

The Herald Of Christ's Kingdom

January/February 1995

Editors' Journal

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."—John 4:16, 17

The litany of troubles which follows this scriptural declaration becomes more and more manifest as each year passes into history. Global conflicts in Bosnia and Rwanda, civil rights abuses in Haiti, the ever-threatening face of Saddam Hussein in the daily press, a rapid increase in drive-by shootings all draw attention to the perilous times we live in.

Mixed emotions arise over the peace process in the Middle East. While there is natural rejoicing in any slowdown of hostilities, there is also the realization that the land Israel is trading for peace is part of their God-promised inheritance.

One by-product of the uncertainties in today's world is a marked increase in stress syndrome. Psychologists report a large growth in patients developing mental and emotional problems trying to cope with the realities they are facing. How appropriate this is in light of the prediction of Luke 21:26: "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

The significance of these events is highlighted further in the epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief" (5:1-4).

Rather than being a cause for alarm, present distresses should be a cause for rejoicing, for as Paul writes in Romans 13:11: "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to

awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." And again in Luke 21:28: "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

World affairs, then, should serve as a motivational tool, a spur to drive us to more zeal and more carefulness in copying the character of our Lord and Master. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (2 Peter 3:11).

Our New Cover

Thanks to the generous assistance of some of our brethren in the printing industry, **THE HERALD** is pleased to be clothed in a new four-color cover. The mountain scene should remind us of the prophecy of God's kingdom found in Isaiah 2:2: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it."

The theme for the current issue is the *holy spirit*. No power or influence is more important to the Christian than that of the holy spirit. In fact the Christian dispensation was introduced on the day of Pentecost by an outpouring of this spirit. Through it we perceive the mind of God. By it we are to be guided day by day. Its witness and seal give us the assurance that we are his. Eventually it will be poured on "all flesh" (Joel 2:28).

The first two articles, *The Holy Spirit in Our Lives* and *The Power of the Holy Spirit*, give us a general overview of the subject. Some of its specific functions are covered in articles on *Spirit Begetting*, *Life in the Spirit*, *The Comforter*, *The Witness of the Holy Spirit*, and *Sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise*. The various operations of the holy Spirit are scripturally summarized on page 27 in *The Holy Spirit: Its Functions and Symbols*.

Coming in 1995

Specific themes will be addressed in future issues of **THE HERALD** in 1995, if the Lord is willing. March/April, in consideration of the Memorial supper, will have Communion With Christ as a theme. In May/June we will take a look at Prophecy Today, while the July/August issue will deal with Living the Christian Life, and September/October will examine the Fundamental Doctrines of Hebrews 6:1, 2. Closing the year, the November/December edition will cover the seasonal topics of the holidays—Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the New Year.

Entering 1995, our thoughts and prayers are to the effect that each of us may face the challenges the year holds with true Christian fortitude and courage and that we may each grow more and more into the image of our Master, being rightly exercised by those experiences which God's providence sees fit to send our way.

The Holy Spirit in Our Lives

"Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing, In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit."—1 Thessalonians 5:16-19

There is no better scriptural passage for our guidance. The command in verse sixteen to "rejoice evermore" shows that every day is holy to us. It was considered a sin to be sad on a holy day in Israel. While it is not possible to always rejoice in ourselves, our circumstances, or our friends, there is never a moment when it is not possible to "rejoice in the Lord" (Phil. 4:4) unless our fellowship with him is broken by some sin which we cherish and leave unconfessed.

"Pray without ceasing" (v. 17) implies four elements which we can easily remember using the acronym ACTS: Adoration of God; confession to him of our sins; thanksgiving for his forgiving love and mercy; and supplication for the needs of both our brethren and ourselves.

The admonition in verse eighteen, "in everything give thanks," suggests the victory of "glorying in tribulation." "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:3-5).

It is necessary to recognize, both doctrinally and in our individual experience, that God gives the holy spirit as willingly as he did at Pentecost, Caesarea, Ephesus (Acts 2:1-13; 10:44-48; 19:1-7) and that it works today in the Christian as it did in the early church before one encounters the danger of quenching that spirit (v. 19).

In verse 21 we learn that none of the things we learn by despising not the prophesyings of verse 20 are really ours until we prove them to ourselves both intellectually and experientially.

The abstinence from evil (v. 22) applies even to those things which are innocent and lawful of themselves but which might be misjudged by others and associated with questionable times, places, or circumstances.

Finally (v. 23) we have a distinct reference to the holy spirit, a complete surrender of the whole self to the control and guidance of the spirit.

In Spirit and In Truth

We are commanded to worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23)—to worship him with both the spirit and with the understanding, and to sing with them both: "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing

with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (1 Cor. 14:15). God's holy spirit ministers to our spirit just as his word ministers to our understanding. Both of these are needed for perfect guidance (Rom. 8:15-18; Acts 15:28). We must rise up like eagles on these two wings of faith and freedom seeking the carcass of truth (Matt. 24:28).

God dwells within us through Jesus Christ and we can do anything as long as we remain true to our vow of consecration and worship him in spirit and in truth. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

Self Will

We can disobey God's word by allowing self to distort or disbelieve what he tells us. We are not justified in doing this for we are "beheaded" (Rev. 20:4) for Christ. Christ is our head. We must not let self will interfere or our imaginations to run wild in disobedience to God's word.

The wood that is used in fine cabinets has to be soaked frequently in water and then dried in ovens until it becomes well seasoned, so that it will neither swell nor shrink. We, like this kind of wood, must also be perfectly seasoned by the water of the word and the fire of the spirit so that we will never swell or shrink when honored by others for loyally doing the work of the harvest.

As doves will not remain where there are inharmonious sounds, neither will the holy spirit remain with one who is back-sliding or lacking in love (1 Cor. 14:23-33). When the spirit of meekness prevails, individual members of the body of Christ meet as brothers. This united, unclouded spiritual fellowship is impossible where love is lacking or when strident and unruly voices are raised.

Priestly Office

A realization of the exalted priestly office of Christ comforts and sustains us in trial or perplexity, but only when we come boldly to the throne of grace. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:14-16).

We must always be on the alert to hear the distressful cries of both the sheep (our older brethren) and the lambs (the newly consecrated ones) and lay down our lives daily for them.

Fruits of the Spirit

How can we tell that the holy spirit dwells in us? We know by the presence of its fruit in our lives (Matt. 7:20). We need to examine ourselves for the presence of these "fruits of the spirit" (Gal. 5:22, 23).

Love: Are we able to demonstrate our love to brethren and neighbors which we do not really like?

Joy: Are we happy to be followers of Jesus?

Peace: Are we secure when things do not seem to go right?

Long-suffering: Are we patient in dealing with the faults and imperfections of others?

Kindness: Do we excel in showing kind and tender actions?

Goodness: Do we seek to emulate Jesus by going about doing good?

Faithfulness: If our whole lives crashed down about us would we, like Job, still trust in God?

Meekness: Are we gentle in our rebukes and, like Jesus, merciful in our judgments?

Temperance: Do we exercise self control in all things?

These nine qualities will be the natural result of the holy spirit in our lives. It is worthy of note that, in Galatians 5, Paul speaks of self-centered egotism as "the works of the flesh" but the result of the indwelling of the spirit is defined as fruits.

An Abiding Spirit

Evil is alien to the new creature. Goodness suits us now. It is the thing for which we are made. Without the power of the holy spirit in our lives with purity we will never succeed in reaching that goal and the reward of immortality which accompanies it.

Any consecrated life apart from the power of the holy spirit would be a life utterly ineffective and lacking in "fruit bearing." Only as we live our lives in the power of the spirit can we weed out of our spiritual gardens the weeds of the carnal nature which are unsuited to our new creature. Otherwise we will shrivel up and die and never know the joys of the kingdom.

Submit and Commit

I read in a friend's book not long ago an extract which commenced with the following words: "The longer I live the more profoundly am I convinced that the all-in-all of practical Christianity may be summed up in two words-`submit and commit.'" Truer words have seldom passed from human pen; and this is the great lesson that grace by her gentle discipline teaches, and that the will of man has to learn. Submit- cease first from thy rebellious self assertions, and next from thy proud efforts to correct and amend thyself; and then commit- cast thyself into the hands of omnipotent love. Claim it of the new Adam that he shall dwell within thee, accomplish, as he has undertaken, what thou canst not do, and regulate in peace and harmony, under his scepter, the once jarring and conflicting forces of thy nature. So shall there indeed be a great calm, a stillness, a rest, within thy consecrated heart, and thou shalt be in a position to make proof of all the wealth of thy promised land- the land that flows with milk and honey- as thou proceedest to live not only soberly, but righteously and godly. Only let us take heed lest it should be said of thee or me, reader, "We see that they could not enter in, because of unbelief."
School of Grace (R111)

The Power of the Holy Spirit

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.-- Acts 2:1-4

The subject of the holy spirit, its office and operation, has been grievously misunderstood by many of the Lord's people for centuries, and only in the light of the rising Sun of Righteousness has this subject become more clearly understood in harmony with all the various scriptural testimonies pertaining to it. The doctrine of the Trinity, which began to rise in the second century and reached a large development in the fourth century, is responsible in considerable measure for much of the darkness which blends with the truth on this subject in many Christian minds, much to their disadvantage.

There is consistency in the Scripture teaching that the Father and the Son are in full harmony and oneness of purpose and operation. And equally consistent is the Scripture teaching respecting the holy spirit—that it is not another God, but the spirit, influence, or power exercised by the one God, our Father, and by his only begotten Son—in absolute oneness, therefore, with both of these. But how different is this unity of the Father, the Son, and the holy spirit from that held and taught under the name of the Trinitarian doctrine, which declares that there are the three persons in the one God. This view suited well the Dark Ages, which it helped to produce.

Our Lord represents the matter in clear light and in harmony with all the other scriptures on the subject when he declares that the holy spirit must come from the Father, when he declares that the Son would petition the Father to send the spirit; when he declares that this special power or spirit of the Father would be another Comforter, instead of our Lord Jesus himself, whose going away was necessary and expedient. It was preferable or expedient that he should personally leave his disciples and appear before the Father as their Advocate, and thus secure to them the holy spirit, which would represent the Father and himself.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

It was on the day of Pentecost that the disciples "with one accord in one place," experienced the miraculous outpouring of the holy spirit. We are not to understand from the account given in the second chapter of Acts that a mighty wind blew upon the praying and waiting company on Pentecost Day but that there was merely a sound which resembled that of a mighty wind. It was the more miraculous that there was no wind. Then "there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were filled with the holy spirit." It was the promised blessing from on High, from the Father's throne, through the Son; as St. Peter explained, "As every man

hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another" (1 Peter 4:10). We are not to understand that the multitude, being of one mind, produced this manifestation but rather that the Lord, by his providence, brought them into the condition of full accord, preparatory to the giving of this blessing. Similarly he says that special blessings may be expected when two or three unite in their petition—not that their uniting effects anything, but that the Lord is pleased to reward the united efforts of his people and thus to encourage them to forsake not the assembling of themselves.

