

THE WORD AND WORK

(Volume XXXIX, October, 1945)

COME, LORD

The whole creation groans,
And waits to hear that voice
That shall restore her comeliness
And make her wastes rejoice.

Come Lord and wipe away
The curse, the sin, the stain,
And make this blighted world of ours
Thine own fair world again.

—Horatius Bonar.

WORDS IN SEASON

R. H. B.

THE ELECTION OF GRACE

In Romans 11:5 Paul speaks of "a remnant according to the election of grace." And he adds "if it is by grace it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace." (Rom. 11:6.) That is, the election is not on the basis of personal merit, worthiness, and desert, but by the choice and call of God. This forestalls the idea that only a few extraordinary characters can hope to belong to the elect remnant; but (as in 1 Cor. 1:26f.) the principle of God's choice is that "not many wise," "not many mighty," "not many noble" are called; but that "the foolish things," the "weak things," the "base things" are chosen, "that no flesh should glory before God." The great mistake about "election" has always been due to the fact that men have not been able to separate the doctrine from fatalism on the one hand; and on the other they have brought it into conflict with the worldwideness of God's love, and God's desire that all men should be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). Also they have never been able to harmonize "God's sovereignty" and "man's free agency." So in the natural way of our limited minds, we have taken hold of one side of the truth and explained the other away. And how well men can do that! How completely and proudly each side could vanquish the other! But the child of God does not need to take partisan side, on this or any other Bible doctrine. All God has said is good and true to the believer. If we can harmonize the various state-

ments it is well; if not, we do still believe them, and still preach and teach them as they stand.

If your views of "election," or "predestination," relieve you of responsibility—either in the matter of your own earnest and faithful acceptance of the gospel, or as to your preaching of the gospel to all men—you may be sure your view of it is wrong. Whatever the sovereign choice of God may be, we must teach and preach the gospel to all, and the sinner must believe and obey it, as though there were no such thing. This question does not enter into the matter of a man's individual acceptance of salvation at all; nor does it relieve any man of the necessity of obedience and watchfulness, nor for his concern for others. And most especially should it not be concluded that any man has ever been predestinated to be lost. For God was never willing that any should perish but would have all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

But after you have come to God, upon your own free acceptance of His gracious invitation ("him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out")—if you think a bit, it may dawn on you that (unless you think it all accidental) God has in some ways given you some very extraordinary help and opportunity—has directed your way, has borne with you, has blessed you in many ways, drawn you, and that (apparently at least) as He has blessed few others. Perhaps you may come to realize that though you chose, it must have been because you had before been chosen. If you should ask yourself *why*—you will never be able to figure it out: one thing is certain—that it was not because in any wise you deserved it. The grace of God will seem wonderful and precious to you; and the realization that back of all your choosing, believing, obeying, back of all your life is the mighty purpose of God who began a good work in you and will finish it unto the day of redemption—that thought will be a strength to you in your utmost need. Then if that creates a deeper sense of gratitude and an all-the-greater sense of responsibility to lay hold on that for which you were laid hold on by Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:12) and prompts you to give diligence to "make your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10) it is well—you have then rightly understood the doctrine of election.

GOD'S ELECT

People get confused over the fact that God is not a respecter of persons, yet has chosen certain ones above others to special advantages and blessings. But an even slight examination of the Bible reveals the fact that He evidently has always done so. He chose Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their seed after them. In the New Testament He chose apostles, most notably Paul; and often He spoke of His sheep, His people, yea, of "children of God," although as yet they had never known the Lord. Before getting too much puzzled over *how* that can

be, note clearly first the fact that so it is. The "what" always comes before the "how"; the fact before the explanation. Many deny the *fact* because they cannot square it with what they know, or think they know. This shuts the door to all further light. In the study of God's word it is good to discern first and hold to the facts presented. The explanation, if any, can wait.

Some have thought to cut the knot by saying: "God is not a respecter of persons, but He is a respecter of character." Granting that this may often have seemed to be the case, it does not explain God's principle of election. Oftener than not we can see no antecedent excellence or merit in the chosen ones of God. Abraham's one commendation was not that he was a great good man but that he believed God. Nor have we any reason to conclude that others would not have responded as whole-heartedly if God had revealed Himself to them as He did to Abraham. In Isaac we fail to see any outstanding virtues; and Jacob was not a better man, as men go, than Esau—in some respects not as good. The word of God forestalls any such conclusion as that Jacob was in himself worthier than Esau; for in response to their mother's inquiry of God—"the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil that the purpose of God according to election might stand—not of works but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated." (Rom. 9:11.)

"What shall we say then?" adds Paul—"Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid." If He were minded to do us a wrong we would not be able to help ourselves: we would have no come-back whatever, for His power is absolute. But He never will or can do any human being an injustice. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5.) So likewise Israel, God's elect nation, was not chosen as a nation because of any goodness or merit which they possessed (see Deut. 7:6-8; 9:4-6, 24; and 10:15). The New Testament leaders also, except for the electing grace of God would have been men of the common sort, in no way different from all other sinners. And we could hardly think that if Christ had appeared to any other hot-headed rabbi as He did to Saul on the road to Damascus that such a one would not have turned to Christ as Saul did. But He did not so reveal Himself to any other, either before or after. Such are the ways of God and who can stay His hand or say to Him, What doest thou?

WHAT MEN ARE ELECTED FOR

No man ever lights a candle for its own sake. When God bestowed upon any man or group of men special grace He always had a purpose beyond that man's own (or that group's own) blessing. He called Abraham, spoke to him, entered into covenant with him, led and directed and taught and protected

and blessed him as He did no other man of his time—but at the same time stated his purpose: “In thee and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” If He chose Isaac; and if He chose Jacob above Esau for reasons all His own—not because of their personal merit (Rom. 9:11), it was that through them all the nations of men might be blessed. If God chose their seed after them, the people of Israel, it was not because they were more than any other nation, nor because they were more righteous, for they were a stiffnecked and rebellious generation from their beginning (see Deut. 7:6-8; 9:4-6, 24; 10:15; and Ezek. 20)—but that through them He might eventually reach all the world: as the Lord Jesus declared, and as it is this day, “salvation is from the Jews.” (John 4:22.) For God’s love was never less than world-wide. The apparent favoritism which He displays toward some is but His method of working for the blessing of all. In loving Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Israel, Simon Peter, John, Paul, so especially, He loved all the rest of us. God’s elect were not His particular pets—they were called to be His instruments, His burden-bearers, His martyrs and scape-goats. High was their calling, heavy their lot in life.

Moreover there was no getting out of it. Whether they would respond willingly or not was left with them—God does not force any man’s will. They may, like Jonah, seek to go to Tarshish when God sends them to Nineveh; or like disobedient Israel, try to be like other nations—but all in vain. (Ezek. 20:32.) Or they may, like Paul, gladly fall in with God’s will, and say “I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.” In either case they are to be used; “for the gifts and the calling of God are not repented of.” Rom. 11:29.

