

THE MERCY OF GOD

“So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy”
(Romans 9:16).

Jesus said: *“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy”* (Matt. 5:7).

Strong’s Concordance defines mercy as: *“compassionate (by word or deed, specifically by divine grace)”*. One secular definition of “compassion” is “a feeling of sorrow or pity for the sufferings or misfortune of another”.

Jesus’ words may be the basis of Paul’s exhortation to the Galatians: *“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith”* (Gal 6:10). The inclination to do good to another assumes one can improve the lot of the other, that is to have compassion for them.

Showing mercy may also be considered to be an aspect of love, and regarded as entwined in the fruits of the Spirit. Indeed one may wonder why mercy is not listed individually by Paul as one of the fruits of the spirit: *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law”* (Gal. 5:22-23).

Divine mercy

The fore-going relates to the relationships of mankind with each other and how the Christian should view his fellow human being.

Paul’s words to the Romans—that it is God and God alone who shows mercy—refer to each individual’s relationship with God.

In view of the suffering being experienced by mankind, Paul’s words need to be interpreted in the context of the overall plight of Man, which in turn means in the overall Divine plan for mankind. Every individual—both Christian and non-Christian alike—is personally subject to God’s over-ruling, and it is in that context that their welfare must be considered.

Hence is manifested the privilege of the Christian. It is only those who are privileged to understand God’s plan for mankind (which spans several ages), and which ultimately will yield wonderful benefits to every human being who complies with God’s arrangement when they have the opportunity and responsibility (that is, in “their time”), who are able to see that the present distress contains God’s mercy. To those who are not privileged to know about the times of restitution which God has promised since the world began (Acts 3:21), God’s dealings with mankind may be deemed “unfair” and contrary to the concept that God is love.

Omnipotence

In order to understand the mercy of God it is necessary to realise that God is omnipotent and has all things in His hand. God has the power and authority to use whom He wishes to achieve His purpose and It is in that context that His plan may be seen to be merciful.

One example of God using whom He pleases is His dealing with Pharaoh: *“For the scripture saith*

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unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth" (Rom. 9:17-18). God used Pharaoh for a specific purpose: to show His power to mankind which He will reveal to all mankind in accordance with His plan.

God's dealing with anyone means He has chosen them to perform His bidding. Every such idea may give the idea of prestige, which raises the question whether God does have his special favourites upon whom He bestows His gifts or uses them to His advantage, while denying such benefits and opportunity to others.

The answer to that question may be both yes and no, and is linked to the three words "in due time" in Paul's letter to Timothy: *"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time"* (1 Tim. 2:1-6).

The "yes" case

The first point to understand and accept before one can appreciate that, at the present time, God shows favour to some more than to others is that He is indeed the creator and ruler of the universe. The consequences of Him being in total control has to be realised and not just idly acknowledged. Isaiah explains: *"Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment. Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? he gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow. He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet. Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he"* (Isa. 41:1-4). Those verses express the absolute authority of God. The command *"keep silence O islands"* can be understood only if one understands that God is over them: the islands are inanimate, that is lifeless, and therefore cannot decide to "keep silence". The expression implies that God has complete control over all His creation, both lifeless (inanimate) and those to whom He has given life (animate).

Israel

Another example of God exercising His autonomy is Israel being His special people: *"For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations"* (Deut. 7:6-9). Israel did not have any virtues of themselves that gave God any grounds for choosing them above other nations.

In view of God's total authority over all things it is feasible that He has the power and authority to choose others beside the nation of Israel. It is not for His subjects to tell Him what He has done or what He should be doing but to learn His ways and to understand what He is doing; that is, to understand His Divine Plan of the Ages.

And that is Paul's message to the Corinthians: *"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God"* (1 Cor. 2:6-10).

Paul's letter urges them to understand what God is doing and to interpret events from God's level and not from their human level. As Paul stated, his message was not according to the wisdom of this world, not even the princes of this world understand His plan, and so a knowledge of God's plan and purpose is a treasure that God has made known only to those to whom He has given it. Thus, it might seem that, at the present time, God does "have His favourites".

Responsibility

Every opportunity brings responsibility, and the opportunity God has given to His "favourites"

brings responsibility: *“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God”* (Heb. 12:1-2). And *“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway”* (1 Cor. 9:24-27). The Christian is to recognize their responsibility and *“so run”*.

The “no” case

The argument can be mounted that while God has favoured some by showering them with His special blessing there are at least two features of this life that show He treats all men equally.

Regarding their subjection to the environment Jesus said: *“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust”* (Matt. 5:44-45). Visual observation confirms that rain falls on those who are striving to be upright and those who do not strive in that way.

Jesus’ words have greater impact for those who directly—that is, first hand—rely on agriculture for their food supply, which is an aspect of life that is shielded from view of many due to the impact of industrialisation which “guarantees” a ready and reliable supply of food, water and “basic” services.

Secondly, as Solomon concluded: *“And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit”* (Eccl. 1:13-14).

Solomon continues and explains the reason for his conclusion: *“For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous,*

and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them. All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead. For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion” (Ecc. 9:1-4). Simple observation of Man’s life span and rewards at the present time on this earth vindicate Solomon’s conclusion that all of Man’s efforts are futile, ending in death.

Times of Restitution

And therein lies one of the secrets of God’s plan. It is summarized by Paul in Romans 8:18-23: *“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body”*

Paul’s words declare some critical points that are essential to understand God’s mercy:

- The creature (creation) is waiting for a previous work to be completed: the manifestation of the Sons of God. The Sons of God are those to whom God has given His Holy Spirit: *“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God”* (Rom. 8:16-19);
- God has deliberately (consciously) subjected the present creature (creation) to the vanity Solomon identified, and He has subjected it in “hope” (anticipation, expectation, confidence);
- The whole creation will be delivered from the

present bondage to corruption (the vanity of this life): *“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful”* (Rev 21:3-5);

- Nevertheless those whom God has enlightened continue to groan within themselves because they have compassion for their fellow man as they both endure the pains of this life.

The lesson learned

There is an old saying “sometimes you have to be cruel to be kind”. While that is a secular saying it contains an element of truth in respect of God’s dealing with His human creation.

An understanding of all the points mentioned above—from Adam’s disobedience in Eden to the present time—is necessary to understand how mankind’s present battle with sickness, poverty and death can in any way be considered to be compassionate (a feeling of sorrow or pity for the sufferings or misfortune of another) on God’s part.

And just not showing mercy but also being the only one who shows any mercy: *“So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy”* (Rom. 9:16).

The key is that the present experience will result in mankind being fully appreciative of the blessings God will shower on them in His time: *“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy: (Isa. 65:17-18). The joys of that time will mean that the trials of the present time will be not be remembered and hence there will not be any temptation to return to the present distress: *“What do ye imagine against the LORD? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time”* (Nahum 1:9).■*

OUR LORD’S MEMORIAL

According to our usual reckoning the time for the observance of the Memorial of our Lord’s death in 2018 will be the evening of Thursday March 29th (14th Nisan). 1Cor 11:23-26

THINGS THAT ARE BROKEN

God uses those people and things which are broken to show His glory:

- It was the overthrow of Jacob’s natural strength at Peniel that made him one whom God clothed with power;
- It was when the three hundred elect soldiers under Gideon broke their pitchers that the hidden lights of the lamps shone forth to the consternation of the Midianites;
- It was when Jesus took the five loaves and broke them that the bread was multiplied sufficient to feed five thousand;
- It was when Mary broke her beautiful alabaster box, rendering it henceforth useless, that the pent-up perfume filled the whole house;
- It was when Jesus’ body was broken that his life was poured out and He became the ransom price to release all mankind from the sentence of death;
- It is when a grain is sown (broken) in the earth that it brings forth fruit;
- It was when the Lord broke Saul’s spirit that He shed upon him the riches of Divine grace and changed his name to Paul;
- It was the broken loaf that Jesus invited His disciples to eat and by which they were to remember Him: *“And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me”* (1 Cor. 11:24).
- It is with His rod that He will break the spirit of the nations as a potter may break vessels;
- It will be then that *he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father* (Rev. 2:27)
- It will be when He has broken the spirit of the nations that He will turn to the people a pure language that will enable them to serve Him with one consent:
- It will be when He has broken the devil’s influence over the nations and handed the kingdom back to God that God will be all in all.■

CONVENTION BROADCAST

The annual convention sponsored by the Berean Bible Institute Inc. is to be held from 5.00 pm Thursday 25 January until after lunch on Sunday January 28, 2018.

For details and the program see:

www.bbi.org.au/node/385

The broadcast link for the broadcast will be:

<http://biblestudents.adobeconnect.com/australia>.

LIGHT IN DARKNESS

“Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous” (Psalm 112:4)

This article is based on the opening address at the Melbourne, Australia, Christian Convention on 25 December 1940, now 77 years ago. It is printed here because it confirms that the hope of the brethren at that time was the same as it is today: *“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever”* (Heb. 13:8).

Maybe the assurance of *“light arising out of darkness”* was particularly precious at that time because the whole world was once again plunged into war: 1940 was “shortly” after USA President Woodrow Wilson had proclaimed that World War 1 was *“the war to end all wars”*.

President Wilson did not know the events that were to transpire during the remainder of the twentieth century. And it was not only President Wilson who did not know what awaited the world during the twentieth century; God had not yet revealed to anyone the details of His plan for that period. Maybe some of the brethren present at that convention were familiar with the expectation taught about 30 years prior that God would establish His kingdom of peace on earth in about 1915-16. The onset of another global war in 1939 was contrary to those expectations. And so in the twenty-first century, as the prophecies recorded in the Old Testament are being continually revealed in increasing light, Jesus’ words are being vindicated: *“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be”* (Matt. 24:35-37).

Some Bible students believe that God has now revealed the time when He will begin the constructive phase of the times of restitution: *“And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began”* (Acts 3:20-21). The details of the sequence in which the restitution will be accomplished is another subject and is not the purpose of this article.

Looking back

One of the events that had not been revealed in 1940 was when God would establish Israel as a sovereign State in the Promised Land. That

happened in May 1948, only a little more than 7 years later. Bible students knew it was prophesied: *“Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God”* (Ezek. 36:22-28). However while many were aware of the prophecy they did not know the precise date when God would fulfil it,

While the nation of Israel has now been established in its own land for almost 70 years, there are some details of Ezekiel’s prophecy that have not yet been fulfilled, for example *“the heathen shall know that I am the Lord”*: In general terms the Gentile nations do not yet understand that the establishment of Israel in their land might be part of the fulfillment of Ezekiel’s prophecy let alone acknowledge it.

The upright

The term “upright” in Psalm 112 does not mean perfect. If it meant “perfect”, no human being would have any knowledge of God’s plan—no light would have been given—because, as Paul wrote to the Romans: *“...: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one”* (Rom. 3:9-10).

One concordance defines “upright” as *“straight (literally or figuratively)”*, and it is in both the literal and figurative senses that God regarded as upright, several who lived in Old Testament times. Noah is one example: *“These are the generations*

of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God” (Gen. 6:9). In spite of being “just and perfect in his generations”, Noah died—“And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died” (Gen. 9:29)—which is in accord with Romans 3 and which shows that, in the absolute sense the terms “just”, “perfect” and “upright” need to be interpreted in their context.

Considering the nation of Israel in particular, compliance with the rituals and requirements of the Law Covenant did not make them perfect, even though the requirements for a man to be regarded as “just” under the terms of the Law Covenant were within the capability of human beings. Ezekiel wrote: “The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right... And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD” (Eze. 18:1-9). The standards specified by Ezekiel did not require perfection, just noble, just or upright conduct.

David

David also was upright: “...David did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite” (1 Kings 15:5). David’s sin is recorded in 2 Samuel chapters 11 and 12: “And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD” (2 Sam 11:27); “And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die” (2 Sam. 12:13). The Lord put David’s sin away and regarded David as upright even though he transgressed. The Lord looked upon David’s heart and not on his every deed: “... he raised

up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. Of this man’s seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus” (Acts 13:22-23).

While neither Noah nor David were perfect in the absolute sense—both died—they were shining lights in their time, just as Daniel was a light in his time: “Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry? I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee” (Dan. 5:13-14).

Responsibility

While the term “upright” does not mean “perfect” it does require righteous conduct which must always be exhibited, just as it was with David: “Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, as the LORD liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the lords favour thee not” (1 Sam. 29:6).

And so it is today. Observance of the law of the land is necessary to let one’s light shine before all men: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation” (Rom. 13:1-2).

The only condition that justifies the Christian from not abiding by the law of the land is if such observance would conflict with the principles of their “... conversation in heaven...” (Phil. 3:20). “Conversation” is translated from the Greek word “politeuma” which Dr. Strong states may be an abstract word and it may have a figurative meaning of citizenship—Philippians 3:20 is the only verse where “politeuma” occurs.

Righteous conduct

The Christian must not engage in activities or actions that the world would deem to be transgressing the law of the land. For example the Christian must not commit murder: “If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you

suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters" (1 Pet. 4:14-15).

It might be considered easy to guard against three of the evils listed by Peter—murder, thieving, evil doer—but the fourth one may be more subtle: “a busybody in other men's matters”. The desire to always be helpful—to edify—one's brethren must always be in the fore front of the Christian's mind, but there comes a point where a willingness to be helpful becomes an intrusion. Watchfulness unto prayer is required to correctly identify the boundary.

Esteem

The Christian must not expect to be applauded for their uprightness, but on the other hand they are to be aware of the wiles of the Adversary: “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets” (Luke 6:26). It will not be until the kingdom age that mankind will recognize and acknowledge the example the Christian displays in this present life: “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Pet. 2:11-12). In the meantime it is as Jesus said: “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake” (Matt. 5:11).

Arising light

It is in that vein that the words of the Psalmist are to be understood: “unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness”.

The concept of “arising light” does not mean the Christian is to expect to illuminate those around them with a knowledge of God's truth because unless “except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain” (Psa. 127:1). It is God who calls and who gives light: “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9). It is the Christian's duty to let their light shine so that all whose eyes God has opened may see. But presently “we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life” (1 John 5:19-21).

Thus Psalm 112:4 presents a challenge to those to whom the Lord has given His Holy Spirit: “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:14-16).■

LOOK AND LIVE

Numbers 21:5-9 records Israel murmuring and complaining during their wilderness journey because they were hungry and thirsty. Rather than provide them with food and water God sent fiery serpents among them and many were bitten and died.

Moses was instructed to make a serpent of bronze and put it on a pole; whoever was bitten by a serpent and who looked up at the brazen serpent lived.

John explains that therein is a picture of God's plan for mankind: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:14-16).

Eventually every individual human being who looks to the serpent will have everlasting life.

However Paul explains that those whom God has called should take note of Israel's example in this present life: “Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted... Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Cor. 10:6-11).

And there is a further lesson: every individual had to look to the serpent and so every individual Christian has to look for themselves: “be fully persuaded in their own mind” (Rom. 14:5)■

IF YE DO THESE THINGS

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, you shall never fall” (2 Peter 1:10)

The phrase *“make your calling and election sure”* is an exhortation to faithfulness.

The exhortation is strengthened by continually calling to mind the reward that is offered to the overcomers: *“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev. 3:21).*

The reward

The reward—to sit with Christ in His throne—is the highest ever offered to any human being: the faithful of Old Testament times were not offered this reward even though they suffered greatly: *“... they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (Heb. 11:38-40).*

The overcomers will not only reign with Christ but be heirs of God: *“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified” (Rom 8:16-17).*

The grandeur of being joint heirs with Christ is made more apparent by envisioning Christ’s inheritance: *“I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession” (Psa. 2:7-8).* At that time Jesus will “own” the Earth and all its inhabitants.

Entry

The opportunity to gain this high estate is one that God has bestowed on those whom He and His Son Jesus have chosen: *“Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (John 15:15-16).* Remembering that it is God who has chosen anyone to be a joint heir with His Son Jesus, should encourage everyone who has been

given that opportunity to stretch every nerve to achieve the reward that has been offered to them.

Qualifications

Those who sit with Christ in His throne will be overcomers: Overcoming is not a matter of physical stature but of spiritual development, of growth in grace and knowledge: *“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18).* The Hebrews were criticized for not having grown: *“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:12-14).*

Faith is the foundation of other qualities

In his second letter Peter lists the qualities that measure Christian growth, the first of which is faith: *“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:5-8).*

Faith is the first requirement: it is the foundation: *“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house” (Heb. 3:1-3).* Hence *“without faith it is impossible to please Him for he that cometh to God must believe that He is and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6).*

However faith alone is worthless: *“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in*

peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works" (Jas. 2:14-18).

Nature of faith

The Christian's faith is not a faith in people or things or even religious systems, rather it is a faith in God who is their heavenly Father.

Hebrews 11:1 reads: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". Faith is different from hope. Hope may be merely wishful thinking, that is, what one desires; there does not need to be any basis for believing their hopes will be realised.

On the other hand faith is the assurance (conviction) that one's hopes will eventuate, that is, be realised or come about, even though they have not been seen: "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:23-26). If the things one hopes for are visible (seen) there is no need to hope that they will eventuate and hence there is no need for faith.

Growth

Once the basis of faith is established—the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5-6)—it is necessary to understand and believe that God will bless all the families of the earth: "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 shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3).

Critics may contend that there is not any evidence that God intends to fulfil His promise to Abram. Such critics are not privileged to understand and believe that God has given several signs that He will fulfil His promise, but He will do it in His time and not in the time frame expected by mankind. One manifestation that His plan is being accomplished is the coming to earth of His only Son Jesus who was crucified. His crucifixion, in itself, did not prove anything

except for the events that accompanied it: "And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the spirit. Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned. And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things" (Luke 23:44-49). The phenomena were so extraordinary that the centurion could not resist acknowledging that Jesus was a righteous man and consequently praised God.

The Apostle's faith

In spite of the lack of faith around them Paul wrote: "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful: (1 Cor. 4:1-2). The Apostles had to be faithful, that is, continue to declare the things they hoped for but which were not yet seen. Such preaching required faith, that is, conviction that God will bring those things to pass: "Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean" (Acts 17:16-20). Paul met with opposition and so faith—conviction—that what he was preaching was required.

When the examples of many who have gone before, and carried out various activities because they were convinced (convicted) that God would bring about what He had told them—being things they hoped for but things that were not yet seen—the severity of the test of most Christians' faith is not extraordinary: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is

set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin" (Heb. 12:1-4).

Testing

The greatest example of all is that of Jesus who submitted to the Cross, there not having been anyone before Him who had suffered death and been raised to eternal life: "For even hereunto were you called because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow in his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21).

Jesus resisted unto blood; the blood of the Cross. Certainly there have been many since Jesus' time who have also resisted unto blood, and their example should be an additional encouragement to all who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ.

While the testing today might be considered to be less severe than those in Old Testament times, every Christian today endures testing, perhaps not the same physical pain and suffering but one that is subtle and which requires continuous vigilance to thwart. It is as Paul warned the Romans: "Be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom.12:2). The present secular environment, in which many have food and raiment aplenty, and in which technology relieves them of the burden of earning their living by the sweat of their brow—*And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*" (Gen. 3:17-19)—makes their test more pointed because they have to consciously cast off the temptations that surround them: "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:11-14).

When it is remembered that "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" (Matt. 10:24-25), it should not come as any surprise that those who would share the reward of living and reigning with their Master will also be tested and despised by the master of Beelzebub's house.

God tested His Son's faithfulness before He considered Him victorious: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:14-15).

The lust of the flesh

In this context the words of John are pertinent: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17).

James also exhorts the believers to withstand the temptations of the world: "Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:5-7). James' statement implies that they should have been aware of the snare of esteem; he challenges them to realise that the warning regarding vanity would not be given if it did not have some application—the Scriptures are not written in vain.

Hence the advice for the Christian who would be an overcomer is for them as Hebrews 12:1-2 expresses it: "wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God". They should also be assured that "God is faithful, who will not suffer them to be tempted above that ye are able but will make a way of escape that they are able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13).■

THE GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE

As the world enters the early days of the year 2018 A.D., it is a privilege to have been given a knowledge of God's plan for mankind.