The entire house was filled with a wonderful power, and every believer was apparently electrified, vivified. They were filled with this holy spirit, this hallowed influence, and began to speak in foreign tongues under the influence that had come upon them. Following the miraculous sound and the electrical influences pervading the room and the manifestation of the lights upon their heads, we may be sure a considerable degree of holy joy and excitement was manifested amongst the believers; and this soon spread abroad and attracted a large concourse of people through curiosity, because it was stated that they were "continually in the temple" (Luke 24:53; Acts 2:46).

The flames of fire beautifully symbolize the light of Truth, the enlightenment of the mind, which comes through the begetting of the holy spirit. This power divine was remarkably manifested in the eleven apostles, for while the multitude still recognized them as "ignorant and unlearned men," nevertheless they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus and learned of him and that they had a certain kind of enlightenment of mind and heart, which could come from no other quarter.

And is not this true of all those who have been begotten of the holy spirit. This communication of the divine life through the holy spirit is a hidden transaction, great indeed in its significance and issues. "As in the origin of our natural life we are made in secret and curiously wrought, much more in our spiritual. But the issue has to do with the farthest eternity." No manifestation of the spirit of God, prior to the first advent of our Lord Jesus, was exactly the same as the manifestation and operation of the Lord's spirit upon our Lord Jesus, from the time of his baptism until his crucifixion, and upon the Church of Christ from the day of Pentecost unto now—until the very end of this Gospel age, and the completion of the Church's course in the first resurrection. In harmony with this we read, "The holy spirit was not yet given [except to our Lord Jesus], because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39).

The Communion of the Spirit

The familiar benediction which invokes upon us the "communion of the holy spirit" has probably a deeper meaning in it than has generally been recognized. The word "communion" signifies the having in common. It is used of the fellowship of believers one with another and also of their mutual fellowship with God. The holy spirit dwelling in us is the agent through whom this community of life and love is effected and maintained. "And truly our fellowship," says John, "is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3). But this is possible only through the communion of the holy spirit. In his promise of the Comforter, Jesus said: "He shall take of mine and show it

unto you." As the Son while on earth communicated to men the spiritual riches of the invisible Father, so the spirit now communicates to us the hidden things of the invisible Son; if we were required to describe in a word the present office-work of the holy spirit, we should say that it is to make true in us that which is already true for us in our glorified Lord. All light and life and warmth are stored up for us in the sun; but these can reach us only through the atmosphere, which stands between us and that sun as the medium of communication; even so in Christ are "hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," and by the holy spirit these are made over to us.

The operation of God's spirit during this Gospel age is widely different from its operation in previous times; and this difference is expressed in the words "spirit of adoption," "spirit of sonship," "spirit of holiness," "spirit of truth," and kindred expressions. The holy spirit in this sense of the word is guaranteed only to the house of sons.

Spirit of Holiness:Our Sanctification

"According to the spirit of holiness" Christ "was declared to be the Son of God in power by the resurrection from the dead," but "according to the flesh, the seed of David" (Rom. 1:3,4). How striking the contrast between our Lord's two natures, as revealed in this passage: Son of David as to the flesh, Son of God as to the spirit. And "as he is, so are we in this world." We who are of the regeneration have two natures, the one derived from Adam, the other derived from Christ; and our sanctification consists in the double process of mortification and vivification, the deadening and subduing of the old and the quickening and developing of the new. In other words, what was wrought in Christ who was "put to death in the flesh but quickened in the spirit" is rewrought in us through the constant operation of the holy spirit; and thus the cross and the resurrection extend their sway over the entire life of the Christian. Consider these two experiences:

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:24,25). These words, so constantly repeated in one form or another by our Lord, make it clear that the death-principle must be realized within us in order that the life-principle may have final and triumphant sway. It is to this truth which every disciple is solemnly committed in his baptism: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3,4). Baptism is the monogram of the Christian; by it every believer is sealed and certified as a participant in the death and life of Christ; and the holy spirit has been given to be the executor of the contract thus made at the symbolic grave of Christ.

Indwelling of the Spirit

"Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:11, R.V.) This is the condition of making true in ourselves what is already true for us in Christ, of rendering practical what is now judicial; in other words, of being

dead to the power of sin in ourselves as we are already dead to the penalty of sin through Jesus Christ. As it is written in the Epistle to the Colossians: "For ye died [judicially in Christ], mortify [make dead practically] "therefore your members which are upon the earth" (Col. 3:2,5, R.V.). It is this condition which the holy spirit is constantly effecting in us if we will have it so. "If ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:13). It is the spirit of God overcoming our fleshly nature by his indwelling life on whom is our sole dependence. Our principal care therefore must be to "walk in the spirit," and to "be filled with the spirit."

No degree of mortification can ever bring us to sanctification. We are to "put off the old man with his deeds," by "putting on the new man who is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

The indwelling of the spirit can alone effect this work of development. The "fruits of the spirit" are to be encouraged, to be cultivated more and more that we may yield the full, perfect fruitage of love. These fruits of the spirit are designated by the apostle to be "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Such fruits are not miraculous gifts but gradual and indirect gifts. They are wrought out in us in proportion as we come into harmony and obedience of thought and word and deed with the spirit of our Father; in proportion to our separation from the world and its spirit. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," says the Scripture. But experience proves that this is possible only by having our hearts so filled with the love of God, by being so absorbed with the things of the spirit, that the things of the world will have lost their attraction and their value. As another has expressed: "Loving not is only possible through loving, the worldly affection being overcome by the heavenly."

Transformed Into the Same Image

Now "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy spirit which is given unto us"; and what is true of the love of Christ is true of the likeness of Christ. How is it acquired? As it is written: "We all with unveiled face, reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18, R.V.). The indwelling spirit must be "behind all, beneath all, and effectually operative in all. It is only the spirit of the Lord dwelling within us that can fashion us to the image of the Lord set before us." Who is sufficient of himself to accomplish this work? The disciple is required to be consciously and intelligently active in his own growth, to "give all diligence to make his calling and election sure"; but this can be accomplished only through the spirit. We must surrender ourselves to the divine will. We must live in the spirit, pray in the spirit, walk in the spirit; all of which are "as essential to our development in holiness, as the rain and the sunshine are to the growth of the oak." There must be a total self-surrender to God, and an infilling of the holy spirit. "If through the communion of the holy spirit the life of Christ is constantly imparted to us, that life will prevail within us." In proportion to the closeness of our abiding in him will be the completeness of our success in bringing forth the fruits of the spirit. "He that

abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

Although we cannot agree with those who teach that repeated Pentecosts and spirit baptisms are to be expected and prayed for, we do believe that the Lord's people need to come into a similar attitude to that of the brethren who were blessed on Pentecost day in order to enter the favors and privileges which are ours through Christ. There was to be but one Pentecost. The holy spirit which there came to the Church abides with us still, and its blessing is the privilege of those consecrated ones whom the Lord accepts and adopts into his family. But before any one is prepared to get a proper blessing of the Lord's spirit, he must first have the justification by faith and a heart free from the love of sin and must present his solemn resolution to be, to do, to serve the Lord, the Truth, the brethren. He must be in this attitude to receive the enlightenment, the comfort, the fellowship of God's holy spirit. Even though he be inflamed with a desire to serve the Lord, the Truth, and the brethren, he will do wisely to follow the course of the early Church—tarry, study, pray that he may himself be filled with the spirit. Earnest of Our Inheritance

We have not yet, beloved, reached the consummation of our Great Hope; but "the spirit, through whose inworking power this great change is to be wrought, already dwells in us, giving us by his present quickening the pledge and earnest of our final glory." And so we read in another scripture: "But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you." Such is the power of the holy spirit. Let us not lose sight of the important fact that until we have received our share of the blessing of Pentecost, until we have come under the anointing of the holy spirit, we cannot have the mind of Christ, nor can we be transformed into his glorious image. Would that all of the Lord's people might seek earnestly a larger measure of this holy spirit—watching and praying thereunto with all perseverance.

Spirit Begettal

"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."--James 1:18

Spirit begettal is a coined phrase used to identify a recurrent biblical metaphor that characterizes a specific act of creation—the bringing forth (James 1:18) of a new creature (2Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). Though the phrase is not to be found in the Bible, the inspired writers did use similar expressions: born again [from above] (John 3:3, 7); born of the Spirit (John 3:6, 8); born of God (1 John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18); begotten of God (1John 5:18); begat [brought forth] . . . with the word of truth (James 1:18); begotten . . . again [anew] unto a lively hope (1Peter 1:3).

Natures Separate and Distinct

The Bible reveals two realms in God's creation—heavenly and earthly, spiritual and physical: "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another" (1 Cor. 15:40).

Within these realms there are various beings of different natures. In the heavenly there is the divine and angelic. In the earthly there is human and animal, among others: "All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds" (1Cor. 15:39).

These natures are separate and distinct. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).

Mortal Creation

Angelic beings are spiritual in nature. The life they enjoy is conditional. They are mortal. These heavenly hosts were brought forth by individual acts of creation (Matt. 22:30).

The first humans, Adam and Eve, were also individual acts of creation. They, too, were given life conditionally. They also were mortal.

The rest of the human race has received life by begettal and birth. With but one exception, that begettal has been accomplished by a seed that began with Adam. Father Adam's disobedience brought the curse of death upon him and his seed (Rom. 5:12-19; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22).

The one exception was the man Jesus. Though he was born of woman (Gal. 4:4), he was not of Adam's seed (Matt. 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35). Through the virgin birth he possessed a perfect earthly body like that first created.

Jesus gave his perfect humanity to replace that which had been lost, thereby providing Adam and his seed an opportunity to have life restored (Matt. 18:11; Rom. 5:14-19; 1Cor. 15:21, 22)—a restoration to be accomplished through resurrection (1Cor. 15:12-23).

Following resurrection there will be judgment (Rev. 20:11-13), a trial for life like that experienced in Eden (Rev. 22:12-14). As before, the life received will be conditional, and those who are disobedient will go into the grave a second time (Rev. 20:15; 21:8).

Unlike Adam and his seed, the disobedient angels were not put under a curse of death. Instead, they were placed in spiritual chains (2Peter 2:4; Jude 6) until the time of their judgment (1 Cor. 6:3). If not repentant, if they continue in disobedience, their fate will also be second death (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 21:8).