In one respect God’s elect are not to be envied; but in another how great are their advantages, and how happy and glorious is their position! On the one hand theirs is the severest discipline, the heaviest chastisement, and, if willfully disobedient, the most terrible retribution; on the other hand theirs is the highest opportunity and glory and blessing. In the very chapter that foretells Israel’s awful sufferings, God foretells also their final restoration and vindication (Deut. 32); and presently, in view of all that is to come, He exclaims, “Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, a people saved by Jehovah, the shield of thy help, and the sword of thy excellency!” (Deut. 33:29.) — If thou art a *Christian* today, be glad and thankful for you are one of God’s elect; yet rejoice with trembling and seek to fill by the grace of God, within your sphere, the high place and position to which He has called you. (Phil. 2:12, 13.)

“Wherefore, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.”—2 Peter 1:10.

NEWS AND NOTES

Davis City, Iowa: "We arrived home from Worth, Mo., Monday, September 24. Closed our meeting with the chapel well filled and brethren much encouraged. One man was restored. We plan to be back with them for more work later."—Wm. J. Campbell.

Fellowship and Liberty

A good brother says, "I received a copy of the Word and Work and enjoyed it very much. I do not hold to your views concerning the second coming of Christ, but I appreciate very much your attitude concerning fellowship."

We appreciate this fine expression from our good brother. It might interest this brother and others to know that an aged brother, whom we love for his work's sake, at one time asked for permission to speak in Portland Avenue Congregation where Brother Boll is minister, stating that he wished to set forth his views which were contrary to the way Brother Boll saw the prophecies. His request was granted and for three nights he spoke and was heard patiently by the congregation. Not a word of antagonism was spoken from the floor, and the brother was treated with kindness and courtesy before and after the meetings. This is a demonstration of the fact that such men as Brother Boll are willing to differ on the matters of prophecy and still to receive one another. But if any man is factious concerning these matters, pro or con, he will stir up trouble in the church and should not be encouraged. Those who are at agreement concerning fellowship should set an example before other brethren by fraternizing one another in an active way.

Two Revivals

The Camp Taylor, Kentucky, church is announcing a gospel meeting to begin Sunday, October 14. Orell Overman is to be the speaker from night to night. Attendance has been growing at the Camp Taylor church and the brethren hope for a good meeting.

R. B. Boyd is to return to the Highland church for another meet-

ing beginning the first Sunday in November. Those who are interested in hearing strong gospel messages should plan to attend this series of meetings.

Welcome to Our City

Brother Willis Allen is to begin regular work with the Shawnee church in Louisville the first Sunday in October. He succeeds Brother Claude Neal, who has labored with the church for twenty years. During his ministry a new building has been erected and several substantial members added to the membership of the church. Brother Neal has proven to be a very useful man of God among us, both as a faithful gospel preacher and as an educator in the Portland Christian High School. May the Lord, if He tarries, use him in His service for many years to come. The churches and preachers of Louisville welcome Brother Allen in our midst and pledge to him our love and cooperation.

Preachers' Meetings

Since last report there have been two meetings of preachers of the Louisville area. One was sponsored by the Alumni of the Portland Christian School and the other was the regular monthly meeting to which the alumni was invited. At each of these meetings the matter of modernizing and enlarging our beginning of education under Christian supervision was discussed. It was the consensus of opinion that the Lord was leading in the direction of a new building where our high school could be enlarged and better equipped and where a venture in college work could be launched. With this now as a definite program we feel that more hearts will be stirred to have a part in this worthy work through their prayers and gifts.

Two Radio Programs

Tune in WGRC each Sunday morning at 7:45 for a short devotional program. Various speakers have been bringing messages from week to week. "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find

love, which is shown by their works. This church has contributed to a it after many days," says the Preacher in the book of Ecclesiastes. Only God knows the good that may result from this means of preaching the Gospel. **Urgently needed funds may be sent in care of E. L. Jorgenson, 1061 Everett Avenue, Louisville 4, Kentucky.**

E. L. Jorgenson is speaking over WAVE each Wednesday afternoon at 1:45. He has gone to a great deal of expense and trouble to secure hymn recordings by select singers for this and other radio programs. During September his program opened and closed with these songs. However, the Council of Churches, under whose courtesy he has been invited to speak each week for six months, controls the music and may use a quartet of gospel singers in future programs. It was understood at the outset that our recordings would be needed only until the Council's live quartet was ready. Nevertheless Brother Jorgenson is free as to his messages, and therein only lies his responsibility. Send no money for this free time on the air.

Brother W. S. Hoar states that fine crowds attended the Linton, Indiana meeting with visitors from nearly all congregations in reach. Also he said that all appreciated the excellent messages brought by Brother Boll from night to night. The meeting was all too short.

Borden, Ind.: "The meeting at Alexandria, Louisiana, closed Sunday, September ninth. There were six baptized and one rededicated. Brother J. Edward Boyd of Maxwellville, Florida, led the singing and helped in general. Brother W. J. Johnson and Brother John Burgess who are in charge of the work were faithful and valuable supporters all through the meeting. Bro. Harry Prather and Fulton Curtis, with several local young people, canvassed the city with tracts and advertising matter.

"Seven were added to our number the last Sunday in September here at Borden."—F. S. Spaulding.

As we go to press Brother D. H. Friend is in a revival meeting at Waterford, Kentucky, where Brother Jack Stinnette is regular minis-

ter. The first week ended with five baptisms and unusually fine attendance reported.

Louisville, Ky.: "Our trip embracing sixteen states and two and one-half months ended in safety at home August 20. I preached in Dallas and Abilene, Texas; Escondido, Long Beach, and Hollywood, Calif.; Omaha, Nebr.; and Berea, Indiana. I met many preachers, heard some and observed work at various places. We found many brethren who have the forward look and strive for 'greater things for God.' Interest in things really spiritual is evidently on the increase. Dissatisfaction with husks for sustenance of the spiritual life, also is on the increase—a hopeful symptom.

"E. A. Rhodes and wife render needed service on behalf of the Lord for Japanese Christians. Brethren Phillips, Beam, et al., are to be commended for their cooperation with such faithful servants of God. We visited with the Harry Fox family; then enjoyed two days and nights with the Davises at Omaha, where we also visited co-laborers of olden times, E. E. Beck, wife and daughter, now of Lincoln,—a most enjoyable season. The Omaha work is blessed in having Lowell Davis serving there, and has bright prospects. We praise our Lord for a most enjoyable trip, and trust that beloved friends, relatives, old pupils, and we, may all serve Him better having been together."—Stanford Chambers.

Greenville, S. C.: "The churches of Christ in Greenville, and Duncan, S. C., enjoyed another visit from Bro. J. E. Blansett, evangelist of Dallas, Texas, and regular minister of that city.

of the Fair Park church of Christ

"Because of previous arrangement, Bro. Blansett spent only a little over a week here, which was all too short. He preached one time for the Judson church of Christ, and held a two weeks' meeting for the Duncan church. It was unusually well attended. Interest was good, and much good was done. There were four additions; three by baptism, and one restoration.

"The Duncan church, although small in number, is rich in faith and

number of works which it considers worthy, among which is the home mission fund begun by Bro. Robert B. Boyd of Johnson City, Tenn. The missionary-minded brethren and sisters of the Judson church are also regularly contributing to this work. May the Lord lead us on to even greater efforts for His glory."—Brady M. Green.

