

The Herald

Of Christ's Kingdom

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Breaking Bread House to House

EDITOR'S JOURNAL

"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."—Acts 2:46

When a young man and a young lady begin a courtship they can never get enough of each other's companionship. There is so much to talk about. Every detail of the other's life is of intense interest. Time together flies by only too swiftly. So it is with the Christian and his Lord. He loves to spend time in prayer and study. Each new detail he learns excites his emotions.

But the individual Christian is not the only bride of the heavenly bridegroom. "The body is not one member, but many" (1 Cor. 12:14). Thus it was, from the very earliest days of the Christian church, that the believer not only loved to spend time in study and meditation upon his espoused, but also was desirous of spending great amounts of time with his fellow believers. Their common interest in Christ was the focal point of their lives. As the Apostle Paul said, "I am determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2).

Thus it was that from the first day of the Christian church, the Day of Pentecost, the brethren not only worshiped daily in the temple, but began regularly "breaking bread from house to house." These joint meals provided a continuing opportunity for Christian fellowship in which they not only became acquainted with their future bridegroom, but also with other members of the bride class. This was not burdensome to them and they ate "with gladness and singleness of heart." The sense of the Greek phrase is that they participated with abounding or exuberant joy and simplicity of heart. Simplicity and openness is one of the greatest assets in building strong interpersonal relationships.

Throughout history Christians have maintained this high desire for communication with each other. They have developed intense personal interests in each other's lives. They have helped fellow believers to stronger faith and greater courage and endurance under trial. All such activities knit them closer and closer in the bonds of love.

Modern Times

One strong distinguishing feature of the Bible Student movement of the past 125 years has been the concept of regular conventions. From the first such gathering in Chicago in 1893, the concept of conventions has spread world-wide with well over one hundred being held annually in cities throughout the world. Many of those in the United States and Canada are listed on the inside back page of each issue of **THE HERALD**.

While each of these gatherings has a full schedule of presentations on biblical topics, they also provide time for Christian fellowship. This fellowship allows the opportunity for detailed discussion of scriptural themes, but also much is gained by getting to know one another in depth. Not only do we, as the hymn phrases it, "share each other's woes; each other's burdens bear," but such fellowship also provides an opportunity to rejoice with each other (1 Cor. 12:26). As with the early church, this is done with much "gladness and singleness of heart."

In addition to laughing and crying together, such intimate communication permits each Christian to learn valuable lessons from the experiences of his brother or sister. Lessons from the life of one's fellows can be invaluable. This is specially true of the faithful ones whose lives are recorded for us in the Bible. We read of the values of the examples of such experiences in James 5:10, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience."

In this issue of **THE HERALD** we are going to spend some time "breaking bread" with some of our brethren of the early church. Many names of our brethren from the first century are given in the New Testament. Some, like the apostles, are very prominent, while others, like those catalogued in Romans 16, have only cameo roles to play. The ten selected for this issue are arbitrary. The authors were given freedom to choose the characters of their choice and introduce us to some of these brethren who lived nearly 2000 years ago. As James speaks of the blessing of knowing of "the patience of Job" (James 5:11), so may we be uplifted as we read of the sweet devotion of Mary Magdalene, the martyr's witness of Stephen, the friendly helpfulness of Aquila and Priscilla, the open hospitality of Lydia, the golden tongue of Apollos, the missionary zeal of Titus, the pathos of the runaway slave Onesimus returning to his master Philemon, and the positive spirit of Gaius.

The Early Church

One Heart and One Soul

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."—Acts 4:32

Contributed

Outwardly they had little in common. Some were unkempt sinners, others were thriving publicans. A few were of the persuasion of the Pharisees, others were despised by the scribes and priests. Some worked in Jerusalem in menial jobs, others were merchants and traders from as far away as Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Rome. True, they were all of the Jewish religion, but even that would soon change as Gentiles would join their group in ever-growing numbers. Yet, with such divergent backgrounds, they were "of one heart and of one soul."

The diversity of their home conditions was soon lost in an overwhelming cause. They were captivated by a new truth—Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. A lowly Galilean, rejected by the religious leadership and crucified for the twin crimes of blasphemy and treason, was risen from the dead. Unbelievable! Yet the proofs were there—"infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3). The news was electrifying! On the day of Pentecost 3000 were baptized (Acts 2:41); shortly thereafter 5000 more joined their number.

What welded together this diverse body into the driving force it soon became, not only in Judea but throughout the world? They were "of one heart and of one soul." The Apostle Paul divides this unity that bound them into its constituent parts in Ephesians 4:4-6: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Having been begotten with a new spirit, a holy spirit, they saw a new calling, developed a new faith, lived a new baptism, and found a new relationship not only to their Lord but God himself, the "Father of all." This was the compulsion that knit them together as one body, the body of Christ.

More than this commonality of vision, however, was responsible for the phenomenon of the new Christian church. God, in his overruling providence, raised up in their midst men and women fully devoted to him who would provide leadership to this body. First and foremost among these, having been tutored by Jesus himself, were the Twelve Apostles.

These were not alone. He brought forth some to be prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Eph. 4:11). Paul explained their role in verses 12 to 16, "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all

come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Beyond these special servants there were the thousands of other brethren, each playing a role so that the body could grow by "that which every joint supplieth." What a joy it will be, if we are faithful, to meet the members of this group who, coming from many cultural and economic backgrounds, were drawn to lay that aside and "have all things in common." It is with great anticipation that we can each look forward to meeting **OUR BRETHREN FROM THE EARLY CHURCH.**

Mary Magdalene

Last at the Cross, First at the Tomb

"And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun."— Mark 16, 1, 2

Contributed

As Jesus hung on the cross dying, five of his followers stood nearby watching helplessly. Among them was John, his beloved disciple; his mother, Mary, and her sister, Salome; Mary, the wife of Cleopas; and Mary of Magdalene. Many of Jesus' other followers watched from hiding places nearby. Yet only these five were close enough to offer consolation to their dying friend and Savior.

It is interesting that four of the five individuals mentioned were women. We see illustrated here some of the attributes especially manifested in the female gender which made these four women so close to Jesus' heart. Despite feelings of confusion and fear, these followers endured the threat of persecution and punishment to offer consolation to our dying Lord and master. "These women had followed him and cared for his needs" according to Mark 15:41, and they continued to do what they could for him to the end.

No doubt Mary Magdalene was reflecting on her many experiences with Jesus as she watched this loved one die an agonizing death on the cross. Although Jesus had frequently spoken of his coming death, Mary like the disciples and other followers did not comprehend the meaning of his words. She, like the others, stood there to support this dear one in his hour of need. Not thinking of her own personal safety, she offered what comfort she could even though her heart was heavy laden. In spite of this gruesome spectacle and despite the fact that the man who had brought such hope to her life was being crucified, her faith and devotion remained strong and unshaken.

Seven Devils Cast Out

Mary had been a devoted follower of Jesus for some time. She is described in Luke 8:2 as "Mary of Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils." The Lord had performed a miracle which cast out the seven spirits that had plagued her. We are not told of the nature of the specific plague that was upon her, only of her liberation from the evil spirits and her subsequent walk with Jesus after this point. No doubt the bondage imposed by these spirits must have wreaked havoc on her emotional, moral, and physical life. Her dedication and devotion to the Lord are chronicled by subsequent references to her in the scriptures.

We learn in the eighth chapter of Luke that women among the followers of Jesus traveled after him as he went to cities and villages preaching the glad tidings of God's Kingdom. This is in contrast to the customs of the time. Jewish men and women did not worship together, let alone did men tutor women students. Jesus was laying forth a principle later enunciated by the Apostle Paul when he stated: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). This is the foundation of the equity which exists in the church. Although there were different offices and duties, the body of The Christ was not biased as to gender, race, nationality, or position. Mary Magdalene's travels with Jesus and ministering unto his needs served as an early illustration of this point. It also highlighted the importance of all members of the body putting forth that which they possess for the good of all.

Mary Magdalene not only nurtured Jesus and the apostles but also served to support them financially. While little is known of the origin or nature of her wealth, she was apparently a woman of some means. This seems indicated by the text cited in the paragraph below and by the fact that there is no indication that she was supported by a husband or that she had employment, and yet she traveled with the group for a time.

But unlike the rich young ruler, whose master was money, she and the other women traveling with Jesus made riches their servant. In Luke 8:2, 3, we receive insight into this matter where we read "Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means" (NAS). They freely gave that which they had in loving service and devotion to the master.

Mary stood near the cross as the sky darkened and the earth shook beneath her feet. A mood of tremendous gloom covered the landscape. Doubtless this was one of the most devastating experiences of her life as she watched the life of this perfect man slip into the oblivion of death. Despite the weight and horror of this experience, she stood by her master and went with Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea as they took the body of Jesus to the tomb. As the men hurried to wrap the body with linen and place it in the burial chamber, Mary stood by. She watched them prepare and anoint the body with the mixture of aloes and myrrh to make this a proper burial. The ritual was hurried as sunset and the Sabbath were near. Broken-hearted, Mary Magdalene and Mary mother of Joses watched as the two men struggled and rolled a sizable rock in place to seal the tomb's entrance. This assured that the tomb would remain undisturbed until they returned after the Sabbath. According to the sixteenth chapter of Mark, the two women sat outside the tomb for a while, grief stricken and in disbelief yet ever loyal to their Lord and Master. These women deeply felt the loss of such a wonderful friend. But of course Jesus was much more, he had been their hope. This hope now lay in a state of confusion and bewilderment because they had not understood just how great was the hope Jesus offered, and they did not understand that his death was not the end of that hope, but the beginning of its completion.

A Final Token of Respect

On the day following the Sabbath, early in the morning before breakfast, Mary Magdalene was among the women who came to the grave. The preparations as the Sabbath had approached had been rushed, and no doubt the women wanted to more properly take care of the body. After all, this was their final act of love and respect for one who had touched so many hearts. This was yet another illustration of the loving devotion they had for the master, even after his death. The women wondered how they would move the rock, seeing as it had taken two men to put it in place. How could they so slight of frame move such a formidable obstacle? Then as if in answer to their dilemma, the earth quaked and an angel of the Lord rolled back the massive stone. Those that witnessed this spectacle were awestruck. The Roman guards were first paralyzed and then fled in fear. But the dear women who came to tend to the body, despite this frightening scene, drew closer to the tomb where they were greeted by an angel of the Lord. In Matt. 28:5-7 we read; "And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you." Doubtless, the angel's message reminded them of Jesus' statement that he would rise again on the third day. The women rushed from the tomb in a state of both fear and astonishment. They ran back to the disciples to deliver the angel's message. As a result of her faith and dedication, Mary found herself in the role of giving the greatest message ever proclaimed to mortal man: HE IS RISEN!

Things had happened so quickly: Jesus' glorious entry into Jerusalem, his exaltation by the cheering masses, the conspiracy against him and betrayal, his trial, crucifixion, and burial. Yet the message Mary was called to convey made all of these events start to make sense. Jesus had risen from the dead. When she conveyed the message to the disciples, John and Peter rushed back to the tomb to confirm what Mary had said and found. John and Peter went to the tomb and saw that the body had indeed vanished.

They returned to their home in amazement of what had taken place. Mary Magdalene had also returned to the tomb, but she did not leave. She lingered outside the tomb still crying. Her heart was broken by the loss of this loved one, yet the angel indicated that he had risen from the dead. This was a mysterious and difficult thing to comprehend. If only the master were here to tell her what she should do, to calm her fears, and to instruct her. As she once again approached the tomb, this time peering inside, she saw two angels, one sitting at the foot and one at the head of the burial slab. The angels inquired of her "Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." (John 20:13-14). She turned to leave and encountered one whom she thought was the gardener. Her heart was still confused and forlorn. Jesus said to her "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master." (John 20:15-16). Instantly she recognized the Master's voice, just as the sheep recognize their shepherd's

voice. What joy must have filled her heart! Now she had personally encountered the risen Master.