Immortal Creation

Because both the angelic host and Adam were given life conditionally, it was possible for God to provide them with perfect bodies. Being mortal, if they proved to be disobedient they would forfeit the privilege of life, and it could be taken from them.

New creatures, on the other hand, as partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), are to be immortal (1Cor. 15:53, 54). As a result, their judgment must come (1 Peter 4:17) before they are given their proper, deathless, body. As the Apostle Paul declared, first they are to bear the image of the earthy (1Cor. 15:49).

"That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain . . . Behold, I shew you a mystery . . . we shall all be changed . . . this mortal must put on immortality."—1Corinthians 15:35-54

And, as Paul continued in his second epistle, they have this treasure in earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4:7).

"For we that are in this [earthly] tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. . . . For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ."—2 Corinthians 5:4, 10

After their judgment, after they have been found worthy (2Thess. 1:5; Rev. 14:4, 5), they will be out of jeopardy (1Cor. 15:30). Then, it will be said that death has no power over them (Rev. 2:11; 20:6). After judgment, their vile body will be fashioned like unto his [Jesus'] glorious body (Phil 3:21).

Then, this creation will see Jesus as he is, for they shall be like him (1John 3:2), and they shall bear the image of the heavenly (1 Cor. 15:49).

Born of Water and Spirit

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again [from above], he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—John 3:3, 5

Centuries of Christian history cause a reflex action to our Lord's words. Water is quickly associated with baptism. A little thought on the context, however, suggests a different meaning.

At that time Christian baptism had not been instituted. The disciples themselves knew nothing of it; yet, the Lord chided Nicodemus: "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" (John 3:10).

Unless we credit Jesus with being arbitrary, it would seem he had to be referring to some Old Testament teaching with which a member of the Sanhedrin should be familiar.

The writing of the prophet Isaiah may provide the key:

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."—Isaiah 55:10, 11

Peter made the same connection when he declared, "Being born again [anew], not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God" (1Peter 1:23). James agreed, "Of his own will begat [brought forth] he us with the word of truth" (James 1:18). And, as Paul explained, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

The Baptism of Jesus

Though Jesus probably used water to point to God's Word, there is, nevertheless, a close relationship between spirit begetting and baptism.

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye . . . Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now."—Matthew 3:1-15

John's baptism was a baptism of repentance (John 1:31; Acts 19:4), a baptism for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus, crowned with the glory and honor of human perfection (Heb. 2:9), was without sin (2 Cor 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22; 1John 3:5). John recognized this anomaly, and at first refused to baptize him. Only after Jesus' strong insistence did John comply. Why did Jesus insist? Why was he baptized?

Without the writings of Paul we would be unable to answer. In his letter to the Romans, however, the Apostle revealed the significance.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."—Romans 6:3,4

The baptism of Jesus symbolized his death as a human being, and his raising up in newness of life as a new creature. As Peter so succinctly expressed it, Jesus, at the Jordan, was put to death flesh, quickened spirit (1 Peter 3:18).

Paul applied this meaning not just to Jesus but to all who follow him. Thus, the water of baptism depicts death. The immersion into the water pictures a going into death as a son of Adam. The raising up out of the water illustrates the begetting as a spirit being, as a son of God, as a New Creature: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

A Purpose For the New Creation

Isaiah's declaration that God's word will not return to him void (Isa. 55:11), bespeaks of an underlying purpose for the new creation. James, at that remarkable summit meeting in Jerusalem, gave a chronological outline that provides important insight into that purpose.

"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And, to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this [first work] I will return and will build again the tabernacle [tent] of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and [even] all the Gentiles."—Acts 15:14-17

The tent of David, or the house of David, denotes the nation of Israel (2 Sam. 7:23-29; Amos 9:11, 12; Zech. 12:10). God has made marvelous promises to this nation which are yet to be fulfilled (Ezek. 36, 37).

As James explained, however, there is a work to be accomplished before that fulfillment. A second people are to be taken out of the world, a people of whom Moses prophesied: "They [Israel] have moved me [Jehovah] to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation" (Deut. 32:21).

As rendered in the King James Version, this prophecy is not easily understood. It would have God returning evil for evil. Such cannot be (1 Peter 3:9)! The text is better rendered, "I will make them zealous by ones not a people and I will incite them by a foolish nation."

The work for this new people of God is to incite Israel to a zeal for God, thereby fulfilling the promises made to their fathers. Then, through Israel, they are to bless the "residue of men . . . even all the Gentiles" (Acts 15:17; Amos 9:12).

Paul explained this purpose in his epistle to the Galatians. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ ... And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:27-29).

The promise to which the new creation is heir is that made to Abraham by God, "In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. 3:8).

The Bringing Forth

Those who have ears to hear God's Word (Matt. 13:16), and who consecrate themselves to this great work, are baptized for the dead and dying world (1Cor. 15:29). In that baptism they die to the ways of the flesh: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:5). As a consequence, the work of this Elect of God (Col. 3:12) is not confined to the future. There is a work to be done in the present life, "be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2).

Following spirit begetting there must be a renewing of the mind to the things of the Spirit. This is a vital step in bringing forth the new creation. They must be worthy, properly prepared, for the good works (Titus 2:14) God has in store.

In the epistle to the Hebrews, the writer passionately delineated this preparatory work. After demonstrating the necessity for Jesus as a new creature to be made perfect (Heb. 2:10; 5:8, 9), he entreated all who follow Jesus, "let us go on unto perfection"(Heb 6:1).

This is not a fanciful requirement laid down by a capricious authority. It rests on the very nature of the new creation. God is begetting a little flock (Luke 12:32) to partake of the divine nature, to be members of his divine family, and to inherit the Kingdom. Since the body associated with the divine nature is deathless, it is imperative every member of that family reflect God's gracious character of love (1 John 2:5). Only when the corruptible has put on incorruption can the mortal put on immortality, only "then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:53,54).

Life in the Spirit

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."--John 14:6

Our text speaks of the drawing power of Christ and of the opportunity to know something concerning the "high calling." This thought is further emphasized in John 6:44: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

When we first recognized that we could possibly have a standing before Christ, even before we entered into a covenant relationship with our Lord, we accepted the fact of our position as sinners. To establish the only life-giving energy in our minds, it is essential that we first understand where the begetting of the Lord's spirit originates (2Peter 1:4). It certainly cannot be something we do on our own. In 1Peter 1:3-5 we read that it is by divine power. We are "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." We are "begotten by the word of truth" (James 1:18). We must first accept Christ as our Redeemer and make a full consecration to God. After we have made a full consecration we are assured that "all things that pertain unto life and godliness," all we need for our continued service to our Lord as new creatures in Christ Jesus, will be provided (2 Peter 1:3).

After we endure the tests of discipleship for a while in the service of the Lord, we not only recognize the difficulties but we also increasingly realize our own weaknesses. Forgiveness is always available to those who possess a submissive character in their service to God. We are assured in James 1:5 that divine guidance will be ours along the narrow way—the assurance that we can ask for the wisdom of God and that we can receive it liberally.

Spiritual Influences

The influence of the spirit and the precious promises of God nourish, develop, and strengthen the new mind. We must continually partake of these divine promises freely so that we can grow in the Lord. The growth process in the developmental stages of the new creature helps us to achieve new levels in Christian maturity (1 Cor. 3:1, 2). We must desire to make these steps in our consecration, especially when many others look upon the Christian way as not being a happy existence.

In Philippians 3:13 Paul refers to the "apprehending" or obtaining of the prize. He says, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended." Paul realized his inability to stand alone before Christ. His sin was something of which he was constantly reminded. Since he knew that he was far from perfect, he stresses the point of endurance in the next verse. "I press toward the mark for the prize of God in Christ Jesus." The future was before him. He must forget those things which were behind.

The Greek word for "press" in verse fourteen is the same as that translated "follow after" in verse twelve. This word indicates a continuous effort: "I keep pressing on toward the mark." Paul indicates that there is a prize, if one is found faithful, at the end of the race. We know the race is difficult. We always face so many besetments. What corrections can we individually make as we run this race?

The holy influence of Christ and that of our heavenly Father is always there. Using the avenue of prayer has always been one of the best ways to find direction for our thinking and guidance in our decisions. To keep the proper perspective is not always easy since our opposition is constantly battling against us. Prayer, with the help of the holy spirit, should and will kindle our heart and mind to once again focus on the race that is set before us.

Paul did not include himself in this race as one who had already won but as a candidate for disqualification (1 Cor. 9:27). His point was one of self-discipline. He always had in mind the goal set before him. This race course becomes a test of endurance, fortitude, and ambition or desire. We must endure all things so that we will never hinder or dishonor the plan of God in any way (1 Cor. 9:12). Paul tried to make the Corinthians aware that they could be disqualified. They appear to have been lacking in personal discipline. When self gets in the way all prospects of achieving the goal can be lost. The goal should include our attempt to win as many as possible to Christ and, thereby, maintaining our own personal self sacrifice.

The Comforter

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."--John 16:7

A verse by verse study in John 16

The final message of Jesus to his apostles is recorded in the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of the Gospel of John. Jesus continues to discuss the themes he had begun in the upper room as recorded in the fourteenth chapter. He was forewarning them of his imminent death and, at the same time, giving them the good news that they would not be alone but would be visited with the holy spirit.

Forewarnings—Verses 1 to 6

These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

Having their hopes placed so solidly on Jesus as the delivering Messiah it was natural that they should be easily offended by his death. How they echoed the sad confusion of the two on their way to Emmaus: "But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done" (Luke 24:21).

Death would come to them in two ways—religious authorities would shun them, putting them "out of the synagogues" and soon the secular hand of the law would enforce the death penalty for the crime of simply being a Christian. Now, being forewarned, they would be in a position to recall his predictions and it would blunt the shocked surprise of the sudden turn of events. As long as he walked at their side there was little need to burden their minds with such tragic thoughts. He would be able to adequately explain each turn in the road. In fact, though, ever since the Mount of Transfiguration, he began preparing them for the eventuality of his death.

Now sadness would prevail—sadness on his part that they had so little grasped the reality of his arrest that they had not even asked where he was going and growing sadness on their part now that the truthfulness of his prediction began to sink in. It was only a short while earlier, in the upper room, that Thomas had finally put to him the question, "We know not whither thou goest, how can we know the way?" (John 14:5).

The Comforter—Verse 7

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

The coming of this "comforter" has been a constant sub-theme throughout this closing discourse of Jesus. It is identified both as the holy spirit (14:26) and the "spirit of truth" (15:26). The Greek word translated "Comforter" is *parakletos* and is translated "advocate" in 1John 2:1, where it is applied to Jesus.