Johnson City, Tenn.: "Since our meeting with Bro. Mullins, there have been two responses to the invitation at our regular services, both for baptism. I preached nine nights under our tent in the Carter-Sell Addition recently. God blessed with good interest, and one woman, a member of a certain denomination since childhood, made the confession anew, and is to be baptized Sunday night, Sept. 23. God is blessing His work both here and in the Carter-Sell Addition, and we hope soon to have a building erected in which to conduct regular services in the Carter-Sell Addition."—Robert B. Boyd.

Dugger, Ind.: "I have just closed a meeting with Brother E. E. Kranz at the Cedar Springs congregation near Fern Creek, Ky. This is one of our oldest congregations. Many of our pioneer preachers have preached at this place. I am grateful to have had the privilege of joining the long list of preachers who have stood in the pulpit of this historic church building to proclaim the message of Christ and Him crucified. It would be interesting to know just how many have confessed Christ during these years of the congregation's existence.

"Our annual home-coming was a blessing to those attending. The song rally in the afternoon brought brethren together from ten congregations. The Psalmist was right when he wrote: 'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.'

"How thankful we are that our boys and girls are beginning to come home to stay. My word of comfort to those who haven't come home and do not know when they will get to come is that I feel sure all of you will be home by spring. In hope we wait for you."—Maurice Clymore.

Sellersburg, Ind.: "The Lord recently blessed our efforts in a wonderful way with the little group of faithful members meeting at Highview, located about three miles from Fern Creek, Kentucky. Brother and Sister Edward Schreiner are laboring with this congregation and doing a fine work. I was with them from September 3rd through 16th. During this period, 10 were baptized and one rededicated her young life to the Lord's work. Interest was very good and the attendance increased with the meeting, including many visitors from other congregations.

"Returning to the pulpit here on September 23rd, I was greeted with an overflow attendance and three responses to the invitation. Two were baptized and one restored. A new interest and enthusiasm is also seen recently in our Sunday School and Monday Bible Classes.

"The Lord willing, I am to begin a series of meetings with Brother Clymore and the Dugger, Indiana, congregation, beginning on Monday, October 1st. Pray for this effort."—Howard T. Marsh.

Louisville, Ky.: "We of the High View congregation enjoyed a real, "old-fashioned revival" Sept. 3-16. Bro. Howard Marsh of Sellersburg, Ind., preached many stirring evangelistic sermons. There was good attendance every night with everyone whole-heartedly working and we especially appreciated the co-operation of other congregations. Twelve responded to the invitation to come to Christ, eleven for baptism.

The highlight of the meeting was the all-day meeting Sept. 9 and basket dinner. There was much encouragement given us by visiting brethren who spoke that afternoon and all enjoyed the number of special songs from time to time.

"May God continue to bless Bro. Marsh in his coming meetings and all others who are laboring in His field."—H. Edward Schreiner.

Brother Boll's winter series of Bible Classes will begin about November 5. Free to all. Write R. H. Boll, 2626 Montgomery St., Louisville, Ky., for particulars.

SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN

R. H. B.

“Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.”—Luke 17:3, 4.

These solemn words were spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples; and they are not to be ignored or set aside on any alleged dispensational grounds, or emptied of their meaning by spacious comments and glosses. They touch on one of the sorest of all needs in the church and in the lives of individual Christians. As a matter of fact this teaching is rarely—almost never obeyed. We have a sly way of slipping lightly over inconvenient scriptures. We do well to watch ourselves. I believe that if this one text were held up, and brought home to the minds and hearts of Christians it would bring about a great repentance and much needed reformation in the church.

TAKE HEED TO THYSELF

The case which the Lord Jesus assumes here is that of a brother's sinning against *you*. We are always more willing to concede that we have been sinned against than that *we* have sinned. Be it so then. He says: we will take it that “thy brother has sinned against thee.” Now follows the Savior's warning word: “Take heed to yourselves.” You may be inclined to say, “Let *him* take heed—he is the one that is in the wrong.” But the Lord says, No—if your brother has sinned against you, *you* are in danger. *He* is in danger, of course; but the Lord is not speaking of *him* now, but to *you*. Not only the offender but the offended one is in peril. By the fact that your brother has sinned against you, you are placed in a position of danger. The danger is first of all that you may conceive a hatred or resentment against him in your heart; that you will bear him grudge, and secret or open enmity. Or, the danger may be that you will proudly ignore the affront, and refuse to take notice of him who has done the wrong; and do not propose to be bothered with him, but that you'll just wash your hands of him, and let him go to the devil. That course is the one oftenest adopted, for it falls quite in line with that thing we call “human nature.” And it is always associated with a fatal ill-will in the heart. If that is your attitude, your sinning brother has certainly succeeded in causing you to stumble; and you in turn, by your wrong attitude are causing him to stumble yet more. So we see—if thy brother sins against thee, *thou* art in danger. A difficult situation has been created by that fact; and you may thank God if you come out of that test safely, and without the smell of fire on your garments.

WHAT TO DO

But what shall we do in such a case? Even in the Old Testament, in the law of Moses, the Lord enjoined a course of action: “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart: thou shalt surely rebuke thy neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.” (Lev. 19:17.) If such was the code of conduct under the Law, how much more should

those who are bound together in the bonds of brotherly love in Christ Jesus, observe such attitude toward an offending brother in the Lord! But the teaching of Christ goes further. I am not only to rebuke my brother who sins against me, but, if he repents, I must forgive him. And when the Lord says forgiveness He means real forgiveness.

And that is not all. If thy brother should repeat his offense, yea if seven times a day, and seven times in the day turn back to you saying "I repent"—thou shalt forgive him. Probably just such a case has never arisen and probably never will. Nevertheless, so unlimited is my forgiveness to be that if it did happen, then every time my brother turns to me saying, "I repent," however oft repeated the offense may have been, I am to forgive him—gladly, ungrudgingly, fully, whole-heartedly (else it would not be really forgiveness). If that would occur—not seven times, but two or three times, not in one day, but, let us say, in a month, or in a year, it would put quite a strain on our feeble goodness. The temptation would be strong to doubt the brother's sincerity. I might feel that I was being made a fool of. I would want unquestionable proof that he has really repented, and that he will not do the wrong again. I would perhaps put him on some sort of probation; and I would likely even then be wary of him, and give him no more chances to play bad tricks on me. All of which would not be in accord with the Lord's teaching. No—the Lord says I must accept him, when he comes to me, saying "I repent," freely and frankly, with no lingering suspicion or doubt. I must take him at his word—I cannot judge his heart and motive. If he is manifestly insincere I should point it out to him; but if he tells me he is sorry and wants to do right and make things right, I must accept him.

The "old man" fairly expires at such a demand as that. It is not at all in human nature to *act* on such fashion. But Christ's people are not to live on the basis of human nature: they are the new birth partakers of the divine nature—God's nature; and God acts on that principle. Of course *He* knows the hearts, and He knows when repentance is true or feigned. Yet in this seemingly hard teaching lies a great consolation for us. God certainly does not want us to be better than He is—and if He wants *me* to forgive so whole-heartedly and unreservedly, that shows how great and free His forgiveness is. Let us never doubt it—but however unworthy and undeserving I may know myself to be, and though it be the thousandth time I am coming, let me trust again in His infinite mercy, and come again with boldness to His throne of grace, there to receive mercy and grace to help in the time of need.