Only now did she start to comprehend the implications of the statement, "He has risen!" One who was so compassionate, so giving, so faithful, so contrite of heart, was privileged to be the first to see the risen Lord. Indeed this was a fitting reward for one whose heart condition was ready for the invitation to become a footstep follower in the new and living way about to be opened to just such as Mary. This is one whose experiences already evidenced a consecration of heart, first to Jesus, the perfect man, and now to the risen Lord. She wanted to cling to him, and hold him, but Jesus told her not to cling to him because he had work for her to do. His physical manifestation was all that Mary needed to truly proclaim in her heart that HE HAS RISEN!

A Bearer of Glad Tidings

Once again Mary ran back to town, and we imagine this time with joy untainted by confusion, this time not to deliver the announcement that he had risen, but that she had herself seen and spoken to the Lord and that he had indeed conquered death. Mary returned to the disciples and conveyed Jesus' message to them. It was not long after that that the risen Lord appeared in their midst in the evening. Yet Mary was the one who was first blessed to see him—no longer as a man but after he was raised to his new spiritual glory, though in a human body prepared for the occasion as were other bodies on other occasions.

Although the scriptures are silent on Mary Magdalene after this point, we see from her beautiful character that no further witness is necessary. We feel confident that based on her resolve through fiery trials she continued in the faith. She had been plucked from the grasp of Satanic spirits, was privileged to travel and minister to the Lord, was with him as he entered Jerusalem, watched his crucifixion, assisted in his burial, witnessed the resurrection morn, acted as a messenger to the footstep followers, and was the first to talk to Jesus after his resurrection. Mary Magdalene's example is that of complete devotion to the Lord and his cause, obedience at all personal costs, appreciation for his mercy and overruling prompting to service and sacrifice, trust in him no matter what confusion the circumstances may cause, faithfulness, and selfless love. Certainly the scriptures witness to the fact that it could be said of Mary Magdalene: "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men" (2 Cor 3:2).

Stephen

A Man Full of Faith

"Stephen, a man full of faith and of the holy spirit."—Acts 6:5

Robert Wilson

When the name of Stephen is mentioned the thought that usually follows is "the first Christian martyr." That is true, of course. However, Stephen's contribution to the Christian cause is far greater than merely dying as a martyr.

Two things stand out in the assessment of Stephen's contribution to the truth. First, he had a profound effect on the Apostle Paul and his ministry. Secondly, he brought additional light to the sacred narrative of the plan of God.

Stephen and Paul

With respect to Paul, we must rely on supposition, but certain facts are provided upon which to construct a foundation. The Apostle was of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia that had been a part of the Greek empire. Thus he knew Greek. Stephen likewise knew Greek and, from his non-Jewish name, appears like Paul to have been born outside of Israel. It was due to the complaints of Hellenist (Greek speaking) widows in the church that deacons were elected. They were not appointed by the apostles but were elected by the congregation, so in all likelihood some at least would be able to speak Greek in order to serve the needs of the Greek-speaking widows. Stephen was likely in that category.

Another evidence of Stephen's language ability is supplied in Acts 6:9, "And there arose some of that synagogue which is called of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen" (Diaglott). It seems certain that such disputation among Jews from so many nations required a mutual language and that it was Greek.

Saul of Tarsus most certainly would have been present to hear Stephen's defense of himself before the Sanhedrin. In reading Stephen's narrative, one might ask, "How did that account get into the Bible? Who of the early church had access to it?" Reason tells us that Paul, as Saul, is the most likely to have had that access, and he was certainly the most qualified to retain and record that fateful scene. Acts 7:58 puts him there and that he kept the coats of them that stripped down for the purpose of throwing stones.

Some believe another evidence to Stephen's impact on the apostle is Paul's "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12:7). They understand the "thorn" to be the haunting memory of his part in the trial and stoning of this bright, intelligent, and innocent follower of Jesus, with whom he had much in common.

Finally, Stephen's innovative recitation of the narrative of God's dealings with Israel and his injection of additional facts is similar to the method of teaching Paul later used.

Old Testament Insights

Additional insights provided by Stephen include his clear account in Acts 7:2 of God's calling of Abraham "as when he was in Mesopotamia before he dwelt in Haran." The Genesis account (11:31), reads, "And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there." This text could be understood to mean it was the father, Terah, who was motivated to take his family and go to Canaan. Students of the Bible have long appreciated that Stephen clarified this point, making evident that the way God taught Abraham obedience was by progression. He did not lead him into Canaan until, through the death of Terah, Abraham finally did "get out from" his "father's house."

Further, in Acts 7:4, Stephen clearly states that "when his father was dead, he [God] removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell." Again, the Genesis account is vague on this point: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee" (Gen. 12:1).

The Septuagint

Stephen, as a Greek-speaking Jew, apparently read the law and the prophets from the Greek Septuagint. It is in this translation that the prophet Amos (5:26) identifies an Egyptian idol, Remphan, that Israel worshipped together with the Ammonite idol Moloch (Acts 7:43). Remphan is not found in the Hebrew, giving further evidence that Stephen, in quoting from the Septuagint, could both read and speak Greek. Also worthy of note is how he inserted Amos' prophecy into the Mosaic narrative (cf: Amos 5:25, 26 with Acts 7:42, 43).

Again, quoting from the Septuagint, Stephen cited the number of Jacob's family at 75, rather than 70 as found in Genesis 46:27. The basis of this discrepancy is partly explained if the Genesis number represented those that came into Egypt as those who came "out of his loins." The Septuagint says the number is 66, without the nine wives. Stephen quoted it as "Jacob and all his kindred," which would include the wives, making the total 75.

Stephen on Moses' Character

Commenting on Moses, Stephen added three important aspects to his character. First, to the statement in Exodus 2:2 that says Moses was a "goodly child," Stephen added he was "exceeding fair" (Acts. 7:20). Second, he stated Moses was highly educated, "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." And third, he spoke of Moses' great works: "and was mighty in words and deeds" (v. 22). The only thing the Exodus account tells us is "And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither

heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" (Exod. 4:10).

The three distinct periods of forty years each in the life of Moses were laid out by Stephen in Acts 7:23, 30, 36; of which only the last is specified in the Pentateuch. Stephen also brought the man Moses to life by expressing the emotion of his sense of terror and trembling at the burning bush in Acts 7:32, whereas Exodus 3:3 simply records the facts. In Acts 7:38, 53, Stephen spoke of the intervention of angels in the giving of the law; no mention of this appears in the Exodus account.

A Discrepancy

Finally, there is another difference in Stephen's account from that of the Old Testament. Stephen sends us scurrying to the Pentateuch when he says in Acts 7:15, 16, "So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, and were carried over into Sychem [Shechem], and laid in the sepulcher that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem."

When was it that Abraham bought such a sepulcher? We go to the twenty-third chapter of Genesis and read of the death of Sarah in Hebron in the land of Canaan. Abraham speaks to "the people of the land, to the children of Heth," and asks them to entreat for him "to Ephron the Hittite, son of Zohar," for the cave of Machpelah and the field surrounding it. Abraham then purchased the field "which was before Mamre" and buried Sarah in the cave. That is the only purchase of burial ground by Abraham that we can find. Upon his death, his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave next to Sarah. The location is better known as Hebron and lies about twenty miles south of Jerusalem and about twenty miles west of the Dead Sea.

Jacob, on the other hand, bought a parcel of land some thirty miles north of Jerusalem in Samaria (Gen. 33:18, 19). "And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padanaram; and pitched his tent before the city. And he bought a parcel of field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money."

A further complication is found in the account of Genesis 49 and 50 where Jacob's body was carried up out of Egypt by his sons and buried in the cave purchased by Abraham at Machpelah, where Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob's wife, Leah, were buried.

Also, Joseph's bones were carried up by Moses when Israel departed Egypt and they were buried at Shechem, according to Exodus 13:19 and Joshua 24:32. The books of the Old Testament, however, say nothing about where Joseph's eleven brethren were buried. Josephus says they were buried in Hebron, but having now seen Stephen's insights and knowledge of the Scriptures, and knowing of his begetting by the holy spirit, we accept his word over that of Josephus, and suggest that they were buried in Shechem (Sychem).

Adam Clarke comments that "we have the uniform consent of the Jewish writers that all of the patriarchs were brought out of Egypt and buried in Canaan, but none except Stephen mentions that they were buried in Sychem. As Sychem belonged to the Samaritans, probably the Jews thought it too great an honor for that people to possess the bones of the patriarchs; and therefore have carefully avoided making any mention of it."

An Unknown Man

So it is that we learn from Stephen many fine details concerning God's dealings with Israel. Yet we know practically nothing about Stephen himself. There is no mention of who his father was, whether he had brothers or sisters, or even a wife. He well embodies the thought of 1 Corinthians 2:2, "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." One wonders if Paul had Stephen in mind in expressing those words. Stephen's connections to family, friends, society, his educational background, his trade or profession—these all fade into insignificance when we view his character and message.

While we generally think of Stephen as being young, there is no evidence to preclude him being the age of our Lord at the time of his death or even in his forties. That he is shown disputing with a group of Greek-speaking Jews, "and they were not able to resist his wisdom and the spirit by which he spake" (Acts 6:10), shows that he was well versed in the scriptures and was able to give "an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). This provides an insightful look at the depth of Stephen's knowledge and wisdom and at his personal ability of self-expression. This also gives the reader of Acts 7 justifiable cause to consider carefully and attentively the account of Stephen's testimony before the Sanhedrin.

At the opening of the account of Stephen's trial, there is a remarkable statement made concerning the attitude of the council members about his appearance: "And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel" (Acts 6:15). Stephen well knew the history of those in civil and religious power in Israel. They consistently rejected those sent to them by God, and he knew that he was to be a victim of the same blind and malignant spirit; yet his serenity was unruffled. As they steadily looked upon him they were awed at his presence. Finally, the High Priest breaks the spell by asking, "Are these things so?" He was referring to the false accusations that had been brought against Stephen. Thus begins the wonderful recitation of this man of faith as recorded in the seventh chapter of Acts, together with the account of his stoning. It was thus that Stephen "fell asleep" (Acts 7:60), a phrase used in the Bible to describe death with the hope of a resurrection. Stephen's eventual resurrection would bring him into the presence of God, "by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh" (Heb. 10:20).

Aquila and Priscilla

A Partnership in Christ

"Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus."—Romans 16:3

Contributed

In the history of the early church, we find many fine examples of brethren who dedicated and sacrificed themselves in the service of the truth. From these examples, we can learn valuable lessons in how to apply the truth in our daily lives. Aquila and Priscilla were just such an example. Aquila and Priscilla first come to our attention in chapter 18 of Acts. Aquila was a Jew, originally from Pontus, an area of Asia Minor bordering the Black Sea. The Scriptures tell us that Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, had moved to Rome but were driven out from Rome because of their Jewish faith. Their exodus resulted from the A.D. 49 anti-Semitic edict made by Claudius that all Jews must depart from Rome (Acts 18:2).

Aquila and Priscilla settled in Corinth, a large commercial city, where they met the Apostle Paul. When the holy spirit directed Paul during his second missionary journey to preach the gospel in Macedonia, the city of Corinth was one of the objectives because the Lord had many people in this city (Acts 18:10). As a result, Paul spent a year and a half in Corinth teaching the word of God (Acts 18:11).