This dual identification of the title is in harmony with John 14:16 where the holy spirit is predicted as "another Comforter." There are two Greek words translated "another" in the New Testament, *allos* and *heteros*. The word used here is *allos*. The difference between the two words is best summed up by Prof. W. E. Vine in his Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words: "*Allos* expresses a numerical difference and denotes 'another of the same sort'; *heteros* expresses a qualitative difference and denotes 'another of a different sort.'" The holy spirit was promised to be of the same sort as Jesus, to carry on his work amongst the disciples. As Jesus had been their teacher and guide, so now the holy Spirit would "teach them all things" by calling to their memory the lessons they had learned personally from their Master (14:26). In this manner it would "testify" of him, causing them to more effectually "bear witness" of him to others (15:26, 27).

Certainly if we had been there with the apostles we would have felt like saying, "No, Lord, please stay with us yourself. We prefer you to another comforter." How difficult it would have been for us to grasp the thought of another comforter being "expedient"—for our advantage. Why would not the continuance of his personal presence have been more desirable? What advantage is there of the holy spirit over that of Jesus himself?

The answer is implied in 1 John 2:1, where it is said that Jesus would be our "advocate [the same Greek word *parakletos*] with the Father." As he had been in the presence of the disciples for three and a half years, so he would now be their personal representative in the presence of the Father. But he would not leave them without a comforter, the Father would give them "another comforter who would abide with [them] forever" (14:16). This comforter would have a unique advantage which even Jesus did not then possess—it could be with them at all times and in all places. This comforter would not be limited to time and space but would be with each individual Christian connecting him, as with a telephone line, to their "advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

The Work of the Comforter—Verses 8 to 15

And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew

you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

In these few verses we have spelled out the contrasting work of the holy spirit to the unbeliever and to the believer. The word translated "reprove" in the King James version is variously translated "convict" and "convince" by other translators and carries with it the thought of uncovering, or exposing, a true meaning.

The three concepts that the spirit would expose among unbelievers were sin, righteousness, and judgment. Sin would be identified as a failure to believe in the work and mission of Jesus. The righteousness of the Messiah would be revealed by his resurrection, rewarding his faithfulness with the exaltation to his Father's own nature, the divine nature. And the finality of judgment would be shown by the ultimate failure of his great adversary, Satan, to thwart God's plan, thus assuring his own negative judgment.

In contrast, the spirit of truth would guide the believer into still deeper perceptions of God's will and plan by directing the believer's mind to the word of God, enlightening him as to the true and spiritual meanings of the scriptures. As Jesus said (v. 12), he had "yet many things to say" to them which they could not bear at that time. These were not unuttered truths, but deeper meanings to what he had already told them. Now the spirit would recall these to their memories, showing their true import.

The method of how this teaching function of the holy spirit would work is spelled out for us in 1 Corinthians 2:13-16: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

Sorrow and Joy—Verses 16 to 22

A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man

is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

Despite Jesus' persistent talk of his imminent death the apostles still could not understand. What did he mean, "A little while?" Briefly he explains the turmoil of emotion that would so shortly be theirs. He knew his death would hit them hard, that they would sorrow greatly even as their enemies rejoiced at having put down their nemesis from Galilee. Likening the experience to that of a woman delivering a child, he assured them that their sorrow would be shortlived. True to his word, he was born again to a spirit nature just three days later and when he showed himself to them some eleven times in his post-resurrection appearances they were so thoroughly convinced of the fact that their new joy was permanent. There was no more uncertainty. They knew that their Redeemer lived.

Joyful as they were at his being raised from the tomb, it is nothing to be compared with the joy that they and all future followers of the Master would experience when he would see them again at his second advent. Then they would realize the import of the words with which he opened his last discourse while still in the upper room: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (14:1-3).

Prayer—Verses 23 to 27

And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

The holy spirit would also become the Christian's aid in prayer. While Jesus was with his disciples they came to him frequently with their questions. He answered them, often using parables with hidden meanings because the deeper truths behind them they could not bear at the time (v.12). Now, through the holy spirit and in the name of Jesus, they could make their needs known directly to God. Once again the analogy of the telephone fits well. The holy Spirit was to be their direct connection to the heavenly Father; and the name of Jesus, more than a mere password, would be their "advocate with the Father" to plead their case for them. They had a friend in high places, one who was willing to cover their imperfections with the robe of his righteousness.

Although this privilege of prayer was given as carte blanche, "whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name, he will give it you," there were implied conditions. This is spelled out

in James 4:3: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."

Not only does he assure the Christian of prayer privileges, but also of the personal love of the Father "because ye have loved me, and believe that I came from the Father."

True Belief—Verses 28 to 32

I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

"I leave the world, and go to the Father." Finally his words seem to penetrate the minds of his disciples. They were sure they comprehended. In fact they spoke of this as the conclusive proof that he was the Messiah: "by this we believe that thou camest forth from God."

But what is true belief? This was the challenge Jesus threw at them. "Do ye now believe?" He predicts that when the hour of his departure would come they would desert him. How reminiscent of this is his conversation with impetuous Peter, possibly at this very juncture in his discourse, "Then saith Jesus unto them, `All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.' Peter answered and said unto him, `Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.' Jesus said unto him, `Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.' Peter said unto him, `Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.' Likewise also said all the disciples" (Matt. 26:31-35).

There are two kinds of belief—acceptance of a reality, and motivational belief that acts upon the reality. The first kind even the devils possess, "The devils also believe and tremble" (James 2:19). Jesus was looking for the second kind, that belief which produces faithfulness in the one by whom they believed. This they lacked at that time. This they would gain in their future experiences under the guidance of the holy spirit.

Be of Good Cheer—Verse 33

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Predicting their last minute desertion was not an act of scolding by their Master. He knew the pressures that would be upon them. Not only did he know of their desertion, but he

also knew of their ultimate faithfulness. Therefore he follows the prediction of their temporary unfaithfulness with the motivation for disclosing that fact to them, "that ye might have peace."

This peace would not be immediate. They would sorrowfully rue their failures. But they would be constantly reminded by the holy Spirit of their Master's faithfulness and how he overcame the world, proving it to the very end by dying for the sins of all mankind. As he had "overcome the world" so they would be similarly motivated to overcome in the many and varied tribulations that would beset them. Thus they might have peace.

Be of good cheer! As the eleven who trekked with him the lonely road to Gethsemane were to find peace in eventual overcoming, so shall each of us if we likewise resolve to eventually overcome. "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

The Witness of the Spirit

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."--Romans 8:16, 17

No one is authorized to preach the gospel unless he receives this anointing of the spirit. "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach" (Isa. 61:1).

The word "witness" (Rom. 8:16) is not the usual word which is translated into English as "witness." The usual Greek word is *martus* or *martureo*, from which we obtain our word "martyr." The word in our text is the Greek word *summartureo*, "to testify jointly," "to corroborate by concurrent evidence," "to confirm, to testify in support of someone or something." "Someone" is the consecrated and the "something" is the evidence of the begetting of the holy spirit.

Miraculous Manifestations

In the early church, this witness was sometimes startling, manifested by a visual aid in the form of a cloven tongue of fire.

Certain gifts of the spirit were given for the purpose of speaking a foreign language, enabling the hearer to understand the message in his native tongue. Some gifts involved power to heal.

Miraculous gifts passed away when the apostles died, for such publicity was no longer necessary. The church was firmly established. Early in the age, these gifts became a stumbling block, and they have continued to stumble nominal Christianity ever since.

A More Quiet Witness

After the apostles and the early church fathers fell asleep in death, the witness of the holy spirit was evidenced in a quiet, unseen, inward manner. "The Spirit . . . beareth witness with our spirit . . . we are the children of God."

We Acquire an Advocate

The evidences of the operation of the holy spirit are multiple. One is when an individual can verbally affirm his full consecration to God—his talents, time, influence, his life. Based on Hebrews 7:25, this is a witness that he is of the true church "whose names are written in heaven." "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott helps even more: "He is able to save completely those drawing near to God through him."

This is consecration. Those desiring to return to God's favor are shown the way.

Symbolically, they are provided with a "robe," the merit of Christ's sacrifice, imputed to the spirit-begotten as a covering for their imperfections.

In this verse, we find the entire intercessory work of an Advocate. The exalted and glorified Savior intercedes, using his merit.

We Become Fruit-Bearers

Another evidence of the spirit is fruit-bearing, character development. These outward indicators are called fruits and graces of the holy spirit (II Peter 1:5-8): "Add to your faith virtue . . . knowledge . . . temperance . . . patience . . . godliness brotherly kindness . . . [love] . . . if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful."

Notice the associated blessing (v. 11): "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom."

A maturing Christian will grow in various degrees. One should examine his own progress. If growth is evident, behold the witness of the spirit. If he has difficulty recognizing his own growth in Christ-likeness, another might be better able to recognize it. Thereby they could aid each other. Cultivating the fruits and graces of the spirit is necessary to maintain standing in the body of Christ.

Purging and Pruning

In the parable of the vine and the branches (John 15:2), the church is represented as branches. Their steady growth is required. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: . . . every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

There is another lesson here in connection with another witness of the spirit. We abide in Christ if we grow as a branch on his vine. The Father prunes each branch to remove the dross of our characters. When we appreciate his purpose and grow in grace, this is another evidence of being a child of God: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth (Heb. 12:6, 7).

Chastening is difficult for us, but look at the results (v.11): "It yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

These pruning experiences are not the same with each son. Some need a parental glance. Others need repeated scourgings.

We Sin Not

"Whosoever is born [begotten] of God sinneth not" (1 John 5:18). The Greek word *gennao* can be rendered "born" or "begotten," depending on whether it is used with the masculine or feminine gender. Used in connection with God (v. 16), God generally being considered masculine, *gennao* should here be properly translated "begotten." "Whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not."

Is it possible that one begotten of God sins not? The thought is that the spirit-begotten one may be overtaken in a fault or make an error in judgment. But he will not willingly transgress the divine law. Nor would the new mind delight in these sinful inclinations of the flesh. They would be detested by the new mind. A new will would delight in doing the Father's will. It would cringe from opposing it.

The Norley translation renders 1John 5:18 "will not practice sin" rather than "sinneth not."

The Hatred of the World

Our Lord was not of this world: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own" (John 15:18, 19).

If it is our experience to be hated by the world, the spirit of God witnesses with our spirit that we are his sons. Those with God's mind have not the spirit of the world, in contrast to the minds in whom the spirit of the world has gained a foothold.

Most of our Lord's persecutions came to him from the religious element (scribes, Pharisees, chief priests, doctors of the Law). Had he cooperated with them, he would not have been hated by them.