PRAYER

"Prayer is no petty invention of men, a fancied relief from fancied ills. Prayer is no dreary performance, dead and death-dealing, but is God's enabling act for man, living and life-giving. Prayer is the contact of a living soul with God. Prayer is God's plan to supply man's great and continuous need with God's great and continuous abundance."—Edward M. Bounds.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT?

E. L. Jorgenson

Those who have seen the celebrated cathedral at Milan (the Italian City, Melano) have been impressed by the three inscriptions over the three entrances.

Above one of the smaller doorways, perhaps at the left, is written the legend, "All that pleases us is only for a moment"; and over the other smaller entrance is written, "All that troubles us is only for a moment." But over the great central arch is carved in stone the legend, "Only that is important which is eternal." Those three statements are as massive as the rocks that bear them.

"For our light affliction," writes Paul, the man who had suffered so much—"For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." How can we help looking at the things which are seen? And how can we look at the things which are not seen? Yes, even these earthly eyes of ours can fix their gaze upon the glass of the window pane or they may look through glass upon the things beyond. "For," continues Paul, "the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." And surely, only that can be really important which is eternal!

What are the *important* things—the real, the worth-while things of life? Are they the houses and lands, the stocks and bonds, the silver, the gold, and the currencies that constitute the wampum of our exchange—as our materialism seems to think? If these are the vital things, how is it that those who have them in abundance are not universally happy? And that those without them are frequently more content? The only answer is that the most vital—the most important—things of life are not material. They are indeed *real*—by faith; but they are not material. They are spiritual. They are invisible; they are things "not seen"; but they are just as real, for all of that, as the "things that are seen"; and they are far more important. For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." And that only can be really important which is eternal.

Why should it seem incredible that there is spiritual personality, and that there are real spiritual forces out there in the realm of the invisible—since even in our own present world, the greatest forces that we know are invisible?

Electricity, for example, is invisible, and mysterious. "It is a force," said Edison, "of which we know absolutely nothing." We cannot even understand the principle of induction. We can use it, but we cannot understand it. Yet electricity is certainly real. It can kill—and almost make alive. As a mediate transferring energy, it lights our streets, it runs our factories, our farm tractors, our home appliances; and almost all modern invention is by the application of it. What a tremendously real force is electricity!

Gravitation is an invisible and mysterious force. But it is real. Newton found the law, "That any physical body in the universe attracts every other body with a force directly in proportion to the product of the mass and inversely in proportion to the square of the distance." Neither Newton nor we have understood the *nature* of *gravitation*; but we know it is the force that holds the planets in their orbits round the sun, and that holds the universe together. For fear of it we dare not step right off a house-top or a flag-pole. Gravitation, though invisible and mysterious, is a tremendously real force!

We may not understand the nature of electricity, nor the nature of gravitation; but we cannot deny that their force is very great and real. And who can say that they may not be the direct and mighty forces of the life of God Himself, immanent in His universe and in our world! And with what reason or logic may a man who admits, and even uses, these mysterious and invisible forces—with what logic can he disbelieve in God, and in the spiritual powers, on the ground that they are invisible and mysterious! We have just seen the sudden change of mass into awful energy, in the atomic bomb; why then should it seem incredible that in the beginning, by a simple word, God changed energy into mass!

Yes, there are *spiritual* forces in our world that are just as real as electricity and gravitation. And what are some of these?

Faith: That is a real and mighty force. By faith—because they believe *what* they believe, men still leave home and native land for far-away heathen fields—in order that black men, brown men, yellow men, and those of all the Christless shades between, may hear the gospel and may come to believe what they themselves believe; and on those mission fields they often die for Christ and for their faith. Faith is a real and mighty force in human life. So real, that what a man believes will determine his whole career and course for time and for eternity.

Hope: Hope is a real and a mighty force; and Paul says that we are saved by hope. Every doctor knows the healing power of hope in sickness—"While there is life, there is hope," we say; and we may almost say, "While there is hope there is life." Hope is the motivating force, the spring, the thing that moves, that stirs, that stimulates and inspires; and hope is a strong upholding, sustaining force in trial. When hope is gone, then all is gone. Hope is a great and real force in human life.

Love: Love is a real and a mighty force. A man's love for his country—we call it patriotism—What a force that is as we have found out in these awful solemn days.

A man's love for a good and noble woman! What a force that is! For her, he will go both to prison and to death.

A man's love for his home! That something that sends him out into the fields in the morning hour, and keeps him there, and brings him back again at night; that sends him down into the mines, out upon the sea, up into the air, and out under the sea, that in some way he may wrest a living from the earth in the sweat of his brow;

and that there may be something to clothe those little bodies, back at home; something to put on those little hands and feet, to keep them warm in winter; and something to put in those little mouths, and to keep the wolf of hunger from the door. This is love; and what a real and mighty force it is! And truly, "The light of a whole world dies, when love is gone"!

Faith, hope, and love! Invisible, impalpable, immaterial, but real for all that. Real, because back of these is the one great eternal reality of Almighty God Himself. The God who is laid hold on by faith, who satisfies our hopes, and who is Himself the eternal, inexhaustible, undiminshable fountain of Love!

Many of you must have read of Henry Grady, famous editor of the famous newspaper, *The Atlanta Constitution*, in the reconstruction days, following the war between the states.

It is said that Henry Grady once closed down his roll-top desk and left the busy editorial offices in Atlanta in the middle of the week. Far out into the country he went, to the little old house where he was born, and where his aged mother lived: "Henry," exclaimed the old mother, as the story has come down to us, "Henry, is there anything the matter? How ever did you get away, to come out here in the middle of the week?"

"No, mother, there isn't anything the matter, exactly, only I'm afraid I've been slipping. I seem to have lost my grip on God, and on the things that matter most. I just wanted to come back to you and to the old home for a little while. I thought that out here, with you, mother, I might get back the precious things I've lost."

Out over the old farm the great Grady went, living again the days of boyhood; seeing and hearing again the simple sights and sounds of childhood; seeking the simple faith which he now knew to be more precious than gold. When nightfall came, he returned to mother's little house. And as he sat there on the floor, with his head in mother's lap, just as he used to do; and as she ran her fingers through his hair, just as she used to do, she talked to him again about her God—his mother's God; and of those precious things of Faith, and Hope, and Love; and of those unseen things that are bound up in the life of the eternal and changeless God, those *real things* that shall never pass away. That neither war, nor imprisonment, nor life nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, can take from those who have committed themselves to God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord—body, soul, and spirit—not only for time, but for all the endless ages that are yet to come!

—(Delivered over Radio WAVE, Sept. 12, 1945.)

"If anything needs complete revision and overhauling today, it is our so-called "Christian work." If the average church were put through a genuine house-cleaning according to New Testament standards and reconstructed according to the Acts, most members might have difficulty in recognizing it next Sunday morning!"—Vance Haver.

EXCLUSIVE SOCIETY

J. H. McCaleb

A long time ago one of my teachers at the university took me to lunch. He was a member of an exclusive club and one in which I had never hoped to set foot as a guest. I wasn't too comfortable during the meal because I felt that I didn't belong.

Life is full of incidents of that kind. We are constantly running into situations where some one, or some group, does not belong.