This is a wonderful example of the keen interest and close supervision which the heavenly Father takes in the work of the gospel. He knows of those who are prepared to respond to the gospel message even before they hear it and he directs the lives of his servants to bring the message to these hearing ears. His direction of Phillip to meet with and preach the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch is another evidence of this direction (Acts 8:26-29). These examples increase our faith as they demonstrate the wisdom and power of our God who has called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light of truth.

Aquila and Priscilla and the Apostle Paul shared the same craft, tent-making. It was this shared profession that brought them together when Paul arrived in Corinth. From the scriptural record, Aquila and Priscilla are the first people of Corinth that Paul met with and who accepted his testimony of Jesus Christ. From that point, the life of Aquila and Priscilla were completely transformed.

Dedicating Their Lives to the Gospel

The first thing we notice about Aquila and Priscilla is that they dedicated their lives to the Lord and the brethren, moving where the Lord directed. When Paul left Corinth for Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla accompanied him to assist with the work there (Acts 18:18, 19). They remained behind at Ephesus ultimately meeting with and helping Apollos gain

a better understanding of the gospel while the apostle traveled on to Caesarea and Antioch (Acts 18:22-26).

When Paul wrote his letter to the Romans, Aquila and Priscilla were back at Rome assisting the brethren (Rom. 16:3-5). By the time Paul wrote his final epistle to Timothy, Aquila and Priscilla had left Rome and were probably back in Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:19). Beyond this record, their travels are not recorded. However, it is reasonable to conclude that their travel to different ecclesias was much more extensive because Paul expressed to them thanks from "all the congregations of the gentiles" (Rom. 16:4, Diaglott). Aquila and Priscilla subjugated their temporal lives to the Lord's service, moving to a new location whenever they felt so directed by the Lord. They counted not their lives dear unto them but, as faithful stewards, used their time and means in whatever capacity the Lord needed (Acts 20:24).

The Apostle Paul called them "fellow-laborers" (Rom. 16:3). As such, they are included in a select group of Paul's co-laborers, which included Timothy, Titus, Ephaphroditus, Clement, Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Marcus, Justus and Lucas. This group was a special comfort to Paul during his ministry (Col. 4:11). This reference gives us a good idea about how active Aquila and Priscilla were in the service of the Lord.

The lesson to us is one of dedication to the Lord's service. Aquila and Priscilla were not interested in improving their earthly careers or becoming comfortable in this life. Their life was a pilgrimage in the service of their Lord, moving and doing whatever it took for the furtherance of the gospel. They abstained from earthly entanglements and instead became followers of Paul, that through faith and patience they might inherit the promise of eternal life (Heb. 6:11, 12).

Laying Down Their Necks

Their service to the Lord included actually risking their lives for Paul, who brings this to our attention in Romans 16:4, "These persons on behalf of my life, laid down their own neck" (Diaglott). Paul was referring to the riot in Ephesus instigated by the craftsman, Demetrius (Acts 19:24-29). Paul was probably lodging with Aquila and Priscilla while in Ephesus and the mob made straight for their home to seize the apostle. The mob's ringleaders apparently wanted to have a spectacle in the Colosseum—to have Paul cast into the arena to be devoured by wild beasts before the multitude. Paul alludes to this in 1 Corinthians 15:32 when he wrote "If, as men do, I fought a wild beast at Ephesus, of what benefit is it to me?" (Diaglott).

While the Scriptures are silent on exactly what Aquila and Priscilla did to save Paul, the mob was foiled in their search for the apostle. They seized Gaius and Aristarchus instead and took them to the theater. Paul went to the theater to make his own defense of the gospel but was persuaded by the local brethren not to enter (Acts 19:30-31). Aquila and Priscilla, by their willingness to lay down their lives for the Apostle, had shown that divine or agape love had been developed in their hearts (1 John 3:16). They had learned

the Lord's new commandment, to love one another as he had loved them (John 13:34-35).

While we do not have the opportunity to protect an apostle from a raging mob, we do have ample opportunities to lay down our lives for the brethren. These opportunities involve using our time, energy, talents and possessions to help our brethren both spiritually and temporally. It ranges from taking our brethren to meetings and conventions to visiting and encouraging them in illness and trials. It involves studying together as often as possible, helping one another grow in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a full grown man (Eph. 4:13). It includes being faithful companions of those whom the Lord uses more publicly in the proclamation of the gospel. Let us follow the example of Aquila and Priscilla and not be weary in well doing but as we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all, especially unto them who are of the household of faith (Gal. 6:9-10).

Speaking the Truth in Love

Aquila and Priscilla's assistance to the brethren included helping them come to a better understanding of the truth. While at Ephesus, a Jew from Alexandria named Apollos, came and preached the Lord Jesus Christ. Apollos was eloquent and powerful in the Scriptures and fervent in the spirit. However, Apollos was only acquainted with the baptism of John. He did not understand the baptism of Jesus: that when we are baptized into Jesus, we are baptized into the same kind of death (Acts 18:24-26; Rom. 6:3, 4). Priscilla and Aquila took advantage of this opportunity, not to criticize Apollos but to explain to him more accurately the way of God (Acts 18:26, Diaglott). With this better understanding, Apollos went on to greatly help the brethren in Achaia, strenuously discussing with the Jews in public and proving by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah (Acts 18:27, 28).

The Scriptures indicate this was a private conversation where Aquila and Priscilla more accurately expounded or exposed the way of God to Apollos. No doubt, they spoke the truth in love, focused on helping Apollos acquire a better understanding and grow up in all things into him, who is the head, Christ (Eph. 4:15).

In this regard, Aquila and Priscilla serve as an example for us of how to deal with differences of opinion and understanding with our brethren. The objective is helping one another reach a better understanding of the truth, not criticizing and winning a public or private argument. Aquila and Priscilla, having purified their lives by obedience to the truth unto unfeigned brotherly love, loved their brethren from the heart, intensely (1 Peter 1:22 Diaglott). We must do the same.

Hospitality for the Brethren

We see Aquila's and Priscilla's love for the Lord and the brethren manifested in a very special way—hosting brethren to meet in their home. Twice, Paul closes his epistles with greetings to Aquila and Priscilla and the church that is in their house (Rom. 16:5; 1

Cor. 16:19). Since the Scriptures make no mention of children, we suggest these were brethren studying with Aquila and Priscilla much as Paul did when he first came to Corinth. This willingness to invite brethren to their home was an evidence of their love for the Lord and a willingness to use all of their possessions in the service of the truth.

Aquila and Priscilla provide a wonderful example for us to follow. Hospitality is always a virtue. But when that hospitality extends to the Lord's people, to provide them a place for their spiritual service and growth as new creatures in Christ, this is especially pleasing to the Lord. Aquila and Priscilla were contributing to the wants of the saints—pursuing hospitality (Rom. 12:13, Diaglott).

This is an example we can follow at this end of the Gospel age. Our homes should be open to the brethren. We have all known brethren who have opened their homes over the years and have observed how they have been richly blessed by the experience.

This example provides one of the best tests of the stewardship of our possessions and their use in the Lord's service (1 Cor. 4:2). We typically have no earthly possessions more valuable than our dwellings. To open them up to brethren shows that the focus of our stewardship is to use everything we have in the Lord's service.

Their Life-Long Service to the Lord

Aquila and Priscilla were a beautiful example of how a husband and wife, together, may dedicate their lives to serving God, our Lord Jesus, and the gospel. Their example shows us how we can serve the brethren in so many different ways—in hospitality, in study, and in laying down our lives. Their example reminds us of the words of the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 10:32-36:

"But continually recall to mind the days now past, when on being first enlightened you went through a great conflict and many sufferings. This partly through allowing yourselves to be made a public spectacle amid reproaches and persecutions, and partly through coming forward to share the sufferings of those who were thus treated. For you not only showed sympathy with those who were imprisoned, but you even submitted with joy when your property was taken from you, being well aware that you have in your own selves a more valuable possession and one which will remain. Therefore, do not cast from you our confident hope, for it will receive a vast reward. For you stand in need of patient endurance, so that, as the result of having done the will of God, you may receive the promised blessing" (Weymouth).

We trust Aquila and Priscilla were faithful to the end of their lives. They patiently endured suffering, they were companions of those like the Apostle Paul who publicly proclaimed the gospel, they never cast away their confidence in the great spiritual reward set before them or the heavenly Father who promised it. They are a powerful example of brethren who, whatever they did in word or in deed, did all in the name of the Lord Jesus (Col. 3:17). The story of their zeal and faithfulness has been recorded in the Scriptures so that we might copy it in our Christian walk.

Lydia

One of Paul's Crown Jewels

"Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved."—Philippians 4:1

Carl Hagensick

Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, established the city of Philippi in 358 B.C., one year after his ascension to the throne. It became a major garrison city for his army troops in their battles against the Medo-Persian empire to the east. After the fall of Greece to Rome it had declined to becoming a small village. It regained importance in 42 B.C. as the site for the decisive conflict between the assassins of Julius Caesar, Cassius and Brutus, and the armies of Marc Antony and Octavian (Augustus), in which both Cassius and Brutus committed suicide.

It derived its commercial strength from its nearness to the seaport of Neapolis (nine miles distant), from being on the main east-west Egnatian road, and from the nearby gold mines. It was also the site of a major home for retired army veterans.

It was probably for these reasons that it attracted Lydia, a seller of purple, to move from Thyatira which, though larger, did not lie on a major trade route nor did it attract the Roman military traffic who would have money to spend on fancy garments for wives and girlfriends. There was perhaps a more important reason for Lydia's move to Philippi. The economy of Thyatira was controlled by its trade guilds. Among these powerful guilds was that of the dyers, who had developed a method of extracting the color from the "madder root," rather than the more costly methods using sea mollusks. These guilds were dependent for their welfare on the orgiastic worshippers of the Lydian sun-god, Tyrimnos. Neither Christians nor Jews were permitted to ply their trades in Thyatira since they openly decried such worship. Though born a pagan, Lydia had become a proselyte to Judaism and may have felt it expedient to remove herself from the guild problems in Thyatira.

Thyatira was a major city in the province of Lydia. Some scholars assume therefore that Lydia is not the name of the woman but a nationalistic designation. They assume that the woman associated with that name may be the Euodias of Philippians 4:2, but this appears to be sheer speculation and we prefer the thought that her actual name was Lydia.

The church in Philippi was spiritually blessed. Paul refers to it in our theme text as his crown jewel. It was the first established church in Europe. The brethren there became especially noted for their sacrifice and the warmth of their love and hospitality toward other Christians. The account of its formation and the role played by the zealous sister, Lydia, though sketchy, are sufficient to gain a portrait of this remarkable person.

A Portrait of Lydia

From Troas Paul went " . . . thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days. And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshiped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."—Acts 16:12-15

The Greek word *proseuche* used here for prayer is also descriptive of a place of Jewish worship where there are too few Jewish adherents to warrant a synagogue. Thayer's Lexicon has this to say of the word: "a place in the open air where the Jews were wont to pray, outside the cities, where they had no synagogue; such places were situated upon the bank of a stream or the shore of a sea, where there was a supply of water for washing the hands before prayer."

The role of Lydia in this story is worthy of note. In New Testament times women were assigned separate and minor roles in religious services. Lydia's prominence here implies that there were either no, or very few, male Jewish adherents. Paul does not deliver his customary sermon but uses a friendlier approach—a discussion with the women which resorted thither. As suggested by Thayer, the location by the riverside indicates not only a commitment to the doctrines of Judaism but to its ritual cleansing ablutions as well.

Lydia's Seven Virtues

From the few words of this brief passage in Acts we note a number of sterling characteristics of our sister Lydia.