All knowledge of God's plan is a gift from Him and not of human effort. Jeremiah recognized that he had been given the gift of fore-seeing some of the events to come: *"Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD. Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth"* (Jer. 1:4-9).

Challenge

However being a servant of the Lord and one to whom He had given knowledge brought challenges. One challenge was to pronounce to Judah and Jerusalem that God would punish them for their disobedience: *"The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem... Then the LORD said unto me, Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them... For the LORD of hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee... And the LORD hath given me knowledge of it, and I know it..."* (Jer. 11:1-2; 6, 17, 18).

Initially Jeremiah was timid, even though he did not know their plot against him: *"But I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me..."* (Jer. 11:19). Their plot was to slay Jeremiah because he preached the word of the Lord to them: *"Therefore thus saith the Lord of the men of Anathoth, that seek thy life, saying, Prophecy not in the name of the Lord, that thou die not by our hand"* (Jer. 11:21). It was declaring the word of the Lord that provoked them to anger.

It was the same in the Apostle's day: *"Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our*

words... notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear... And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever" (2 Tim. 4:14-18).

Recorded for our admonition

The question may be asked whether the record of Jeremiah's experience has been recorded for the benefit of Christian believers in our day, or whether only the examples mentioned by Paul have any relevance to Christian experience: *"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come"* (1 Cor. 10:11).

Reviewing Jeremiah's experience suggests that reflecting on his trials has relevance to the Christian's pilgrimage:

- Acknowledgement that God ordained him. It is as Jesus told His disciples, the Christian must realise their standing is not of their own doing, : *"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you"* (John 15:16). And as Paul wrote: *"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called... that no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord"* (1 Cor. 1:26-31);
- God's selection of Jeremiah did not cause him to be proud nor to trust in his human strength. On the contrary *"he was as a child"*: he recognized that of himself he was powerless;
- God put His words into Jeremiah's mouth. Likewise He puts the words into the Christian's mouth: *"For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist"* (Luke 21:15);
- Jeremiah's ordination imposed servitude: *"Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah"*. Paul considered himself to be a servant: *"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God"* (Rom. 1:1);
- Just as Jeremiah preached the word that the Lord had given him, so must the Christian *"shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light"*, remembering that *"in time past they were not a people, but are now the people of God"* (1 Pet. 2:9-10), and that it is God who has given them their knowledge. ■

PREACH THE WORD: REBUKE

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2)

In broad terms, the commission Paul gave to Timothy may be considered to consist of two parts: exhortations to Timothy (to be instant in season and out of season), and instructions regarding the action he was to take regarding others (reprove, rebuke and exhort).

Of all the instructions, perhaps the one to “rebuke” presented the greatest challenge.

The wind

Matthew 8:26 records Jesus rebuking the wind: *“And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm”*. In this verse ‘rebuke’ is translated from the same Greek word as in 2 Timothy 4:2.

Wind is an inanimate component of the earth and cannot decide of itself when it will blow, from which direction it will blow and at what speed. It is totally under God’s control as shown by God used it in the days of Noah: *“And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged”*(subsided) (Gen. 8:1).

Hence Jesus’ rebuke of the wind shows that “rebuke” may have a figurative sense and reference to the context is required to decide the sense in which it is used in each occurrence.

Forbid

The Greek word rendered “rebuke” is also translated as “charge”, and may mean to forbid, that is, to direct someone not to do something. Matthew 12:16 is an example of this meaning: *“And charged them that they should not make him known”*. This instance does not include any thought of censure or correction; just a prohibition not to do something.

Censure

However “rebuke” may also mean to censure, that is to reprimand or correct. Titus 1:10-11 illustrates this meaning: *“For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake”*. Paul directed Titus to *“stop the mouths”* of those who were subverting whole houses; Paul’s direction required Titus to take direct action and censure the offenders.

How

Sadly, there were occasions when Timothy had to censure some in public, making them an example to others: *“Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality”* (1 Tim. 5:19-21). Timothy was to consider two principles before rebuking an elder.

Firstly the misdemeanour had to be substantiated by *“two or three witnesses”*. Nevertheless when the error was substantiated, Timothy was to rebuke them *“before all”*, that is to make them a public spectacle so that others may learn from the error.

Secondly Timothy was to act *“without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality”*. That is to say he was not to be influenced by the elder’s standing: an error was an error and had to be handled consistently. Such action illustrates the importance and responsibility of elders and their influence on others.

Who

The epistle was Paul’s personal letter to Timothy, *“his own son in the faith”* (1 Tim. 1:2), and hence the question may be asked whether such censure action was to be conducted by Timothy only and not by others. If that was the case the responsibility Paul endowed on Timothy was demanding: *“let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity”* (1 Tim. 4:12); *“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee”* (1 Tim. 4:16).■

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THE GRACE OF HUMILITY

“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;” (Philippians 2:3 NASB)

Throughout the Scriptures the quality of humility is consistently commended to us as an element of character to be earnestly desired and carefully cultivated. The Apostle Paul says, “Pursue Love” and understanding that humility is a component part of love (“love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up”) therefore Paul is saying in effect, “Follow after humility.” Yes, humility, like all the other beautiful graces that go to make up the Christ-like character, must be carefully cultivated by the children of God. Paul says in Romans 12: 16, “Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.” (NASB)

The wise man in Proverbs 16:19 says, “It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly Than to divide the spoil with the proud.” Again, A man's pride will bring him low, But a humble spirit will obtain honor.” (Proverbs 29:23 NASB) In Micah chapter 6 under the heading “What Does the Lord Require” the following advise is given “But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God”

All grand and noble-minded characters whom the Lord has used in the past have been humble-minded. “Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination in the sight of the Lord.” Apostle Peter writes “You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,” (1 Peter 5:5-6 NASB)

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was a living exponent of the grace of humility. See Him leaving the courts of heaven to take the lowly estate of man in order to be the sin-bearer and Saviour of fallen man. “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.” (2 Corinthians 8:9 NASB)

The opening sentence of the Sermon on the Mount is “Blessed are the poor in spirit (the humble minded) for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Again, He said, “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.” (Matt. 11: 29.) Paul’s words in Philippians 2 help us in seeking the grace of humility— “In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” (Phil. 2: 3.) Those who naturally have a humble mind have no difficulty in esteeming others better than themselves, but there are some who naturally have another attitude of mind.

This is not necessarily their fault, for they may have been born with larger self-conceit than others. But even if we were born with humbleness of mind, we should take care that self-conceit and pride do not come in. Sometimes in their own heart some people feel boastful of the knowledge they possess. They like to shine, even though they know they have no more brilliancy than others.; they would like to obscure the shining of others that they might be the more noticed in the darkness. It would, therefore, be a safe matter for each of us to follow the Apostle’s suggestion to cultivate this humility of mind and never allow it to be lost. “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (1 Pet. 5: 6; Luke 14: 11.) God would do this abasing, not in a vengeful spirit, but because

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the one who would vaunt himself must be brought low.

There might, however, be circumstances when some who appear to be vaunting themselves really are not doing so, but circumstances and conditions make it seem so. Therefore, to best fulfil the Apostle's injunction, we should, as he suggests in this text, cultivate the spirit of humility — not considering our own good qualities so much as those of others. If we have some good qualities, let us be thankful to God, and remember that every good gift comes down from the God of all grace. We have nothing that we have not received, whether it be by natural endowment, or by the grace of God in Christ; so we do well to remember Paul's advice "not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think," but to think soberly of ourselves, remembering that it is by the grace of God that we are what we are. "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall." (1 Corinthians 10:12 NASB) We stand only by virtue of God's grace in Christ; without Christ we can do nothing.

In comparing ourselves with others, let us look at our own blemishes. There are very few in whom we cannot see some good qualities, good traits. If, therefore, we look at our own imperfections and the good qualities of others, we shall find ourselves more and more appreciative of others; and this will, be of assistance to us in running the race. The consideration of our own imperfections would tend to make us very humble of mind and keep us in this attitude of mind.

We know that "all things work together for good to those who love God." Through His Word our Lord has provided for such the "Balm of Gilead" for their encouragement, and the anointing oil and the comfort of the Scriptures. The Lord does not cast us off if we are not wilfully wrongdoers, and if we take the humbling things in the right spirit; that disposition is what He wants. Those things which would humble us in the sight of others and in the sight of the Lord Himself, will, if we are rightly exercised by them, work together for good to us. Such He will bless and lift up and give an appreciation of His love.

For each one to look merely upon his own things, interests, welfare or talents, and to ignore those of others, would manifest a general selfishness and, consequently, a dearth of the spirit of Christ, which is a spirit of love and generosity. In proportion as we are filled more and more with the holy spirit, love, we shall find ourselves interested in the welfare of others. This was the mind, disposition, or spirit which was in our dear Redeemer, which He so wonderfully manifested, and which we must copy and develop in our characters if we would be of the "little flock," who shall be joint-heirs with

Christ in His glory, concerning whom God has predestinated that to be accepted with Him to this position we must be "copies of his dear Son." (Rom. 8: 29.) See Mark 9: 33-35 ; Matt. 18: 1-5.

The subject of this lesson is one for the most careful and prayerful consideration of every child of God, and especially of all who are in any way tempted to ambition and rivalry, or vainglory in the Lord's service. While the humility of the Lord's apostles is very marked in their subsequent careers, in the beginning, of their course they were all to some extent influenced by the old ideas which it was the object of Christ's teaching gradually to eliminate.

After the peculiar experiences on the Mount of Transfiguration and the selection by the Lord of three of their number for that notable occasion, the question of relative prominence in the kingdom was naturally suggested to their minds, and apparently it led to a dispute which manifested some selfishness. It was to correct this disposition, and to show its antagonism to the spirit which must prevail in the kingdom of God, that our Lord sought an opportunity to converse with them on the subject. "And he came to Capernaum, and being in the house, he asked them, what was it that ye disputed about among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace, for by the way they had disputed among themselves who should be the greatest." By and by one of them inquired, "Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

Then followed the lesson, so important to the apostles, who were subsequently to be exposed to great temptations to ambition and rivalry among themselves for the chief place in the estimation and in the hearts of the people of God—the kingdom in embryo—among whom they were all to be leaders and teachers, chosen witnesses of God. And the Lord would have them be not only witnesses of His truth, but exponents also of the power of His spirit in transforming the heart and moulding the character into graceful conformity to the divine will. But if the lesson was thus important to the apostles in their position as leaders, it is also important to the whole church, all of whom are, to a greater or less extent, exposed to temptations to rivalry and ambition. "And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith to them, If any man desire to be first (i.e., if he manifest the spirit of rivalry), the same shall be last of all, and servant of all."

The spirit of rivalry being the very opposite of the spirit of love and meekness which must characterize all who shall be counted worthy of the kingdom, this statement is seen to be the logical sequence of such a course; for if such a one shall ever enter the kingdom he must first have that disposition thoroughly removed ; and if it be deep

seated or long cultivated, it may take considerable time and discipline to accomplish it, while, meantime, others, not so afflicted, may be engaged in the more rapid development of those graces of character and of mind which fit them more and more for extended usefulness and service, thus necessarily leaving the one under discipline to be the last and least, instead of the first and foremost.

Jesus wanted the disciples to take this lesson to heart and ponder it well, they were to become as little children with simplicity of heart, meekness, truthfulness, freedom from ambition and rivalry, faith, confiding trust, love, obedience, teachable, indifference to social distinctions and popular opinions, and guileless. The possession of such a child-like spirit indicates that the man is not overestimating himself. He views himself as God sees him—as a very imperfect man, striving in much weakness to measure up to the standard of a perfect man, and realising that his best efforts still leave him far short of the mark of perfection. And so he is humbled, in consideration of his failures, rather than puffed up by comparing himself with those of still lower attainments.

The parable of a man with a beam in his own eye trying to pick a mote out of his brother's eye was a forceful method whereby the Master instructed the necessity of humility on the part of those who would be taught of God. Humility is here, as elsewhere, put as a foundation virtue. The Latin word for humility is "humus"—ground. This implies that it is soil out of which other virtues are produced. One has said, "The more a man does examine, the more does he discover the infirm ties of his own character." Another has wisely commented, "Ten thousand of the greatest faults in our neighbours are of less consequence to us than one of the smallest in ourselves."

Let us give earnest heed to the wisdom of the Word of God and "humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God," remembering that "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble."

The Apostle Paul urges us to "Consider Christ" in Hebrews 12: 3, and in Phil. 2: 5 he says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," and goes on to describe and explain that the mind which was in Christ Jesus was the mind of humility. Although He was in the form of God, He thought not by robbery to be equal with God,—He did not meditate a usurpation of Jehovah's power or position. On the contrary He humbled Himself; He made Himself of no reputation; He divested Himself of all His power and honour as the pre-human Logos ; He took upon Himself the form of a servant ; He humbled Himself ; and Paul goes on

to show that the humbling of Himself did not end with His step down from a very high form of spiritual life to the lowly estate of man. Consider His utter self — forgetfulness; nurtured by a humble maiden, born in an obscure manger ; lovingly cared for by lowly parents to whom He was subject until He became 30 years of age—manhood's estate under the Law.

Even then, when our Lord appeared as a man—a perfect man—crowned with the glory and honour of perfect manhood, the humbling, process continued. He had not only laid aside the symbols of His glory and become man ; but when He was a man He humbled Himself. Humiliation was a constant characteristic of Him as a man ; He did not aspire to high honours; He did not affect pomp and parade ; He did not demand the service of a train of menials, but He condescended to the lowest conditions of life. "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." "I am among you as he that serveth."■

A Prayer

Heavenly Father, Holy One!
May Thy will in us be done;
Make our hearts submissive, meek,
Let us ne'er our own way seek.

Loving Saviour, we would be
Ever more and more like Thee,
Free from pride and self-desire,
Fervent with a holy fire.

Jesus, Master, we would bear
In Thy sufferings a share;
Help us, Lord, to follow Thee,
Heavy though the cross may be.

Fill us with Divinest love,
With Thy spirit from above,
May we patiently endure,
Trusting in Thy promise sure.

Blessed Lord, Thy saints defend,
Watching o'er them to the end;
Day by day their faith increase,
Keep them in Thy perfect peace;

Comfort, strengthen, guide and bless,
Lead them through the wilderness,
And when Thy due time shall come,
Gather all Thy loved ones home.

Poems of the Dawn

RAISED IN GLORY

"He is not here, for He has risen" (Matthew 28:6 NASB)

Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was like lightening, and his garment as white as snow!

You can possibly imagine how they must have felt, when they saw this messenger from God sitting in their presence! The guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. The angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said, come see the place where He was lying, and go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going before you into Galilee, there you will see Him: behold I have told you."

He has risen are some of the most profound words ever spoken outside of when God addressed Moses. In these words the entire future of mankind was hanging in the balance! Go quickly and tell them, "He has risen."

As the Apostle Paul tells us in 1Corinthians 15:20, "But Christ has been raised from the dead, the *first fruits* of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive."

In His final words to His disciples when He appeared to them after His resurrection Jesus said, as we find in Matthew 28:18, "*All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I command you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age*". Even to this very day we have been enlightened to understand the Holy scriptures, yes having an insight into the scriptures that the world has not!

When Jesus spoke these words He was fulfilling the prophesy that Isaiah had spoken hundreds of years before. These words are found in Isaiah 9:6,7. "*For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders: and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace. On the throne of David and over His*

kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD Jehovah of hosts will accomplish this." Of course we see this direct fulfillment as future, in the millennium, however the groundwork is being laid for this kingdom as we speak! Jesus in the beginning of that period will bring forth all who are in their graves with the assistance of His church. He has earned this God-like status from His Father to bring about the ultimate will of the Father.

In the gospel of John chapter 5 starting with verse 25, we find Jesus speaking to the crowd, again this is a prelude to the millennium, but also to His followers down the age, us, brethren. "*Truly truly, I say unto you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and those who hear shall live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of man.*". "*Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment. I can do nothing on my own initiative. As I hear I judge; and My judgment is just because I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent me.*" Jesus Spoke these Words prior to His crucifixion.

We are extremely blessed, for our relationship is with Jehovah, our Father, through the covering of Christ Jesus, righteousness. Our petitions in prayer are to the Eternal one. Or as the prophet Daniel says, "The Ancient of Days". The world does not have this privilege brethren! Remembering what Jesus said after His resurrection, go, preach the gospel to the whole world.

We are to be witnesses for our Lord Jesus. Some of us consecrate and begin our witness earlier, while others come later in life, but to the same end. The scriptures give us examples of the earlier and later. In Acts the 7th chapter we see the deacon Stephen completing his walk at a relative early age, while the Apostle John lived into his nineties.

The account of Stephen's experiences are similar to that of our Lord Jesus. He also performed wonders and signs. They were both tried by the Sanhedrin, and they both prayed for the forgiveness of their killers!

Are we not also to be compassionate to our enemies? Does it not say that God loved us when we were yet “*Sinners!*” We are told to hate the sin not the sinner! Do not despair brethren. For God and His Son look at what we can become, not what we are! There is a story told of Michelangelo while he was carving on a block of marble. The individual observing asked him what he was carving, his answer was, “I’m trying to release the angel contained therein”. God looks at the heart.....

When Jesus picked Peter to be a foundation of His church don’t you think the other disciples must have wondered why, and even grumbled. Here was a man who was unruly, course, uneducated, and only a fisherman. How could Jesus pick such a man?

We find the answer to their possible question in the book of Acts beginning in the 5th chapter, verse 14. *“And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women were constantly added to their numbers; to such an extent that they even carried the sick out onto the streets, and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on any one of them, and they thought they might be healed. And also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick, or afflicted with unclean spirits; and they were all healed!”* Jesus saw into the heart of Peter and knew what he would become!

On the other end of the spectrum we look at the Apostle Paul. Are any of us as educated as he was, or hold such high power? Here was the man who held the coats of the men who brutally stoned Stephen to death. In Acts chapter 9 we read of an unusual account about Saul. *Acts 9:10-18.* “*Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias”, and he said “Behold here am I Lord”. And the Lord said to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for behold he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight.”*

To test your faith, you might ask yourself, would you be willing to follow these instructions? But Ananias answered, “Lord I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon Thy name.” But the Lord said to him, “*Go for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for my name’s sake.*”

And Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, “*Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit”, and immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he rose and was baptized.*”

The principle of this account is found in 1Samuel 16:7, we quote, “*For Jehovah seeth not as man seeth. For the man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart.*”

Saul, a man who had destined himself to rid the land of these so-called Christians, became the Apostle Paul, who wrote over 14 books of the New Testament, if you include Hebrews!, Jesus saw into his heart and knew what he could become.

As we examine the time of Jesus’ resurrection once again, we turn to the book of John and read a beautiful account of the tenderness of Jesus to Mary, a disciple, as she viewed the empty tomb. Now remember this Mary is the one who anointed Jesus feet and was scolded by the disciples. John 12:1-8. *“Jesus therefore six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him. Mary therefore took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume, but Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, Why was this perfume not sold for 300 denarii, and given to the poor people? Now he said this , not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it. Jesus therefore said, “Let her alone, in order that she may keep it for the day of my burial.”* This woman had been given prior knowledge of Jesus impending death, whether she realized it or not. The information had been given from on High!

Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; and she beheld two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had been lying. And they said to her, “*Woman why are you weeping?*” She said to them, “*Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.*” When she had said this, she turned around, and beheld Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “*Woman why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?*” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to Him, “*Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.*” Jesus said to her, “*Mary!*” She

turned to Him and said to Him in Hebrew "*Rabboni*" which means teacher."

This tender scene was Jesus assurance to Mary that everything was alright! And again to give assurance to His disciples, Jesus appeared to them in a closed room the first day of the week. Jesus came and stood in their presence, and said to them, "*Peace be with you*" And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples therefore rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

After the resurrection, many events took place. Events that would fix firmly in the minds of Jesus' disciples that these things had actually come about as He had foretold!