According to Peter there are some people who belong rightfully to an exclusive society. In the ninth verse of the second chapter of his first letter he says, "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellency of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

That is truly a select crowd. There can be no group more exclusive, for those people are exclusive eternally. But who are these people who are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession?

They are Christians, and Christians are followers of Christ. They have faith in God, hope of eternal glory, and do all things through the proper motive, which is love of God. Still more definitely they have complied willingly and gladly and faithfully with the ordinance of baptism and have been buried with Christ to arise with Him into newness of life. They are part of the body of Christ, which is the church.

God does the including and the excluding, and He alone has that right and power. But he states that whosoever will may come. And so it is ours to decide whether we will accept God's grace.

How perfect must a man be to stay in the church, and what particular rituals must he observe? Many have attempted to define the terms and to emphasize various details. Out of this has sprung denominationalism. Who has the right to say that one matter is important and another is not?

There is no such thing as doing just enough to escape condemnation. If a man is truly a Christian, he must desire with all his heart to do what God wants him to do. His failures will be many but he will improve as he progresses, and the blood of Christ will cover all sin. There will be differences in our failures and differences in our knowledge. All, however, will have the same heart and the same love.

Are you willing to include in your fellowship all whom God includes in the body of Christ? Have you ever given deep consideration to God's will in this matter?

Pendleton, Ky.: "I just closed a meeting at Bethel which resulted in three baptisms. The church was strengthened in other ways. Brother O. E. Shields, who works with this little group, is a very faithful man. Pray for the work at Pendleton."—Clyde D. Edens.

THE SUBLIME MADE RIDICULOUS

Stanford Chambers

One of the many evil devices, proving quite effective with many, is that of making things sacred to appear in a ridiculous light. It has long been resorted to in opposing Bible truths and Bible ordinances.

The Lord's Supper has been subjected to all manner of perversions from that of the bacchanalian feast to that of trans-substantiation. Between the two extremes are the carelessness and formalism into which so many have drifted, or the non-observance of our Savior's dying request and that without compunction.

And to what caricature has our Lord's ordinance of baptism not been subjected! Unscriptural claims made for it, perversions in the practice of it. How many times in days gone by have the riff-raff and the prejudiced stood on the bank and ridiculed the burial in baptism of those thus confessing their faith in the death and resurrection of the Son of God. How many have been prevented from thus obeying the command of our Savior's last commission from fear of such ridicule. Then the perversions: "A drop is as good as an ocean," hence affusion has by multitudes been substituted for Scriptural baptism. Trine-immersion came in with the controversies over the oneness of the Godhead. Proxy baptism is practiced by Mormons, which they seek to justify by their interpretation of Paul's reference to their being "baptized for the dead." We recently listened to a plausible plea for this Mormon institution. Plausible to think that I can go and be baptized on behalf of my friends who died unbaptized! Christening of infants as practiced by millions today, what is that but proxy observance? Parents or "god-parents" doing the believing on behalf of the infant who cannot believe! in the face of our Lord's word, "He that believeth and is baptized"; or that of Philip to the Ethiopian who wished to obey his Lord in baptism. Philip said, "If thou believest thou mayest." We protest all perversions and caricature of this ordinance of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and are unmoved by them. A counterfeit dollar bears testimony to the value of the genuine.

In like manner we decry the caricature method of opposing the Bible truth concerning the return of our Lord and events related thereto. I stood with a crowd awaiting the arrival of a late train. Two business men were on the platform. One said to the other, "That train is as slow as the second coming of Christ." His coming is not slow, but sudden. "Though it tarry, wait for it." It is not uncertain, but sure. It is not imaginary, but real. Not figurative, but actual. It is not fulfilled in death, but saves His people out of death. Caricature and perversion of the truth of His coming have robbed many saints of "that blessed hope," so that His coming is the occasion of a terrible dread, the thought of it brings shudders, and the Bible teaching on the subject is unwelcome truth. Satan has made this truth, so repugnant to him, almost as repugnant to church members generally!

And His reigning over the earth, His footstool—what a crime!
And His glorified saints reigning with Him, what another crime!
And what a calamity to the earth! Anything but His being “king
over all the earth in that day! And so caricature the literalness of
it. Have Him sitting on a material throne with a material rod in
His hand! Make His appearing not glorious, but ridiculous. That
will be found a weighty argument with a number. And caricature the
devil (Michael durst not, but there are men who will if it will lend
needed enforcement to an argument) and his horns and tail; have him
bound with a material chain, or argue that he is not bound, the first
resurrection a revival of souls, or have disembodied souls enthroned
and reigning! Confusion worse confused serves Satan as well some-
times as any of his other devices (of which we are not supposed to be
ignorant). But for men who profess to “speak where the Scriptures
speak” to resort to caricature and thus turn the sacred into the
ridiculous, how painfully do we observe the fact of their so doing
when we have a right to expect something better of them.

BEN'S BUDGET

Ben. J. Elston

An intelligent brother, who tried about the best one could to
show himself a most loving, devoted friend, from our first meeting
until God took him, told me this: We were receiving our final lec-
tures in a noted medical school. In some final advice one instructor
said, “If you young men have sense enough *not* to give your patients
anything that will kill them, most of them will get well.” After
more than a score of years I am still much impressed with the wis-
dom, not only of not *doing*, but of not *saying*, the wrong thing. The
tongues of preachers (and their pens, also) often express sentiments,
I fear, that are better privately entertained. “Give diligence to pre-
sent thyself approved *unto God*”—not to yourself, nor to others. Real
remedies may be wrongly administered. Conscientious diagnosticians
do not destroy a patient, or one another, because they honestly
differ. It was not Jesus, but Satan, who is said to go about “as a
roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” Was ever an “honest
and good heart” helped by rasping, reflecting, pelting? It was *just
after* (How opportune!) a miraculous catch of unharmed fish, that
Jesus called some preachers to catch men! Read Luke 5. I've not
read of one of His own chosen preachers ever saying a really need-
less, heartless thing!

“A lukewarm church is a powerless church. There is nothing
about it to make unsaved men believe its testimony is worth while.
But a church characterized by fervent love for Christ, and energet-
ically reaching out after the lost makes an impression even upon the
most ungodly that it is hard to ignore. When the churches them-
selves heed the command to repent and get right with God, we may
expect to see repentant sinners flocking to their altars.”—H. A. Iron-
sides.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER OF FIRST THESSALONIAN:—II

(1 Thess. 5:12-28)

R. H. B.

A number of separate exhortations and instructions, strung together like those in Romans 12 and Col. 3; with a final prayer and benediction and salutation, constitute the closing portion of 1 Thess. 5. These brief and terse utterances of the Holy Spirit are greatly worth our attention and study—and, needless to say, of our whole-hearted obedience. Let us look at them.