A Religious Woman: The descriptive term used of Lydia, "which worshiped God," is a Greek idiom for a Jewish proselyte. Her name and Thyatiran background suggest that she was born of Greek descent. It is probable therefore that her upbringing was either non-religious or in the polytheism of the Greeks. Even before Paul's witness to her at the riverside, probably before she left Thyatira, she had made a major change in her religious thinking by accepting Judaism.

Such a change had its costs. As noted before, both Jews and Christians who proclaimed their abhorrence of the sun-god orgies in Thyatira were denied trade guild membership and thus deprived of financial support. They either had to resort to menial work or seek employment elsewhere. For sister Lydia the choice appears to have been the latter—move to Philippi.

Led by God: Her religious progression from paganism through Judaism to Christianity is not accounted to her own perspicacity, but to the fact that she was one "whose heart the

Lord had opened." True sonship with God can never be obtained by one's own wisdom or labors or efforts of any kind. Instead, as we read in Hebrews 5:4, "no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he who is called of God, as was Aaron." Jesus says much to the same effect in John 6:44, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

The road that each Christian follows is distinct. Some are attracted through family ties, others respond quickly and decisively to the Lord's first tugs, while still others are led through convoluted paths that wind them ever nearer to the relationship they seek with God. Lydia's path wended its way through Judaism.

We know not how long Lydia followed the religion of the Jews. The evidence suggests that it may have been for a considerable time or else that she became a convert to Judaism in her later life. We read nothing of her husband in the Acts account, though the suggestion is made that she had grown children. She would have needed time to build up her Philippian business enterprise, which was evidently prosperous enough to support a home of sufficient size to house the meetings of the newly developed church. To these evidences we can add that Paul does not mention her in his letter to the Philippians, which conveys the thought that she had either died by the time of that epistle or had moved away. The central role she plays in the Acts account further suggests that she was respected and independent in the local Jewish community.

An Open Ear: Having espoused Judaism, possibly for an extended time, she is nevertheless attentive to the words of Paul, which would sound radical to most Judaistic ears. It is unfortunately symptomatic of many who have experienced one conversion in their life to resist further attempts to change them. There are natural reasons for this. Usually the first change of belief brings a certain amount of scorn and contempt from previous acquaintances. They frequently will charge such with lack of constancy for the "faith of their fathers." This forms a psychological barrier for further change. Major changes in religious belief calls for much study and soul searching. It often calls for great personal sacrifices as well, as was probable in the case of Lydia. To be willing to face these challenges a second time requires a deep personal commitment, honesty, and sincerity. Lydia passed all these tests.

When Paul moves on from Philippi to Thessalonica and thence to Berea, we find another group with this same attribute. We read of them in Acts 17:11, 12, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few." Paul emphasizes the same point in 1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21, "Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (Emphasis has been added.)

Lydia's pattern of being attentive to something she had not previously believed is a difficult one to emulate. There is the fear of being thought wishy-washy by others or of being subtly led into error. This is why the necessity is there for the attentive listener to "prove all things" by searching the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are so. To

do otherwise is to throw away the "key of knowledge" (Luke 11:52) by either not listening ourselves or forbidding others to do so.

Decisive Character: The account makes evident that Lydia's baptism as a follower of Jesus, if not immediate, soon followed. For a woman of her prominence to make such a radical change would require some thought. In Lydia's case, it appears that this thought process was not prolonged. Not only would she personally believe the principles of Paul's teachings but she was willing to openly avow them, confessing them before others in the rite of water baptism. The admonition of Elijah to the Israelites on Mount Carmel was not necessary for our sister Lydia: "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kings 18:21).

Jesus gives wise counsel in Luke 14:28, "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" Such counsel, however, does not imply that Jesus is suggesting that this be a prolonged process. Rather, the experiences of the Ethiopian eunuch and the Philippian jailer (Acts 8:36; 16:33) suggest that the practice in the early church was to the contrary. A decision must be made and considered well but it must not be belabored. For the true follower of Christ there is really no other choice, "For the love of Christ constraineth us [leaves us no other choice]; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:14, 15).

Of Beneficial Influence: Not only was Lydia baptized but also "her household." We should not assume that this means young children, or even necessarily children at all (though that seems likely). A woman of means would have a household that included servants. In either case it shows that the respect she commanded was such that those dwelling in her house also accepted the new Christian religion.

Such a respect must be earned and not demanded. As Paul admonishes parents in Ephesians 6:4, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The responsibility of a Christian parent cannot be overemphasized. There must be a constancy in the application of principles to the affairs of life; this is communicated not only verbally and, where required, with discipline, but even more importantly illustrated by the example of the parent. We know not if Lydia's husband had died when their children were small or, for that matter, even if he was dead. He may not have followed her in her religious professions. Whatever the case, the lesson indicates that she was responsible for much of the training of her household. Their willingness to be baptized with her indicates the effectiveness of that training.

It would not be long before a similar scene would be enacted across town. This time it would not be a Jewish proselyte but a Roman jailer in Philippi. (It is possible he was the Clement of Philippians 4:3.) His background and Lydia's were very different. Yet both shared one thing in common, a benign influence on their household so that when they were baptized, their household was baptized at the same time (Acts 16:33).

Children are usually raised with a respect for the beliefs and feelings of their parents. In the culture of the early church this was more true than today. But if her household included servants, this testifies to her fairness and justice as an employer. Once again Lydia sets a pattern for all sincere Christians to follow.

Hospitable: No stronger statement of hospitality can be found than in the words of Lydia, "And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us." To deem hospitality the privilege of the hostess rather than that of the one being hosted is not too strong a way of phrasing the matter. This is further implied by the force of the Greek word translated "constrained," *parabiazomai*, defined by Professor Thayer as "to employ force contrary to nature and right." The only other usage of this word in the New Testament is by the two in Emmaus when they "constrained" Jesus to abide with them (Luke 24:29).

While Paul appropriately enough protested the proffered hospitality, there is no evidence of the use of any force "contrary to nature." Rather, the entire concept of offering such largesse to Paul and his group, virtual strangers to the assembled women, was in itself contrary to human nature. One wonders if Paul, when drawing the lesson from Abraham entertaining angels in Hebrews 13:2, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares," does not also have Lydia in his mind.

Constancy: It is one thing to offer hospitality when times are good, it is quite another to maintain that offer when the recipient of that hospitality falls into disrepute. As the narrative in Acts 16 continues, we find Paul and Silas imprisoned for teaching customs that were not lawful for Romans to receive (Acts 16:21). The account is well known—the singing in prison, the tremors that shook the house, the freed bonds, the conversion of the jailer and his baptism, the insistence that the magistrates exonerate them. Yet the upshot was that it was desired that they "depart out of the city."

This brings us to one final reference to Lydia, in verse 40, "And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed." Lydia, whose very business was dependent on the goodwill of the Roman population, does not disown them but rather opens her doors to them and the entire church that assembled in her dwelling.

In Hebrews 10:33 Paul encourages this trait in all true Christians, praising them for both enduring afflictions personally and also "partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used." Lydia exemplified the teachings of Jesus in Luke 6:32, 35 where he said, "For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

Here, as in so many other instances, we see the radiance of the gem which Lydia provided in Paul's beloved church in Philippi, "his joy and his crown." The example is a high one for each of us to copy. May we all be "Lydias."

Apollos

An Eloquent Orator

***"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts."—
Malachi 3:1***

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The reader closed the roll reverently and laid it down. He turned to face his congregation. The eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed upon him.

"This day"—his commanding voice rang out, riveting their attention; "this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." His burning eyes swept the building, and the Christian Aquila, seated at the back, leaned forward to listen.

"My brethren, sons of Israel, children of the covenant, heirs of the divine promise to Abraham, to you is this word sent. Woe betide you if you fail to perceive the day of this visitation. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. If you will comprehend it and accept it, you will inherit the promises made to our fathers and enter in; if you reject it, then the Kingdom will be taken from you and given to another people who will bring forth the fruits thereof." Silence reigned. This Egyptian Jew from Alexandria was speaking to them in a manner not normally experienced by these Greek Jews of Ephesus. Their religion meant a great deal to them, surrounded as they were by all kinds of pagan faiths and deities, but in the comfortable exercise of their legalistic rites and rituals they had in measure forgotten the ancient promises which were Israel's mandate for existence as a people. Now this stranger was awakening half-forgotten memories in their minds, and some among them began to remember that they were, after all, a people for a purpose. Thoughts were broken as the speaker resumed.

"Away there in ancient days the holy prophet Malachi spoke of the time when the most high God shall rise up to judge the nations, deliver his ancient people from oppression, and establish upon earth his own kingdom of everlasting righteousness, the day of Messiah."

He stopped for a moment, his eyes sweeping the audience, mute and attentive before him. "The day of Messiah" he repeated slowly; then "but before Messiah is revealed, there must come his herald, to prepare his way before him, as spake the holy prophet Isaiah 'the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.'"

He leaned forward, enunciating his words in measured tones, evenly, impressively. "That herald has come; he has appeared in our midst and given his witness. He was for a season a burning and a shining light, and then the powers of this world took him and silenced him— but the witness goes on."

He stood erect, eyes lifted to heaven. "Twenty-five years ago, John, the son of Zacharias, stood forth in the deserts of Judea, the homeland of our people, and proclaimed the imminent coming of the Messiah. There went out to him all Jerusalem and Judea and they were baptized by him in token of repentance and for the remission of sins. The word of God had been fulfilled and God had sent his messenger to declare the coming of the sun of righteousness."

He turned back to his hearers. "And now, although the light has gone, for Herod the king slew him, his message lives on. To this day the disciples of John wait and watch for the coming of the One he preceded. To this day we, of the sons of Israel, wait in expectation that He who shall lead Israel to victory and glory over all enemies will shortly appear, to open to us the Kingdom of Heaven. Though it tarry, said one of old time, wait for it, for it will surely come, it will not tarry. Wait patiently, ye men of Israel, and be ever watchful, that ye may not be taken by surprise at his appearing, for, the kingdom of Heaven is at hand!"

Apollos and Aquila

The worshippers streamed out of the synagogue, some thoughtful, some indifferent, some earnestly discussing between themselves. The preacher stood in the doorway for a moment and Aquila, watching, caught his eye. Aquila came forward.

"My name is Aquila; I am a Roman Jew exiled from Rome by decree of the Emperor Claudius" he said simply.

"I am Apollos of Alexandria" came the quiet reply. "I am here to awaken our people to the importance of the signs of the times and to bring them the message and hope of John."

"But that was twenty-five years ago and you have not yet realized the coming of the Lord he heralded" rejoined the other.

A faint shadow crossed Apollos' features. "There are those of us in Egypt, and some few here in Ephesus, who believe that he will surely come, even as John predicted, though the time be delayed."

"For what do you look? How will you know him when you see him?" asked Aquila.

"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty, and in thy majesty ride prosperously. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath." He it is for

whom we look, the one who comes as a conquering king, to destroy all evil and bring in everlasting righteousness."

"But is it not also said that he is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, brought as a lamb to the slaughter, pouring out his life unto death, so seeing of the travail of his soul and then being satisfied?" urged Aquila gently.

Apollos looked thoughtful.

"I know those words well. I do not understand them. How can the Sent of God be slain; and if he be slain, how can he ever become King?"

"For the transgression of my people was he stricken, the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all and with his stripes we are healed!" Aquila quoted the well-known words softly.

"Our iniquities are purged by the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement" returned the other man.

"But can the blood of bulls and goats really take away sin?" ventured Aquila.

A dawning comprehension appeared in the eyes of Apollos. "No—no—, they cannot. Those rituals of olden time can be no more than pictures, shadows, of some greater thing which is yet to be revealed. There must be a greater and more real giving of life that sin may be removed and the blessing come. There must be sacrificial death before kingly glory. Why did I never see that before? The Messiah must come first in suffering and death and afterwards in glory and never-ending life, a royal priest after the order of Melchisedek. But if that is so, how shall we know him when he comes, in lowliness and humiliation such as that?"