When the angel of Jehovah spoke the words, "He is Risen", the kingdom of God had begun. The adversary's fate had been sealed! Brethren, do you not realize you also, are the kingdom of God! In Luke the 17th chapter we read the account of the cleansing of the lepers, Jesus made an astonishing statement! In this account! In the story, there were 10 lepers. All were healed, nevertheless after they left, only one returned to come back to give thanks to God through Jesus. Jesus told him, "Rise and go your way; faith has made you well." Now being questioned by the Pharisee as to when the kingdom was coming, Jesus answered and said the kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, "Look here it is, or, there it is! As he was speaking to them he made this astounding statement. For the kingdom is in your midst". Jesus was telling them that he was the beginning fruit of that kingdom! As co-laborers of Him, brethren, we become part of that kingdom of which He referred. With Him, we are the kingdom of God!

As feet members of our Lord, we have a great responsibility to represent Him in a loving and informative way. As feet members our commission is clearly spelled out in the book of Isaiah, chapter 52 verse 7, we quote, "*How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace, and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, "Your God reigns."*" This was the commission Jesus gave to His disciples upon His resurrection! We are the "John Class". In no other religious group do you find this encouragement.

After three and a half years of Jesus' ministry, and following His death and His resurrection, the angel of Jehovah spoke saying, "*He is Risen*". This announcement coming direct from heaven, clearly demonstrated that Jehovah had accepted Christ's sacrifice and had given His approval for the great work that was to follow!
In the book of Matthew we are given nine very

important teachings that were given to those who were gathered for the sermon on the mount by our Lord. He gave these teachings, for He knew that He would not always be with them in person. I'm sure these teachings came to mind after His resurrection.

These teachings if you will are a road map to the kingdom. If they are followed faithfully, you will never fail! "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted, Blessed are the gentle for they shall inherit the earth, Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied, Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy, Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God, Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God, Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, Blessed are you when men cast insults at you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you on account of Me*"

His final admonition was, "Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

We must exercise great self-control in this walk. As the scriptures in Luke 21:19 says, "*By your patience will you gain your lives". Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.*"

"He is not here for He has risen" ■

*I walked today where Jesus walked,
In days of long ago.
I wandered down each path He knew,
with reverent step and slow.
Those little lanes they have not changed,
A sweet peace fills the air.
I walked today where Jesus walked,
And felt His presence there.
My path led through Bethlehem,
Ah! memories ever sweet;
The little hills of Galilee,
That knew those childish feet;
The mount of olives hallowed scenes
That Jesus knew before;
I saw the mighty Jordan roll,
As in the days of yore.
I knelt today where Jesus knelt,
Where all alone He prayed;
The garden of Gethsemane..
My heart felt unafraid.
I picked my heavy burden up,
And with Him by my side, I climbed
The hill of Calvary, where on the cross He died.
I walked today where Jesus walked.
And felt Him close to me.*

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SHAVUOT-FESTIVAL OF WEEKS

"You shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks, that is, the first fruits of the wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year." (Exodus 34:22 NASB)

All Jewish males were required to appear before the Lord. "Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me. "You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. And none shall appear before Me empty-handed. "Also, you shall observe the Feast of the Harvest of the first fruits of your labors from what you sow in the field; also, the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year when you gather in the fruit of your labors from the field. (Exodus 23:14-16 NASB)

Jehovah made a promise to Israel if they fulfilled His laws "...I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your borders, and no man shall covet your land when you go up three times a year to appear before the LORD your God." (Exodus 34:24 NASB) Moses was told "Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." (Exodus 34:27 NASB)

Obedience to God's laws brought a promise. "He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock, in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give you." "You shall be blessed above all peoples; there will be no male or female barren among you or among your cattle". (Deuteronomy 7:13-14 NASB)

The Festival of Weeks was an occasion to present the first of the wheat crop to God. In Israel, agriculture was the basis of the economy; the basis of life. People's welfare and wealth were tied to the land. The reward for the hard work of tilling and planting was the harvest.

The term weeks was used to describe the time period from the barley harvest until the wheat harvest. It is called the Feast of Weeks because God specifically told the sons of Jacob that they were to count seven sevens of weeks (seven complete weeks) from Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:15; Deuteronomy 16:9), and then on the "morrow" this feast was to be observed. Seven sevens of weeks are forty-nine days. Add one additional day ("on the morrow"), and it brings the total number

of days to fifty.

Interestingly, the field harvesters were to leave the corners untouched in order for the poor and immigrants to gather food for themselves: "And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God." Lev. 23:22.

The children of Israel were not to simply bring the firstfruits of the wheat to the Temple (as they brought the firstfruit of the barley at the Feast of Firstfruits), but rather two loaves of bread. These two loaves were specifically commanded to be made with fine flour and baked with leaven (Leviticus 23:17), and they were to be used as a "wave offering" for the people.

These two loaves, however, could not be eaten until after the ceremony was completed and could not be placed on the altar due to their leaven content. In addition to the wave offering, two lambs, one young bull, and two rams were to be offered as burnt offerings before the Lord (Leviticus 23:15-22; Numbers 28:26-31). The feast was concluded by the eating of communal meals to which the poor, the stranger, and the Levites were invited.

The loaves differed from all the other meat-offerings, being made of leavened dough, because in them, their daily bread was offered to the Lord, Who had blessed the harvest, as a thank-offering. They were therefore only given to the Lord symbolically by waving and to the priests "The priest shall then wave them with the bread of the first fruits for a wave offering with two lambs before the LORD; they are to be holy to the LORD for the priest." (Leviticus 23:20 NASB) ■

"These loaves were made of "fine" or wheaten flour, the quantity contained in them being somewhat more than ten pounds in weight. As the wave-sheaf gave the signal for the commencement, the two loaves solemnized the termination of the harvest season. They were the first-fruits of that season, being offered unto the Lord by the priest in name of the whole nation. The loaves used at the Passover were unleavened; those presented at Pentecost were leavened - a difference which is thus accounted for, that the one was a memorial of the bread hastily prepared at their departure, while the other was a tribute of gratitude to God for their daily food, which was leavened." JFB

*Shavuot has a double significance. It marks the all-important wheat harvest in the Land of Israel (Exodus 34:22) and it commemorates the anniversary of the day God gave the Torah to the entire nation of Israel assembled at Mount Sinai, although the association between the giving of the Torah (*Matan Torah*) and Shavuot is not explicit in the Biblical text.

PENTECOST

"Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me;" (Acts 1:4 NASB)

Christ's last message before His ascension

"Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. "You are witnesses of these things. "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.'" (Luke 24:45-49 NASB)

The apostles had been on a momentous journey of 3½ years witnessing their master performing many miracles, even raising people from the dead. They had heard him speak in ways that astounded the people and the officers of the Sanhedrin informed the Pharisees "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks." (John 7:46. NASB). They had seen Jesus betrayed by one of their own (Judas), taken by night before the Sanhedrin, charged with blasphemy, then to Pilate, charged with sedition, whipped and humiliated before the Roman Soldiers. They witnessed the Chief Priest and the officers call for him to be crucified preferring a criminal to the Messiah. They had seen him crucified, buried and raised on the third day and finally being taken up into Heaven.

Before Christ's ascension he instructed them "not to leave Jerusalem", they were to stay in the city. The word "stay" in the Luke account has the meaning of "to sit down". The disciples were not told by Christ how long they would have to wait to receive the promise of the Father. The wait of ten days must have seemed long, they had so much to tell the people about Christ and the long-promised kingdom. For the space of ten days; they continued to wait, and not to depart. They were to sit still and be silent in the sense that they were not to begin to preach. No doubt much time was spent in prayer and Christian discussion on what they had witnessed, plus no doubt wondering what this gift from the Heavenly Father would accomplish in their lives. Before His death, Jesus had spoken to them say if they kept His commandments, that His Father would send a Helper, one that the world would

not receive because they did not know or acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, the son of God. In John's gospel Jesus sets out its purpose "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me," (John 15:26 NASB)

The day for this miraculous gift had arrived, "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance." (Acts 2:1-4 NASB) All this was part of God's plan as with it being a festival day there were Jews from all over the world in Jerusalem.



One of the first public signs of the gift of the Holy Spirit was that those gathered heard the disciples message in their own language. (Acts 2:6-11). The listeners knew something strange or miraculous had occurred, these men from Galilee, supposed lower class where able to communicate in the many languages that were spoken throughout the Roman Empire.

John Gill writes of the Galileans that they are " *rude, unpolished, and unlearned men; who had never been brought up in any school of learning, and had never learned any language but their mother tongue; and that they pronounced with an ill grace, and in a very odd manner; and which made the thing the more astonishing to them.*"

At first the people of Jerusalem who witnessed this miraculous phenomenon were astonished, with some attributing the proclamations of the Christians to drunkenness (Acts 2:12-13). Some of the crowd tried to dismiss the disciples by declaring that "They are full of sweet wine."

The effect of the Holy Spirit was most noticeable in the Apostle Peter. Just seven weeks before while Jesus was before the High Priest, Peter denied three times that he knew Jesus. "Surely you too are one of them; for even the way you

talk gives you away." Then he began to **curse and swear**, "I do not know the man!" And immediately a rooster crowed. (Matthew 26:73-74 NASB) Then in John 21:15-19 is recorded Jesus's challenge to Peter "do you love me" three times, followed by the Lord's instructions to "feed my sheep".

What a change came over Peter, now filled with the Holy Spirit, boldly explained the event to the crowd as a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh" (Acts 2:17; Joel 2:28). What a challenge he gave those with a hearing ear, "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-- this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power." (Acts 2:22-24 NASB) Peter explained how his listeners could also receive this Spirit: "Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38-39). God used the miracle of the people hearing the Gospel message in their own tongues and Peter's preaching to add to His Church. "And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation!' So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls."

Lessons

The selection of the Passover lamb

"This month (Nisan) shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you. "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, 'On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers' households, a lamb for each household." (Exodus 12:2-3 NASB) Nisan was to become the beginning of the ecclesiastical year. This day corresponds to Jesus riding into Jerusalem, "They brought the colt to Jesus and put their coats on it; and He sat on it. And many spread their coats in the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields. Those who went in front and those who followed were shouting: "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!" (Mark 11:7-10 NASB)

The death of the Lamb

'You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. (Exodus 12:6 NASB) This is also the day that Jesus gave his life for all mankind, Paul states "For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed." (1 Corinthians 5:7 NASB) Peter reminds us that we were redeemed "with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." (1 Peter 1:19 NASB)

The First Fruits of the Barley Harvest

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them... you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. 'He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD for you to be accepted; on the day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. 'Now on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb one year old without defect for a burnt offering to the LORD. 'Its grain offering shall then be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering by fire to the LORD for a soothing aroma, with its drink offering, a fourth of a hin of wine. 'Until this same day, until you have brought in the offering of your God, you shall eat neither bread nor roasted grain nor new growth. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. (Leviticus 23:9-14 NASB)

We are not left in any doubt as to how this feast was fulfilled by Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul tells us clearly: Jesus Christ "is risen from the dead and has become *the firstfruits* of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20). The wave-sheaf offering represented Jesus Christ, who was the "*firstborn over all creation*" and the "*firstborn from the dead*" (Colossians 1:15, 18). His resurrection was the same day during the Days of Unleavened Bread on which the first sheaf of grain of the spring harvest was to be waved before God. Just as the sheaf was waved to represent the entire harvest to the left and the right, so the resurrection of Jesus was not just for Himself. He represented the many that 'shall come from the east and the west' (Mat 8:11) to faith in Him and be raised from the dead as well! As the offerings that were made on the feast of firstfruits were a sweet savor to God², how much greater was the sweetness on the day Jesus rose from the dead?

Pentecost

This was the time of the presenting of the first fruits of the wheat harvest. One interesting difference from the first fruits of the barley harvest was the presenting of two leavened loaves. This could picture the call of the Church who are not "holy, harmless or undefiled" as Christ was, but draw from sinful mankind, both from the Jews and the Gentiles.

Romans 8:29 speaks of Jesus Christ as "*the*

firstborn of many brethren." Yet the New Testament Church is *also* considered to be firstfruits. In speaking of the Father, James said, "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of *firstfruits* of His creatures" (James 1:18). God's Spirit within us identifies and sanctifies us—setting us apart from the world. "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ," wrote Paul, "he is not His," and "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8:9, Romans 8:14).

The significance of the Bible writers calling these people of God firstfruits becomes evident when we consider John 14:6. Here Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. *No one comes to the Father except through Me.*"

Few people understand that God follows a systematic plan, symbolized by His Holy Days, to save *all* of humanity by offering *all* people eternal life in His Kingdom. In this world we are simply at *the beginning* of the harvest for the Kingdom of God those who if faithful unto death will receive a spiritual reward. The resurrection of the whole of mankind is in the Millennial Age to come.

The Bible teaches us that *God must call people* (John 6:44; John 6:63). Our Creator, therefore,

controls the timing of His harvest. When God founded His Church by imparting His Spirit to believers on the Day of Pentecost 50 days after Jesus' resurrection, It was the beginning of what Joel prophesied, that God will ultimately pour out His Spirit on "all flesh" (Joel 2:28-29).

The Holy Spirit at work

The coming of the Holy Spirit dramatically changed the lives of the early Christians. The book of Acts is filled with accounts of the early Church's remarkable spiritual impact on the surrounding society. A transformation was so evident that nonbelievers accused the Christians of "turning the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). Such was the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit.

To fully grasp how God's Spirit can work in our lives, we must comprehend what the Holy Spirit is. In Scripture the Holy Spirit is described as the *power* of God at work in our lives (Acts 1:8; Romans 15:13, Romans 15:19), the same power that was at work in the ministry of Jesus Christ (Luke 4:14; Acts 10:38).

Paul told Timothy "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline." (2 Timothy 1:7 NASB)■

BR. HENRY GREENHALGH 27TH JANUARY 1935-3RD FEBRUARY 2018



Brother Henry finished his earthly course on Saturday the 3rd February 2018 at the age of 83. Br Henry was from Gympie, Queensland, Australia .

He was able to stay at home on the family farm and in the care of his immediate family, Henry spent his last weeks and days in the place that he loved and cherished. But even more so he drew strength from the words and messages of comfort the dear brethren sent to him. He loved to study the word of God.

He loved to attend conventions in Australia, USA Europe and England. He enjoyed the fellowship of the brethren near and far that he met in person or by phone. A quiet and gentle man, an ambassador for Christ - we will miss him very much.

He respected people for who they were and if by chance, if he could have made a fuss - maybe he would have said "Keep the Faith".

"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints." Psalm 116:15

A Preview of the Kingdom

"Close your eyes for a moment to the scenes of misery and woe, degradation and sorrow that yet prevail on account of sin, and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect earth. Not a stain of sin mars the harmony and peace of a perfect society; not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word; love welling up from every heart, meets a kindred response in every other heart, and benevolence marks every act. There sickness shall be no more; not an ache or a pain, nor any evidence of decay-not even fear of such thing.

Think of all the pictures of comparative health and beauty in human form and feature that you have every seen, and know that perfect humanity will be still surpassing loveliness. The inward purity and mental and moral perfection will stamp and glorify every radiant countenance. Such will earth's society be; and weeping bereaved ones will have there tears wiped away, when thus they realise the resurrection work complete."

The Divine Plan of Ages Page 191
Revelations 21:4

How RVIC Came to Be

Work on the **Revised Version Improved and Corrected (RVIC) Bible** began in Ann Arbor Michigan, USA in 1959. Peter Parsons, papyrologist from Oxford University, visiting that year, told me that the University of Michigan had the largest collection of Bible papyri in the Western Hemisphere. Prof. H.C. Youtie graciously soon granted me free access to the Papyrology Dept. and its library.

The 4th-century Sinaitic and Vatican 1209 manuscripts were known in 1885, when the Revised Version (RV) Bible was published. Since then, more-ancient Greek manuscripts were being discovered and published, every few years in the Oxyrhynchus Papyri volumes, the Chester Beatty Papyri in the 1930s, and the Bodmer Papyri just then being published.

Succeeding years were spent reading manuscripts (often with the help of a diatome) and published texts, and then comparing them for accuracy.

After waiting forty years in vain for an updated and improved Variorum Bible (1876), it called for beginning work on one.

Zwerdling lectures at Ann Arbor: Ephraim Speiser on Genesis 1-11, Frank Moore Cross on Dead Sea Scrolls, and G. Ernest Wright on Old Testament archaeology, and others, added light throughout the Old Testament. Physics may enlighten some things about the creative days of Genesis 1. Historical linguistics casts light on Genesis 11.

Accuracy must be the primary goal. Best accuracy comes from starting with one of the best translations and improving it. Rotherham, American Standard Version (ASV), New American Standard Bible (NASB), and a couple of others,

would each have been good starting points. But the ASV was chosen because its language is most similar to the familiar King James Version (KJV, or AV), and its copyright is expired.

When Hebrew or Greek is more ambiguous or more specific than can be clearly expressed in English, footnotes are needed. The RV and ASV improved on the KJV for consistency (concordance) in translating words; the RVIC furthers consistency, especially for words with potential theological significance. When New Testament manuscript evidence is cited, the reader will not automatically know how reliable individual manuscripts and ancient version are: so progressively less reliable manuscripts are shown in progressively smaller font sizes. Appendices explain the manuscript evidence and how to use it, problems and solutions in translation, chronological data, and a comparison of other English translations for accuracy.

The RVIC is not to be a Baptist, Lutheran, Bible Student, or other-fellowship translation. Almost everyone (including its editor) will be able to find several expressions he likes, and at least a few he dislikes (or would have preferred the apostle had re-worded things). The RVIC is still not perfect, but is thought to be the most accurate English version yet. Converting it into twenty-first century English is left to others.

James B. Parkinson, 2018

To view the RVIC on the web go to:
<https://herald-magazine.com/christian-literature/online-bible/>

Or

For information on the Christian Resources App for phone or tablet. The RVIC Bible Download available and is easy to navigate. The App is FREE
<https://bibleresources.info/christian-resources/>

Convention Announcements

Sydney Convention 11th to 13th May 2018

Theme: "The Divine Plan of the Ages"

Location:

Bethsham Camp and Conference Centre

70 Wyee Road Wyee NSW 2259

Information: Email: australianbiblestudents@gmail.com

Call: Richard 0466 038 225

Queensland Convention 5th to 7th Oct 2018

Location:

Alexandra Park Conference Centre

13 Mari St, Alexandra Headland QLD 4572

Information: Email: darryngreenhalgh@hotmail.com

Call: Darryn 07 5483 1946

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<http://www.biblefellowshipunion.co.uk/>

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PREACH THE WORD: EXHORT

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2)

Paul after reminding Timothy to reprove and rebuke the brethren at Ephesus who had “gone after their own lusts” he was then to exhort the brethren with great patience and instruction.

Paul, writing to Timothy states “Until I come, give attention to the *public* reading of *Scripture*, to exhortation and teaching.” (1 Timothy 4:13 NASB) Timothy had to become familiar with and understand the scriptures before he could ‘reprove, rebuke or exhort’. As the word ‘*public*’ is supplied, the reading of the scripture could be in public or private. Timothy would have access to the Old Testament, but he may also have been acquainted with the classical writings of Greece as Paul was. (Acts 17:28; Tit 1:12)

Exhort

The word exhort in 2 Timothy 4:2 is Strong’s number G3870. It is found 108 times in the New Testament.

Παρακαλέω parakaleō (*par-ak-al-eh'-o*)

From G3844 and G2564; to *call near*, that is, *invite, invoke* (by *imploration, hortation or consolation*): - beseech, call for, (be of good) comfort, desire, (give) exhort (-ation), intreat, pray.

Vines adds to the meaning of ‘to exhort’, that is “to urge one to pursue some course of conduct (always prospective, looking to the future, in contrast to the meaning to comfort, which is retrospective, having to do with a trial experienced).”

Brethren

Paul reminds the Thessalonians that he, Silvanus and Timothy had a responsibility to exhort the brethren “just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 NASB) Barnes writes “as a father would his own children” means that “*With an interest in your welfare, such as a father feels for his children, and with such a method as a father would use. It was not done in a harsh, dictatorial, and arbitrary manner, but in tenderness and love.*” The purpose of his exhortation was that they should walk worth of God, who had called them. They were to live in a manner that would honour God, this means that their lives should not bring condemnation on God or His cause, especially

when they realise the great reward that is on offer for those who are faithful.

