

BOOKS & BOOKLETS

The PBI has published many booklets for Bible study and witness activity. Some of these booklets are listed on the back of each issue of THE HERALD. Those booklets are free, while others are available at a nominal cost. The supply of some booklets is nearly exhausted and others have become outdated as the world has changed. The editorial committee is reviewing each booklet with an objective of republishing it. This may take a while so we ask for your patience if requested material is not available. Booklets which duplicate material published by other organizations might be eliminated as we strive to offer unique views unavailable elsewhere.

There seems to be interest in republishing three books from the early days of the Institute. Brother James Streeter wrote three books which dealt with prophetic events: *Daniel, Beloved of Jehovah, The Revelation of Jesus Christ, Vols. 1 and 11*. *Daniel* discussed important prophecies relating to the time of the end, and *Revelation* was one of the first treatises to bring together 19th century Bible student views of John's vision. The extensive quotations from now out-of-print commentaries became a comprehensive review of second advent literature. It seems appropriate that in these days we provide readers an opportunity to have these books. We are soliciting bids and help now in the republishing work. Future *News & Views* will update readers on our progress.

BIBLE STUDENT ACTIVITIES

When Israel was born as a nation in 1948, many Bible students proclaimed it was prophecy fulfilled. Publications and programs proliferated—each aimed at identifying Palestine and subsequently Israel as God's land. During the past 44 years, efforts have been devoted to proclaiming the Jews' place in God's plan to Christians. Recently, a group of Bible students put together a witness to Jews about Israel's prophetic role in God's plan. This non-proselytizing program is consistent with the method used in the early truth movement. "Israel: Appointment with Destiny," has been shown in synagogues throughout the United States. Now the program is being presented in Israel! In what could prove to be a historic mission, a group of Bible students has been invited to present a Hebrew version of the program as a gift to the government of Israel. Additionally, this group will meet with leaders of Russian Jews, with a good possibility that a Russian version of the program will be distributed to Soviet Jews in Israel. This is a unique witness opportunity. A report on the trip, scheduled for October/November, will appear in the next News & Views.

Any classes or churches that have had notable opportunities or experiences are encouraged to send a summary of their experiences to the News & Views editor, Len Griehs, 141 Westbrook Drive, Feasterville, PA 19053 for publication, in the magazine.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

In Christendom

Apparently for the first time, a Jesuit priest has been recognized as a Zen teacher—a sunsei—and has been "empowered to teach and to transmit the dharma (teaching) of the Buddha." In a ceremony sponsored by the New York Zen Community, Robert E. Kennedy received the black robe, staff, and other insignia of a Zen teacher. He learned to appreciate Zen after he was sent to Japan in 1965, and he has come to perceive it as "not alien to our Catholic faith" (*Christian Century*, January 15, 1992)

The General Synod of the Church of England recently rejected changes that would have restricted infant baptism to children of committed Christians. Archbishop George Carey said the open policy will keep the church vibrant and growing. The church views infant baptism as a "God-given pastoral and evangelistic opportunity," one bishop explained. Anglicans baptize about 200,000 babies every year.

The personal chaplain of Pope John Paul II confessed that he had "sinned" by not accepting Protestants as part of the church. Observers said it was the first time a Vatican official has said such a thing. Raneiro Cantalamessa said "No church has the monopoly on the Holy Spirit." He is a charismatic who has been prodding the pope to accept Pentecostal doctrines.

Around The World

Christians in Saudi Arabia are forbidden to assemble together for worship or prayer, even in private homes. A Christian leader was arrested late last year by the religious police. He was tortured and forced into signing a confession that he was a prostitute. The religious police raided a meeting and arrested about 75 people. All were released except for the leader, who never appeared again. (*Pulse*, December 27, 1991)

Biblical scholar Dr. Martin Muller claims to have a photograph of a human soul leaving the body of housewife Karen Fisher, taken seconds after she died during heart surgery. Although no one in the operating theater actually saw the entity, clergymen, including those at the Vatican, have hailed the photograph as the most dramatic proof of life after death ever.

In a similar but unrelated incident, researchers weighed a patient just before and just after death. They later theorized that the 1/3000th of an ounce difference in readings was the weight of the patient's soul. (*Weekly World News*, September 15, 1992)

• BOOK REPORTS •

For most of its history, the orthodox church has taught that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three co-equal, coeternal "persons" in one God. How old is this doctrine? How did it come to be codified?

A recent book written by Mark M. Mattison, *The Making Of a Tradition*, contends that the doctrine of the Trinity developed over the course of several centuries under the influence of Gnostic and Greek philosophical thought. His book examines the writings of the "Church Fathers" and the recently discovered Nag Hammadi Library. He quotes from many sources, including some in many Bible student libraries.

According to Mattison, the Trinity as defined in the creeds is peculiar to Christendom; it was not simply borrowed from Egypt or Babylon. It did not simply appear in the fourth century. Mattison contends that it was carefully worked out over a period of centuries with the help of various Greek philosophies and Gnostic theologies. (Gnosticism was a religious movement which drew on a wide variety of religions and philosophies and which exalted spirit over matter, something which Gnostics regarded as evil. Some claim Gnosticism was the ancient version of the New Age movement.)

If the doctrine went through many changes and refinements prior to its ratification in the creeds, there must be a question as to its validity. Why else would the "Trinity" of the Second Century be different from the "Trinity" of the third century and the "Trinity" of the councils?

One word of caution: Mattison does not believe in the pre-existence of Christ. He favors the view of the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith. His book is, however, a scholarly treatise, bringing fresh research and thought into the debate over the Trinity.

PBI FINANCIAL STATEMENT

(i) Balance Sheet as of April 30, 1992

ASSETS

Cash On Hand		\$10,730.29
M & I Bank Certificates of Deposit		90,000.00
M & I Money Market Savings Account		5,665.99
Accounts Receivable		335.00
Prepaid Expense		254.50

Inventory of Books		
J. T. Read Tapes	298.00	
Miscellaneous Items	79.00	

Total Inventory		377.00

FIXED ASSETS

P.B.I. Office Equipment	43,590.92	
Accumulated Depreciation	19,451.92	24,139.00
P.B.I. Library	3,000.00	
Depletion of Books	475.00	2,525.00
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Total Assets		\$134,026.78
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LIABILITIES

Berean Bible Institute (Australia)	180.00	
Herald Subscriptions Paid in Advance	225.00	

Total Liabilities		405.00

Net Worth (As per analysis)		\$133,621.78
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(2) Statement of Income and Expense and Analysis of Net Worth-for Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 1992

INCOME

Contributors	\$15,282.10	
Herald Subscriptions	8,215.00	
Legacies	345.00	
Interest Earned	6,401.00	
Herald Gift Subscriptions	4,118.00	
P.B.I. New Members	80.00	

Total Income	\$34,441.10	

OPERATING EXPENSE

Pilgrim Expense	7,989.92	
Printing & Mailing Herald	11,034.45	
Office Staff	16,800.00	
Postage-Other than Heralds, Free Lit	857.58	
Literature & Tapes Mailed Free	388.50	
Milwaukee & Racine Office Expenses	2,550.70	
Rent & Utilities	3,673.70	
Depreciation-Office Equipment	6,103.92	
Depletion Library Books	112.00	
Free Bklt. Newsletters, Advertising	3,357.56	

Total Operating Expenses		\$52,868.33
Net (Loss) for Fiscal Year		(18,427.23)

Net Worth May 1. 1991		152,049.01

Net Worth April 30. 1992		\$133,621.78
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Respectfully submitted by *Loyal Petran*, Treasurer