"Did you ever see John?" asked Aquila.

"I saw him once, when I was a young man on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. I was enthralled and captivated by his message and was baptized by him in Jordan. I returned to Egypt and never saw him again but his teaching has remained with me throughout life."

"Did you ever see Jesus of Nazareth?"

"I later heard that a man called Jesus had been hailed by John as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world and as greater than John himself. I did not credit it. To me John was the greatest of the prophets and none could ever excel him. I heard that Jesus had been put to death by the Romans and I did not give him another thought."

"Put to death by the Romans" repeated Aquila thoughtfully. "And the prophet says he was taken from prison and from judgment, and was cut off from the land of the living, and made his grave with the wicked in his death." He was speaking very softly now.

There was a long pause.

"The Lamb of God;" Apollos murmured the words as if to himself and the other could hardly hear him. "The Passover Lamb; only by coming under its blood could the man of Israel be saved. The glory came later, forty years later, when Joshua led the people into the Promised Land. Suffering and death first; afterwards glory and life. Is it then that Messiah must suffer these things first and afterwards enter into his glory?" He paused, thinking deeply. "Then you are telling me that Jesus of Nazareth whom John pointed out is indeed the Messiah, that Messiah has already come and we knew it not?"

An almost imperceptible nod was the answer.

Apollos straightened himself up. The resolute look was back. "I am to read the prophets again next sabbath in the synagogue. I shall read the story of the suffering servant in the book of the holy prophet Isaiah, and I shall preach Jesus."

He looked at Aquila almost beseechingly. "May I come with you to your home to-day. I have much to ask you and much to reflect upon. You may talk and I will listen."

The Acts Account

The entry of Apollos into the Christian community must have been something like that. He first appears in the eighteenth chapter of Acts, just after St. Paul's first visit to Ephesus. Paul had gone to that city from Corinth, where he had founded a church during the course of his first missionary journey, taking with him Aquila and Priscilla; they settled in Ephesus while Paul continued his journey. There was as yet no Christian community in Ephesus, and the three worshipped and ministered at the Jewish synagogue. Their ministry there seems to have been accepted and appreciated. After Paul's departure this Apollos made his appearance and seems to have been equally acceptable. He was not a Christian, as were Aquila and Priscilla, but he had accepted the message of John the Baptist and counted himself one of John's disciples. This fact, together with the presence of a "group" of John's disciples in Ephesus twenty-five years after his death (Acts 19:3), is an interesting indication of the persistence of his ministry into a second generation, much as a group gathers round some noted minister today and persists for many years after his passing.

Apollos hailed from Alexandria in Egypt, a city where a numerous and powerful Jewish community had existed from much older times. where he eventually became the leader and bishop (presiding elder) of that church.

Increasingly, it is generally agreed that Apollos was the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.* The ascription of that Epistle to St. Paul is known to have no valid authority.* While several others have been suggested as the possible writer, the nature of the Epistle, the manifest familiarity of the writer with the Mosaic ceremonies, and various other considerations, point to Apollos as the most likely choice. It is thought that it was addressed to the Jewish believers at Ephesus and written at some time after Paul's death.

It is believed by some scholars that the Apocryphal work known as the "Wisdom of Solomon" was also written by Apollos.

Zealous, active, studious, learned; an eloquent speaker and a fluent writer, this man may well have exercised a much greater influence among the early Christians than the brief allusions to him in the New Testament would suggest. More like St. Paul in many ways than any of the others whose names are more familiar, he may well have been a veritable pillar of the church. If indeed he is the unknown writer of Hebrews, then Christians of all generations, not least we at this present time, owe him, under our Lord, a debt immeasurable beyond words.

* **EDITOR'S NOTE:** "Luther, and many scholars since, suggested Apollos as the author [of Hebrews]. . . . none is satisfactory, and Origen's judgment [only God knows] is fully warranted." (Harper's Bible Commentary, "Hebrews," Harold W. Altridge, p. 1259 [1988]). The majority of the editors of this journal lean toward the authorship of the Apostle Paul.

Titus

The Traveling Evangelist

"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine."—Titus 2:1

Contributed

Titus, whose name means honorable, was a noted Christian teacher and fellow laborer of the Apostle Paul. He was of Greek origin, the son of Gentile parents (Gal. 2:3). Although very little is known of his early years, there are several references to his activities after his conversion to Christianity.

It is interesting to note Luke makes no specific reference to Titus in the book of Acts; however, he was undoubtedly included in the "certain others" in Acts 15:2. In addition, Paul referred to him nine times in his second letter to the Corinthians, twice in the book of Galatians, and once in his last letter to Timothy. Also, Titus was the recipient of the Pauline epistle bearing his name.

Titus was converted to Christianity by Paul, who referred to him affectionately as his "brother" (2 Cor. 2:13) and as his "own son after the common faith" (Titus 1:4). Paul loved Titus and appreciated his trusted companionship (2 Cor. 7:6). Titus may have been young in years but he showed evidence of a mature Christian character. As Paul's convert, loyal friend, and faithful helper, he was closely associated with the apostle for nearly twenty years, being an inspiration to Paul on several of his journeys. Titus was particularly successful as a leader in the church of Corinth. He also provided needed assistance in Dalmatia on the Adriatic Sea and on the island of Crete.

Titus, the Uncircumcised

Titus was apparently known to the Galatian brethren. He was introduced (Gal. 2:1) as a member of the delegation from Antioch when Paul and Barnabas traveled to the council at Jerusalem, the headquarters of the church, to consult the apostles and elders concerning the controversy that had arisen regarding circumcision (Acts 15:1, 2).

Certain Jews were teaching that Christ's salvation would be of no effect without circumcision. Evidently many Jewish Christians resented the acceptance of Gentiles as Christians without circumcision. The church at Antioch, on the other hand, regarded the demand for circumcision to be contrary to the teachings of Paul and Barnabas and an infringement upon their liberty in Christ.

Thus the council at Jerusalem was called specifically to deliberate the necessity of circumcision for all Christians and the observance of the Law of Moses by Gentile Christians for salvation.

Luke stated that the Apostle Peter (Acts 15:7-9), speaking out of his personal experience with Cornelius (Acts 10), reminded the delegation how God had taught him through the vision of clean and unclean beasts that he was not to call the Gentiles common or unclean. James, the chairman of the meeting, and Peter both seemed to support the delegation from Antioch. Letters were then written stating that they "gave no such commandment," thus assuring that such teachings had not been authorized by the apostles at Jerusalem (Acts 15:24).

Certain Christianized Jews in Galatia had also been promoting acceptance with God by keeping the Law of Moses in connection with faith in Christ. Paul's epistle to the Galatians was written to counteract the influence of those Judaizing teachers. Referring to the council in Jerusalem, he implied that the issue had been forced, with the Gentile Christian Titus being cited as a test case. Although Titus had been a convert for fourteen years, he had not been circumcised.

It is noteworthy that Paul earlier had insisted that Timothy be circumcised (Acts 16:3). Perhaps that decision was made because one of Timothy's parents, his mother, was Jewish. However, in this instance Paul observed that the gospel of faith in Christ that he was preaching was being undermined by the Judaistic party; and he firmly resisted compelling Titus to be circumcised (Gal. 2:3). It was apparent that Paul needed to demonstrate to all that it was faith in Christ that saved. In other words, Titus became the representative of the "church of the uncircumcision." He was living proof of a new doctrine; and the decision stood that Gentiles need not conform to the Jewish rites (Gal. 2:5).

In Corinth

"Thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you."—2 Corinthians 8:16

Titus continued to serve as Paul's preaching companion and trouble-shooter. Titus was specially useful in resolving some major problems in the church at Corinth after Timothy had failed. Some writers have suggested that Titus may have been firmer and more energetic than Timothy (McClintock & Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Baker Book House, 1981, Vol. X., p. 439).

Members of the church at Corinth had earlier been beset by false teachers, and their faith in Paul's apostleship and teaching had been shaken. A party spirit had emerged in the church community; and divisions or sects had developed with some remaining followers of Paul, others following Apollos, and others Peter (1 Cor. 1:11). The Christians at Corinth had written a letter to Paul asking certain questions and discussing certain problems.

Paul dealt with their questions in a letter to the Corinthians which he sent by sea, while Timothy took the land route to deal with the situation in person (Brownrigg, Ronald, *Who's Who in the New Testament*, Holt, Rhinehart & Winston, 1971, p. 440). Neither

the letter nor Timothy's visit achieved the desired effect of reforming the Corinthian Christian community, and Paul was grieved over their lack of repentance.

Paul received discouraging news about the Corinthian brethren while he was in Ephesus, where he had gone from Galatia. In addition to tensions and strife, a serious case of immorality had arisen. Paul did not immediately return to Corinth (2 Cor. 1:23; 2:1), perhaps because of their unrepentant attitude. He wrote a letter which was carried by Titus, who may have been more experienced than Timothy. The letter demanded a proper respect for Christian morality and for Paul himself, as founder of the Christian church in Corinth.

Paul was extremely anxious about his appeal to the Corinthians to mend their ways. Shortly after closing his ministry at Ephesus, he traveled by way of Troas, to intercept Titus on his return from Corinth through Macedonia. Somewhere en route he met Titus (2 Cor. 2:12, 13), who at last brought the good news. The Corinthian church had repented, and the erring member had been corrected (2 Cor. 7:7-11). Paul warmly expressed his relief and gratitude at the report of Titus (2 Cor. 7:6-9; 8:13-15), who had successfully completed the delicate and difficult work given to him by the apostle (2 Cor. 7:7, 13, 15). Without the efforts of Titus, the story of the Corinthians might have been very different.

With that controversy resolved at last, Paul assigned Titus the task of completing the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem which was then in progress (2 Cor. 8:6, 16, 17, 23).

Elders and Bishops

"Ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee."—Titus 1:5

Another reference to Titus is in the pastoral letter written to him (Titus 1:5). Paul sent the letter shortly after he had left Titus in charge of the believers on the island of Crete following their visit there. There is no reference to the founding of the church of Crete in the Scriptures. Cretans were in Jerusalem at Pentecost (Acts 2:11) and perhaps some of them returned home as Christians. Paul's epistle to Titus outlines instructions for him as the bishop or overseer who was to minister to the believers there.

The date Paul wrote the epistle to Titus is uncertain. It may have been between Paul's two imprisonments in Rome or during his second imprisonment. Paul gave Titus instructions regarding his responsibilities as overseer because the church in Crete was unorganized and composed of members who needed much admonition.

The people of Crete were considered to be especially degraded and lacking good character. Thus it was necessary for the apostle to give an exhortation to those who had left the world to join together with the Lord as his church.

It is interesting to note that the highest mountain in Crete, Mount Ida, was famous as the legendary birthplace of the Greek god Zeus. It has been said that the people were akin to

the Philistines, thought to have been identical with the Cherethites (1 Sam. 30:14). As daring sailors and famous bowmen, they had a very bad moral reputation (H. H. Halley, Halley's Bible Handbook, Zondervan Press, 1965, p. 642).

Although the Lord's people today live during an enlightened time, Paul's words of exhortation are quite applicable. The guidelines he gave Titus for the qualifications of elders continue to be utilized by Christians throughout the world.

The apostle charged Titus to ordain elders in every city (Titus 1:5) and specifically cited their qualifications (Titus 1:6): "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly." He was further instructed relative to false teachers (Titus 1:10-16).