Elders

Peter also exhorts the elders of the flock stating “Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.” (1 Peter 5:1-3 NASB)

The brethren are the “flock of God” and the elders are therefore under shepherds. They take their position not by compulsion but with a willingly heart to serve. They were to do it not for sordid gain, that is not to make themselves wealthy at the expense of the flock. This does not mean that the flock could not support them (1Ti 5:17-18). A mercenary spirit is incompatible with true eldership. The last part of the verses could be summed up with Elders should be examples, not dictators to the flock. They should be leading the flock from the front, not driving them from the rear. They need to remember that the flock is God’s, not theirs.

Conclusion

To exhort the brethren is a necessity for the ecclesia, both the group and the individual. It is to encourage us to grow more into the grace and knowledge of our Heavenly Father and to encourage us to live a life worthy of our calling. “Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.” (Ephesians 4:1 NASB) The end result should be that we become more Christ-like as we continue our journey on the narrow way. ■

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SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

"We are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ." (Ephesians 4:14-15 NASB)

The epistle to the Ephesians is perhaps the most profound of all the writings of the apostle Paul. The first three chapters describe in some detail the privileged present position of the Church, their predestination and redemption, their present inheritance and God's eternal purposes in and through them. The second group of three chapters deal with the appropriate behaviour and witness of each member of the Church, both within the congregation and in the world. Chapter four likens the individual Christian's experience as a walk and gives instructions as to the conduct along the way.

Verses one and two of the chapter set the keynote. The Christian is to walk in such a way as befits one who has been called to such a high vocation, as Paul has described in the previous chapters. Verses three to six urge each one to endeavour to maintain the unity of the Spirit, by which each true follower of Christ has been sealed in the bonds of peace, and sets out the unifying factors. Verses seven to thirteen describe the varying ministries of service within the Church, all designed for the building up of the Church, and includes the assurance that grace for useful service is given to "everyone of us".

Verses fourteen to sixteen deal with God's provision for the development of the "whole body" individually and collectively. These verses read; "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." (Eph 4:14-16 NASB)

The epistle to the Ephesians is believed to have been written by Paul while in prison in Rome in about AD 60. The apostle's exhortation "speaking

the truth in love" is just as relevant today as it was in those very early days of the Christian Church.

The words may be considered in two contexts, first the literal speaking of truth in everyday life, and second in the presentation of the message of truth as we find it in the word of God. As Christians, we would probably be likely to take the first application for granted, but even among Christians it is possible for some slackness to creep in when we are off guard. The second is of greater concern to the Lord's people, but the first lesson is still most important. Lying is nowadays a way of life among many worldly people, often hidden under euphemisms such as salesmanship, public relations, politicians "core and non-core promises", "white lies" and so on.

For the Christian, there can be no compromise; let us not forget who "is the father of lies" in whatever colour or guise. "Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another" (Ephesians 4:25). Paul's words echo those of the prophet Zechariah who declared; 'These are the things which you should do: speak the truth to one another; judge with truth and judgment for peace in your gates. 'Also let none of you devise evil in your heart against another, and do not love perjury; for all these are what I hate,' declares the LORD." (Zechariah 8:16-17 NASB)

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Infections spread and multiply; lying or deception in any form is an infection. How circumspect we need to be both in word and in act.

For most, if not all of us, complete honesty and truth have always been set before us as the only Christian standard, and we have sought to abide by it. So, it is to the application of the apostle's instruction to the presentation of God's truth, as it has been revealed to us, that we turn our attention. Bible Students are lovers of the truth, the commendation given to the Bereans of old setting the standard, whether we use the name Berean or not. Luke tells us in Acts 17:11 that these noble brethren "received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

These earnest ones believed it necessary to check even the words of the apostle Paul to verify that what he was preaching matched up with God's earlier revelations, through Moses and the Old Testament prophets and writers, as contained in their Hebrew scriptures. How necessary this is still for us, the same apostle in fact directly urges us to do likewise; "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). We are to test all things, to try all things, to establish whether they are true and worthy of our acceptance, whether they are in accord with the character of God revealed in His word and more directly in His dear Son, whether they harmonise with His declared plans and purposes.

Immediately before his injunction to speak the truth in love, Paul has pointed out the dangers of failing to make use of all the means which our Heavenly Father has provided for growth in grace and knowledge, and thus for establishment firmly in the faith. "we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming", he declares. There are plenty of weird and wonderful winds of doctrine blowing about in this end time. How important, how blessed, it is to know the truth and to nurture those younger, either in years or in faith, in the understanding of the truth. There are quite a few examples of so called new light or new thoughts being expressed, these cause those new to the truth to doubt about what they have learnt. The apostle Peter's desire was that his hearers remember his words to them and be established "in the present truth" (2 Peter 1:12)

Bible Students often use "the truth", to describe the understanding of the Scriptures which has come down to us at this end of the age, and it is a very understandable usage, conveying a deep appreciation of the light of His word that we have received. We need at the same time to be careful, however, lest we start to think that we have all the truth, or that we alone as Bible Students have "the truth". Down the age the great truths of God's word have at times been lost or hidden, awaiting the time

for, as it were, their re-discovery. In the earlier Bible Student days, a text often quoted was "But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day." (Proverbs 4:18 NASB) Let us not have closed minds, but at the same time "prove all things".

Other Christian groups apart from Bible Students, incidentally, use the term "the truth" to define their understanding of God's character and purposes, the truth is not a creed or statement of beliefs but an

experience, an understanding, a personal encounter with the one who is Himself "the Truth". After we come to know Him, we need to learn of Him and, by the various means of grace available to better understand the Divine will for us. The importance and value of a clear grasp of the essential teachings of God's word "the doctrine" cannot be overstated. We all share responsibilities in this area towards our younger brethren either in age or experience.

The reference to Christ Himself as "the Truth" is, of course taken from His own words "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way where I am going." Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." (John 14:3-6 NASB) Thomas is often called the Doubter, but he wanted an explanation that he could understand. How wonderfully Jesus gave him his answer. To Pilate's question, "What is truth?" Jesus answered not a word, but to Thomas, the genuine enquirer, He gave a grand revelation of Himself which comes down to us today to gladden our hearts also. Jesus truly is the living Word, the truth and revelation of God, and the only way to God.

John's beautiful words concerning our Saviour are recorded in John 1:14 "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." This message is also inherent in our Lord's reply to Philip as recorded in John 14: 8 & 9, 'Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father?'"

Our trinitarian friends quote this in proving their doctrine that Jesus and God are one, but Jesus is clearly referring to His full revelation and the love and character of His Father. Earlier, he had said. "He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me." John 12:45 and John 1:18 we read, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him". Here we see that Christ is the living Word, the truth.

But the recorded word of God is also described as "the truth". The Psalmist tells us that "All the paths of the LORD are lovingkindness and truth To those who keep His covenant and His testimonies." (Psalm 25:10) and "Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom." (Psalms 51:6 NASB) In Psalm 19, David praises all the manifestations of God in creation and in all His instruction and provision for the nation of Israel. In the New Testament, our Lord plainly declares, "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth." (John 17:17 NASB)

As we come into relationship with God through His dear Son, then His word becomes the more precious, and the more we will seek to know Him who is the author of that word, which is "the truth". The message of our Lord at His first advent, and of the apostles, is indeed referred to as "the word of truth", and to understand fully the apostle's injunction to "speak the truth in love", we need to find out what influence and power over Christians the word has. In James 1:18 we read that "In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures." In Romans 8, we learn that this begetting is a work of God's Holy Spirit in the heart and mind of the believer (verses 14 to 16).

It is the working of the Spirit that first opens our eyes to the truth as it is revealed in God's word, this brings us into relationship with God, through faith in His dear Son and His merit, making us sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty (2 Corinthians 6:18). Romans 10:10, 14 & 15 further explains the process for each one, "for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!" (Romans 10:10-15 NASB)

"SANCTIFY THEM THROUGH THY TRUTH; THY WORD IS TRUTH".

The thought of sanctifying leads our minds back to the sanctifying of the priests and vessels of the tabernacle in Old Testament times in Israel. These people and utensils were thereafter no longer profane, but set apart for the divine service, reckoned holy and dedicated to that purpose alone. Such, under the influence of the Holy Spirit pictured in the anointing oil, is the effect of the sanctifying word of truth on each receptive heart. It is the truth that sanctifies, and Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, says, " God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth." (2Thess 2:13 NASB)

Further. we read in John 8:31,32 & 36, "So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If

you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free...So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."

The truth is not only a begetting and sanctifying power, but a liberating power! The literal speaking of truth is itself a freeing power-the opposite inevitably leads on a downhill path (and. it is said, requires a phenomenal memory to avoid being caught out). But more importantly, for the Christian, it frees from the bondage of sin. Romans 6: 16 to 18 reads "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness." (Romans 6:16-18 NASB)

THE EARLY CHURCH

In the early church the Judaisers that sought to reinstate the old law rituals and services into the congregation were causing trouble, and Paul had to protest quite sternly with some, calling on them to "stand fast therefore in the liberty wherein Christ hath made us free and be not entangled again, with the yoke of bondage for, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another, for all the law is fulfilled in one word, Love. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Galatians 5: 1. 13 & 14). Here both bondage to the law and to the old fleshly ways are included. The liberty into which the lord's people have been called is precious; it is only the truth as it is in Christ, the living Word, and in the Scriptures, the written word, that fully frees the believer. Our only captivity is willing submission to our Lord and Saviour and to His service.

EXTENDING THE LIBERTY

Preserving our own liberty in Christ is important. but we sometimes fail to extend that liberty to others. We need not, we cannot, judge others and their liberty; "Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand." (Romans 14:4 NASB) Similarly, on points of Bible interpretations where there are differences, let us learn to extend the same freedom, and to do it as heartily to others as we expect to receive. We must realise, as did the apostle, despite the great light which has been shed on God's word, that we all "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known." (1 Cor 13:12 NASB)

The truth should be a unifying force, and that is the point at which the apostle's injunction. "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called" (Ephesians 4:1 NASB). He follows these words with seven elements of truth which

should have that unifying influence. As we focus on these, we shall surely be drawn closer together. Then follow several ministries within the Church; not all are called to the same tasks, but from verse 7 we note that it is "unto every one of us" that grace is given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Our Lord has a service for every single one of His people and, to a large degree, it is encompassed in the words "speaking the truth in love".

ASPECTS OF SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

There are also two aspects to this speaking of the truth in love, the first among the Lord's people, the second to those around us. Opportunities for the second do not often occur for most of us, though some seem skilled in the impromptu word for the Master. The promise is that in time of trouble, our Father will provide both "a mouth and wisdom", so we may trust Him also for the right word of truth when the occasion does arise. All of us, however, are to be "always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence."(1 Peter 3:15 NASB)

How blessed we are to have such a reason, to have a message of truth that can be given in love. The gospel which is the heart of that message is by definition 'good news', something positive for heart and mind. What a privilege we have of recognising our Saviour and recognition of His lovingkindness and tender mercy as shown in the Divine plan of salvation, but the history of the Church has shown that bitterness can creep in. The great opponent of truth is ever ready to sow seeds of strife among brethren. Two of seven things which the wise man says God hates is "A false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers. (Proverbs 6:19 NASB)

On the other hand, the psalmist declares, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brothers to dwell together in unity!" (Psalms 133:1 NASB) Paul counsels the Hebrews, "Let brotherly love continue" (Hebrews 13:1). The bonds of truth, and love for the truth, surely have that sweet influence at all times.

Paul cautions "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear". (Ephesians 4:29 NASB) "So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another". (Romans 14:19 NASB) These list the positives of truth-speaking out of love.

IS SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE ENOUGH?

James counsels "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was." (James 1:22-

24 NASB) Likewise, our speaking out the word of truth will be of no value if we do not live out that truth to the limit of our ability, with the strength our Father will supply. "Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth." (1 John 3:18 NASB)

Paul, in his letters to the churches, often links the witness of the word and the testimony of the conduct of himself and his co-workers. The word and the walk must go together; we are not only to speak forth the truth, but also manifest it in our lives. What a powerful witness the apostle's own life presented, what trials he endured for speaking out the truth! Most of these trials we are not likely to be called upon to endure, though we live in an uncertain world, but the evidence of the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives, through unfeigned love for the brethren and for all mankind, should be reflected in our faithful presentation of the truth in love and in the living out, by God's grace, of that truth.

We have seen, then, how precious is the truth, how we need to cherish it, to seek to know it more and better, and through the Holy Spirit's guidance to know and love its author more dearly. Paul commends the Thessalonians "For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe."(1 Thess 2:13 NASB)

The truth is itself a message of God's love, His such great love, not only to a few now but to all in due course. It would be expected that those who believe that they have found the truth would want to speak it in love, in a spirit of kindness and goodwill towards all. In Paul's day, he had to complain that some were preaching Christ out of contention, not sincerely. Fortunately, others were preaching Christ through love. Our presentation of Christ in our words and in our lives is to be an exhibition of the love, which we ourselves have experienced. Without love, our testimony will be lifeless. Paul says, without love it is merely an empty sound.

Two lovely and well-known verses in Malachi read - 'Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name. "They will be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I prepare My own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him."' (Malachi 3:16-17 NASB)

What do these verses conjure up in your mind? Hopefully a lovely picture of brethren in sweet communion and with the smile of God upon them. May this be shown when meeting with others who love the truth. "Let us exhort one another daily, while it is called today"... in unity, steadfast to the end"■

THE BALM OF GILEAD

People today are interested in finding natural and herbal remedies for their many ailments, rather than relying on modern medicine. One source that people are turning to is the Bible for information regarding these old remedies.

One of these treatments is the "Balm of Gilead" also called "Mecca Balsam" and are mentioned in the Old Testament. The word "balm" occurs 6 times, the word "Gilead" appears 99 times, while the term "Balm of Gilead" occurs twice.

GILEAD'S LOCATION

Gilead is in a mountainous region east of the Jordan River with an elevation of 915 metres above sea level. The area extends 97 kilometres from the southern end of the sea of Galilee to the northern tip of the dead sea. Gilead is 32 kilometres wide. The western boundary is the Jordan River, the south boundary is the land of Moab, the northern boundary is the Yarmuk river, the east by the desert. The Jabbok River divides the area into northern and southern Gilead.

The name Gilead, as is usual in Palestine, describes the physical aspect of the country: it signifies "a hard-rocky region" The name Gilead is sometimes used to denote the whole country east of the Jordan (Genesis 37:25; Joshua 22:9; 2Samuel 2:9.) The King's Highway, a main trading route went from the Gulf of Aqaba to Damascus, passing through the area of Gilead. This area was noted for its spices and myrrh as well as balm.

THE BALM OF GILEAD TREE

The genuine balm tree of Gilead stood 3-4 metres tall with a wand-like spread of branches. The trunk was 23 centimeters in diameter. The outer bark is a rich brown colour, the inner bark is green and very aromatic. The leaves are small and white while the flowers are small and reddish in colour. The seeds that the tree grows from are solitary, yellow and grooved on one side. The fruit is reddish grey and about the size of a small pea with an agreeable aromatic taste. Dioscorides (c40-c90) and Galen (131-200 A.D) were both Greek surgeons working for the Roman army and the Balm of Gilead is recorded in their writing.

There is some mystery to where the trees originated. Josephus states that the trees originally were a gift from the Queen of Sheba, taken from Arabia and given as a gift to King Solomon (1Kings 10:10). (Ant. 8:6 section 6) Other historians claim it was first planted in Judea and only allowed in the king's garden. However, from its name Balm of Gilead, it appears that the most successful area for planting was in Gilead.

THE BALM OF GILEAD

The "Balm of Gilead" had long been famous in antiquity for its nearly miraculous properties for

healing wounds. It was used to cleanse sores, to heal deep wounds, as an eye salve, as an antidote for bites of poisonous serpents and breaking down of calcium deposits in the body. In fact, it was commonly held by the Israelites to be beneficial in healing of all manner of disease.

The resin or gum of the balsam tree was also used as a scent in oils and perfumes. The products are named balasan in Arabic, which it appears to be derived from the Hebrew baal shemen, meaning "lord or chief of oils" giving us the word balsam.

The trees exude the juice during the heat of the summer, in resinous drops. The process being helped by incisions in the bark. The amount of liquid balm obtained from a tree is about 3 drops a day. The balm was so scarce, that the Jericho gardens yielding only six or seven gallons yearly, because of this the balm was worth twice its weight in silver.

Recent excavation of an ancient city, within the area of Gilead, unearthed the remains of a fortress like building used for the manufacture of balsam oil. In fact, the balsam of Gilead was so famous that the conquering Roman emperor Titus (70AD). After conquering the area of Gilead, displayed branches from Gilead's balsam trees in his triumphal march through Rome.

This extremely valuable oil was used for barter in the ancient world. Archaeological findings, in Gilead, prove that the secret of manufacturing and distilling was such a closely guarded secret in the community, that Archaeologist remarked "This place was built like Fort Knox". The villagers were sworn to secrecy. An inscription carved into the mosaic floor of a local synagogue reads: "Whoever reveals the secret of the village to the Gentiles, the one whose eyes roam over the entire earth and sees what is concealed will uproot this person and his seed from under the sun". (Biblical Archeology Review, Sep/Oct 1996).

When Joseph was being sold by his brothers to a caravan of Ishmaelites, it is interesting to read "And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt." (Genesis 37:25 ASV)

This shows that the extract of oils was a well-established industry before the trees were brought to Israel and thousands of years before Christ walked on the earth. Today, a related strain of the balsam tree is cultivated in the southern Arabian Peninsula and as and Somalia, and the oil is processed for use, as in Biblical times. The oil is mainly used for healing and as an antidote for snake bites and scorpion stings.■

THEY WOULD NOT BE HEALED

Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? (Jeremiah 8:22 ASV)

Jeremiah's name means of "whom Jehovah has appointed". He was the son of Hilkiyah from the town of Anathoth, 4.5 kilometers north-east of Jerusalem in the land of Benjamin. Jeremiah was called to the prophetic office when he was still young in the thirteenth year of Josiah (628 B.C.). He greatly assisted Josiah in his work of reformation (2 Kings 23:1-25). The death of this pious king was lamented by the prophet as a national calamity (2Ch 35:25).

The call of Jeremiah is interesting, reading "Now the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord Jehovah! behold, I know not how to speak; for I am a child. But Jehovah said unto me, Say not, I am a child; for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid because of them; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith Jehovah." (Jeremiah 1:4-8 ASV) Although Jeremiah was young and the task ahead of uttering Jehovah's judgements seemed extremely difficult and dangerous, Jeremiah was given the following assurance "For, behold, I have made thee this day a fortified city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee, saith Jehovah, to deliver thee." (Jeremiah 1:18-19 ASV)

To understand the significance of Jeremiah's three questions it is necessary to gain an understanding of what led to this situation as described in the first eight chapters. The warnings start with "Then Jehovah said unto me, Out of the north evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land. For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith Jehovah; and they shall come, and they shall set everyone his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah." (Jeremiah 1:14-15 ASV)

The second chapter speaks of Jehovah and reminds Israel of the passion they once had for Him. *"The honeymoon is over. God reminds rebellious Israel of the fervor and the warmth and the purity of the love streams in the early days. She was desperately in love with her Lover and the tender love made life full of music and joy and hope. She was pure and clean and holy. No disloyalty or unclean thought marred the beauty of her devotion. But now the picture is heart-rending. God's heart is crushed with grief and disappointment. Israel now is living in open sin. She is unfaithful to the covenant*

vows. Other gods have stolen her affection. She has ceased to love Yahweh and her conduct is shameful in the extreme." Kyle M. Yates

In Chapter three the people are reminded of their renunciation of Jehovah. However, there are gracious invitations and encouragements for them to return and repent, showing the mercy of God and that although sin abounded grace did much more abound. Judah did not heed the warning when they saw Jehovah's judgement on Israel, instead they persisted in their sin. Jehovah pleads with them "Return, O backsliding children, saith Jehovah; for I am a husband unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion. And I will give you shepherds according to my heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." (Jeremiah 3:14-15 ASV)

Chapter four continues the plea, first for the ten tribes that form Israel to return to the Lord with their hearts and to turn from their abominations, with the promise of rest and safety under Jehovah. He then pleaded to the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem to repent or they would be consumed with the fire of divine wrath. Jeremiah is to warn them of the destruction of the land and the city. Jeremiah speaks of his anguish saying "My anguish, my anguish! I am pained at my very heart; my heart is disquieted in me; I cannot hold my peace; because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion, that gaspeth for breath, that spreadeth her hands, saying, Woe is me now! for my soul fainteth before the murderers." (Jeremiah 4:19,31 ASV)

In chapter Five Jeremiah sees that the profession of religion by the majority of the people is false and hypocritical, although Jehovah had stricken them, they have not grieved of their sinful condition, they refused correction and made their faces harder than rock (Jer 5:3). Even those whose circumstances and rank in life gave them opportunities to gain information, that others did not have, showed no restraint, acting above the law and trampling all moral obligations under their feet. "For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me, saith Jehovah. They have denied Jehovah, and said, It is not he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine: and the prophets shall become wind, and the word is not in them: thus shall it be done unto them." (Jer. 5:11-13 ASV)

The last verse of the chapter is especially condemning "the prophets prophesy falsely, and

the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jeremiah 5:31 ASV) With the priests failing in their duties to lead the people, Jehovah sent prophets, some of whom prophesied falsely, giving the people the words they wanted to hear, not the words from Jehovah.