1. There is the exhortation to give due recognition to preachers, teachers and elders of the church; and to "*esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake.*" It is for their work's sake that these servants of God are to be highly esteemed. If they are not so looked up to and held in honor they will not have courage and incentive for their work, neither will their teaching have the desired weight with the people. There are two extremes to be avoided: on the one hand the pretensions of a "clergy" with its titles, pompously labeled ecclesiastical dignitaries who hold themselves as above common Christians and people (in contravention to Christ's teaching in Matt. 23:8-10); on the other hand that disrespectful, sometimes contemptuous attitude which makes "the preacher" the butt of jokesters, and too much of a "hail fellow well met" with everybody. (The latter is often the preacher's fault. "Let no man despise thee," said Paul to Timothy.) If in a home the preachers and leaders of the church are criticised and contemptuously spoken of, is it any wonder if the children are indifferent to the preaching and grow up in contempt of the church?

2. "*Be at peace among yourselves.*" This was Christ's word to His disciples in Mark 9:50, where He connects it with the "salt." And surely nothing can more effectively rob the salt of its savor as the disruption of peace among the people of God.

3. The next exhortation (1 Thess. 5:14) is somewhat startling. We are inclined to think of the New Testament churches—especially such *good* churches as Philippi, Thessalonica, Ephesus—as being perfect. But here we see them as beset by the same frailties and deficiencies as are found in the churches today. Things did not run so smoothly in those early churches. There were then, as now, some "disorderly" brethren; some "fainthearted"; some "weak"; and any of the brethren may have had such faults as would require the "long-suffering" of the rest. Paul addresses the rank and file of the Christians; but here he has in mind those who were of the more spiritual sort (Gal. 5:1). He tells them what to do with reference to their faulty brethren. The disorderly should be admonished (later he orders withdrawal of fellowship in such cases, 2 Thess. 3:6); the fainthearted are to be encouraged; the weak are to be supported; and toward all they should exercise longsuffering. Think of the mutual care and love and watchfulness over one another implied in this!

4. (V. 15.) The "old man," though judicially nailed to the

cross of Christ, and delivered over to death (Rom. 6:3, 4, 6) constantly seeks to assert himself; and in nothing more so than in the desire for retaliation. When anyone has injured me, I feel a strong impulse to "get even" with him—to pay him back, and do to him as he has done to me or worse. But in us the new Christ-nature must rule (1 Peter 2:21-23), and the passions of the "old man" must be put to death. (Col. 3:5f.) Especially if someone *in the church* has wronged or insulted us (which may sometimes happen) the "flesh" will rise up in hot resentment and indignation. It is then that the grace of God must prevail, and by the Spirit we must put to death "the deeds of the body" (Rom. 8:13), and the Christian finds out that he can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth him. (Phil. 4:13.)

5. (Verses 16, 17, 18.) Here are three injunctions: "*Rejoice always*"; (2) "*Pray without ceasing*"; (3) "*In everything give thanks.*" As to the first of these—the question rises immediately—"How can we do that?" Not by forcing it certainly; nor by putting on false smiles. The secret of the Christian's joy is revealed in Phil. 3:1 and 4:4—he is to "*rejoice in the Lord.*" It is in Him that we find the reason for our joy; as He also is the Source of it. (Comp. Ps. 4:7; 43:4; Hab. 3:17, 18.) The next exhortation is to constant, persevering prayer; and the third to *thanksgiving*. Naturally we would limit the "everything" for which we should give thanks to good things, things that are welcome and which make us happy. Yet, in the light of Rom. 8:28, the Christian can literally give thanks in everything. If Joseph, for instance, had known the end of his career from the beginning he could have thanked God for the worst things that befell him. And the Christian can be thankful in sorrow and suffering, and rejoice "in tribulations also." "For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward." Let that apply not to v. 18 alone but to all three of these verses (16, 17, 18).

6. Again, the next three exhortations go together. "*Quench not the Spirit: despise not prophesyings; prove all things, hold fast that which is good.*" (Verses 19, 20, 21.) The first of these, in this connection, has reference to the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the extraordinary "gifts." (For fullest discussion of this, see 1 Cor. 12, 13, 14.) As with all the gifts of God, these gifts would be increased by use, or lost by neglect and misuse. "Stir up [lit. "stir into flame"] the gift of God which is in thee through the laying on of my hands," Paul writes to Timothy. And in the next verse he suggests that it might be quenched by timidity and cowardice. (2 Tim. 1:6, 7.) One of those "spiritual gifts" was the gift of prophecy. It headed the list of them all, for value and benefit. (1 Cor. 14:1f. The gift of "tongues" was last and least, and not to be exercised in the assembly at all unless there was someone there to interpret.) But the gift of prophecy did not rank with the "inspiration" of the apostles and other inspired messengers. It was limited, and often mingled with the speaker's own thoughts; also easily counterfeited. It had to be tested (see "the discerning of spirits," 1 Cor. 12:10) and checked up on. There was danger therefore that the gift as a whole might come to be dis-

regarded by Christian people. Hence the apostle's admonition, "Despise not prophesyings." But everything was to be tested and tried by the standards of known truth, and only what was "good" was to be retained. Although miraculous gifts have ceased, these admonitions apply to us today. We can lose the zeal and fervor, the ardent faith, and the love which is of the Spirit, by neglect and disuse. And we, too, must always test everything we hear by the Scriptures.

7. Finally this admonition that we abstain from evil in every form, and in whatever shape and guise it may seek to entice us. The King James Version has, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." (That much-needed caution is covered elsewhere. See Rom. 12:17, last clause.) But here he warns against all evil, whatever the form and appearance it may wear.

A FINAL PRAYER (Verses 23, 24)

Brief but wonderful is the final benedictory prayer in 1 Thess. 5. It has two petitions. The first is for entire sanctification: "*and the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly.*" Every Christian is "sanctified" when he is "justified"—i. e. when he becomes a Christian, a child of God. (1 Cor. 6:11.) But this work of God (as every other) must be realized and perfected in life. (2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14.) But though this is *our* charge, it is also God's work. (1 Thess. 3:12, 13; 2 Thess 3:3-5.) Sanctification is finally perfected when we are perfected before God, and presented before Him without blemish in exceeding joy. (1 Pet. 5:10; Jude 24.) For we shall be like Him when He shall appear. (1 John 3:2.) And every one who has this hope set *on Him*, begins right here and now to purify himself even as He is pure. (1 John 3:3.) Should a Christian have any lower aim and purpose?

The second petition looks forward again to the Lord's coming: "*and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Not, as in the King James Version, preserved "*unto the coming of Christ,*" but "*at*" the coming of Christ. Here is the analysis of the human being: we consist of "spirit, soul, and body." These three items are the essential constituent parts of a complete man. All three are frequently referred to, and spoken of, throughout the Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation. Here, too, is a battleground of controversialists, and many theories and strange doctrines have centered about these items. Especially *the soul* of man has been a subject of questionings and disputings. The body, and even the spirit of man is more easily defined—but what is the soul? Trace the word by means of a concordance; if possible also in the original Hebrew and Greek ("nephesh" and "psyche") and we shall at first sight be amazed at the wide range of meaning this word carries, and the many senses in which it is employed. This is not the place to go into a discussion of this theme. Sufficient for our purpose here is the recognition that man consists of spirit, soul, and body. The apostle's prayer is that in all these parts we may be preserved entire and without blame at the coming of Christ. There is such a thing as "the destruction of the

flesh," in the case of a sinful Christian, "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (1 Cor. 5:5.) Again, there is a warning against fornication, as being peculiarly the sin which affects the body (1 Cor. 6; see esp. verses 13-20). There is also a future redemption of the body" (Rom. 8:23) which will be in the day of "the revealing of the sons of God." Great is the mystery, profound the depth of meaning, which is back of these words. Yet the point and purport of this prayer cannot be misunderstood; it is for our perfect sanctification, complete final salvation!