Paul gave specific instructions for several other groups of consecrated believers, including:

1. Titus' own conduct as bishop, "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:7-9).

2. The expectations of mature Christian men: "That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience" (Titus 2:2).

3. The duties of decorous, Christian women: "The aged women likewise, that they may be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:3-5).

4. The expectations of young men: "Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you" (Titus 2:6-8).

5. The peculiar duties of servants, though freemen in Christ: "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus 2:9, 10).

The epistle includes a general exhortation to all classes in the church, repeatedly urging them to maintain good works.

In closing, Paul directed Titus to join him at Nicopolis as soon as Artemas and Tychicus arrived to take his place at Crete (Titus 3:12). Titus was briefly mentioned in Paul's

second letter to Timothy. Paul, re-arrested, condemned, and awaiting execution, felt forsaken by his followers, even though they were striving to continue his work throughout the Mediterranean churches. Paul sent Titus to Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10) on the east coast of the Adriatic, possibly to Nicopolis.

Titus was consecrated, courageous, resourceful, tactful, and zealous. He successfully handled the problems brought about by the quarrelsome Corinthians, the untruthful Cretans, and the fighting Dalmatians. He was obedient to the apostolic authority and diligent in fulfilling his privileges of Christian service. May we be as zealous in the opportunities the Lord provides for us.

Philemon and Onesimus

*"I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds." —
Philemon 10*

P. L. Read

In the brief moment of a single epistle two lovable characters enter our Christian lives with their transforming fellowship.

Commentators think that Philemon was a man of considerable wealth because of the salutation to the church in his house (v. 2). But they seem to forget that there is no evidence of any church edifice until near the end of the second century, and that where two or three would gather together in Jesus' name he promised to be present (Matt. 18:20; cf. Rom. 16:3,5; Col. 4:15). The fact that Philemon owned slaves would also not necessarily indicate much about his social standing. In that day slaves far outnumbered free men and were found in most homes.

Commentators also use Philemon's ability to entertain traveling brethren as an indication of his wealth. This reason is faulty because the spirit of Christianity has long led to the dividing of a crust with one who is in need, and those who travel find their joy in the fellowship furnished in breaking bread—regardless of the limitations of the household appointments or table provisions.

"Our Beloved and Fellow-Worker"

In the epistle to Philemon there is nothing of the spirit of distinction between laity and clergy that in later centuries came from the pens of those who thought to sit as successors to Paul. The apostle forgot his special honors and placed himself on Philemon's level, as another servant in the harvest field. How well his words demonstrate that we are all brethren, all equally acceptable to the master of the harvest. From sowing to reaping there are a variety of jobs to be done. All who serve faithfully until the end of the harvest will hear that "well done good servant" from his master.

Philemon's labor contributed the flicker of a single candle to the light of the glorious gospel of Christ. He added to the veritable beacon which Paul had kindled. But the difference between them lay in the circumference of the circles in which the two men had influence, not on the inherent value of their individual service. Paul had none of the vulgar tendency of thinking little of the modest service of obscure people. Nor did any brother receive a front seat from his hand because of golden jewelry or appearance. It did not matter to Paul whether Philemon was wealthy. Paul was interested in whether Philemon would be faithful in laying up treasure where thieves could not break in and steal (Matt. 6:19, 20).

Slavery

The better we understand history the more outstanding is Paul's wisdom in approaching this delicate matter. Slaves were living tools in those days, a form of private property just as machinery in a factory is today. Their only purpose—for their master—was to provide a luxurious living. They were not their own, they were purchased. The master thought, the slave acted.

It would be natural to think that this situation was very bad for the slaves and very good for the master. The fact was that all Christian slaves were by their very condition given wonderful opportunities of learning the submission necessary to every one under the headship of our heavenly Master. The lesson is of such extreme importance that the apostle even advises slaves to remain in the condition in which the Lord found them upon becoming Christians—even slavery. As cruel as their earthly master may have been, they were to accept him as though he had been placed over them by the Lord himself (cf. 1 Cor. 7:21, 22).

As a part of the system to prevent slaves from running away, the government furnished fugitivarti, the truant officers of the day. It was their business to track down runaway slaves and return them—often to the death penalty. This severity was due largely to the popular fear that the slave population would revolt. In the year 300 B.C. there were 21,000 citizens in Athens who lived in daily fear of their 400,000 slaves. Conditions were similar in Philemon's day in the Roman Empire.

Onesimus had to be strong in faith when he left the presence of Paul on his way home. He had to be confident of the transforming power of God's love and in Philemon's willingness to be transformed.

Paul's Tact

It is not surprising to note the delicate balance in which Paul weighs every word to prepare Philemon's heart for the test which this great ordeal would put upon his Christianity—a test of his love and faith toward the Lord Jesus and toward his saints and, in particular, toward Onesimus.

Paul's plea adds two sentimental touches. He asks for Philemon's sympathy toward himself as a prisoner "of Jesus Christ." Then, he extends his own request for sympathy to include his status as "Paul, the aged." We do not think he referred to his natural age but that he had become old before his time by his experiences (2 Cor. 11:23-28).

Though there must have been a great bond of love between Paul and Philemon, it is not this personal love to which Paul appeals. He begs "for love's sake," for the sake of the standard of Christian love. Selfishness says, "There is no excuse for you not seeing it my way." Christian love says, "I beseech you, therefore, by the tender mercies of Christ, by the love he has implanted in the hearts of every true Christian." Such love does not seek

compliance, only a oneness in resignation to the will of God. The lightest wish of mutual love is stronger than the sternest word of authority.

Onesimus

Beginning with verse ten Paul plainly tells Philemon what has been trembling on his lips all this time: "I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus." Formerly a slave and a thief, Onesimus is now "my son, Onesimus."

Classical literature brands slaves generally as "liars, thieves, idle, treacherous, master-haters, ever watchful for opportunities of retribution." The name Onesimus, however, was frequently borne by slaves. Its meaning is "helpful, profitable." Such descriptive words were often used as slave names. Verse eleven indicates that Onesimus had not lived up to his name, but Paul who had "begotten" him in his bonds does not doubt that he will now be as "profitable" to Philemon as he had proven to be to him, serving the Apostle faithfully in his imprisonment. Paul's faith was not in Philemon or Onesimus personally but in the grace of God working in their hearts. He was confident it would keep them faithful even in the trials which faced them both.

By the earlier failures of Onesimus we are reminded that we too are unprofitable servants. The price that was paid to induct us into our heavenly Father's service is too great a one to make possible our returning anything that could be called profit. However, when we have reached our heavenly home, things will be as different for us as they were for Onesimus on reaching Colossae. As runaway vagabonds who have robbed God of what was his due, we come pleading admittance, confidently expecting acceptance as ones who are "now profitable." Our Father has the love that suffers long and is kind, the love that hopes for all things (1 Cor. 13:4, 7). His eldest son has the love that can say, "If he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth thee aught, put that to mine account."

Fugitive slaves who sought refuge on the decks of English transport ships soon discovered that the government sided with their owners, instructing that every one be returned to his master. Paul, similarly, sided with the slave owner. Onesimus, however, does not return as one who must be dragged against his will. Instead, as a bond-slave of Jesus Christ, he gladly returned to his servitude to Philemon. We know not the intimate details of his thoughts as he carried Paul's letter to his master. Perhaps he was fearful and tempted to turn back to the freedom he had so briefly enjoyed. But that course offered no lasting freedom. If he were to be caught by the law, he would be dragged back to his master. An ordinary slave in an ordinary household could not help but be plagued by such thoughts. But Onesimus' nine-hundred mile journey was not only taking him back to an earthly master but also to a fellow servant of Jesus Christ.

Paul, therefore, is sending Onesimus back to Philemon not as the servant of a human master but as the Lord's servant. Justice compelled Paul to send Onesimus back and love forced him to write this lovely letter. Onesimus' sanctified conscience and his consecrated desire for God's glory forced him to return.

Paul's Own Heart

Paul and this slave had become intimate friends. In verse twelve he speaks of Onesimus as part of his own body—as essential to him as his own heart and lungs. The symbolism here is not excessive. No saint can count himself spiritually healthy if he is not benefiting from the other members of the body whom the Lord has provided for his assistance. We will suffer spiritually if we do not take that which every member supplies (Eph. 4:16) and apply it to our lives.

The King James translation uses the archaic word "bowels" here. In our current vocabulary the word "heart" more clearly conveys the idea which Paul expressed in the Greek of his day. The word he used is only applied to the "higher organs" (those of thought and emotion) and as such it expresses a greater importance in the relationship than the King James reading suggests.

Paul would have enjoyed keeping Onesimus there with him. He indicates that he had considered it but stifled the thought at its inception. He writes, saying that he was "wishing" (NAS), but that he would do nothing without the consent of Philemon. "The language is exact; there is a universe between [wishing and willing]" (Expositor's Bible). Justly, Paul could not have accepted the service of Onesimus without Philemon's consent, and Paul does not even suggest the possibility of Onesimus being returned by Philemon to him.

"For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever" (v. 15). When Paul used the word "perhaps" he was not speculating. He was not unclear about God's benevolence but he was unclear about whether Philemon would demonstrate himself a mature Christian. It was clear to Paul that his God arranged all things after the counsel of his own will (Eph. 1:11). Paul did not doubt the wisdom which timed and directed the feet of Onesimus to the city where God's messenger waited with an abundance of time to preach to every listening ear. So it was not a runaway slave whom Paul "received." Onesimus had been temporarily parted by divine providence so that Philemon might have him back forever, no longer as a slave, but as a beloved brother.

Verse sixteen reminds us of Paul's attachment for the slave. He has become "beloved . . . in the Lord." Paul expected that he would become even more precious to Philemon. But Philemon would have to first accept Onesimus in his new capacity as a brother and the first few days of their reunion would be the most difficult.

When Paul pleads therefore, "if then thou countest me as a partner, receive him as myself," it is not the demand of a superior but the plea of a peer—two men standing on equal footing. Paul asks the heartiest of welcomes for his protegee, "more than a servant, a brother beloved." There are many who are willing to be partners on Sunday with those whom they despise during the rest of the week. The only satisfactory arrangement for the apostle was an unrestricted seven-day partnership.

Charging Paul's Account

"Charge that to my account" is the lawyer-like phraseology he uses and he completes the legality of his offer saying, "I Paul write it with my own hand.

Philemon was assured that this was a debt that could be collected. The Greek here is an infrequent use by Paul or a rare word in description of an even more rarely found Christ-like act. Paul took upon himself the chastisement of Onesimus' peace (Isa. 53:5).

It is not necessary to fully understand the circumstances that made possible Paul's statement, "I do not say that you owe me your own life." Whether the allusion be physical or spiritual does not matter. But it points to another basis upon which Paul could have commanded Philemon. Paul had learned the lesson of the far greater power of love. "True love never presses its claims, nor recounts its services" (Alexander MacLaren). The truth of these words exposes many of the acts which parade themselves as "acts of love" as being of their true master, the Devil.

Paul is not boasting. His gesture of love hopes to obtain for both of these brothers the favor of the Lord. Love delights to give, asking nothing in return. Selfishness has its eye on reward, the praise of men, the comfort of a satisfied conscience, and the warmth of self-commendation. We, too, have a debt. We owe our lives to Christ. If there is gratitude, there is response, and eagerness to give what we can—all that we have (cf. Gal. 4:15; 1 Thess. 2:8).

The Joy Paul Desires

"Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my heart in Christ" (v. 20). The Greek word rendered "joy" is impossible to put into graceful English. The form of speech that the apostle here employs is that of a play on words, the most difficult of the translator's problems.