In Chapter six Jeremiah again warns of the invading of the land of Judah and the besieging of Jerusalem by the Chaldean army. Jehovah warns the people that even the remnant of Israel who sought refuge in Jerusalem would be taken them if they do not hearken to His words stating, "Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul be alienated from thee; lest I make thee a desolation, a land not inhabited." (Jeremiah 6:8 ASV) An account is given of the sins of Judah and Jerusalem which provoked God to bring this desolating judgment upon them. Their contempt of the word of God, their worldliness, the treachery of their prophets, their insolence in sin and their stubbornness against the rebukes, which made their sacrifices unacceptable to him, resulted in Him giving them up to ruin. Jehovah had commanded Jeremiah to give them good counsel during all this, but they ignored the counsel. (Jer 6:8, Jer 6:16, Jer 6:17).

Jeremiah is now instructed to change his location "The word that came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, saying, stand in the gate of Jehovah's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of Jehovah, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship Jehovah." (Jeremiah 7:1-2 ASV) They were to stop putting their trust in the lying words of the priests and false prophets. The fact that they had the temple in Jerusalem was not a reason to have confidence that they were safe, as without amending their ways their faith was in vain. Jehovah bids them to take warning of what happened to their Brethren, the Israelites who were taken captive without any regard to their sacred place in Shiloh. The Jews provoked Jehovah with their idolatrous practices, and the sacrifices that they presented at the temple were not accompanied with obedience to moral law so were of no benefit. Jeremiah is then told "Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me; for I will not hear thee." (Jeremiah 7:16 ASV)

The devastation which is to be brought upon Judea is graphically described in chapter eight when the Jews are told that even the graves of the kings, princes, priests, prophets and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will be desecrated by the Babylonians (the graves would be disturbed as they hunted for ornaments and treasure often buried with the

dead). The conditions will be so bad that Jehovah warns "And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue that remain of this evil family" (Jeremiah 8:3 ASV). Jeremiah proceeds to reprove them for their persistence in transgression; and for their thoughtless stupidity, when even the brute creation, by instinct, obey God's laws, which is shown in stark contrast to the actions of the Jews who have shown disdain for God's laws. As a result, even the fortified cities will offer no protection against the invaders.

Jeremiah Grieves for His People

"Oh that I could comfort myself against sorrow! my heart is faint within me. Behold, the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people from a land that is very far off: is not Jehovah in Zion? is not her King in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with foreign vanities? The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. For the hurt of the daughter of my

people am I hurt: I mourn; dismay hath taken hold on me." (Jeremiah 8:18-21 ASV)

The hopelessness of the condition of the people now overwhelms Jeremiah, crushing him down. He realizes that he will hear the mournful cry of his people being lead away into captivity. Jeremiah understood that once they are in captivity in Babylon that they would then question why Jehovah was not in Zion, as their King, why had He not rescued them. "The siege of Jerusalem lasted two years; for Nebuchadnezzar came against it in the ninth year of Zedekiah, and

the city was taken in the eleventh month (2Kings 25:1-3). This seems to be a proverb 'We expected deliverance the first year - none came. We hoped for it the second year - we are disappointed; we are not saved - no deliverance is come.'" Adam Clarke

Jeremiah's questions

Jeremiah then cries out "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" (Jeremiah 8:22 ASV)

No Balm in Gilead

Gilead was close to Jerusalem and was renowned for its balm. Little is recorded about how the balm was used in Biblical times, although in modern times it is used to treat bruising, swelling and minor skin irritations. Mixed with other herbs it becomes an analgesic to relieve fevers, muscle aches and arthritic pain. There are two other accounts that speak about using the balm of Gilead to heal the pain and suffering of the people.

◆ "Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin daughter of Egypt: in vain dost thou use

AFTERWARD.

**GOD'S ways are equal: storm or calm,
Seasons of peril and of rest,
The hurtling dart, the healing balm,
Are all apportioned as is best.
In judgments oft misunderstood,
In ways mysterious and obscure,
He brings from evil lasting good,
And makes the final gladness sure.
While Justice takes its course with strength,
Love bids our faith and hope increase:
He'll give the chastened world at length
His afterward of peace.**

Poems of the Dawn <https://dwellingintheword.wordpress.com>

Balm of Gilead

many medicines; there is no healing for thee.” (Jeremiah 46:11 ASV)

- ◆ “Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: wail for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed.” (Jeremiah 51:8 ASV)

There is a lesson in the account of Egypt. Egypt was a strong and powerful nation but was put on notice that it would be brought low, never to recover to its former glory. The wise men of the country were renowned for the healing properties of all the medicines they could prescribe to heal the hurt from the injuries that would be suffered in her defeat and yet Jehovah tells them that all the treatments would be in vain. The medicine that they needed was only to be found in Gilead.

The second example is that of another mighty nation Babylon, described as “a golden cup in Jehovah’s hand”. It had been used to punish the Israelites when they disobeyed God’s laws, but Babylon’s rulers went beyond what was required and their rulers were found wanting. Nebuchadnezzar had been given a lesson by the most high God when he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the wild beasts and he dwelt amongst them. His son Belshazzar did not learn from this example. He did not humble his heart before the most high God and in Daniel chapter five this proclamation is made “God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it, you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient, your kingdom has been divided.” His rejection of the Almighty meant there was no balm to heal the people.

No Physician there:

There was a physician available, Jehovah the almighty God, the creator. This is brought out by the words in Jeremiah “For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith Jehovah; because they have called thee an outcast, saying, It is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.” (Jeremiah 30:17 ASV) Jehovah was always ready to heal the people or nations that came to Him. There is a wonderful promise of this in Jeremiah 33 “Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them; and I will reveal unto them abundance of peace and truth. And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned against me, and whereby they have transgressed against me.” (Jeremiah 33:6-8 ASV) The problem was that the people did not call for the physician.

The answer to the first two questions was simple, Jehovah was able to help and heal them. He had in His power all that was required to redress all their pain and suffering. The third question is more complicated as it required those needing to be healed to have a change of heart. This is understandable with the children of Israel as they

were Jehovah’s chosen people. Egypt and Babylon although not Jehovah’s chosen people, were used by Jehovah to both save and punish His people.

Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

David gives the simple answer “O Jehovah my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.” (Psalms 30:2 ASV) David knew that the Great Physician was always available, but that he had to ask for the help.

The reason why their health was not recovered was not due to Jehovah, but to themselves. Both the balm and the physician were available for the people, but they would not submit to Jehovah or seek his advice. They were not willing to submit to the methods that would cure them. Many times, they are referred to as a stiff-necked people “But they hearkened not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, and might not receive instruction.” (Jer. 17:23 ASV)

Christ, just before His death, lamented over Jerusalem “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” (Matthew 23:37-39 ASV) Jehovah had sent His own and they even rejected Him.

However, there will come a time when the whole nation of Israel accept Christ. “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.” (Zechariah 12:10 ASV)

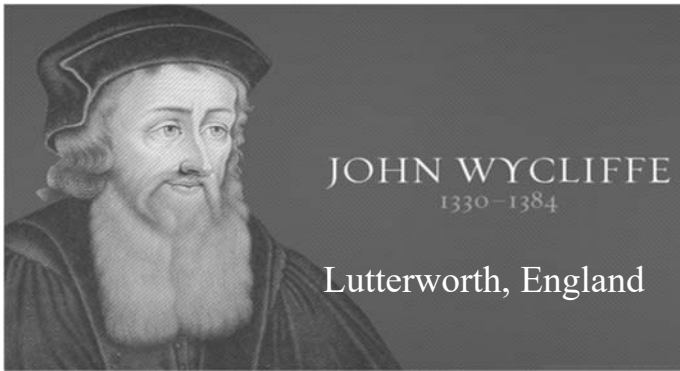
Then all the nations will be healed as promised in Revelations “And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” (Revelation 22:1-2 ASV)■



NEW WEBSITE

The Berean Bible Institute Inc
has a new website.

australianbiblestudents.org
Includes our history, publications, events,
children’s page, links to resources and
archives of Australian Publications from 1918



John Wycliffe (Wicliffe) was born in the year 1324*, in the County of North Riding, Yorkshire. His ancestors had lived here since the time of the Norman conquest and, as the custom was at this time, they took their Surname from the place of their birth/residence. So, the parish he was born in was The Parish Of Wicliffe. (*some sources say that he was born nearer to 1330).

Nothing of his early years is recorded, a few sentences will suffice to trace the various stages of Wycliffe's academic career. At the age of Sixteen he was sent to Oxford, where he became a scholar and a Fellow of Merton College, he turned twenty while he was here... In 1360 he was appointed to the mastership of Balliol College. During his time there he became more profoundly versed in the knowledge of divine things, unknowingly to him he was being prepared for his great work of starting the great Reformation against the False Church.

In 1365 he was appointed Head of Canterbury Hall, it was during this time that Wycliffe challenged the authority of the pope, Urban V, who was claiming to be the only vicar of Christ. The pope also claimed this meant he was Superior to all Monarchs and was in fact their Feudal Master, therefore all Kings owed him obedience and Tribute, especially the English Monarch. Wycliffe took on this false claim; acting, as he claimed, as "the Kings (England) Peculiar clerk". The whole world was watching this battle between the British Crown (Edward the III) and the Holy Roman Empire (Urban V). Britain defied the 'Vicar of Christ', and for his part in the revolt Wycliffe was banished by the Pope from his Post at Canterbury College. This was the real start of the battle between Wycliffe and the False Church (Babylon the great).

He next took on the corruption of Monks, Friars and other Monastic Orders, the battle continued up to the time of his death. This Controversy involved great Principles and had a marked influence on the mind of Wycliffe in the way he developed his views of the Papacy. His views, we know, came from his ever-increasing new light, that was revealed to him from his study of God's word (Psalm 119:105). These monks and friars were involved in giving absolution to the Population for any crimes or sins they had committed, and the money (ALMS) they

collected was making them rich and immoral at the people's expense. The Question Wycliffe was asking was "Is it from the Friars or from Jesus Christ that we are to obtain forgiveness of our sins?" The more Wycliffe looked into the holy word, the more it revealed to him how far the church of Rome had departed from the gospel of Christ, and the gulf that separated salvation by the blood of the Lamb from salvation by the pardons of the pope.

It was now that Wycliffe grew up into the Reformer of England- The great pioneer and founder of the Reformation of Christendom! He went on to say on this subject "May God of his endless Mercy destroy the pride, covetousness, hypocrisy and heresy of this feigned pardoning, and make men busy to keep his commandments, and to set fully their trust in Jesus Christ. I confess that the Indulgences of the pope, if they are what they are said to be, are a manifest Blasphemy."

Wycliffe, the man who was the mainspring of this movement, so formidable to the Papacy, had to be struck down. His writings were examined. It was no difficult matter to extract from his works doctrines that spoke out against the power and wealth of Rome. These teachings foretold a terrible disaster for Rome, unless stopped. For too Long his teachings had been neglected, he must be immediately dealt with. Pope Gregory XI sent five copies of a Papal Bull against Wycliffe to England on 22nd May 1377. The King of England, Edward III, died on 21st June 1377 but this Papal Bull did not arrive in England until December.



As long as Wycliffe only attacked the riches and abuse of Power by the Church he was still protected by some members of the clergy and aristocracy, but once he started dismissing the traditional doctrine of Transubstantiation this support dried up. Even his most powerful supporter, John of Gaunt First Duke of Lancaster, (son of Edward III), deserted him. Although deserted by many he was still held in regard by the Court and Parliament which prevented him from being excommunicated or deprived of his living.

During the 1380s He spent much time in Translating the Bible into the English Language, with his friend Nicholas of Hereford. The whole work was revised by Wycliffe's Younger Contemporary John Purvey in 1388. There are still 2 manuscripts that exist of this revision, which may imply how widely circulated it was by the 15th Century, and for this reason the followers of Wycliffe were called "Bible Men" by their opponents. While saying mass at the Parish Church in Lutterworth on 28th December 1384 he suffered a stroke and died as the year ended. He was 60 years old. Thus, died the Morning star, the father of the Reformation. ■



Shirley Bruce passed away on Sunday May 6.

Shirley was born on October 12, 1922, in Chicago to Hulda and Irving Foss. She grew up in Chicago, and enjoyed an active life of skating, riding bikes, baseball games, singing in the school choir, Bible meetings and family gatherings.

In 1941, her family drove to Los Angeles for the 4th of July Convention, she fell in love with California. Shirley, her mom and dad moved to Pasadena in 1943. In 1945 she went to the Dawn in New Jersey to work for a couple of months. One day a group went to the train station and, in her words, "a good-looking soldier boy came running in.... this was when I met my dear David." They corresponded almost daily and were married in Chicago in December 1945. They moved to Los Angeles, where David began to work with Russell Pollock and Burton Brown, living in a home they built in Pasadena.

Shirley's life was an absolute example of faith, family and friends. David retired from the Pollock office in 1967 to devote more time to the Lord. He and Shirley travelled the world meeting with Bible Student groups and isolated brethren. David wrote to Shirley, "I think we make a good team. I give talks, but you talk with people. A gift I don't have."

In 1978 David and Shirley moved to Seattle where they felt they could be an asset to the small Seattle class. During this time David split his time between Seattle and managing the development and construction of the Bible Students Retirement Center in Oregon, they also continued to travel the world doing their pilgrim work. In 2000 Shirley and David moved into BSRC. Later David became more infirm and Shirley was his full-time caregiver. David passed in 2013.

David and Shirley travelled to Australia several times. David was stationed by the army in Australia during the war and would visit with Br Ern Martin, President of the Berean Bible Institute (1929 to 1988) at the office at Ermington Place. ■

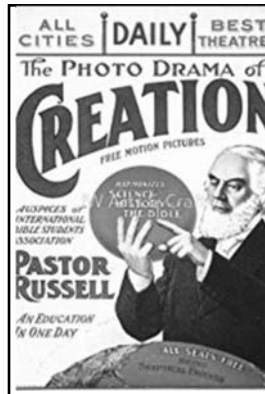
Convention Announcements

Queensland Convention 5th to 7th Oct 2018

Location: Alexandra Park Conference Centre
13 Mari St, Alexandra Headland QLD 4572
Email: darryngreenhalgh@hotmail.com
Phone: Darryn +617 5483 1946

Berean Bible Students Convention 25th to 28th January 2018

Location: Camp Wilkin
57 Noble Street, Anglesea Victoria
Email Enquirybbi@gmail.com
Phone Richard +614 6603 8225



The Photo-Drama of Creation, was a four-part, eight hour Christian film produced by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania under the direction of Charles Taze Russell, the founder of the Bible Student movement. The film presents God's plan from the creation of the earth through to the end of the 1,000 years reign of Christ.

Production began in 1912, being completed in 1914. It was the first major screenplay to incorporate synchronized sound, moving film, and colour slides. It is about 8 hours in length and was presented in four parts. This presentation took the audience from the time of creation to the end of the Millennium. Russell published an accompanying book, *Scenario of the Photo-Drama of Creation*, in various languages.

The presentation premiered in January 1914 in New York, and in the summer of 1914 in Germany. Over 9,000,000 people in North America, Europe, New Zealand and Australia saw either the full Photo-Drama or an abbreviated version "Eureka-Drama".

Shows that combined magic lantern slides and films were common at the time, but the addition of recorded speech was remarkable as it was years before this was common amongst movie produces. The magnitude of its distribution for a single religious production was particularly notable. At the time, the project's full cost was estimated at about \$300,000 (current value \$7,330,000). Admission was free, and no collections were taken. ■

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DAILY SERVICE

THE Lord's business is His people's vocation. "Vocation" is the term that describes the special business of any person, while the word "avocation" describes an occasional business. The Apostle Paul's vocation was that of a minister of the truth, while his avocation or occasional employment, when necessary to provide things honest and decent in the sight of God and men, was tentmaking.

Similarly, all the Lord's people should consider that their vocation or calling is of God, and relates to the special or spiritual ministry in which He privileges us to engage, as fellow-servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. In order to provide the necessities of life it is necessary that we should also have some earthly employment; but this we should always regard, not as our vocation, not as our chief business in life, but merely as our avocation or temporary engagement, incidentally necessary to our chief or principal business.

The question should now properly be in the minds of all who realise themselves as consecrated to the Lord, members of the Royal Priesthood: To what extent am I fulfilling my present priestly office and performing daily as I have opportunity my appointed work of sacrifice?

Too many, under the false teachings of Babylon, both in word and custom, have come to consider that worldly gain, honour, ease and general self-preservation constitute the reasonable service of the Lord's people. The churches that are experiencing the largest growth of members now are the Prosperity Churches. The religious belief among their members hold that financial blessing and physical well-being are always the will of God for them, and that faith, positive speech, and donations to religious causes will increase one's material wealth. Prosperity theology views the Bible as a contract between God and humans: if humans have faith in God, he will deliver security and prosperity.

Often those of the little flock are looked upon as deluded fanatics, especially in proportion as the sacrificing is done for the truth's sake, in the interest of spiritual things. We are, however, not to be taught of the world, nor should we be persuaded by the teachings of the Churches. We are to hearken to the voice of the good Shepherd, to hear His Word and learn of Him, if we would be prepared by Him, in the school of Christ, for the glorious things promised us as His joint-heirs in the future. "Faithful is the saying: For if we died with him, we shall also live with him: if we endure, we shall also reign with him: if we shall deny him, he also will deny us: (2 Timothy 2:11-12 ASV)

We can see how the Apostle, even though finding

it necessary at times to engage in the business of tentmaking, might be considered as a priest, whose time, energy and talents were all sacrificed to the Lord, and given freely in serving His people, in doing good unto all men as he had opportunity, especially unto the household of faith; but how can others who have not the opportunity, not the talents, nor the open door for such special service as his, be sacrificing priests, when as a matter of necessity nearly all of their time must be given to their various employments, which providence seems to have opened before them as their avocations? When it is necessary to spend nearly all of eight to twelve hours per day in the service of our avocations, how can such consider or serve the interests of their vocation, the priesthood?

The Lord has very graciously made arrangements for this very condition. He assures us in His Word that it is not the amount we shall accomplish in His cause, but the spirit, the desire and the effort which is manifested, that in His estimation would indicate the degree of self-sacrifice. He graciously declares that if our hearts be given to Him, whatsoever we may have need to do, may be done as unto the Lord, and will be accepted by Him. From this standpoint we can see that the work, which the Apostle Paul did in his avocation, passed to his credit as a part of his vocation, just as much as the other part of his time which he spent in more congenial methods of proclaiming the Gospel.