He could have avoided persecution if he would have remained silent concerning God's truth. We should expect persecution to result from proclaiming the Truth. The Power of Faith

Another witness of the spirit is found in I John 5:4: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world ... this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Again, the word "born" should here be "begotten." For "whosoever is begotten of God overcometh the world"—another indicator that we are out of harmony with worldly methods. But we have aid unseen, the heavenly things of God—in contrast to things seen, the unsatisfying things of this world. The value of things of this world diminish by the degree of our faith.

Setting a Standard

Another aid in overcoming is to set a standard—one that is in harmony with the Lord's Word and out of harmony with the deteriorating ambitions of the world.

The expression "overcoming the world" indicates that "overcoming" requires activity, constantly striving—no compromise. John is positive that the victory that overcomes the world is faith. The spirit thus witnesses that an overcomer must walk by faith, not by sight.

Growing in the Lord

Another evidence of the spirit, that we are sons, is in our growth. Peter tells us (1 Peter 2:2): "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that ye may grow."

Note the word "grow." As one matures in the truth, he desires something more than just milk: "Everyone that uses milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness .. is a babe . . . strong meat belongeth to them . . . of full age" (Heb. 5:13, 14).

By meat, Paul means the deeper truths of God. The spirit-begotten would not be satisfied with merely the milk. That would show little progress. Instead, they would seek ways of growing, ferreting out truths from God's Word. Based on this fuller knowledge, they would develop a greater sufficiency of the spirit.

For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall (2 Peter 1:8, 10).

Growth is all-important, a witness of the spirit of God.

Proclaiming Our Testimony

A ninth witness—the holy spirit witnesses through the words of Jesus: "Whosoever . . . shall be ashamed of me and of my words . . . of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed" (Mark 8:38).

Whose heart is tuned with the Lord and his Word will take delight to acknowledge Jesus as his Redeemer, Master, Teacher, always endeavoring to present this testimony to any hearing ear.

If any, having not this witness, is ashamed to confess Jesus' name and to be identified with him and their brethren, the Lord will be ashamed of him. "I will deny [him] before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:33).

Knowledge, Truth

One more witness of the spirit is knowledge—an important ingredient which Peter included in the fruits and graces of the spirit. The Apostle John agreed: "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

This promise of being guided in all truth was specially applicable to the apostles. Ultimately, it would reach the entire church through them. The guidance concerned God's plans. Truth would confound the "wisdom" of learned religionists. No eloquent error could withstand its logic.

Truth would fill the church with enthusiasm—a desire to share the good tidings. Its knowledge would come upon them gradually, progressively, beginning with the foundation truths, firmly establishing them, then expanding into more difficult understandings. Their new spiritual mind would be nurtured on milk, but then they would require meat, and finally strong meat (Heb. 5:12-14)—the deeper ramifications of divine promise.

This is the progression that John referred to when he said, "[The holy Spirit] will guide you into all truth."

The same apostle said, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things . . . the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you . . . the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth . . . even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (1 John 2:20, 27).

Here is that same anointing, the holy spirit. The apostle does not mean that the church would have no need of human teachers. This would be in opposition to other scriptures which speak of pastors, teachers and overseers directing the church. Peter was pointing out that the church did not want teachers who would corrupt the truth with worldly philosophies. As long as the spirit abides in us, it serves against these sophistries.

Different witnesses of the spirit intertwine with each other. Knowledge is related to growth; growth brings forth activity and loyalty and faith. Overcoming is associated with faith. All of these evidences seem to apply concurrently and are dependent on each other.

The Holy Spirit in the Next Age

The holy spirit will witness to the reconciled world of mankind in the next age. Its operation will be somewhat similar to its operation during this Gospel age; but it will be to bless all. No longer will it be possessed by a few special servants and handmaidens. As Joel 2:28 states: "Afterward I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh.

The witness of the spirit will no longer be with those who live godly and as a result suffer persecution, for no persecution will be permitted under the reign of the Mediator. The holy spirit will no longer witness to a narrow way of sacrifice for a little flock, for the day

of sacrificing will be past. The world will, instead, have a highway to traverse—one that will be free of any impediments. All obstructions that we encounter now will be removed. The spirit's witness will be that of blessings to the well-doers. The punishment for willful sinners will eventually be that of destruction.

Our Responsibility

With this understanding of the holy spirit, let us examine ourselves to recognize its absence or presence in our lives. If we find it to be present, let us nurture it conscientiously, joyously, and gratefully.

Sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."--Ephesians 1:13

Carl Hagensick

A seal in ancient times served many purposes. It was the guarantee of authenticity, serving much as a notary public's seal does in our day. It was also an outward evidence visible to all that the sealed object had been kept secure. The immutability of the sealed orders from being changed is illustrated by the use of the seal of King Darius to certify the order for Daniel's being cast into the den of lions (Dan. 6:17).

Usually the object to be sealed was covered at its opening with hot wax and imprinted with a seal from the signet ring of the guarantor. Once the wax had set the seal was impossible to change. Any tampering was immediately detectable.

Although seals were sometimes used by ordinary individuals, the word is generally connected with royalty. The transfer of a seal to a deputy showed delegated authority. For instance, the Pharaoh of Egypt gave his signet to Joseph when appointing him in charge of food distribution (Gen. 41:42) and the signet ring of King Ahasuerus of Persia was transferred first to the wicked Haman and, after his exposure, to Mordecai (Esth. 3:10, 12; 8:2). God authorized Zerubbabel, the leader of Judah at the time of their return from Babylonian captivity, to be his spokesman by calling him his "signet" (Hag. 2:23).

In the New Testament the concept of being "sealed" is used to describe one of the works of the holy spirit in the Christian's life. This work is distinct from that of "begetting," which is the start of a new life in the believer by an infusion of the spirit. It is also distinct from "anointing," which gives divine authority for preaching and other service of the Lord. This is clearly inferred in 2 Corinthians 1:21, 22: "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

The New International Version divides this text into three distinct activities: "Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. [1] He anointed us, [2] set his seal of ownership on us, and [3] put his spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come." Other translators combine the latter two activities into one.

The concept of ownership is further stressed in 2 Timothy 2:19: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." Even today we use a similar sealing. Possessors of large herds of cattle will mark their cattle with a peculiar "brand" to identify them and to insure against their theft.

What is the Lord's Seal?

It is this concept of branding that helps us identify more specifically what is the seal of the holy spirit. An illustration is given in Revelation, chapter seven, of an angel ascending, like the sun, from the east, marking the servants of God with a seal "in their foreheads." Lest some get the thought that this is an action that occurs only in the Christian's experience at the end of the age, we are informed that even during the fifth period of the church, which most expositors attribute to a past historic event, there is evidence of this sealing: "And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads (Rev. 9:4). [Author's emphasis.]

In Revelation 7 we are further informed of the number that receive this seal—144,000—a number that many feel represents the literal number of the church of Christ. This "sealing" activity must be completed before the final destructive storm of Armageddon can be loosed. While many identify this seal with intellectual knowledge (since it is in the "forehead," or seat of the intellect) most feel that it represents something more than mere knowledge.

There are two clues which appear to bear on this issue. The first is found in a very similar picture in Revelation 14:1 ASV: "And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads." The Revised Standard and the New International versions concur with this translation, which adds the words: "his name" to that of his father. Although the word "seal" is not used to describe this forehead marking, the reoccurrence of the number 144,000 appears sufficient to link the two references. Therefore the "seal" is identified as the mark of ownership: the combined names of Jehovah and his son, Jesus.

A Second Picture

A similar picture is given in the ninth chapter of Ezekiel: "And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof" (vs. 3, 4).

Like the angel "ascending from the East" in the Revelation picture, here the "man with the writer's inkhorn" places a mark in the forehead of the faithful, those "that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done." The Hebrew word here translated "mark" is *tav*, which also denotes the last letter in the Hebrew alphabet. The shape of this letter is reminiscent of the blood sprinkled on the doorposts and lintels of the Israelite houses in ancient Egypt on the night of the passover. The blood of that passover lamb pictures the blood of Christ (1 Cor. 5:7). As the letters of the Arabic alphabet, which we use in the Western world, developed, the *tav* became our "T," which also roughly resembles a cross.

It is by this blood of Christ that Jesus bought the whole human race (1Cor. 7:22, 23). This is the seal of ownership which Christ places on the forehead of his followers.

A Deeper Meaning

Both the Hebrew shem and the Greek onoma, which are translated "name" in the Bible, convey not only the thought of that word by which we are known but also the concept of the character of the person. This is the deeper thought of being "sealed by the spirit." As we develop more and more the attributes of Godlikeness and Christlikeness we are more and more showing that we are truly the sons of God.

The "overcomers" of the church of Pergamos are promised a "new name." "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Rev. 2:17).

Later, to the "overcomers" of the church of Philadelphia, the revealing angel elaborates on this "name," telling us that it is the name of God, the city of God (Jerusalem) and of Christ. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name" (Rev. 3:12).

That this name includes the character of Christ we are distinctly told in Jeremiah 23:5, 6: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Again, in Jeremiah 33:15,16 this title is extended to the followers of Christ, the spiritual Judah and Jerusalem: "In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness."

It is this righteousness of Jehovah that comprises the name etched into the forehead of his followers. Only as they develop this righteous character, emulating that of their heavenly Father and their heavenly Bridegroom, can they be sealed. Now the church is covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness. Eventually they must develop righteous characters of their own. This righteousness will become their own peculiar robes. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19:7, 8).

Crystalization of Character

A further lesson can be developed from the ancient process of applying a seal. Wax was heated and a signet ring was carefully impressed. As the wax cooled it set, or crystalized, and the seal became permanent. Before it cooled it was possible to mar the seal by rubbing it or setting an object upon it.

So it is with Christian character. When we first begin to "put on Christ," to copy his attributes, we do so somewhat tentatively. Our copies of his life are quite indefinite. We must remain in contact with him as our signet for a period of time to trace the fine lines of his character. Then we must let that image set itself deeply in our minds, become crystalized, so that it will become permanent.

Perhaps this thought was in the background of Paul's mind when he wrote the following words to the church in Philippi: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13, 14).

Developed as Paul was in Christlikeness, he did not feel that he had yet completely overcome. The "mark," the goal for which he was running, was still in front of him. He was stretching every nerve to reach that end. It is worth noting that the Greek word translated "toward" in verse fourteen does not carry that primary meaning. The Greek *eis* is closer to our word "toward." Here the word is *kata*, which conveys a downward action. He was pressing "down" upon the goal, much as a signet ring is pressed down upon the melted wax to form the perfect seal.

The success of his endeavors is manifest later in the apostle's life when he could write to Timothy, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:7, 8).