Thus far it has been a prayer—not merely a pious wish, but a true prayer. Now, however, the apostle (and do not forget that he speaks by the Holy Spirit, and that it is the Spirit that speaks through him) adds a word of confident assurance—startling in its positiveness and certainty: "*Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it.*" (Note the same promise in 1 Cor. 1:8, 9.) Our hope is based—not on our faithfulness, though that is all-important in its place—but on God's faithfulness. Our trust is not in the "perseverance of the saints," but in the perseverance of the Savior.

Now a few parting injunctions, and the benediction "*Brethren pray for us.*" How the apostle craved the prayers of the Christians! How much must depend on our prayers one for another! (See Eph. 6:18-20; Col. 2:2-4.) "Salute all the brethren with a holy kiss." This was the customary expression of affectionate friendship (comp. Luke 7:45)—as it still is in some places, and even quite frequently among us between friendly sisters and members of a family. But our general custom in greeting is the handshake. The apostle certainly did not mean to institute a church-ordinance of "the holy kiss" (as some have thought) but rather to emphasize the character and sacred meaning of our common greeting, whatever its customary form may be. Then he solemnly adjures them by the Lord "*that this epistle be read unto all the brethren.*" These are precious words, not to be ignored or neglected; words of the Holy Spirit, words of our Lord Jesus Christ to us through His ambassador. They must be read—not once, but again and again, and always, so long as there is a church, all through the centuries, in the churches, and by Christians privately or in social meetings; by us also. And not read only, but received into the heart, believed, treasured, obeyed. With greater reason than Moses can we say, "It is no vain thing for you, because it is your life." (Deut. 32:47.)

The brief salutation, which (as he tells us in the second epistle, 2 Thess. 3:17, 18) is the token in his own hand-writing in his every epistle, concludes this great epistle "*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*"

A GREAT PRICE

Roger Babson says: "Fifteen billion dollars of our national income goes into the garbage pail in the form of liquor, narcotics, gambling, sex magazines, and other things which undermine the health and employability of our people."

“FAITH OF OUR FATHERS”

In the *Millennial Harbinger* of 1832, Alexander Campbell reprinted the following able article on “The Literal Interpretation of Prophecy,” by James A. Begg. Much more also, along the same line and from the same author, he reprinted in the pages of the *Harbinger*.

We give first Campbell’s remarkable introductory note of approbation; then the main article by Begg, followed by a shorter one which Campbell introduced by urging a “second reading” of the first. and last of all (after Campbell’s approbation again). we exhibit another paragraph by Begg in which prophecies of the first and second Coming are wonderfully conjoined.—E. L. J.

THE APPROBATION

Indicative of the principles of interpretation on which the work proceeds, and as a substitute for one of our Essays on prophecy, we will, with full approbation, give the following extracts. The reader will see how they tally with what has been already said upon the method of interpreting prophecy.—Editor, *Millennial Harbinger*.

THE LITERAL FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY

“In endeavoring to ascertain the meaning of scripture prophecy, it is important to observe, that, from the very nature of most of its predictions, they are only capable of a literal interpretation. Were Christians to attend with care to their contexts, and even to circumstances introduced in the various prophecies sometimes spiritualized, they would find in these alone checks sufficient to prevent such a perversion of their meaning and design. But it is also farther to be observed, that to explain away all the predictions concerning the *glory* of Christ, is to justify His rejection by the Jews, notwithstanding of the plain declaration of his humility and sufferings. For, if we are at liberty to spiritualize all the prophecies which foretell his reign in glory, how can we blame them for adopting a similar mode of interpreting other predictions not more clear and far less numerous? Besides, this is a method of interpretation which seems not only repugnant to reason, but is quite inconsistent with that literal fulfilment which prophecy has hitherto received. If all past predictions, except where figures are obviously used, have had their fulfilment *literally*, even when the minuteness of prophecy was extreme, on what principle of interpretation is a mode of fulfilment yet unprecedented now to be expected? We can point to a long series of predictions which have been literally fulfilled, and to others which are being so at this very day, in their utmost minutiae, and can see no reason to suppose that those which, for aught we can tell, may relate to the ensuing month or the ensuing year, are not to have a literal fulfilment also, as no intimation is given by the Spirit of Prophecy of a period at which this mode of their accomplishment shall cease. Thus alone can the criterion divinely given, by which to distinguish

the *true* prophet from the *false*, be of any avail; "If thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously." Deut. 18: 21, 22. And the minuteness with which prophecy has hitherto been fulfilled, proves how safely the rule may be applied. The past dealings of God in this respect, which show the perfect correspondence between the prediction and its accomplishment, have, however, been much neglected; and hence, perhaps, the unwillingness so often displayed, believingly to receive the promises he has bestowed, without the intervention of our own limitations; and hence, also, our unbelieving fears to submit divine predictions concerning the future to the ordeal which Jehovah himself has prescribed.

"* * * Or, taking history as evidence, we might trace the literal fulfilment of prophecy in the rise and fall of empires—the scenes of their splendor, and the means of their overthrow. We might refer to the judgments poured on cities famed of old, and in the height of their glory when denounced of the Lord: of Nineveh, of Babylon, of Tyre, of Jerusalem, and others; and might gather thence evidence incontrovertible of the literal fulfilment of prophecy in circumstances the most improbable to human foresight—by means the most unlikely in human estimation—and with a specification of incidents so apparently insignificant as would, perhaps, never have been recorded had not the minds of historians been under the immediate control of him whose omniscience they thus unwittingly attested. The very improbability of such prophecies ever being fulfilled, renders their accomplishment a more glorious display of that divine attribute which Jehovah claims as peculiarly his own, and in proof of which he even appeals to prophecy. * *

"These remarks derive much confirmation from a recent publication by the Rev. Alexander Keith, titled, *Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion Derived from the Literal Fulfilment of Prophecy*; from which, did our limits permit, we should gladly have availed ourselves of extracts. But for the illustrations of our views, we prefer making a selection of scripture predictions concerning the humiliation of Christ, with reference to their fulfilment. (He cites Gen. 49:10; Isa. 6:14; Matt. 1:20; Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:1; Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:1; Isa. 53:2; Jno. 1:11; Isa. 53:3; Matt. 26:56; Psalms 20:6; Matt. 27:29; Luke 22:11; Isa. 50:6; Matt. 25:67; Mic. 5:1; Matt. 27:30; Isa. 53:7; Matt. 27:12; Isa. 53:3; Mark 15:15. * * * See pp. 259, 260.)

"Prophecy has hitherto been literally fulfilled, and there is the same ground as ever for believing it will still continue to be so * * *

"But from the continued operation of the same principle—which up to the present hour we are not left without exemplification—and from the entire absence of all authoritative imitation of any intended alteration, we may reasonably infer—nay, we are bound to believe, that in this respect no such change is designed, and that any interpretation assuming this as its basis, is altogether unwarranted.