Similarly, we can see that those working at their different occupations, if at heart fully consecrated, would be seeking to do their work as unto the Lord. If they are careful to use all other opportunities for proclaiming the truth, for serving the Brethren, for doing good unto all men, the improvement of the few opportunities coming to them and their willingness to sacrifice personal taste and conveniences for the service of the truth and for the Brethren, would be counted by the Lord as a full sacrifice, because such a disposition in respect of little things would imply an equal faithfulness in the presence of larger opportunities.

"BEAR YE ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS"

If you were toiling up a weary hill,
Bearing a load beyond your strength to bear
Straining each nerve untiringly and still
Stumbling and loosing foothold here and there
And each one passing by would do so much
As give one upward lift and go his way,
Would not the slight reiterated touch
Of help and kindness lighten all the day?

Poems of the Way

PREACH THE WORD-LONGSUFFERING

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2)

Paul had instructed a young Timothy to reprove, rebuke and exhort the Ephesians that had “gone after their own lusts” but then added a very important statement about the way he was to approach “preaching the word” so that he would achieve the best result for the brethren involved.

Earlier in the letter Paul cautions Timothy “The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.” (2 Tim 2:24-26 NASB)

Longsuffering according to Thayer comes from the Greek word μακροθυμία makrothumia G3115

Definition:

- 1) patience, endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance
- 2) patience, forbearance, longsuffering, slowness in avenging wrongs

The word is used 14 times in the KJV either as longsuffering or patience.

Vines states “Longsuffering”, It is that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish; it is the opposite of anger, and is associated with mercy, and is used as an attribute of God.

Longsuffering by the prophets of old

There is a wonderful example of the longsuffering that God showed to his chosen people, Israel, after they had made the Golden Calf. Moses returns, sees what they had done, and in anger destroys the tablets on which God had written His Law. It reads “And the Lord passed by before his face, and proclaimed, The Lord God, pitiful and merciful, **longsuffering** and very compassionate, and true,” Exo 34:6* Moses bowed low and worshipped God asking that he pardon the iniquity and sin of His own possession and that the covenant was renewed. Peter wrote of the longsuffering shown by God, waiting while Noah constructed the ark so that Noah and his family could be brought safely through the flood. (1Peter 3:20) (*Septuagint)

Patience is the quality that does not surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial; it is the opposite of despondency and is associated with hope. James instructs the brethren to be patient until the coming day of the Lord, using as examples the suffering and patience of the prophets of old. James uses Job as an example of one enduring afflictions and yet he waited patiently

for God to reveal His purpose. “We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord’s dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.” (James 5:11 NASB)

The Longsuffering towards the New Creature

Paul sets out a picture of God as a potter with total control over the clay. He gives a beautiful statement about God’s longsuffering and its purpose. “What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,” (Romans 9:22-23 NASB)

Paul states “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.” (1 Timothy 1:15-16 NASB) Paul saw himself as the chief of sinners because of how he was persecuting the Church. He speaks that Jesus Christ had exhibited his abundant longsuffering, exercised towards his elect for their salvation.

Longsuffering of the Brethren

Paul in four of his letters sets out the importance of longsuffering so that the brethren could realise the importance that this plays in their attitude to other Brethren. In 2 Corinthians 6:3 he shows the importance of longsuffering to the Brethren “so that the ministry will not be discredited.” He goes on to list the many things that may be endured, but as servants of God we must show purity, knowledge, patience (longsuffering) with genuine love towards the brethren and also the world. In Galatians 5:22 Paul instructs them to walk by the spirit instructing “**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering kindness, goodness, faithfulness,**”[■]

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The Physician's Balm

“For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them”. (Matthew 13:15 ASV)

Several times, either directly or indirectly, Christ alludes to Himself as a physician. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruised” (Luke 4:18 ASV).

The setting was the Synagogue in Nazareth and the passage was from the book of Isaiah. Christ goes on to explain the wonderful privilege that the Jewish people of that time had, with the physician in their midst. He reminds them of how so many of the world needed this healing. In the past, many times, Israel needed healing and yet rejected God, the source of their healing.

His statement “Physician, heal thyself” was a proverb meaning heal yourself before you can heal others. This did not apply to Christ, as he was perfect, but was because of their rejection of Him in his home town. “You profess to be the Messiah. You have performed miracles at Capernaum. You profess to be able to deliver us from our maladies, our sins, our afflictions. Show that you have the power, that you are worthy of our confidence, by working miracles here, as you profess to have done at Capernaum.” He then proceeds to show them why he would not give them this evidence.

Christ goes on to use two examples of Gentiles being healed by the prophets. Br Russell makes the following suggestions. Speaking of the widow in Zidon, “It implies that she, a Gentile, was more worthy of the blessings than were any of the widows of Israel” (see 1 Kings 17:9, R5741:3). Speaking of Naaman, “The ‘many lepers’ of Israel had heard of this prophet, no doubt; but Naaman had faith in God to come seeking Elisha” (R2348:1). In both cases it appears that it was their faith that healed them, something that the town of Nazareth lacked.

Reaction of the Listeners

It is interesting to note the reaction of the listeners “And they were all filled with wrath in the synagogue, as they heard these things; and they rose up, and cast him forth out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong” (Luke 4:28-29 ASV). How quickly was his statement “No prophet is acceptable in his own country” fulfilled.

Christ had come to save and heal the nation of Israel; the nation Jehovah had chosen from all the nations of the world to receive His special blessings, to receive His Laws and from whom the savior of the world be born. How often had they gone astray, yet He had forgiven them and now had sent His only Son to them to bring them His words of hope and forgiveness.

Solomon spoke of the healing abilities of God’s words stating “My son, attend to my words; Incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; Keep them in the midst of thy heart. For they are life unto those that find them, And health to all their flesh” (Proverbs 4:20-22 ASV). The coming of Christ to earth and His ministry brought many of the words of the Old Testament to life and allowed those who were really searching to have access to the healing power of God.

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The apostle John, speaking about the time he was traveling with Jesus during His Earthly ministries, reminds the reader “That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life” (1 John 1:1 ASV). The phrase “the word of life” has the meaning the Word in which life resides, the source and the fountain of life.

John had recorded Jesus’ words regarding the words that would bring eternal life. The passage begins with the reminder to the Jews that their fathers ate the manna from heaven and yet still died in the wilderness. He says that he was the Bread of Life that had come from Heaven, if they ate of his flesh and drank his blood, that is the acceptance of His sacrifice, they would live forever. Jesus knew that only a few would hear his words and understand their meaning. “Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who it was that should betray him. And he said, For this cause have I said unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it be given unto him of the Father (John 6:64-65 ASV). To understand the true meaning they would have to wait for Pentecost when the Holy Spirit would bring the understanding and during the Gospel Age this would only be to those called by His Father.

The Balsam Tree

The Balsam Tree from Gilead gives some beautiful pictures of the process of healing through God’s word. The tree provided a healing balm, however it required those that needed to be healed to firstly acquire the Balm and then secondly to apply the balm. In the Old Testament and during Christ’s time on earth it was renowned for its healing of wounds and other ailments. Although it could heal it could not give life, the Word of God as proclaimed by Christ was the only means of Salvation both during the Gospel Age and in the future Millennial Age.

Growing the balsam tree from a seed is not an easy task as shown by Israel’s attempts to re-establish the tree. How similar is this to the planting, or begetting, of the new creature by the Holy Spirit. The Balsam seed needs life giving water and care that weeds do not grow up and choke the young tree, just as the new creature needs care that the cares of this world do not stunt its growth. Slowly a tender shoot will appear from the Balsam seed and start to put forth leaves, then the blossom will appear. How this parallel the spiritual growth of the New Creature as they develop along the narrow way.

One critical factor with the growth of the tree is that it is well watered, lack of water will mean sickly, shriveling foliage and eventually the tree may wither away. This is similar to the experience of the New Creature, without a good supply of the water of life it will also wither. “Blessed is the man that trusteth in Jehovah, and whose trust Jehovah is. For he shall be

as a tree planted by the waters, that spreadeth out its roots by the river, and shall not fear when heat cometh, but its leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit” (Jeremiah 17:7-8 ASV). How beautifully does this fit in with the verse in Philippians 2:13 (ASV), “for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.” Paul reminds the believers in Corinth of their continual reliance on God for strength “not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God” (2 Corinthians 3:5 ASV).

The sap of the balsam tree is required to take the nourishment from the soil and the water to the very extremities of the tree to impart life and vitality. Similarly, the Holy Spirit imparts the word of God and its meaning to develop the hearts and minds of the believer, producing the fruits of the Spirit. The leaves were white and provided a thick covering to the tree, making the whole tree appear white. This could picture the spotlessness of the word of God as mentioned in Psalms 12:6 (ASV), “The words of Jehovah are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, Purified seven times”. The whiteness of the leaves would also reflect away a lot of the heat from the sun, helping to protect the tree, how beautifully shown for the believer in Proverbs 30:5 (ASV), “Every word of God is tried: He is a shield unto them that take refuge in him”.

The leaves could also picture the robe of Christ’s righteousness, a white raiment without spot. This raiment represents our justification in Christ. The Apostle Paul speaks of our desire “For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked” (2 Corinthians 5:1 ASV).

The Balm of Gilead had a bitter taste, but was most beneficial for the digestion. Similarly, the word of God can be sharp and in conflict to those in the world as Paul explains “For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God’s good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe. Seeing that Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling block, and unto Gentiles foolishness” (1 Corinthians 1:21-23 ASV). There are those who read the scriptures and see just the bitter words that are taught by some of the cruelty of God who allowed so many to die. They see the rigid justice of God without seeing the underlying love that is woven right through the Bible and so cannot say “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart” (Jeremiah 15:16 ASV).

The Balsam tree when it was brought to Judea was only to be grown in the King’s garden. According to



The Queen of Sheba visits Solomon

Josephus, the Queen of Sheba brought “the root of the balsam” as a present to King Solomon (Antiquities 8.6.6). This can beautifully show that the healing balm of God’s word was first brought to the nation of Israel. “He showeth his word unto Jacob, His statutes and his ordinances unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; And as for his ordinances, they have not known them. Praise ye Jehovah” (Psalms 147:19-20 ASV). What a unique privilege that this beloved nation of Jehovah had, His words were even brought to them by the Son of God, but again as so often down through their history, they neglected the word of God, even rejecting the Messiah sent to the lost sheep.

After the death and resurrection of the Messiah they were given a three and half year exclusive invitation to the High calling. The privilege of giving this message to the Jews was not given to the Scribes and Pharisees. They were the ones that are mentioned in Romans. “What advantage then hath the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision? Much every way: first of all, that they were intrusted with the oracles of God” (Romans 3:1-2 ASV). They were rebuked by Christ “woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter” (Matthew 23:13 ASV). The privilege of announcing the new and living way was left to the disciples, the much maligned because they were Galileans and mainly uneducated fishermen. Acts chapters two to five shows the amazing effect that the Holy Spirit had on these humble Apostles as they challenged the Jewish people to realise what they had done, putting to death the Messiah, and how Jehovah had raised Him on the third day. The words had a healing affect, with 3000 being Baptized the first day and it is recorded “And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7 ASV).

Yet within days Stephen would lose his life defending the word of God, with Saul holding the coats of them that stoned him to death. With Saul it was going to take more than just words for him to accept the

healing Balm of God’s word. He was going to have to experience the terror of the loss of his eyesight, and hearing the words: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” before he was willing to accept the Physician’s Balm and be healed both spiritually and physically. This experience and those that lay ahead would be necessary for him to become the Apostle to the Gentiles. Paul, towards the end of his life, looked back at what he had held before his conversion and stated “I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead (Philippians 3:8-11 NASB).

The Apostle John understood the effect of the gospel on the heart, healing and turning them away from sin, separating them from the ways of the world, he wrote “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:1-3 NASB).

During the Gospel Age the Physician’s balm has only been applied to the church of the first born, called by God during the Gospel Age. During the Millennial Age it will be needed to assist the world of mankind up the highway of holiness.

It is over 2000 years since the Messiah came to earth as a baby, with the angels proclaiming “Do not fear. For behold, I give to you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For to you is born today, in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:10-14 MKJV). This promise still alludes the rest of mankind. There has been attempts to bring peace and good will to many by the governments of the world, by organizations such as the League of Nations and since 1945 by the United Nations. Greed and self interest have meant that the promise of peace and an end to wars has failed spectacularly.

Only the coming of the Kingdom of God under the rulership of the Messiah can bring the promise to fruition. The healing process will start with God’s chosen people, Israel. Jeremiah foretells “For I will restore you to health And I will heal you of your wounds,’ declares the LORD” (Jeremiah 30:17 NASB). There is another promise in Hosea that

seems to indicate that there would be 2000 years when they would be dispersed amongst the gentiles and that then they would call upon the Lord. “Come, let us return to the LORD. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us. He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, That we may live before Him. So let us know, let us press on to know the LORD. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; And He will come to us like the rain, Like the spring rain watering the earth” (Hosea 6:1-3 NASB). How often does the dry parched land return to life after the spring rains.

Finally, with the manifestation of the Sons of God all of mankind will have access to the healing balm of the Messiah. “Now it will come about that in the

last days The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it.

“And many peoples will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths.’” For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war” (Isaiah 2:2-4 NASB).

The Atonement Day

What the Atonement Meant to the Jews

The first requirement is to understand that the word Atonement signifies “making at-one,” bringing back into harmony persons and things that are not in full accord. When applied to the human family, it would signify that Adam and his race, having been disobedient to the divine arrangement, have been under Divine displeasure and condemnation. This condemnation, by Divine arrangement is to be done away with, and mankind brought back into harmony with God — to be at-one with Him again-as many as are willing and will accept the Divine terms.

The work of the Atonement began with our Lord Jesus Christ at His First Advent, has continued since, and will be completed during His Second Advent. The Atonement applies first to the church but will not be completed until its provision shall be extended to all of the human family, bringing all the willing and obedient back into full harmony with Jehovah.

It is a comparatively easy matter to talk or write about the anointed High Priest going into the Holy Place and coming out etc. in a general way. However, to understand the matter more clearly is to see that while Jesus is the church’s High Priest, in the more complete sense, He is the “Head” and the church the members of the body of the great High Priest. The Levitical pictures which primarily refer to the Head, when fully considered, refer to the body complete. For instance, the **ceremony of anointing** commenced with the “Head” and the anointing oil (the Holy spirit) continues running down all the members of the body during the Gospel Age.

The **consecration of the priesthood** includes all the members of the body and requires the entire Gospel Age to complete.

The **sacrifice of the atonement** began with Jesus, but to “fill up the measure of the sufferings of Christ which are behind” requires the entire Gospel Age.

On **The Day of Atonement** Aaron puts on “linen garments,” representing holiness and purity (Leviticus 16:4). This picture shows that the church, Jesus’ members, have no righteousness of their own, but are reckoned as pure, washed and clothed with “fine linen which is the righteousness of the saints.” The consecrated need the covering, but Jesus as the Head did not—He was holy, harmless, undefiled,” The Levitical High Priest wore only a linen miter or crown, representing a crown of righteousness—to which was added, when this work of atonement sacrifice was complete and the glorious garments put on, a plate of gold representing glory.

The Meaning of the Sacrifices

What was the reason behind the order of the sacrifices? First, notice that the High Priest Aaron offered a bullock. Because he could not lay-down his life and function any more as High Priest he needed to have the Bullock represent him as a living sacrifice. This reveals that the bullock’s death represents the sacrifice of Christ’s natural life. The High Priest’s taking the blood into the holy place typified the risen Jesus, now a divine being, entering heaven itself to present the merit of his sacrifice to Jehovah.

Another picture shown by the sacrifice of the bullock is that after it was slain, its hide was taken outside the camp and burned with fire showing that when Jesus died for Adam’s sin his flesh was consumed. This is explained in the book of Acts 2:31 “He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption,” yet his *fleshly life* was destroyed.

The *slaying* of the sacrifice did not make the at-one-ment; the Priest must present before God the *blood* as the evidence of its accomplishment and only then could the Priests and Levites be at-one with

God. Likewise, with the sacrifice for the Church. The death of Jesus brought no change to the condition of the Apostles until he had gone into the Most Holy and presented before God the evidence that *he* had “paid it all” — that he had “poured out his soul (natural life) unto death” — had “made his soul an offering for sin.” It was accepted. God sent forth his spirit on the day of Pentecost as the evidence of its acceptance. Thus, he made atonement for the Church and by him, says Paul, they *have received* the atonement. This was only possible because the feature of the work of atonement viz., the sacrifice for his body and his house was completed nearly 2,000 years ago, and the mark of its acceptance and completeness is “the holy Spirit given unto the *believer*.”

There is another sacrifice shown in the type, another *sin-offering*, not again for his body and house, no, this time for the people (Israel), a type of the *world*. Two goats are used in making the atonement for the *world*, as the bullock had been for the house. The Lord’s goat is made a sin offering, and Aaron did with it exactly what he did with the bullock (verses 8, 15, 18, 27). The sin-offering of the bullock and goat were really one, and yet there are two parts.

Many bible students have asked what these goats refer to. Many believe the two goats to be typical of two classes of true believers in Christ.

- The “Lord’s goat” represents the “little flock,” “who count not their lives dear unto them.”
- The “scape-goat” represents the “great company” who through fear of death, were all their life subject to bondage.”

Just as these goats were taken from the *people*, as it were, to be representatives of them, so the church has been taken “from among men.” In Acts 15:14 we read “Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name” (MKJ). This honour went first to the Jews but when that nation proved unworthy of this “honour” it was offered to the Gentiles.



Two goats presented for the Day of Atonement

In the type the goats stood at the door of the tabernacle waiting for the lot to be cast. This indicates that God does not arbitrarily *elect* who shall be part of the little flock; *all* who believe are part of his house and are alike justified by his blood. Whether he shall be *least* or *greatest* depends largely upon his own use of the opportunities placed within his reach.

Regarding the church in its two companies — The Lord’s goat (Christ’s body, the under priest) and the scapegoat (the great multitude) have existed since the church began at Pentecost and have continued throughout the age. One party follows the example of the head and crucifies the flesh, with its affections and lust, reckoning themselves dead unto sin. As Jesus renounced the world, flesh and devil, so do those actuated by the same spirit, remembering the promise of Jesus — “To him that overcometh, I will give to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame”.

In the type it was not the sufferings of the bullock or goat, but the sacrificial **death**, by which an atonement was affected, though they suffered, of course, because death involves suffering. “The man Christ Jesus,” “tasted **death** for every man,” by being crucified — a gradual or lingering death — but the giving of his life in any manner would have paid the price (Hebrews 2:9). “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.” Therefore, just as Jesus was not part of the world and sacrificed his life, all who would be “members of his body” must die to the world, give up the fleshly life, so that they can, with Paul, “reckon; themselves dead indeed unto sin” (Romans 6:11).

Consecration

The Apostle Paul wanted the body members of Christ to truly understand how important it is to stay true to their consecration. He makes the point in (Colossians 3:3). “For you *died*, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” Your flesh is dead if you are fully and entirely consecrated, your own natural will and desire are resigned to the will of “The Head,” “Ye are *dead*.” Further, Paul says “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

The Apostle Paul was not literally crucified, so then what did he mean? It is understood that crucifixion is a slow agonizing death, the figurative crucifixion must closely resemble it; otherwise the figure would have no value. From the beginning of the believers consecrated life they are reckoned as being fully crucified with Christ, but the actual crucifixion of their flesh is a slow, sometimes painful, lingering process, and ends only with the completion of their sacrifice in death.

In some ages it has been necessary for those who would follow the Master to walk to the stake, and

thus literally “crucify the flesh,” “While those who live today are not caused to suffer thus, they are nevertheless called upon just as really to crucify the flesh. And we believe to some it is today a greater trial to follow the Master and walk separate from the worldliness in the nominal church, “having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reproofing them,” than to have gone to the stake to burn in an age when that was counted a matter of honorable distinction in the church” (Reprint R0080).

Many claim to be “followers of the Lamb,” but the reality is that only a *few* actually “follow the Lamb.” Why is that so? It is because it has to do with suffering. All who follow the Lamb will *suffer*. If it caused Him to suffer, it will cause his followers to suffer also. It was the religious leaders of Jesus’ day who persecuted Him, so the consecrated may expect the same. “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master” (Matthew 10:24 NASB). For the follower of Christ it could be said, If you get along smoothly, you have reason to fear that your life shows so little difference from that of the world that they don’t think it worthwhile persecuting you. But if you follow the master, they will say things that are hurtful, insulting, mean, and possibly have some violence done to you.