Now the sealing was complete. His character was crystalized. The character of his Lord and of his heavenly Father were manifest to all—they were written upon his forehead for all to see. The test by which a similar assurance can be granted to us is given to us in 1 John 3:14: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

Before that time, however, the seal can be marred and made useless. The Apostle speaks of this possibility in Ephesians 4:30: "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

The Seal of the Law

This sealing of the new creation is illustrated in the Old Testament law of Moses. "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also" (Rom. 4:11).

Circumcision was an outward sign or symbol of an inner commitment to keep the covenant of God (Gen. 17:11). As this circumcision was the seal of God's covenant with Israel, so another circumcision would be the seal of God's covenant with his church. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:28, 29). And again, "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3).

This spiritual circumcision is further described by Paul in Colossians 2:11, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." It is this work, then, of putting off the flesh and putting on the new mind which is the Christian's circumcision, his "seal" of the spirit. The testimony of John 6:27 further supports this concept: "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."

The "meat which endureth" are the teachings of Jesus Christ. They are the words that contain eternal life. They "seal" the believer when they are accepted and obeyed. The circle of the divine seal is now complete. As the Christian rests in being owned by God ["He hath set to his seal that God knoweth them that are his"] so now he rests in the knowledge that receiving the testimony of Jesus gives the assurance that God is true, faithful, in all he has promised. "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true" (John 3:33).

How our hearts should ache for that "seal of the spirit," for that certainty of knowledge that "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine" (Song of Solomon 6:3). And how we can identify with the passion of the Shulamite for her love in that beautiful song of songs: "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame."

The jealousy here described is not the fear of the fickleness of the one loved, that he will suddenly desert us and run after another, but the fear that we may become displeasing to him by failing to come up to the high standards of character to which he has called us.

Matthew Henry, in his noted commentary, remarks thusly: "those that truly love Christ are jealous of every thing that would draw them from him, and especially jealous of

themselves, lest they should do any thing to provoke him to withdraw from them, and, rather than do so, would pluck out a right eye and cut off a right hand."

Let us, then, seek the full experience of the holy spirit in our lives. Not just the begetting which starts the Christian way, but the full outworking of that spirit in a new life with Christlikeness as its seal. Then we can join in singing:

*Looking back, I'll praise the way
Thou hast led me, led me, day by day.*

The Feet of the Image

Harold Dart

After describing the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar, the prophet Daniel gave the interpretation in Daniel 2:36-45.

According to Daniel the dream was given as a consequence of Nebuchadnezzar's own desire to know the future: "As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass" (2:29).

Four Universal Empires

Expositors are in general agreement that the various parts of the image picture the succession of kingdoms which would rule over areas of the Middle East adjacent to and including the land of Israel, and ultimately over vast areas of the world. It is a picture of gentile world dominion extending down to the advent of the kingdom. Babylon, the head, was succeeded by the empire of the Medes and Persians, then by the Greek empire under Alexander and his successors, and finally by the Roman Empire, the strongest and most extensive of all.

Most of the efforts of expositors to understand the implications of the image are concerned with the extension of the Roman Empire into the feet and toes. The smiting of the feet of the image by a stone which represents the intervention of the Kingdom of God indicates that the symbols of the vision are intended to portray the history of the fourth empire until the time that it was swept away by the "stone." This leads naturally to an inquiry as to the historical circumstances portrayed by the feet of the image, which are part of iron and part of clay. The biblical statement indicates that the feet and toes are divisions and extensions of the fourth kingdom into lesser and weaker components not having the unified strength of Rome itself—not "cleaving one to another."

These divisions, however, do have a characteristic which identifies them with the fourth kingdom in that they are partly iron, retaining some of the elements of Roman strength which will give them leading roles in events affecting the course of world history. We should thus expect to find Rome continuing to play a significant role throughout history—even until the advent of the Kingdom of God.

History has no more brilliant example of imperial success than the Roman Empire. It united an area of the Middle East extending from the British Isles to Egypt and Armenia under one dominion for over two hundred years. The fall of the Roman Empire is ranked as one of the greatest focal points in human history.

Roman Law

The Roman law, the instrument and symbol of her unity, was the Empire's greatest achievement. The acceptance of this legacy in the Middle Ages gave both church and state a basis for their own systems of law and helped to civilize Europe by spreading widely the principles of equity and humanity embodied in the structure of that law. Roman law did not share the fate of the Empire. The barbarian conquerors retained both Roman law and law courts for their Roman subjects; for their fellow Germans they harmonized Roman law and legal concepts with their own law and customs. In the eastern Roman Empire, Roman law and legal theory, as crystallized in Justinian's great codification, remained in force for almost a thousand years. In both East and West the church erected canon law, its own legal system, upon Roman foundations.

Thus Roman law remained a vital force in the centuries after the decline of the Empire. It still performs its ancient mission of binding together disparate peoples, for a large part of the Western world employs Roman law today.

The underlying concepts of Roman law have equally influenced jurisprudence, philosophy, and practice. From the time of Rome's earliest legal code, the Twelve Tables (ca. 443 B.C.), the harshness of the law was steadily modified.

Today, fifteen hundred years after the end of the western Empire, the traveler in Europe moves along the routes of ancient Roman roads and visits cities which have had a continuous history from antiquity to the present.

Dominance Over Israel

With the entry into the land of Judea by the Roman general Pompey and his capture of Jerusalem in 63 B.C., the Roman Empire became the fourth empire of Daniel's vision. The whole of Syria became a Roman province and Judea was granted limited autonomy under the Roman governor of Syria. Following Julius Caesar's victory over Pompey, he made several decisions in favor of the Jews in the land. Hyrcanus and his sons were made high priests and rulers of Judea. The walls of Jerusalem, which had been destroyed by Pompey, were rebuilt, and the use of the Jaffa harbor was restored to the Jews. In 30 B.C. Herod was confirmed as king of the Jews by Augustus, the first Roman Emperor, and Israel became part of the Roman province of Syria.

In the west the Roman Empire continued its imperial form for approximately 450 years. The decline and fall of the western division of the Roman Empire came gradually over several centuries and its causes have been the subject of much historical explanation and debate.

The advent of Christianity brought an element into the Roman Empire which greatly affected the course of history. While the Empire was being invaded by open violence and undermined by decay, Christianity gently and gradually came into the minds of men. Starting in obscurity, it gained vigor from opposition and finally flew the banner of the

Christian cross over the ruins of the capital. The influence of Christianity was not confined to the limits of the Roman Empire. The church and its tenets continued to expand, until by the middle of the nineteenth century it had spread to almost every corner and among all peoples of the globe. The industry and zeal of the iron kingdom of Rome had been inserted into the church and then widely diffused to the shores of all continents by means of colonization.

It has been alleged that Christianity in its political effects was a disintegrating force and tended to weaken the power of Rome to resist her enemies. The actual effect of Christianity, however, was to unite, rather than to sever, and to bind together national or sectional feeling. In the political strategy of Constantine, the first emperor to espouse Christianity, it was possibly the idea of unifying the dissident tendencies in the Empire that motivated his support of Christianity.

Events that were to occur in the southern and eastern divisions of the Roman Empire are pictured in the eighth chapter of Daniel, verses 9 to 12.

The Forces of Islam

In A.D. 610, in the city of Mecca in the Persian province of Arabia, Muhammad, the founder of Islam, had a vision in which he said he was commanded by the angel Gabriel to proclaim Allah as the one true God. He began to write verses which he claimed had been given him by an angel. Muhammad also cited Jewish and Christian concepts and acknowledged that prophets before him, especially Abraham and Jesus, had been divine teachers; but he proclaimed that his teaching was greater and that it corrected and completed previous Jewish and Christian teachings. He thus magnified his own rule as being that of the greater prophet.

His early teachings were rejected by the idolatrous citizens of Mecca and he was forced to flee to Medina in A.D. 622. In Islamic history this flight is called the Hegira, and the date marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar. He was received with acclaim in the neighboring city of Medina. There were succeeding hostilities between his followers in Medina and the citizens of Mecca with inconclusive results until Mecca at last determined to stamp out the growing power of Medina and sent a force of 10,000 men against Medina. But here they came up against an unexpected obstacle. Muhammad had entrenched himself behind a wall and a trench, a most unsportsmanlike tactic in Bedouin warfare. Muhammad refused to leave his fortress, and the attacking force was unable to arrive at a decision as to how to meet this outrageous conduct. As they delayed, the rains began to fall. Their encampment became uncomfortable and their divergent views produced tempers and disputes. At last the great host began to disperse in all directions and ceased to exist as a threat to Muhammad and Medina. Never again did Mecca take any effective action against Muhammad, and its leading men gradually came over to his side. Finally, under the terms of a treaty, Mecca was established as the spiritual center of Islam, to which prayers should be directed and pilgrimages made. In A.D. 629 Muhammad came to the town as its master.

Thereafter Muhammad prevailed in battles and massacres until all of Arabia came under his control. He died in A.D. 632 at the age of 62, master of Arabia. His religious teachings became the cement which bound together his followers into an intense fanatical unity. History makes it evident that Muhammad was vain, egotistical, tyrannous, and a self-deceiver. The religion he founded was intolerant and promulgated largely by the sword.

Abu Bekhr

When Muhammad died, in the eleventh year of the Hegira, his close friend and supporter Abu Bekhr succeeded him as Caliph (successor) and leader of the people. While Muhammad had been the creator of Islam, Abu Bekhr became its conscience and will. Abu Bekhr was a man of strong faith, without doubts; and he began to carry out Muhammad's projected actions with plundering raids and plans for the subjection of the whole world to Islam. This was in accordance with the letters the prophet had written from Medina in A.D. 628 to all the monarchs of the world, proclaiming this to be the will of Allah.

This effort almost succeeded. Sweeping to the east and south, Islam took possession of Jerusalem and the "glorious land." By A.D. 661 they had conquered Persia, Syria, and Egypt. Later conquests spread Islamic dominion along the northern coast of Africa and into Spain, occupying the region once the province of the eastern Roman Empire and washing against the shores of the western dominions.

Islam had been pitted against the corrupt Christianity of the seventh century Byzantine Empire in "the later time of their kingdom, when transgressors have reached their fullness" (Dan. 8:23). Eastern Christianity had become a babel of ideologies, talking and preaching endlessly of trinities, doctrines, and heresies which had no appeal to the common man. This theological jungle was no match for the single minded loyalty and fanaticism of the followers of Muhammad, who were assured of an entrance into paradise by simple obedience to the commands of the Koran. The surest way to attain this blessed goal was to die in battle against the infidel in the service of Allah. Islam also prevailed because it found politically apathetic peoples who had been robbed and oppressed. They were uneducated and unorganized with selfish, unsound governments out of touch with their people.