A literal translation of this text (though an awkward one) would be "Oh, brother, let me be onesimied [have joy] by you." [EDITOR'S NOTE: The Greek name "Onesimus" (Strong's 3682) is taken from the same root word here translated "joy" (Strong's 3685).] In effect Paul is saying, "I am sending you Onesimus, the helpful, and thus you have the opportunity to be helpful to me, comforting my spirit by letting me hear that you have extended your helpfulness to this new brother in Christ—one with whom you might be tempted to be overly severe in view of his past unhelpfulness, even unfaithfulness. I hope you will remember the need of an aged prisoner for all the consolation he can have and add my need to your reasons for accepting the former slave, now a new fellow-bondsman of Christ, accepting him just as you would accept myself."

The pleadings of Paul and Jesus bear remarkable similarities. Both accept deeds done to loved ones as if done to themselves. Both joy in the imperfect acts of those who respond because they are moved by love. Both expect that degree of love which will perform more than is requested. Both long for a day of reunion and use that mutual longing to

inspire greater faithfulness. Paul, like Jesus Christ his master, prefers the tone of love to that of authority. Christ binds himself to pay all our indebtedness, reminds us that we owe him our lives—a debt that eternity cannot cancel—and asks us to prepare a place for him in our hearts where he can abide.

The Conclusion

This inspired "short story" leaves it to the reader to supply the story's conclusion. Onesimus had fled as an ignorant heathen, a thief, with rebellion and mutiny in his heart, and with stolen property on his person. Though he feared for his life, nevertheless he returns to his master. His life was now hidden in Christ (Col. 3:3). He was a trusted representative of a well-respected Christian. He longed for the perfection of holiness, of knowledge, and of the love of God.

The little letter in his hand, by implication, tells Philemon all these things. Need we question what his answer will be? Need we doubt the joy that did fill Paul's cell in the writing of this letter? He knew that Philemon would do even more than he asked! And who cannot visualize in his mind's eye the two brothers clenched in a typically oriental embrace when Philemon has read the final words?

[This article was digested from the booklet, Paul to Philemon, available free on request from THE HERALD, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272.]

Gaius

John's Well-Beloved

"The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth."—3 John 1

A verse by verse Bible study in the third epistle of JohnThe touching tenderness of the Apostle John shines out in his three epistles. While the first of these three letters appears to be addressed to the church generally, the latter two are a personal correspondence with ones he holds dear. However, in this study our attention is on the third epistle.

Gaius—Verses 1 and 2

The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

John and the author of Hebrews are the only writers of epistles who do not begin by giving their names. John's one exception to this rule (if we regard the first three verses as introductory) is in the book of Revelation. Some attribute this to humility on the part of the apostle. This may well be true. However, in view of the personal nature of these letters and the fact that John at this time is the only apostle living, it may have seemed unnecessary. In any case, John's authorship has been generally accepted since the earliest days of the church, with only a few exceptions.

Eusebius mentions that John returned from his exile in Patmos after the death of Domitian (A.D. 96) and began to visit nearby churches, even though he must have been about 100 years old at the time. Such intentions are indicated in 2 John 10 and 3 John 10, 14.

Gaius was a very popular Roman name, meaning "lord" or "lordly." There are a number of believers in the New Testament with this name. This Gaius is not to be confused with any of the others, since he appears to be a comparatively young man at the turn of the second century (v. 4) and is identified as one of the "children" of John, one who probably became a Christian through John's ministry. It is likely that he was the Gaius who became the bishop of Pergamos, for that Gaius is specifically mentioned in early church history as having been a disciple of John.

The repetitive assertion in the first verse of John's agape love for Gaius indicates a tender bond between the two. Like Timothy, Paul's son in the faith, Gaius does not appear to have been in robust health. It would be a strain on the word "health" to interpret it as spiritual health. Rather, John seems to have been genuinely concerned about the physical well-being of Gaius.

Although the health he desired is apparently literal, John's desire is not to be construed as a prayer for healing but merely what he stated it to be, a desire that the young man be

healthy. And although the health is literal, we do not need to jump to the conclusion that John's hope for the prosperity of his friend is equally literal. In Thayer's Lexicon he gives "success, or prosperity" as the third possible definition for the Greek euodoo. The primary definition is "to grant a prosperous and expeditious journey, to lead by a direct and easy way." John's ardent desire for Gaius is that his pathway be a profitable one and that he be in good health because John could see that his spiritual life is prosperous.

John's Joy—Verses 3 and 4

For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

Of all the apostles, John had enjoyed the longest life. During his years in the way he had witnessed the high of being with Jesus and the low of seeing him crucified. His experiences in subsequent years would have been likewise checkered. He had witnessed the growth of the new religion within one century throughout Asia Minor, southern Europe, and northern Africa, and as far east as Babylon (1 Peter 5:13). He had witnessed persecution at the hand of his fellow Jews as well as harsh attempts to stop the new religion by the leaders of the Roman Empire. He himself had personally been exiled to the island of Patmos. There he had seen the dramatic vision of Revelation. His interest in the developing church was intense. It was the passion of his life.

Considering the lack of modern technology, communication was amazingly well developed throughout the Roman Empire. Traveling missionaries such as Paul, Titus, Luke, and Apollos would bring word of the churches they visited. Letters were freely exchanged.

We can thus well imagine the joy of this centenarian saint as the brethren returning from Pergamos, or wherever Gaius was, and bringing back word of his spiritual well being. He not only was happy but "rejoiced greatly," or as Thayer's translates the word, he rejoiced "exceedingly beyond measure." Gaius had withstood whatever tests God had designed for his pathway, and the aged apostle desired greatly that he continue to thrive along the "narrow way."

John does not rate this joy too high when he said that there was for him "no greater joy." John's joy was not limited to Gaius but his particular interest was in all those whom he called "my children." It is perhaps not unusual for such a revered and aged saint to consider all of the other brethren as "little children" as he did twelve times in his first epistle (though he used a more intimate Greek term in 1 John 2:13, 18). Everyone who has been a parent, or who has had the privilege of leading another to Christ, can well appreciate John's sentiments.

In the context of this epistle, though, it seems obvious that Gaius was the one of the "children" to whom he referred. His joy was not that they were fellow believers, nor is it that they had professed a consecration to God. Rather, what brings him joy is that they

"walk" in truth. Many speak of Christ, many desire to be known as his followers, but the real joy is in witnessing the lives of those who go beyond that and obey and walk in the truths they are learning.

The Good Words of Gaius—Verses 5 through 8

Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.

The King James Version of these verses is somewhat confusing. They are well clarified by the New American Standard Version: "Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers; and they bear witness to your love before the church; and you will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support such men, that we may be fellow workers with the truth."

Gaius was commended for his hospitality. The non-biblical historical records portray him as a man of means. He was here commended for using his resources to support those missionary workers who passed through his city. The biblical record of the early church indicates this was a common practice (1 Cor. 16:6). In Romans 16:23 Paul writes of another Gaius who had been his "host." The account of Lydia in Acts 16:15 is another such indicator.

The sixth verse indicates that Gaius' hospitality may have gone beyond providing room and board but also included financial subsistence for the traveling laborers in the vineyard. By this time the church was occupied more and more with a witness to the gentiles. John indicated that the traveling ministers refused donations from such; thus, there was even more need for support from the consecrated community—support to assist the ongoing witness work as well as the upbuilding of the new congregations in the faith.

While the Greek word *hupolambano* is not incorrectly translated "receive," such Greek scholars as Adam Clarke and Jamieson, Faucett, and Brown prefer the more intense thought of support, both through hospitality and financial assistance. The context seems to indicate that their thoughts are well-based. It was a well-established principle in the early church that individuals who could not afford to be kept in the full time ministry were assisted by those who had the ability to aid. Paul discussed this principle at length in 1 Corinthians 9:1-23, concluding that while such a method was proper, he would not personally engage in it. On at least one occasion, however, Paul did receive financial assistance (Phil. 4:16-18). While the Lord desired the personal involvement of each of his children in their consecration, there are times when the Lord asks those who have the gift of finance to be fellow-workers with those who have not. Even Jesus was partially supported by some women of means (Luke 8:3).

Diotrephes—Verses 9 to 11

I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

The contrast could not be clearer than between Gaius and Diotrephes. One the giver of hospitality, the other not only denying it but actively lobbying against it. The phrase "loveth to have the preeminence" is suggestive that he either was an officer in the church or desired to be one.

In both verses ten and eleven, the Greek word for "receive" is different from that in verse eight. Here "receive" is the best translation. Strong's Concordance notes two levels of depth to the word (#1926), saying it means "to admit (as a guest or [figuratively] teacher)." It is possible that it was in both senses Diotrephes did not want the local church to receive the brethren passing through.

In the church in our day there can be similar tendencies. Certain ministers of the gospel are more popular than others. There can be a tendency to lobby for the non-acceptance of certain elders as teachers, as well as offering them hospitality. The organization of the church is so established that the decision of each local body, or ecclesia, is supreme in its midst. Each consecrated member is encouraged to exercise his personal judgment on their qualifications by casting or withholding his personal vote. But there is to be no electioneering, no lobbying for or against the proposed candidates. Such would tend in the ways of Diotrephes.

There are, of course, matters of serious concern to the church, including the "grievous wolves" of which Paul spoke at Miletus (Acts 20:29, 30). If exposure is deemed essential, the Lord lays down the principles for such in Matthew 18.

Each member of the body of Christ must follow that "which is good." The Apostle Paul phrases it well and concisely in 1 Corinthians 13:5, saying love "thinketh no evil." To emphasize his point he states that this positive, "good-thinking" disposition of mind is godlike; and the opposite is not godlike.

Demetrius—Verses 12 to 14

Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true. I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: but I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

It would seem that Demetrius is the specific cause for this letter. John assured Gaius that, despite what he may have heard from Diotrephes, Demetrius was to be trusted. He possessed the attribute of a good reputation that Paul made a requirement for an elder (1 Tim. 3:7). Perhaps even more important, the truth he taught bore witness to his acceptability. John could write these words with authority, not only because of his venerable age and his apostleship, but because of his personal knowledge. He then pitted his commendation against the condemnation of Diotrephes by saying "ye know that our record is true." What higher attestation could one receive than from the last surviving apostle.

Having completed the main theme of his epistle, he assured Gaius that, even at his advanced age, he hoped to visit Gaius and those with whom he met in the near future. If the early church fathers are correct in identifying Gaius with Pergamos, it would not be an overly long journey (perhaps 100 miles). Yet at John's age, with no modern transport, it was still an ambitious desire. We have no knowledge that he ever made such a journey but his very desire shows the strong determination that had fueled this man of God for the better part of a century.

Closing his epistle, John did not content himself with a salutation to either the church or select members thereof, but asked Gaius on his behalf to "greet the friends by name"—a touching end to a touching epistle by "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

September-October 1997

NEWS AND VIEWS

PBI News

PBI Annual Report

This year marks the close of the 78th year of operation for the Pastoral Bible Institute. By the Lord's grace, the work of the Institute in promulgating the truths penned in the writings of the late Pastor Charles Taze Russell is being carried on in the spirit of the original founders.

Treasurer: In some ways this past year has been a year of transition. One of our faithful long-time workers and directors, Bro. Loyal Petran, has determined that it is the Lord's will that he no longer serve in the capacity of director and treasurer. He will be sorely missed and the role he played will be a difficult one to replace. The board wishes to express sincere appreciation to both Bro. Loyal and his dear wife, Sr. Dorothy, for all the long hours of service they have put in. The treasurer's work will now be taken over by Bro. Leonard Griehs.

Secretary: Another major transition has been in the shifting of secretarial responsibilities. This is an extensive job involving correspondence, the handling of orders for booklets and generally keeping the Institute operating on a smooth basis. The secretary will now be responsible for maintaining the subscription list as well. Our new secretary, and a new director, is Bro. Michael Nekora, who brings needed organizational skills to the work of the Institute.