This dying, or crucifying, frequently requires a long time. Often when those who have consecrated their lives think they have, by grace given, controlled their *old* nature with their *new*, overcome the old *will of the flesh* with the new *will of Christ* “dwelling in you richly,” find, as Paul did, that the old may revive in a moment not expected, and require crucifying again. Just as Paul did, the believer must also keep their body under control. The new nature must control the old nature. This is a battle until the end of their fleshly life; until they take their last breath. “Be thou faithful unto **death**, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10 KJV).

How is the death of a follower of Christ any different than a person of the world? The consecrated are justified to perfect natural life by the death of Jesus, and God promises that if they then voluntarily give up that sinless natural life which they now possess, He will give them a higher life—a spiritual one—and a new body— and they will be considered as part of the bride of Christ. They then become “partakers of the Divine nature”, really and truly “Sons of God” and “Joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, our Lord” who is “Head over all.”

Did They Understand?

The question remains on the day of at-one-ment, did the Jews understand the big picture of what was involved? Did they know that one day in the distant future the sins of the obedient toward God would not only be covered, but removed completely? It appears to be that they only knew that their sins were being covered for the year ahead of them. So then, the basis of the atonement was the sacrifice of sin-a



We should be followers of our Master, Jesus.

representation of the better covenant. There stood Moses representing a greater than Moses. What did he do? First, he slew the sacrifice for the sin offering, it was on the basis of this sacrifice that there could be a covenant and it was the blood of those sacrifices sprinkled in order to accomplish that covenant; so here we have better sacrifices than those; Jesus the antitypical bullock and the Church the antitypical goat.

Mankind generally believes that the work of *The At-one-ment* (atonement) can be accomplished instantaneously and by faith. But, much more than this is needed. It is the result of false reasoning. There is nothing in the scriptures that suggests that the restitution work shall be instantaneous.

There is another word very close to the word atonement, which is reconciliation (Greek *kattalage*). The same word is rendered “atonement” in Romans 5:11. Reconciliation to God is eventually to reach the whole world, but at the present time it is confined to only “him that hath an ear to hear.” In other words, Jehovah begins his work with an elect class, not with the world. The mediator’s work is to actually restore- to mentally, morally and physically retribute mankind- as many of them as will receive his ministry and obey him. Thus eventually the Mediator’s work will result in an actual at-one-ment between God and those whom the Mediator shall restore to perfection.

Since it was the nation of Israel that was given a law covenant (agreement) between Jehovah and themselves, which they broke, it was God’s love and mercy to provide a new covenant which they will be able to keep. The Apostle Paul quotes Jeremiah 31:32 in Hebrews 8:8-12 he says: “Behold the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

How wonderful it will be when the world will follow Israel in being brought back to God (reconciled). At-one-ment with the great **God** of the universe.

The Prophetic Year

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth ... darkness was over the surface of the deep ... Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light ... and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness ... night” (Genesis 1:1-5 NASB).

From the beginning of the creation of the world the Heavenly Father set the sun to determine the seasons, years and days. He used the moon to divide the year into months and to instruct His people on the times for various sacrifices and festivals.

“Then God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth’; and it was so. God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also” (Genesis 1:14-16 NASB).

The phases of the moon were used to set the time of the Passover and the exact days that certain things had to be done. Jehovah used signs that the Jews could readily identify to set the months of the year, such as the spring equinox, which occurred with the ripening of the barley and the flax, but before the wheat and smelt were ripe. Therefore, the first month of the Spiritual Year starts with the first new moon after the ripening of the barley.

Calculating the Prophetic Year

If the sun is used to calculate the length of the year, then this comes to 365.24 days. However, if the moon is used to calculate the length of the year, it is 354.36 days. If the average of the two are taken, then the result is 360 days, which is known as the length of a Prophetic year.

$$365.24 \text{ (solar)} + 354.37 \text{ (lunar)} = 719.61 \div 2 = 359.8 \text{ days (i.e., approximately 360 of prophetic).}$$

Evidence of the Prophetic Year

What evidence does the Bible provide to show that the prophetic year is 360 days? The record in the account of the flood gives the time that the waters rose and when the waters started to recede.

“In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened” (Genesis 7:11 NASB).

“Also the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky was restrained; and the water receded steadily from the earth, and at the end of one hundred and fifty days the water decreased. In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat” (Genesis 8:2-4 NASB).

The Flood covered the land from the 17th of the 2nd month until the 17th of the 7th month. If the days were being counted on the lunar calendar it would amount to about 147 days. Instead it states 150 days. This implies that the median 30-day-month of the prophetic year is here being used, (i.e., $30 \times 5 = 150$ days).

Another example can be found in Daniel

“He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time” (Daniel 7:25 NASB).

To interpret the prophesy, it requires the knowledge that a “time” equals one year and that each day of the year equals one year, as shown by the table below.

Time	Times	Half-Time	⇒ 3.5 Years
360	720	180	= 1260

The same amount of time is also spoken about by the Apostle John in Revelation: “Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread underfoot the holy city for **forty-two months**. “And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for **twelve hundred and sixty days**, clothed in sackcloth.” (Revelation 11:2-3 NASB. Forty-two months divided by 12 equals 3.5 years.)

The 1290 days mentioned in Daniel 12:11 is simply 1260 days with an intercalary month added. (An intercalary month, i.e., a leap month of 30 days.) The leap month may occur on any one of the above three “time” slots, to adjust the year so that the barley would be ripe before the start of the Spiritual Year, which sets the time of the Passover.

Why is the Length of the Prophetic Year Important?

It allows for the student of scripture to calculate with more certainty the timetable that Jehovah has for important events. For those that understood, it gave comfort that the terrible events that occurred under Papacy would come to an end at the end of 1260 years, just as Jehovah had promised. The believer still must go by faith as sometimes their expectations are not in accord with how Jehovah will bring it about.

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful” (Hebrews 10:23 NASB).

1260 Days

“A thousand two hundred and threescore days” (Revelation 11:3, 12:6).

On December 25th, much of the Christian world will celebrate the birth of the baby Jesus. It will be a time of gift giving, attending religious services and feasting with the family. It is also a time for believers around the world to have an opportunity to give a witness to friends and family the true significance of this world changing event.

The problem is that this is not the actual time of Jesus birth. The time of His crucifixion is clear, as it was at Passover, which Jewish people were required to keep each year to remind them of when Jehovah had brought them out of the land of Egypt. “Observe the month of Abib (Nisan) and celebrate the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night” (Deuteronomy 16:1 NASB). This day falls on the 15th Nisan with the eating of the Passover lamb which had been killed on the 14th Nisan in the evening.

It requires much more research to find out the time when Jesus was born.

The 1260 days

The 1260 days in Daniel helps the Bible student to calculate the approximate time of year of Christ's birth and importantly the time of His baptism and thus the start of His ministry?

The clues are found in the ninth chapter of Daniel.

“Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate” (Daniel 9:24-27 NASB).

The word translated “weeks” is the Hebrew word *shâbûa'* means “literally *sevened*, that is, a week (specifically of years): — seven, week” (Strong's Concordance). So this gives the meaning of “Seventy sevens” as 490 years. Daniel was told that the 70 years of Babylonian captivity was about to expire and

what lay ahead for the Jewish people. One thought for verse 25 is that it took 7 weeks (49 years) to rebuild the city, followed by 62 weeks (434 years) a total of 483 years before the coming of the Messiah. Again, the thought is not the time of His birth but the time of His baptism, the start of His ministry which then fits with the statement “being cut off in the middle of the week,” that is three and half years.

Christ's Birth

The fact of Jesus coming to the Jordan for his baptism at age 30 means that his birth was also close to the time of the Atonement Day and the Feast of Tabernacles. The Apostle John could also have alluded to this in John 1:14 “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us,” The “dwelt” among us is the word tabernacle, which would be fitting for the arrival of Jesus during the Feast of Tabernacles.

Christ's Baptism

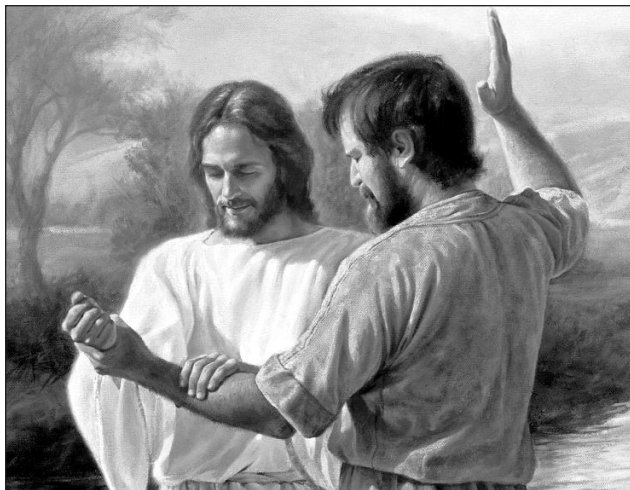
Knowing the exact time of Christ's death means by going back three and a half years the time of His baptism occurred around September/October. This time is very significant to the Jewish people as it lines up with the time of the Atonement and Sukkot — Feast of Tabernacles.

The Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27-28), occurs once a year on the tenth day of Tishri, the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. The Feast of Tabernacles (Deuteronomy 16:13) takes place on the 15th of the Hebrew month Tishri. This seventh month on the Hebrew calendar occurs in late September to mid-October, at the time the fall harvest had just been completed. It is highly likely that Christ's Baptism at 30 years of age fell between the Atonement Day and the Feast of the Tabernacles.

John the Baptist was six months older than Jesus, so his ministry would have started around the beginning of the ecclesiastical year at age 30. The purpose of his ministry was to prepare the way for Jesus' ministry. He was calling the Jewish people to come to repentance and to renew their covenant with Jehovah.

The arrival of Jesus at Jordan to be baptised caused a problem for John, as recorded by Matthew. “John protested strenuously, having in mind to prevent Him, saying, it is I who have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” (Matthew 3:14 AMP).

John realised that Jesus was perfect and thus did not need to repent to come back into harmony with His Father. His baptism had another purpose and so “Jesus answering said to him, ‘Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he permitted Him. After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water;



Jesus, baptized by John

and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased' " (Matthew 3:15-16 NASB).

The Purpose of His Baptism

Jesus baptism signified the laying down of His life, the everlasting life available to Him because of his perfect obedience to the law. His Heavenly Father could not justly take His life, so Christ had to lay it down. This is recorded by the Apostle John "I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative" (John 10:17-18 NASB).

This was the start of Jesus' three-and-a-half-year journey to Calvary. This journey had several purposes.

- The testing of Jesus by Satan to try to get Him to use His powers for His own benefit (Matthew 4:1-11).
- The calling out of the Apostles which would become the pillars of the early Church (Matthew 4:18-22).
- To use the healing powers that He received from His Father to demonstrate his miraculous powers now and as a foretaste of what would be achieved during the millennial age (Isaiah 35:5-6).
- To preach the word of God to the Lost Sheep of Israel (Matthew 15:24).
- His purpose was not to condemn the world but to save it (John 3:16-17, John 12:47).
- To condemn the religious leaders of the time for stopping the people from understanding the Kingdom message (Matthew 23:13).

These three-and-a half years had a purpose, not only the climax at Calvary but also as part of the training Christ needed to become the mediator for the world during the Millennial Age. Not only will He be King but also, He will be a High Priest "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:15-16 NASB).

Let the true believe remember to take up his cross and follow the example of Christ during his life on earth. To lay aside the gift of a sure resurrection on this earth and to take up the offer of the high calling with the offer that if faithful until death, like Paul, there is a Spiritual Crown of life laid up for all overcomers.

William Tyndale's Bible

"The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword ... a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

Tyndale's Life

William Tyndale was born c 1491-1494 most likely in Gloucestershire, England. Although little is known of his early years he was to become one of the fathers of the reformation and as influential on the English language as Shakespeare.

In the early 1500's he began his studies at Oxford University, at Magdalen Hall, where in 1512 he received his Bachelor of Arts. In 1515 he was awarded his master's Degree and was also ordained as a Priest in London.

Tyndale was fluent in eight languages (Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Spanish, French, German, Italian and English) and was said to speak them all with such skill that he sounded like a native speaker.

It was this gift for languages that led him to read Erasmus' Greek New Testament (*Novum Instrumentum Omne*), published in 1516, in which he came across the doctrine of justification by faith.

In the early 1520s he worked as a tutor for the children of Sir John Walsh at their home, Sodbury Manor, in Gloucestershire. During this time, he furthered his studies and set his mind to writing an English translation of the Bible, possibly influenced by Martin Luther publishing the New Testament in German.

Starting the Work

In 1523 he travelled to London to request support from the bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall, to

commence translating the New Testament. The Bishop turned down this request as it was deemed heretical by the church, however news had spread of his plans to Humphrey Monmouth, a Merchant, who agreed to give him board and lodging in order for him to continue his work.

He remained in London for 6 months where he tried, in vain, to find somewhere to print his work. One of the clergymen in opposition to him stated “we are better to be without God’s laws than the pope’s” to which he replied “I defy the Pope and all his laws. If God spare my life ere many years, I will cause the boy that drives the plow to know more of the scriptures than you!”

Aside from being considered a heresy to translate the Bible into any language other than Latin or French it was also seen as unpopular amongst the English people due to Wycliffe’s translation of the Bible into middle English in the 14th century being associated with a group of reformers known as the Lollards, which ultimately lead to the ruling in 1408 that no translation of the Bible was to be made without prior consent from the church.

The Move to Germany

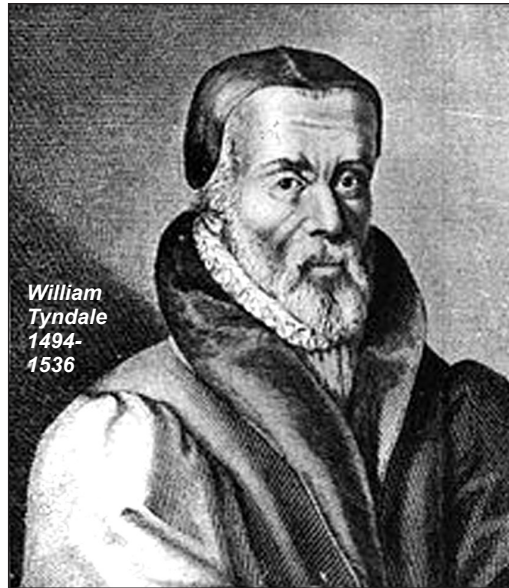
Fearing for his safety and unable to find a printer willing to print his work he decided to travel to Germany in early 1524 in the hopes of completing his translation in hiding and being more likely to find someone willing to print it, given Martin Luther’s success. No doubt his skills in speaking German greatly aided him during this time.

He is believed to have sought assistance in Wittenberg from Martin Luther to continue translation of the New Testament, which he completed in 1525.

He then travelled to Cologne to commence printing, however it was here that word got out of his work and he was forced to flee to Worm where he completed the project whilst in hiding in 1526 using the Guttenberg printing press.

The Use of the Printing Press

The use of the press, rather than being handwritten, meant they were able to print it on thinner paper with smaller font, producing a small, lightweight pocket-book that was more easily smuggled into England. It soon made it into the hands of the King and other authorities, such as Sir Thomas More who was so enraged he said it was “not worthy to be called Christ’s Testament, but either Tyndale’s own Testament or the Testament of his master, the Antichrist”. They burned his book at St. Paul’s cross and he was formerly accused of heresy.



This forced him to go deeper into hiding to commence his work translating the Old Testament. It is not certain where he was during this time, however in 1529 he went to Antwerp where he printed his translation of the Pentateuch in 1530 and the book of Jonah in 1531.

Attempts were made to convince him to return to England, however he knew how dangerous this would be as the news had spread that the men who were supporting his work by smuggling it into England and distributing it were being burned to death and others, including Humphrey

Monmouth, had been called in for questioning in an attempt to locate him.

Tyndale’s Betrayal

He remained in hiding and continued to revise his New Testament and continued his work translating the Old Testament books. He translated Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel I and II, Kings I and II, Chronicles I and II, however they were never published. In the Spring of 1535 he was betrayed by his friend, Henry Phillips, who was experiencing financial trouble and was believed to have been paid to tell the authorities where to find him. This ultimately lead to his arrest and incarceration in Vilvoorde Castle, near Brussels, where he remained for 18 months. On the 6th of October 1536 he was convicted of heresy and treason and was put to death by being strangled and burned at the stake.

His last words were said to have been “**Lord, open the King of England’s eyes**”. His prayer was answered in 1539 when King Henry VIII published the English “Great Bible”, which was based on Tyndale’s work.

His Legacy

Although he did not complete or publish his Old Testament translation the work, what he had done was influential in the Matthew Bible printed in 1537 and has been the basis for all English Bible translations, including the King James version of 1611. He also printed many of his own books about his understanding of the Bible and some that were speaking out against the teachings of the church.

His wording of the scriptures was so powerful, with phrases such as ‘Let there be light’, ‘fight the good fight’, ‘a law unto themselves’, ‘the signs of the times’, ‘the powers that be’ and many more, that they have shaped the English language and are found in many subsequent English translations of the Bible. They endure in our minds, bringing to life the message of the Bible.

Preach the Word: Doctrine

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2).

Paul instructed Timothy when he was commissioned with the responsibility of correcting the brethren in Ephesus, who had “gone after their own lusts”, to rebuke and exhort them. Timothy was to approach “preaching the word” in a way that would achieve the best result for the brethren involved, which would require perseverance and doctrine.

The word translated “doctrine” in the verse is the Greek word *didache*, G1322, which would be better translated “teaching”. Weymouth translates the word as “teacher”, while the NIV translates it as “careful instruction”. Paul uses a different Greek word in 2 Timothy 3:16 (KJV), “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:” In this verse the Greek word is *didascalía*, G1319, meaning “what one receives” while in the verse under consideration the meaning is “what is communicated” (Tittmann).

Paul knew that the road ahead would be difficult, but he had faith in Timothy’s ability to teach what was right, true and full of hope, to accompany his words of rebuke. Not only were his words to agree with the doctrines of Christ, but they also had to be profitable to the hearers of his words.

There are those who profess to have a great knowledge of the Bible, who have studied for many years and therefore claim that they are the ones who should be given the position of teachers of the flock. In 1 Timothy 3:2 Paul sets out the qualifications of an overseer or bishop of the church. One of the qualifications is “apt to teach”. Adam Clarke comments “one capable of teaching; not only wise himself, but ready to communicate his wisdom to others. One whose delight is, to instruct the ignorant and those who are out of the way.” Brother Russell adds that a teacher needs the “Ability to impart the truth to others in its own power and simplicity (not necessarily an orator)” (R1720:5).

Paul understood the importance of teaching the doctrines of Christ and gave Timothy instructions in 2 Timothy 2:14-26. The following are some of the main points:

- **“Not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers.”** — Paul spoke of this in the first epistle stating “If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in

controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions” (1 Timothy 6:3-4 NASB).

- **“Accurately handling the word of truth.”** — Matthew Henry writes “Not to invent a new gospel, but rightly to divide the gospel that is committed to their trust. To speak terror to those to whom terror belongs, comfort to whom comfort; to give everyone his portion in due season, Matthew 24:45.

- **“Men who have gone astray from the truth”** — Teachers need to constantly check that they have not strayed from the truth as expounded by the word of God. This is especially important when dealing with those who are new to the truth, “babes in Christ,” still formulating their beliefs as Paul warns that this can “upset the faith of some.”

- **“The firm foundation of God stands”** — Paul assures Timothy with these words that during trials and difficulties some may be led astray yet the foundation of the church which God had laid remains firm. “Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:20). As long as this foundation remained firm, there was no reason to be discouraged by the few who teach misleading errors from time to time.