Islam swallowed cities, nations, sects, and races and became a vast empire with many millions of converts. Its sole textbook was the Koran and the teachings of Muhammad, and it prospered mightily with the aid of the sword. Its hold upon the allegiance of millions of its converts was to remain until the "latter time of the indignation, for at the appointed time, the end shall be" (8:19). "When he shall even come against the Prince of princes and be broken without human hands" (8:25).

The apostate "little horn" of chapter 7, which arose in the professing Christian church of the western Roman Empire, had a counterpart in the regions of the eastern Roman Empire, where another agency of the dragon's power became established at about the

same time. Both of these forces have trodden down and persecuted the true saints and have continued to exist and play roles in opposition to the establishment of the Messianic kingdom on earth—of which Jerusalem will be the center, as opposed to either Rome or Mecca.

Islam has had an incredible revival of power in recent years, since the restoration of the nation of Israel, which has aroused the forces of the Islamic little horn in its efforts to destroy the established Jewish nation. Military assaults, economic blockades, and condemnatory actions by the United Nations have all been hurled against Israel.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth verses of the eighth chapter, Daniel was told that the vision had a time span of 2300 days. In history, Alexander the Great, the large horn of the he-goat, first struck the Persian ram when he defeated Darius at the river Granicus in 334 B.C. If the vision began at this point and extended for 2300 years, on a year for a day basis, the terminus would be in A.D. 1967., the year in which Israel wrested control of the city of Jerusalem from the Islamic forces of Jordan's King Hussein. The ultimate destruction of the little horn is stated to be as a result of opposition to the Prince of princes, that is, to the establishment of the Messianic rule in the end of the days. Both "little horns" of Daniel are brought to an end by the institution of that kingdom, the "mountain of the Lord's house," the dominion of the Prince of princes.

How To Be a Better Member of a Christian Ecclesia

Twenty-six scriptural principles to improve our interactions with others in our local Christian community

Based on an outline by Tim Thomassen

A wise man once said, "no man is an island unto himself." From the beginning it was the divine intent to bond the Christian community together into local independent churches, or *ecclesias*, to use the Greek term. Here are a few scriptural tips for improving our class participation.

1. Attend and be on time for meetings and other ecclesia activities: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25).

2. Prepare to be a blessing and receive a blessing: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (Heb. 10:23, 24). See also Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 2:15; Rom. 1:14, 15; 1 Peter 3:15, 16.

3. Have a positive attitude: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4:8, 9).

4. Promote unity in the ecclesia: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3). See also Psa. 133:1; 1 Cor. 12:12-30; Rom. 15:5-7.

5. Support other ecclesia members, especially the weaker ones: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:1-4). See also Acts 20:35; Gal. 6:1, 2; 1 Thess. 5:14.

6. **Honor and respect the elders in the ecclesia:** "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine" (1 Tim. 5:17). See also Acts 20:28; 1 Thess. 5:12, 13.

7. **Be willing to take risks involved in seeking new directions:** "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them" (Acts 16:6-10). See also Acts 16:16-18; Prov. 3:5, 6; 11:5; 21:29; Jer. 10:23, 24.

8. **Use your special gifts:** "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 4:10, 11). See also Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Tim. 4:14.

9. **Ask help when needed:** "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13, 14). See also Matt. 7:7, 8; John 15:7, 16; 16:23-26; 1 John 5:15.

10. **Make the most of every opportunity:** "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15, 16).

11. **Be an active listener:** "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19). See also Prov. 1:5; 4:1, 10; 5:1, 7; 8:6, 33; 19:20-27; 22:17; 23:19; Eccl. 5:1; Isa. 38:23; Matt. 11:15.

12. **Do not forget to communicate:** "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things" (Gal. 6:6). See also Heb. 13:16; Mal. 3:16; Acts 4:18-20.

13. **Do not stumble your brother:** "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Rom. 14:21).

14. **Do not be a respecter of persons:** "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons . . . if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are . . . transgressors" (James 2:1, 9).

15. **Walk after the spirit instead of the flesh:** "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1, 2). See also Gal. 5:16-26.

16. **Personify love:** "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away" (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

17. **Live a rejoicing life:** "Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:4-7).

18. **Shine as children of the light:** "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thess 5:4-6). Read also verses 7 through 22.

19. **Seek first his kingdom and righteousness and do not worry about tomorrow:** "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. 6:33, 34).

20. **Sacrifice:** "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 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" (Rom. 12:1, 2). See also Heb. 13:15.

21. **Avoid bitterness and strife:** " Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:29-32).

22. **Copy the attitude of Jesus:** "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (1 Peter 4:1).

23. **Be a doer of the word:** "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). Read on to verse 25.

24. **Separate from the world:** "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17). See also James 1:27; 1 John 5:19; 2 Peter 1:4; Col. 2:8; 1 Cor. 2:12.

25. **Practice peace:** "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). See also Col. 3:15; James 3:17, 18; 2 Peter 1:4.

26. **Be a Dorcas!** "Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did" (Acts 9:36).

The Holy Spirit: Its Functions and Its Symbols

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. - Acts 2:17-18.

The holy spirit of God manifests itself in many offices and is pictured by many different symbols!

FUNCTIONS

ANOINTING: "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD bath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he bath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (Isa. 61:1).

BEGETTING: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1:18).

BRINGING TO BIRTH: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit (John 3:6-8).

COMFORTING: "But the Comforter, (even) the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" (John 14:26 ASV).

CREATING: "And the earth was with out form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face . "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated of the waters. And God said, Let iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1:2, 3): with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Heb. 1:9).

DIRECTING: "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not" (Acts 16:6, 7).

OVERRULING: "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21 ASV).

PRODUCING FRUITAGE: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Ga. 5:22, 23).

SEALING: "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1:21, 22).

TEACHING: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come" (John 16:13).

SYMBOLS

DOVE: "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him" (Matt. 3:16).

OIL: "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah" (1 Sam. 16:13).

"Thou has loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Heb. 1:9).

TONGUES OF FIRE: "And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance" (Acts 2:3, 4 NAS).

WIND: "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting" (Acts 2:2).

NOTE: Both the Greek and Hebrew words for spirit are the same as the words for wind.

It is not enough to dwell in the spirit, the spirit must dwell in us!

NEWS AND VIEWS

PBI NEWS

At the annual meeting of the PBI in June, 1994, the time for election of directors was changed so that the results of the election could be known before the annual meeting. This was done because all voting is done by proxy, and knowing the results would help in the planning of the meeting and director involvement. The nominating committee has sent letters out to all members. If any member wishes to place a name in nomination, they may do so by sending in the nomination as instructed in the letters they received from the nominating committee. The by-laws require that any candidate for the board must be a member of the Pastoral Bible Institute.

BIBLE STUDENT ACTIVITIES

The following letter was contributed by Leanore Straede and regards Emek HaShalom, the Israel retreat of Herman Bezner and Joseph Elisha. It is edited for clarity.

(Thank you) for your material help. Many do not understand with how many demands, duties and expenses a settlement is connected. We had important visitors in the last time(s). One of them was Eli Landau, the Mayor of the town Herzlia. He came with a big group of Jews from USA. After Bro. Hermann's lecture they did not want to depart and asked many questions about the future and the Messiah. As a sign of (esteem) they gave to us a Bible in Golden Cover. Besides the Prophet Elijah crossroad between Jokneam and Kfar Joshua last week took place a great manifestation of identification with the parts of the land Israel which the present government will give up. Many Parliament Members have been announced for speeches. Crowds of people came from far away to hear them. Our Jewish friends invited us and we came to be one of the listeners. But when the parliament members became aware of us they asked us to give a speech and demanded from the organizers even the first place for us. Although not prepared, we could give a complete witness. We said it in the name of the thousands of Bible students and believers all over the world. We could show the accurate fulfillment of the prophecies in the present situation and the very close coming of the Messiah to these events. But also the requirements, which are demanded from us to reach the wonderful Messianic Age. After the speech many prominent men got up to shake our hands and they expressed how our words moved them deeply. When the meeting ended many from the public came and showed their esteem. The Lord gave much grace, and one more of the countless opportunities which we received in Israel to praise Him. To Him be thanksgiving and His Kingdom it may hasten.

Your brethren, Hermann and Joseph 8/30/94

Population Control
AROUND THE WORLD

The world today has 5.7 billion people, and the number is increasing by 86 million people per year. The world is projected to contain at least 7.9 billion people by 2050, but it could have as many as 12 billion. For many, that may raise the concern about feeding all the world's people. The International Conference on Population and Development, held the week of September 5th in Cairo, discussed the difficulties of population growth. One of the interesting items coming from this discussion was the review of the work of Thomas Malthus, whose "Essay on the Principle of Population" published in 1798 argued that food production would not be sufficient to handle the projected population growth, resulting in worldwide famine. Malthus's work was used by many "doomsday" ministers in the early 1800s to prove that the world would end in the early 19th century. However, agricultural revolution, the invention of steam power, and colonization proved him wrong. As fast as the world's population has grown, world food output has grown much faster, and could go on doing so for a long time yet, according to Vaclav Smil, a geographer at the University of Manitoba. The world produces plenty of food, he says. The problems reside in the inability of the food to reach those who need it.

(The Economist, 9/3)

Death Sentence

The state supreme court of Georgia may hear a case in which the appeal to overturn the death sentence will center around the argument that a man's genetics predisposed him to commit crimes. Some legal experts worry that genetic research could tear down the fabric of the criminal justice system by allowing people to argue that they were born without control over their actions.

(Wall Street Journal, 11/15)

Christian Magazine Subsidy

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to review a state university's refusal to subsidize a student-run Christian magazine. In September, 1990, students at the University of Virginia founded Wide Awake Productions to publish Christian viewpoints. The university denied funding because the magazine was a "religious activity." The students sued and the Court of Appeals ruled against the Student group. Libertarians believe that the Supreme Court's agreement to review the case could set the stage for a potentially far-reaching ruling on freedom of religion.

(Dow Jones, 10/31)

Christendom

More than 30,000 people gathered in Georgia to listen to Nancy Fowler, a 46-year-old homemaker who claims to speak words belonging to the Virgin Mary. Fowler appears on the 13th of each month, when Mary is said to reveal herself. Those present say they saw photographs of clouds in which the unmistakable silhouette of Mary appeared. In at least 30 sites in the U.S. thousands of believers gather regularly around individuals who claim to relay messages from the Virgin Mary. Social scientists claim that the approaching millennium, the social malaise and yearning for spirituality, and the disaffection with the institutional church are all factors in the recent growth of sightings.