"In maintaining the literal fulfilment of prophecy, we are not, however, to be understood as denying that the prophetic scriptures contain many *figures*, which are only to be explained as figurative language must always be. In pleading for the literal fulfilment of prophecy, we are only asking for it the same principle of interpretation that is extended to other compositions. In every case, except that of interpreting God's word, it would be considered as the highest injustice to an author to change entirely the meaning of the language ordinarily employed, simply because figures occasionally occurred; nor would any one consider himself warranted to interpret even the figures themselves otherwise than in consistency with the connecting statements given, discriminating the one from the other. Yet without the least pretense to *divine authority* for the principle, statements in scripture, given wholly or partially in unfigured language, are equally subjected to the spiritualizing process, and meanings extracted which nothing less than a *new revelation* could enable the reader to discover; or rather, it may be said, which is *itself* a new revelation, having never been *in* the written language, to be in any way elicited from it.

"Although the Apostle Paul speaks of the seed of Abraham (Rom. 11:17-24) *under the figure* of "branches broken off," and to be yet again "*grafted into their own olive tree,*" no one supposes that the use of such a figure is a reason for denying that the *literal* Israel is there meant. Yet such is the very treatment given to the Old Testament prophecies.

"But fidelity to the word of God requires, that where figures do *not* occur, figurative interpretations be *not* introduced; and where figures *are* introduced, that they be really interpreted as such."—*Mil. Har.*, 1832, pp. 255-262.

"What valid reason can be offered for putting a spiritual interpretation on the one class of predictions, in the above series, which was not extended to the other? Notwithstanding the unbelief of the Jews, those concerning his sufferings and death were fulfilled to the very letter; and what is there in the language of the other which should induce us to adopt a system of interpretation so opposite in its nature? This mode of spiritualizing certain prophecies appears the more exceptionable when we perceive, that while one clause of a sentence is allowed to have a literal signification, another is understood spiritually, although there be nothing observable which can direct to such a change—the system being still farther encumbered by the difficulty of managing certain portions which will in no way bend to such accommodation as it requires. Have we, then, no reason to fear that in thus introducing an unauthorized system of prophetic interpretation, we may be 'teaching for doctrines the commandments of men'? Instead, therefore, of unreasonably persisting in adherence to such opinions, and putting upon prophecy a meaning it cannot bear, let us inquire whether the more natural and the more obvious sense be not that which the Spirit of God designed. The answer to

this inquiry may perhaps be read in the fact, that prophecy has hitherto been fulfilled in its proper sense; while the consequences of abandoning this mode of interpretation by the Jews, form a beacon which ought ever to be kept in view. By overlooking the plain declarations of his sufferings and death, they would not receive the despised Nazarene as their anointed Lord. Let us not, in defiance of their punishment, reject the more numerous declarations of his coming and kingdom in glory. Let Christians attend to the lofty descriptions of the holy prophets—let them weigh their united evidence—let them examine the multitude of these predictions, and the sublimity which pervades them—let them consider the harmony with which they all bear testimony to His coming and abiding with his people—and let them then reflect whether it is probable that all these promises, clear as they seem, and literally as prophecy has hitherto been fulfilled, do not in reality imply, and afford evidence of the truth of Christ's personal reign on earth during the Millennium."—*Mil. Har.*, 1832, pp. 322-324.

FURTHER APPROBATION

The subject of prophecy is daily eliciting more attention, and an increase of light must be the result of the discussion now in progress. In this, as in other matters, we desire to give our readers all sides; not merely the views consonant with our own, but those from which we must dissent. In this way they are better prepared to judge for themselves. The views of this author are rendered much more plausible from the fact that his principal rules of interpretation will give the results which have been approved by the fulfillments already agreed upon; and therefore, had he written one hundred years before the coming of the Messiah, or two thousand years ago, he would have come to the results which distinguished the times of the Messiah. But as we have given place to him, we shall reserve a more full examination of this work till a more convenient season.—EDITOR, *Millennial Harbinger*.

BIGG'S PARALLELS

"The legitimate conclusion from this literal fulfilment of prophecy in times past surely is, that predictions concerning the future will have a similar accomplishment, and that, as Jesus was really born of 'a virgin,' so will he also 'come with the clouds of heaven,' when there will be 'given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him.' Isa. 7:14; Dan. 7:13, 14. That, in the day of his power, he will as certainly come to Egypt 'riding on a swift cloud,' as, in his humiliation, he entered Jerusalem seated on an ass. Is. 19:1; Zech. 9:9. That as 'the spirit of whoredoms in the midst of Israel' has hitherto blinded them, that 'they have not known the Lord,' they *shall* 'know that the Lord of hosts hath sent' him, when he shall inherit Judah, his portion in the Holy Land. Hos. 5:4; Zech. 2:11, 12. That as, when formerly he tabernacled with men, he brake not the bruised reed nor quenched

the smoking flax, so shall he yet 'go forth as a mighty man, stirring up jealousy like a man of war.' Isa. 42:3, 13. That as he really submitted to oppression and affliction, while 'he opened not his mouth,' so will he, in the day of his fierce anger, 'destroy and devour at once.' Isa. 53:7; 42:14. That as the humble Shiloh truly came ere the scepter had departed from Judah, so will the Lord, when he builds up Zion, appear in his glory. Gen. 49:10; Ps. 102:16. That as, when formerly he appeared in our world, the Jewish nation saw in him 'no form nor comeliness,' so will he be 'the desire of all nations' when he comes again. Isa. 53:2; Hag. 2:7. That as, at his first coming, he was truly 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,' he will, at his return, 'rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in his people.' Isa. 53:3; 65:19. That as the children of Israel have really remained 'many days without a king and without a prince,' so they will, in the same sense, have this reproach removed, when, in the latter days, they 'shall return and seek the Lord their God, and *The Beloved, their King.*' Hos. 3:4, 5. That as he who 'is to be Ruler in Israel' was really born in Bethlehem, so, when he has 'returned unto Zion, he will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.' Micah 5:2; Zech. 8:3. That as 'the city and the sanctuary' were really destroyed by 'the people of the prince' who came to execute the vengeance of God, so will the House of the Lord of Hosts 'be built' again when he is 'returned to Jerusalem with mercies.' Dan. 9:26; Zech. 1:16. That as really as his disciples 'hid their faces from him' in the hour of his distress, shall 'many people and strong nations come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.' Isa. 53:3; Zech. 8:22. That as on Calvary he really 'made his soul an offering for sin,' so will he reign 'in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.'" Isa. 53:10; 24:23."—*Millennial Harbinger*, 1832, p. 193.

UNITY AMONG THOSE WHO DIFFER

By Barton W. Stone

Dear Brother Campbell:

Hitherto our discussion has proceeded in the mild spirit of the gospel; nor do I fear that we shall depart from it, if truth be our object. If nothing more be effected by this discussion, I hope we shall convince the world of what has been deemed impracticable, if not impossible, that Christians can love one another, and dwell together in unity, and yet differ in sentiment. I hope also that we shall give an example of that moderation and forbearance which the scriptures teach, yet so uncommon among its professors in the present cavilling age.—*Millennial Harbinger*, 1841, p. 248.

"I never knew my Lord to say anything He did not mean. I am sure that He may sometimes mean more than we understand Him to say, but He never means less."—Spurgeon.