- **“The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome”** — The verse continues “but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition.” It is fitting that the title bond-servant should be used where gentleness and patience are encouraged, as this was always the master’s approach. The Lord’s servant must contend for the truth, but not be contentious or argumentative. He must be gentle to all and approach the brethren with the purpose of instructing them rather than winning an argument. He must be patient with those who are slow to understand and even with those who do not seem disposed to accept the truth of God’s word. The Lord’s bondservant must exercise meekness and humility in dealing with opposition.

The Purpose of Teaching

Paul states in the next two verses the need for rightly dividing the truth and the need for care in teaching the Gospel of Christ. “For a time is coming when they will not tolerate wholesome instruction, but, wanting to have their ears tickled, they will find a multitude of teachers to satisfy their own fancies; and will turn away from listening to the truth and will turn aside to fables” (2 Timothy 4:3-4 WNT).



Paul, on ship

Treasures of the Truth

The Berean Bible Institute Inc. is pleased to offer a FREE copy of the Dawn Publication book *Treasures of the Truth*. The book looks at the hidden “treasures of darkness” written by the Prophet Isaiah long ago. They had been purposely hidden by Jehovah until the due time for their fulfillment. These riches were concealed from the worldly wise for centuries but are now unsealed and made known to God’s people at the end of the present Gospel Age.

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The Bible Teachings

On the Covenants, Mediator, Ransom, Sin Offering and Atonement.

This book was published by the Berean Bible Institute during the 1970’s and set out the teachings from the Bible on topics which so eluded many in the Christian world. The insert in this edition of the Peoples Paper covers the first 20 pages of this 274-page book. For Brethren who would like to read more of the content it is available through the Berean Bible Institute’s official webpage.

www.australianbiblestudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/The-Bible-Teachings-on-the-Covenants2.pdf

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Publisher of “The Dawn” Magazine
<http://dawnbible.com/content.htm>

Pastoral Bible Institute

Publisher of “The Herald of Christ’s Kingdom”
<https://herald-magazine.com/>

Bible Fellowship Union

Publisher of the “Bible Study Monthly”
<http://www.biblefellowshipunion.co.uk>

Conventions

Berean Bible Students Convention

January 25-28, 2019
Camp Wilkin
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Sydney Convention

March 8-10, 2019
Wesley Vision Valley
7 Vision Valley Road, Arcadia, NSW
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Dawn Pilgrim Visit 2019

The Dawn Bible Students Association has announced that they are sending two elders on a pilgrim visit to Australia in 2019. Br Byron and Sr Margie Keith are being joined by Br Michael and Sr Vicky Balko in coming to Australia. The draft itinerary is as follows:

- Arriving Brisbane January 9th
- January 10th Day visit to the Nambour Area
- January 12th to 13th Meeting in Brisbane
- January 14th Gold Coast
- January 18th Morrisett
- January 19th to 20th Meeting in Sydney
- January 25th to 28th Anglesea Convention
- February 2nd to 3rd Melbourne Polish meeting
- Depart for the USA February 4th

They are looking forward to having a blessed time with the Brethren as well as enjoying the sights of the Heavenly Father’s creation. For further information:
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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord’s Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

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Preface

The great importance of a definite knowledge of the Covenants, Ransom, Mediator, Sin-Offering and Atonement, in gaining a full appreciation of the outworking of God's wonderful plan of salvation, and the advantage of having the Scripture teachings on these doctrines available in handy form, the previous volume of this nature being continually sought after but no longer procurable, is the object of this publication.

It would seem that at no time in recent years has there been greater necessity for the brethren to have their minds continually refreshed on these truths, which embrace so much of the deep things of God — meat in due season for the Lord's household (Hebrews 5:14). So many have let these precious things slip and corresponding loss of spiritual growth has been the result. The Apostle's advice to Timothy seems so timely — "Meditate upon these things; give thyself

wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed to thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and those that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:15,16).

While quite an amount of repetition of thoughts will be noticed in this work, nothing has been omitted on that account; the repeated explanation of a truth from different standpoints and in varied expression should prove of benefit to all. The personal references, however, are omitted, as these are not now required. All readers are advised to prove all things for themselves from God's Word.

It is with the prayer that all who read and study this work may receive much blessing, refreshing and spiritual upbuilding from the truths of God's Word, revealed through the late author of this compilation, that this book is sent forth on its mission in the service of the Lord. — *Berean Bible Institute, Australia*

The Ransom and the Sin-Offering

Ransom-Price the Valuable Thing

"The Ransom-Price relates to the valuable thing itself; namely, the blood or death of Christ — a ransom sufficient for the payment of the penalty of one member of the human family or of all, as it may be applied" (Z 1909-309).

Ransom Re Man's Recovery a Redemption

The Ransom work views the matter of man's recovery from sin and death as a purchase — a Redemption. The basis of this thought is the Divine law, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a man's life for a man's life" (Deuteronomy 19:21). Adam and his entire race of thousands of millions are in dire distress through sin and its penalty. God has provided a recovery by a Ransom process — purchasing back from their fallen condition.

Redemption of Humanity Means Not a Life for Each Life

Our first thought naturally would be that to redeem or purchase back, the right of humanity to life, would mean that each member of Adam's race must be purchased by the life of another person, holy, harmless, unsentenced. But looking deeply into God's Plan we find that only one man was tried before the Divine Court — namely, Father Adam; that only Adam was sentenced to death; and that all of his children go into death, not because of their individual trial and death, but simply because Adam, having failed to maintain his

perfection, was unable to give his children more life or rights than he possessed. And so it has been throughout the entire period of six thousand years from the time of Father Adam's sentence until now.

Economic Feature of God's Plan

Here we see a wonderful economic feature connected with the Divine Plan. God would not permit more than one member of the human race to be tried and sentenced to death; for His purpose from the beginning was that the sacrifice of one life should redeem the entire human race. By one man the whole trouble came; by another Man the whole trouble will be rectified. This the Apostle points out, saying, "As by a man came death, by a man comes also the resurrection of the dead; for as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ will be made alive — every man in his own order" (1 Corinthians 15:21-23).

Value of Jesus' Life Included All of Adam's Posterity

Thus we see the value of Jesus' death — that it was not merely for Adam, but included all his posterity. We see, too, how necessary it was that Jesus must be "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners"; otherwise He, like the remainder of the race, would have been under a Divine death sentence. Because all of Adam's race were involved in sin and its penalty it was necessary to find an outsider to be the world's redeemer; and that outsider, whether angel, cherub, or the great Michael Himself, the Logos, must exchange

the spirit nature for the human nature in order to be a corresponding price — a Ransom for the first man.

Why Logos Left Throne of Glory

It was not a God that sinned; hence the death of a God could not redeem. It was not a cherub that sinned; hence the death of a cherub could not redeem. It was a man who sinned, and the ransom for him must be furnished by the death of a man. It was for this cause that the great Logos, in carrying out the Divine Plan for human redemption, left the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, humbled Himself and became a man, “was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour (the perfection of human nature); that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man” (Hebrews 2:9).

Ransom Price and Ransom Work

If we have established clearly what a ransom is, and that Jesus was the only One suitable to be a Ransom for Father Adam, our next point is to show from the-Bible that He did give Himself as a Ransom. We have the word of Jesus Himself on the subject (Matthew 20:28); and also St. Paul’s testimony, “the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a Ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Timothy 2:6). This proves, that the giving of the price sufficient to ransom Adam and all his race was accomplished in Jesus’ death at Calvary.

Ransom-Price vs. Ransom-Work

But the work of ransoming Adam and his race is much more than merely the providing of the Ransom-price. The thought connected with the word Ransom goes beyond the mere giving and appropriating of the price. It includes the recovery of Adam and his race from the power of sin and death. Manifestly, this work has not yet been accomplished; indeed, it has scarcely begun. The only disposition thus far of the Ransom, the merit, has been its imputation to the Church, and this only by faith. The Church is not yet glorified as a whole — not yet delivered from the power of sin and death completely. Manifestly, then, it will require the entire thousand years of Messiah’s Kingdom to ransom, to deliver, to set free, from the power of sin and death, Adam and all his children. Consequently, the Ransom work, which began more than eighteen centuries ago, is still to be accomplished.

Ransom-Price in Hands of Justice Nineteen Centuries

There is no difficulty about the Ransom-price; for that price has been in the hands of Justice for nearly nineteen centuries. But it has been unapplied as respects the world and only imputed to the Church that has been called out from the world during this Gospel Age. The full completion of the Ransoming work will include what the Bible speaks of, saying, “I will ransom them from the power of the grave” (Hosea 13:14). Nor will the Ransoming work be fully accomplished when the last member of the race has been delivered from the power of the grave; for, there will still be a great resurrection work to be done — a raising up out of imperfection of mind, morals and physique, to the

full image and likeness of God, lost through Adam’s disobedience and redeemed by the precious blood at Calvary.

The Sin-Offering Is Different

With the thought of the Ransom before our minds, we now investigate the subject of the Sin-Offering, remembering to keep the two subjects separate and distinct. “The Sin-Offering shows the manner in which the Ransom-price is applicable or effective, to the cancellation of the sins of the whole world” (Z 1909-309). The Sin-Offering does not require so long a time for its accomplishment as does the Ransom. We have already seen that the Ransoming work has been in progress nearly nineteen centuries and will be in progress nearly ten centuries in the future, or a total of twenty-nine centuries. But the Sin-Offering will all be completed before the glorious Reign of Christ begins, His Church then being with Him in glory.

Ransom-Price and Atonement Sacrifice Different Pictures of Same Thing

The Sin-Offering of Israel’s Atonement Day shows us the same sacrifice of Jesus which constitutes the Ransom-price, but it is a different picture; for it shows how God appropriates the merit of Christ on behalf of human sins. This matter was pictured in that feature of the Law which provided the Day of Atonement. The sin-offerings were its principal feature. There were two. First was the bullock of sin offering, which was furnished by the priest himself, the blood of which was made applicable to the priest’s own family and tribe. This we see represented the death of Jesus, and the primary imputation of His merit to the Church of the First-borns.

The Church Willing Sacrificers

This Church consists of two classes. First, is the priestly class, who, like the High Priest, are especially devoted to God and His service, who “present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, their reasonable service” (Romans 12:1). In the type these were pictured both by Aaron’s sons and by the body of Aaron, he being the head. Thus the Apostle speaks of Christ as being the Head of the Church, which is His Body, we being “members in particular of the Body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:27).

The Great Company Unwilling Sacrificers

Second, there is the other class of the Church which, although making the same Covenant of Sacrifice, fail to go on obediently to lay down their lives in the Lord’s service. They do not draw back to sin and to death, but neither do they go on to the sacrificing stage; hence they constitute a secondary class, servants of the first class. These were typified in the Levites, who were the servants of the priests. These are not to be on the Throne with the sacrificing Priests, the Royal Priesthood, but are to serve God in His Temple. They are not to have crowns of glory but will be granted, eventually, palms of victory. And all not found worthy of a place in either of these classes will die the Second Death.

Special Imputation of Christ's Merit

In this picture the Lord shows us a special imputation of the merit of Jesus for the sins of His consecrated people only; and that these, justified by the merit of Jesus, are thus qualified through His merit to be sharers with Him in His glorious priestly functions.

The Secondary Sin-Offering

The secondary Sin-Offering of the typical Atonement day was called the Lord's Goat. It was not provided by the typical High Priest, as was the bullock, but was taken from the people. Indeed, two goats were taken at the same time, as representing the two classes of the Church. The sacrificing class or priestly class were represented by the lord's goat. The less zealous of the Church, the antitypical Levites, were represented in the second goat — the Scape Goat. It was the lord's Goat class, the under priesthood, that constituted the secondary Sin-Offering.

Church Follows Jesus Sacrificially

The account says that the Lord's Goat was sacrificed and was in every way dealt with in precisely the same manner as the bullock, which preceded it. Thus the type tells us that the Church must walk in the footsteps of her Lord, sacrificially even unto death. We should remember that the blood of the bullock was not applied for the sins of the people, but merely for the sins of the high priest's family and tribe — typically for the Church. We should also notice that this secondary Sin-Offering, the Lord's Goat, was not offered for the same persons; for they needed no further offering. It was offered by the high priest as a secondary part of his own original offering; and its merit was made applicable to all the people, to bring atonement to all.

Type and Antitype Agree Re Jesus Appearing for Church

In the antitype of the Sin-Offering the High Priest, Jesus, completed His own personal Sacrifice at Calvary. Forty days later He ascended up on High, and appeared before the Mercy Seat and presented the merit of His sacrifice, not for the world, but for the Church. As the Apostle writes, "He appeared in the presence of God for us," the Church — not the world (Hebrews 9:24). This is in full accord with what we have just seen in the type.

Jesus to Present Blood of Goat as His Own

Ever since Pentecost the Lord has been accepting the consecrated persons represented in the two goats; and those sufficiently zealous He has accepted as His members and has been offering them up as a part of His own Sacrifice. Soon He will have finished this work — when the last member of His Body shall have been found faithful unto death. The next step in the antitype will be for the High Priest then to present again at the Mercy Seat the blood of the antitypical Lord's Goat as His own blood — otherwise, the sacrifice of His Church as a part of His own Sacrifice. This He makes applicable to the sin of all the people — the original sin of all the people.

All Peoples to be Turned Over Soon to Jesus

At that moment, which we believe is in the near

future now, the Father will turn over to the Son all the people their sins fully forgiven as far as the original transgressions is concerned. Forth with the Messiah's Kingdom, established in power and great glory, will begin to deal with the world for its rescue from sin and death, for the ultimate uplift to human perfection of all who are willing and obedient to the regulations of His Kingdom.

Punishment for Sins Against Light

Meantime, there will be other sins of the world not included in the Adamic transgression. The Sin-Offerings are merely for Adam's sin and all the various weaknesses and imperfections which flow from that original sin. The other sins will be such as are not to be attributed to human weakness, but which represent more or less of sin against knowledge, against light. Full, wilful sin against full light would bring upon the sinner the Second death. But only a few have had full light, full knowledge, full opportunity; and hence very few indeed will have sinned unto death.

Light, Knowledge and Responsibility Go Hand in Hand

Wherever the light of the Gospel has gone, however, a certain measure of knowledge has gone, and a certain measure of responsibility accrues; and God intimates that He keeps a very exact accounting with all. Every sin must receive a just recompense of reward. The penalty of Adam's sin has reached down in a general way over the whole race for six thousand years; but the penalty must be paid for the other sins of which we speak, sins which were more or less wilful, more or less against light and knowledge and which have not been previously expiated, but which have accumulated ever since Pentecost.

World's Accounts Squared Before New Dispensation

Before the new dispensation can rightly be ushered in with all its blessings, the world's accounts must be fully squared. It will be the settlement of these accounts against the world which will bring the great Time of Trouble such as never was since there was a nation — the Time of Trouble, which we believe is at hand and which will progress until the great catastrophe of anarchy will complete it in the near future. Then the accounts of Justice having been squared in that great Time of Trouble, the blessings of Messiah's Kingdom will immediately begin.

The Value of the Scape Goat's Suffering

However, God is a very strict Accountant. As He is sure to count against the world all wilful disobedience, and especially all persecutions of His Church, so also He is willing to give the world credit on account wherever possible.

This, we believe, is intimated in the picture given us of a work which followed the Sin-Offerings; namely, the confessing over the head of the scape goat certain transgressions of the people, and the sending away of the scape goat into the wilderness.

Tribulation on Scape-Goat for Destruction of Flesh

Understanding that this scape goat represents some of God's consecrated people who have failed to live up

to their privileges, we understand this to signify that these go into a great Time of Trouble, as represented in Revelation 7:14. There they are represented as coming up out of great tribulation and washing their robes and making them white in the Blood of the Lamb. Those tribulations coming upon the Great Company class, the Levite class, are not tribulations for wilful sins, but tribulations for the destruction of the flesh, in harmony with the Covenant entered into by this class, a Covenant of Sacrifice, which they failed to keep. The sufferings of this Great Company class, we understand, therefore, go as a credit to the world to square the account of the world's sins against light and especially against God's people. The Time of Trouble will be especially against the hypocrites, but the Great Company Class have their portion with the hypocrites and bear a certain share of punishment due the world.

Character of Sins for Which World Is Responsible

That we may clearly note the character of sins for which the world is held responsible, let us recall the statement of Revelation 6:9-11, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? and white robes were given unto them"; and they were told that they should wait "a little season," until their brethren, who also were persecuted, should have the persecutions accomplished in them.

Divine Requirements at End of Jewish and Gospel Ages

Thus the same idea respecting the Divine requirements in the end of the Gospel Age is given to us that Jesus specified in regard to the Jews in the end of their Age. He said that all righteous blood shed on the earth from the time of Abel down, would be required of that generation — to square the accounts (Matthew 25:34-36). In the great time of trouble with which the Jewish Age ended, those accounts were squared up to that time. Similarly, we expect that all the remaining accounts of the world will be squared during the culmination of the great Time of Trouble — just before us.

The Inauguration of the New Covenant

The Apostle, in contrasting the typical and the antitypical Sin-Offering, declares that Jesus, not by the blood of bulls and of goats, but by His own blood, accomplishes the blessings (Hebrews 9:11-15). And again, the sacrifices of the antitypical High Priest are styled the "better sacrifices" — in the plural. This points us back to the institution of the "Jewish Covenant arrangement, where Moses took the blood of bulls and goats and inaugurated the Law of Covenant, sprinkling first the Tables of the Law, and afterwards the people, with the blood (Exodus 24:3-6).

Much People Sprinkled by Moses Required Many Animals

The question arises, why did Moses use the blood of bulls plural — and of goats plural — whereas in the type of Leviticus 16 the blood of one bullock and the blood of one goat alone was used? We reply that there

was really but the one antitypical bullock, the one-Man Christ Jesus who died for us; and that there is really but one antitypical Goat, the one Church, which is accepted by the Lord as His Body, and is associated with, and part of, His sacrifice. But in the inauguration of the Law Covenant, more than one animal of each kind was necessary because of the multitudes of the people of Israel who were to be sprinkled with that blood. The blood of one bullock and of one goat would not have been sufficient; hence the statement, bulls and goats — in the plural — and yet not definitely stated as to how many; for it was really the one bullock and the one goat duplicated as many times as was necessary to provide a sufficiency of blood for the sprinkling of all the people.

Antitypical Sprinkling of Law and People

In the antitype, when the New Law Covenant will be inaugurated by Messiah's Kingdom, the blood of Christ, as represented in the blood of Jesus and also in that of His associated sacrifice, the Church, will be used in sprinkling or satisfying the Divine Law, first of all. This will be the basis for the turning over, to the Kingdom of Messiah, of the whole world by the Father. Then will progress the work of sprinkling all the people with the blood — the work of cleansing mankind — giving all men the benefits secured by the redeeming blood.

The Antitypical Atonement Day

We trust that from the foregoing all will see clearly the distinction between the Ransom which Jesus gave and its application; and the Sin-Offerings of this Gospel Age and what they signify. We wish now to impress a further point; namely, that the Sin-Offerings were associated with the Day of Atonement for sin in the type and in the antitype. The anti-typical Day of Atonement began with our lord Jesus and His sacrifices. The entire Gospel Age has been a part of this Day of Atonement. This Day will witness the full completion of all the sin atonement and more; for all of the Millennial Age will be a part of the antitypical Atonement Day.

Atonement Day Sacrifices Merely a Means to an End

The sacrifices of the Day of Atonement are merely the means to an end. The end to be attained is the blessing of the world, and the bringing of the world back to at-one-ment or harmony, with God. That work will require all of the Millennial Age. It will include the teaching of the world, the restoration of mankind to all that was lost in Adam and redeemed at Calvary. The Sin-Offerings of the Atonement Day merely represented God's Purpose in the use of the Sacrifices which must be completed before the world's at-one-ment with God can begin to go into effect.

Clear Distinction Between Sin-Offerings and Ransom

So, then, let us hope that all will henceforth see clearly that the Sin-Offering of the Atonement Day and its Sacrifices constitute a picture of the processes by which God accomplishes the world's blessings; while the Ransom is entirely distinct, and shows the work of Jesus alone and its ultimate effect for mankind throughout the whole wide world (Z 1916-87).