(Washington Post, 10/14)

Gideons Denounced

The Freedom From Religion Foundation offers two stickers for sale in its ongoing campaign against Gideons International. The stickers are urged to be attached to Gideon-donated Bibles in hotel and motel rooms. One label displays a skull and crossbones and the words: "Warning! Literal belief in this book may endanger your health and life!" The other, "Gideon Exposed," claims that the figure in judges for whom the organization is named was a murderer, plunderer and the father of a mass murderer. Anne Gaylor, an investigator with the Freedom From Religion Foundation said, "Religion is negative and oppressive, and we don't want it ruling our state or government. Patriarchal religion is the enemy of women."

(Washington Post, 10/1)

Rejection of Absolute Truth

"Since the beginning of the 90s, when we first began to see a steady drop in personal spiritual commitment, there has been a consistent increase in the proportion of adults who believe that there are no absolute moral truths. Four years ago, we noted that about two-thirds of all adults **rejected the notion of absolute truth**. That figure has since risen to nearly three-quarters of the population. I don't think it's a coincidence that at the same time people's religious beliefs are becoming less central and less orthodox, and that involvement in faith development has tapered off, that more and more people are also embracing moral relativity."

(George Barna, religion researcher)

Church Cancels Pre-School

The Placenta Baptist Church in Santa Clarita, California has cancelled its preschool, saying that the Bible clearly teaches that children are meant to be raised by their parents at home. "By having a preschool, we are signaling that we think it's okay for parents to leave their children for 10 to 12 hours a day" said Mike Long, chairman of the board of elders. Church leaders cite the book of Deuteronomy and Timothy as commanding parents to care for their children at home.

(Washington Post, 10/23)

Evolution Under Attack

The recently published textbook, "Of Pandas and People," has raised controversy from Kentucky to Texas because of its subtle implications regarding creationism versus evolution. It leaves religion out of the argument, but deploys scientific laws to argue that the world is too complex to be explained by mindless natural forces. The book concludes that an "intelligent agent" must have set down the rules, although it does not identify the agent. Phillip E. Johnson, a Berkeley law professor, defends intelligent-design theory and hails the book as an honest attempt at challenging the unknowns of evolution. In building a case for intelligent design, authors Kenyon and Davis argue, for example, that chemicals floating in the primordial soup would have been unlikely to combine in ways necessary to produce life. They also attack the absence of fossil evidence for evolution. They claim there are no "transitional forms" of creatures in museums. Evolutionists acknowledge that major gaps in the theory exist but they argue that some transitional forms have been found, just not in the kind of smooth progression Darwin postulated. The "intelligent agent" of the theory does not need to be God, the authors claim, "That is really up to the reader of the book to make that connection." One educator agrees that the designer could be anyone-or anything. "Somebody else might think it was a giant turtle."

(Wall Street Journal, 11/14)

Christianity in China

Christianity is the fastest growing religion in China today, especially among young people. On his recent visit to China, the archbishop of Canterbury said that religious toleration is a reality. Yet in the coastal areas, where Protestant churches have sprung up all over the place, the government does everything from controlling the distribution of Bibles to rounding up and beating the "unofficial" Christians. In one incident, five young preachers were taken from their church by eight or nine policemen. They beat some people with their clubs, handcuffed the five preachers, stripped the three male preachers to their waist, and forced the other Christians present to beat the three men 100 times each with a bamboo rod, or be beaten themselves. The two women preachers had their clothes torn open and were sexually abused. One of the men later died. Despite this, the Chinese Christians remain committed to spreading the word. One of the young female house church leaders was asked if she feared persecution. She replied, "That would be my time of glory."

(Chinese Church Research Center, Hong Kong)

Arafat Ousted from Mosque

Islamic militants evicted PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat from a mosque, preventing him from praying. Members of the extremist Islamic Jihad movement knocked off his headdress and shoved him out the back door into the rain at the funeral of Hani Abed, who was slain in a booby-trap car bomb. Outside the mosque, activists shouted "Death to Israel, Death to America."

(Dow Jones, 11/3)

Syria

There is a widely shared sense here that some sort of peace with Israel is now inevitable. This is difficult for many who for years never heard Israel described as anything but the Zionist enemy. The Syrians and President Assad say they will not sign a treaty or make any agreement unless Israel first commits itself to complete withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

(New York Times, 10/30)

Saudi Arabia

For decades, Saudi Arabia has been the most dependable oil supplier to the U.S. and its most important ally in the gulf. It secretly financed the Contra rebels in Nicaragua for the Reagan administration and helped the Bush administration by hosting half-a-million troops during the gulf war. King Fahd has regular chats with President Clinton and American Cabinet officials line up to visit him. The Saudis wield enough power in Washington to be able to reject the choice of ambassador and force the Pentagon to change plans for military exercises. The kingdom has become the largest single customer for American military contractors, with \$30 billion in orders since 1990. The Saudis are now under pressure from conservative Islamic groups to put more pressure on the United States regarding its position in the Middle East. "The Saudis are a very steady friend," said Warren Christopher, representing the administration. "They have a very conservative country which is very supportive of the United States, whether it is the peace process or the congruity of our position towards Iran and Iraq." (*New York Times*, 11/4)

Iran

The Shariah code of Islamic law permits men to have up to four wives, and allows him to divorce any of them at will. For a woman to divorce him requires his consent. All judges in Iran are men and most are mullahs-Islam clerics. "I get a lot of cases where women have been severely beaten more than once, with doctor's evidence to prove it, but the judge says it still isn't enough," says female Tehran lawyer, Mehranguiz Kar. The Koran is clear on what husbands may do to wives whom they suspect of disloyalty and ill conduct. First, "admonish them." Second, "refuse to share their beds." Third, "beat them." Divorce petitions for wives of degenerates and drug addicts have been dismissed and judges have scolded Kar's clients for "abandoning husbands in distress." (*Wall Street Journal*, 10/31)

Pharmaceuticals

Israel's pharmaceutical industry is poised for a greater role in the international bio-technology market. Manufacturing costs are much lower in Israel than in the U.S., according to Sim Fass, chief executive officer of BioTechnology General Corp. Israel's biggest research center is the Weizmann Institute. One of the big efforts recently is going into research on multiple sclerosis. Dr. Ruth Arnon, a Weizmann Institute professor, says that Israel's turbulent history prompted a "brain drain" of talented scientists to Europe and the U.S. over the past decade. "But with prospects for peace now, maybe we'll be able to reverse that," she says. (*Dow Jones*, 11/4)

(Editor's note: the question of "take a spoil" in Ezekiel 38:12 following Israel's dwelling in "unwalled villages" has been interpreted by some Bible students to refer to an intellectual spoil after Israel has laid down its defenses and is at peace.)

Israeli-Arab Peace Vision

"There is a sense among Israelis of events no less momentous than the fall of the Berlin Wall," says Oz Almog, a Haifa University sociologist. Arab affairs scholar Yossi Olmert warns that "even a stable orderly regime doesn't necessarily control the passions of all its people." Some Israelis have visions of Israel and the Arab moderates Egypt, Jordan, the PLO-allying with the West in a "clash of civilizations" with militant Islam.

(Associated Press, 10/30)

Jordan and Hamas

Yasir Arafat is reportedly worried that Jordanian intelligence agents are helping Hamas, the radical Islamic group responsible for acts of terror in Israel, even as Jordan signs the peace treaty with Israel. The treaty suggests that the Islamic shrines, including the Al Aksa mosque on Mt. Zion, in Jerusalem, should come under King Hussein's jurisdiction rather than Arafat's. Arafat said that anyone who does not accept Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine can "drink Gaza sea water."

(New York Times, 10/30)

Jordan and Jerusalem

Jordan will hand control of Muslim shrines in east Jerusalem to Palestinians once the final status of Jerusalem is decided, says Jordan's crown prince. Control over the sites has been one of the most contentious issues of the peace negotiations. Negotiations on the status of Jerusalem are scheduled to begin in 1996.

(Dow Jones, 11/1)

The Law of Return

Since its founding, Israel has guaranteed citizenship to any Jew who requested it. Israel's Law of Return has been the cornerstone of the state's vision of itself as the Jewish homeland. Many Israelis now fear that Israel is becoming a dumping ground for the impoverished and for those merely seeking an easier life, and they want to abolish open immigration. The Jewish Agency, which helps screen and assist new immigrants, is now actively discouraging those likely to become a burden on society. The agency also won't provide financial assistance. In less than 50 years, Israel's population of people age 65 and older has tripled to 10%. Geriatric experts say that number will double over the next two years. Among the most controversial of all the new immigrants are those claiming to be members of the lost tribes. At least 200 lost-tribe members have immigrated in the past two years. Welfare departments are finding it difficult to support both the aging and the immigrants. At least one town, Kiryat Gat, has informed the Ministry of Absorption that it will no longer accept immigrants on welfare.

(Wall Street Journal, 10/31)

BOOK REVIEW

Six Sermons by George Storrs, published in 1842.

George Storrs was the link between the Miller movement of 1829-1844 and the Bible Student movement which began in 1879!

Bible students who enjoy the history of the Bible Student Movement generally view George Stows with great regard. Born in 1796 in New Hampshire, Storrs was raised by a mother who disputed the Calvinistic preaching in colonial America and taught him to be skeptical of traditional religion. Still, at nineteen, Stows joined the Congregational Church and was married three years later to a member of the congregation.

When his wife became ill six years later, Stows was exposed to the Methodist teaching of free grace. The appeal was so strong that, following his wife's death, Storrs decided to become an itinerant Methodist preacher. However, his anti-torment preaching, which had been inculcated in him as a youth, led to his dismissal as a Methodist preacher in 1840.

On a train ride in 1837 between Boston and New York, Stows read a pamphlet published by Henry Grew of Philadelphia. Grew presented the concept that the wicked will experience annihilation as their final destiny. After consulting with several ministers who objected to Grew's views but could not answer the scriptural arguments, Storrs became convinced of the truth of this doctrine and began to preach it.

Storrs then published "Three Letters," in 1842, in which he expanded on the concepts of Grew. The letters proved so popular amongst a small group of Bible students that he was asked to serve a small independent group in Albany, N.Y.

In 1842, Storrs then expanded the circulation of his ideas and accordingly announced a series of Six Sermons on two subjects, "Are the Wicked Immortal?" and "Have The Dead Knowledge?" The sermons were so popular that he subsequently published them in 1847. The demand became greater and he began publishing his ideas in the form of a periodical called, "The Bible Examiner," which continued until his death in 1879. Almost 200,000 copies were circulated. Among those who read his sermons were N.H. Barbour and C.T. Russell. These sermons were their inspiration to publish "The Three Worlds and The Harvest of This World" in 1877. Later, in 1879, when Russell began publishing The Watchtower, he drew on much of Stows work from 1871-1875 for the early issues.

"Six Sermons" is out of print, but can be copied at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.