Pilgrim Service: The continuation of a pilgrim service in visiting isolated brethren continues, though in a quieter mode. As various editors have time in their travels they will seek to service the needs of those so desiring it. Those who desire such visits or services should contact the secretary.

Booklet Publishing: Another continuing service of the Institute is supplying a large number of books and booklets on various biblical topics. These are advertised in each issue of **THE HERALD**. We will try to find the best booklets on various topics from the different publishers of Bible Student literature.

THE HERALD magazine is still published every other month. The number of subscribers is currently just over one thousand. Each issue is based on a single theme, with individual articles treating different aspects of the main theme.

Streeter on Revelation: One project of the Institute this past year has been the republishing of *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* by Bro. R. E. Streeter. This work was originally published as a two-volume set, along with a companion book on Daniel, in the

1920's. It has been out of print for several years. Due to a sizable donation, we have been able to reset the type and print the treatise in a single volume for the low cost of \$10. It may be ordered from the secretary.

Internet Web Page: In an attempt to keep up with modern technology **THE HERALD** has gone on the internet. We have experienced some growing pains in getting the most out of this avenue of service but the areas of difficulty are being addressed and should be corrected in the next month or so.

Communications: Two new methods of communication are now available. E-mail may be sent to us at **ThePBI@aol.com**. Our new toll-free telephone number is **1-888-7-THE-PBI** (1-888-784-3724). These new options as well as written communication are handled by the secretary.

Advertising: During the past year a donation was given to the Institute specifically for increasing the circulation of the magazine. One of the main approaches we will be using is a full-page two-color ad in a leading Christian-oriented magazine. A number of other mailings and incentives will be used to seek to increase the circulation of the magazine by fifty percent.

And so another year comes to a close. The directors and editors of the Institute appreciate the support of all the subscribers to **THE HERALD** and members of the PBI. More than that, we feel the effect of the prayers of the brethren and the encouragement that the Lord gives for all things performed in his name.

Directors Elected

At the annual election the membership of the PBI elected these brethren as directors for the next 12 months:

Francis Earl, Alex Gonczewski, Leonard Griehs, Carl Hagensick, Michael Nekora, David Rice, and Timothy Thomassen.

Letters

Please do not renew my subscription. My wife Vi went to her heavenly home on January 24, 1997, so I am alone and nearing 80 years of age. Thank you for all the good work you have done and are still doing to get the message to the pagan world.

Charles Forster, Illinois

I would like to express grateful thanks for The Herald which I have found spiritually inspiring for an increase of knowledge as well as toward faith and hope. I have taken this publication for 40 years and it was the main source of helping me to understand the

doctrine of the Presence of our Lord. Mother and I were introduced to the truth via the [Jehovah's] Witnesses in 1938 but I could not reconcile their teachings with the scriptures on the subject of the return of Israel. But I waited, as with the subject of the Presence, on the Lord's guidance. Guide and instruct me he did because the JW class closed and we were introduced to the brethren of West Wickam around 1942. I was immersed in 1950. Due to my responsibilities I was not able fully to study the volumes, but again in the Lord's providence, I am now able to devote time to studying God's holy Word in conjunction with the writings of our dear Pastor, and others who follow in his steps. I humbly and gratefully thank our Heavenly Father for having guided me by the holy spirit and I pray that I remain a faithful overcomer.

A. D. Wells, England

As we see the deterioration of this old order may we rejoice in knowing that the Kingdom for which we pray will soon be set up and bring peace and joy to a fear-filled world. The world is unaware of this, but soon it will recognize the Lord's overruling in bringing peace and joy to a world gone mad. May it come soon and may the Lord bless you in spreading the good news.

Ruth Colvin, Louisiana

I take this opportunity to thank you for the courageous work you do in spite of all the difficulties of our times. I wish, hope and pray that our Lord will continue his spiritual and whenever necessary physical help until the appointed time comes to hear the glorious "Come up hither!" Amen.

Lucas Paparistotelis, Canada

Around The World

Israel

Israel's military chief of staff, Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak sees a growing possibility of war in Israel. "The main thing is the atmosphere. There is more tension in the air. I don't think war is around the corner, but I think that there is a different behavior and a different thinking on the Syrian side about the possibility of war," he said in an interview. Throughout Israel, war jitters resemble the anxiety of the country before the 1967 Middle East War. Benjamin Netanyahu, prime minister, stated, "I wouldn't say we're on the edge of an explosion, but I would say there's tension. It's clear that we're prepared for any possibility." Syria has shifted its 14th Special Forces Division from Beirut to the foot of the Golan Heights. Other mechanized and armored Syrian forces have moved eastward from Lebanon. Israeli planners said it looks as though Syrian president Hafez Assad could be preparing a surprise attack to seize a part of the Golan.

—*Washington Post*, 6/5/97

The Health Ministry, prompted by an orthodox rabbi's anti-smoking ruling, is laying the foundation for a court case against local cigarette companies. The ministry intends to recommend significantly more in damages than what was ordered in the United States. Deputy Health Minister Shlomo Benizri said, "The state here picks up 100 percent of the cost of health care." Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, the spiritual leader of the Shas political party and a former chief rabbi, issued a formal ruling that smoking contravenes Jewish law which prohibits damaging one's body. The rabbi said, "smokers should get 40 lashes, and producers of cigarettes are destined for Hell." Almost 30 percent of the Israeli population over the age of 18 smokes and it is estimated that 30 percent of all cancer in Israel is caused by smoking.

—*Bloomberg News* 6/25/97

General Motors Corp. will look into buying magnesium from Israel, the Trade and Industry Ministry reported. Under a program called Partnership 2000, GM's home city of Detroit and cities of Nazareth Illit and Migdal ha'Emek and the Jezreel Valley region have become sister cities. Avraham Horowitz, managing director of the venture, said "Magnesium will be used more in the future because it is lighter than aluminum." Israel is the world's leading magnesium producer.

—*Jerusalem, Bloomberg News*, 7/8/97

Swiss bank officials who deal with requests by Holocaust survivors said they located 10 million Swiss francs (\$6.8 million) belonging to nine Holocaust victims. The assets were found in accounts in Switzerland's three largest banks—Union Bank of Switzerland, Credit Suisse Group, and Swiss Bank Corp. Jewish organizations claim the banks hold billions of francs. A list of dormant-account holders is being published. Separately, the Swiss Holocaust Fund said it will begin disbursing 17 million francs to the "neediest of the needy" in Eastern Europe. The money will go to families of victims of Hitler's genocide campaign.

—*Zurich Press Service*, 7/8/97

The European Union and Israel signed two agreements making it easier for companies to sell to the governments of Israel and EU nations. The agreements eliminate trade barriers that are permitted by the World Trade Organization. Michael Ryan, a member of the EU delegation to Israel, said "Israel can better compete in European markets and European companies can compete in Israel."

—*Associated Press*, 7/9/97

The World Economic Forum said its Middle East economic summit scheduled to take place in Qatar in November may be the last functioning mechanism left to promote regional cooperation between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The summits were created as

a part of the Middle East peace process to bring a business dimension into the reconciliation process. The council consists of 22 member states of the Arab League and Israel. Gregory Blatt, director of the World Economic Forum, the sponsor of the event, said, "Casablanca was the first gathering whereby Israelis and Arabs met, at least from a public point of view, both on the private and public sector." Syria has called on Arab countries not to attend, and has asked Qatar to cancel the annual gathering, saying it allows Israel in the back door of the Arab world, while not agreeing to return "occupied" land.

—*Bloomberg News Service, 6/29/97*

The United States is Israel's largest trading partner. Two way trade totaled approximately \$11 billion in 1996. The principal U.S. exports to Israel include computers, integrated circuits, aircraft parts and defense equipment, wheat and automobiles. Israel's chief exports to the U.S. include diamonds, jewelry, integrated circuits, printing machinery and telecommunications equipment.

—*World Economic Report, 1996*

RAO Gazprom, the world's largest natural gas producer, will send a delegation to Israel to begin negotiations to supply Israeli power companies with gas. A new Gazprom pipeline to Turkey could be extended under the Mediterranean Sea to Israel. Israel plans to build a \$30 million electric power plant in the Negev desert as well.

—*Jerusalem News Agency, 6/25/97*

NATO

The leaders of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization agreed to invite the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary to join the alliance and adopted an open-door policy on admitting new members, including Romania, Slovenia and the Baltic states. The decision ended a debate over the extent of the alliance's expansion into Eastern Europe. The alliance pledged to continue to embrace its former enemies in the coming years and eventually offer membership to Russia, the backbone of the Soviet Union, whose threatening presence prompted the formation of the alliance 50 years ago. While politicians cast NATO expansion as another milestone in post-Cold War relations, it also opens up a market worth tens of billions of dollars for defense contractors who supply defense and communications equipment.

—*Madrid, AP, 7/9/97*

Socialism's Resurgence

Recent elections in Europe and Canada has resulted in a majority of socialists controlling industrialized nations. The new balance represents an abrupt turn to the left by major Western nations. High unemployment and stagnant living standards led voters to throw

out politicians who promised to correct problems but didn't. Three of the most advanced nations in the world—France, Britain and Canada—have elected socialist governments. Kevin Phillips, a former U.S. Republican strategist, sees a growing trend toward worldwide socialism. Center-right coalitions lost power in Japan in 1989, in the U.S. in 1992, in Canada in 1993, and recently in Italy, the U.K. and France. Importantly, the problem wasn't politics but economics. Economist Arthur Laffer showed that tax burdens caused so called "austerity" programs to fail with the people. Jobless rates in France rose from 11.5% to 12.8% while taxes rose from 44.1% of gross domestic product to 45.7% of gross domestic product. In Great Britain, value-added tax increases resulted in an additional 4% of income-tax on British subjects while unemployment rose.

—*Investors' Business Daily*, 6/20/97

Albania continues to teeter on the brink of anarchy. Self-declared King Leka ordered troops to open fire on protesters who marched down the Boulevard of Martyrs. The crowd cheered, "pick up your arms. Take your arms and fight for Albania. Death and Victory." Many Albanians are waiting to see if the Socialists, heirs to the old Communist party, will enjoy a smooth transition to power after their victory over the right-wing Democrats. Fears of a military takeover continue.

—*Financial Times*, 4/4/97

Christendom

Russia's parliament moved to restrict the activities of foreign religious creeds. The new legislation restricts the activities of foreign missionaries and faiths other than Russian Orthodoxy, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism. The legislation had its origins in fears by some leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church that its growth revival is threatened by the proliferation of foreign missionaries. Meetings of religious groups are restricted to those who have been operating in Russia for 15 years.

—*Washington Post*, 6/24/97

In keeping with a recent trend of removing the division between church and state, the Supreme Court ruled that public school teachers may provide remedial education to students in parochial institutions.

—*Washington Post*, 6/24/97

The Vatican signed a pact with Hungary which provides financing of the Roman Catholic Church and protection of its social and educational activities. The legislation gives Roman Catholic schools the same status as state institutions. Nearly two-thirds of Hungarians are Catholic.

—*Washington Post*, 6/21/97

Islam

Leaders from eight Moslem nations came together in Istanbul and inaugurated the Developing Eight group, aimed at increasing economic cooperation among Islam countries. The declaration was signed by the presidents of Turkey, Iran and Indonesia, the prime ministers of Bangladesh, Egypt, Malaysia and Pakistan, and the industry minister of Nigeria. Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani used the forum to criticize the recent adoption of a resolution by the U.S. Congress concerning the transfer of the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, as the group established its pro-Palestinian platform.

—*Financial Times*, 6/16/97