

THE WORD AND WORK

(Volume XLIV, February, 1950)

THE APPOINTED ROAD

Had I ten thousand gifts beside,
I'd cleave to Jesus crucified,
And build on Him alone;
For no foundation is there giv'n
On which to place my hopes of heav'n,
But Christ the corner-stone.

Possessing Christ, I all possess,
Wisdom, and strength, and righteousness
And holiness complete;
Behold in His name, I can draw nigh
Before the Ruler of the sky,
And worship at His feet.

There is no path to heav'nly bliss,
To solid joy or lasting peace,
But Christ, the appointed Road;
O may we tread the sacred way,
By faith rejoice, and praise, and pray,
Till we sit down with God!

—Chatham.

WORDS IN SEASON

R. H. B.

IF GOD HAS SPOKEN

God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." (Heb. 1:1, 2.)

This is a tremendous statement. It declares that the almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth and of all the universe, has spoken to man. To get the true force of this we must have some conception of God—who and what He is—and of man: the inconceivable greatness of Him who spoke, the smallness and insignificance of the creature to whom He spoke. Well may the psalmist in adoring wonder say, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained—what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?" This statement, that God spoke in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, and in these last days unto us by His Son, comprises in its sweep, inclusively and exclusively, the whole book which we call the Bible—the Old Testament, in which God spoke to the fathers by the

prophets; and the New Testament, in which He spoke to us by His Son.

MAN'S KNOWLEDGE FUTILE

Now let us consider the weight and meaning of the fact that God has spoken to us.

1. If that is true, then we can *know* something. Otherwise not. Through all the long centuries of the past the millions of the human race have groped in darkness, vainly seeking for a solution of the problems of existence, the meaning of life, the reason for things—and have never been able to arrive at any certainty and truth. What does man know? In some respects, very much. The accumulated stock of human knowledge has become so vast that no one individual could possibly master all of it. In fact, no one mind can master even one of the major sciences, as for example physics or chemistry, in entirety. More and more the student must specialize on some small branch of knowledge and research. Great indeed is the mass of human knowledge in its totality. And yet—what does man really know? Nothing final, nothing ultimate and certain. Even the field of mathematics (which has been conceded to be the one exact science) has become somewhat clouded and doubtful since Einstein has begun to meddle with it. What are the “axioms,” the last foundation stones of all human thinking, but huge unproven assumptions?

If left to reason and science alone, how can it prove the reliability of the testimony of our senses? “I see that nothing we can know,” said a poet of the world, “and that wellnigh consumes my very heart.” Socrates, the greatest mind of antiquity, when told that the Delphic oracles had designated him as the wisest of all men, said, “They are right: I know nothing, and I know I know nothing. The rest know nothing and don't know it.” For all man's knowledge is relative. It has no absolute foundation. This is especially true in matters that concern us most. In fact the most important questions are precisely the ones for which we can find no answer. What am I? Whence did I come? Whither am I going? What is life? What is death? What is the mystery of my being? Is there any future existence? If so what is it?

An Indian chief came to a missionary as they stood in a large block-house, and said, “I saw a bird coming into the enclosure: it fluttered a moment in the light of the torch, and flew out on the other side. That made me think of ourselves. We come out of the darkness, we know not whence; we hover for a little while in the light of life, and then we go out into the darkness, we know not whither. What can you tell me about it?”

ONLY GOD IMPARTS TRUE KNOWLEDGE

If God has spoken to us there is answer to these questions; if not, not. Our science is perfectly dumb on these matters. Even the much-vaunted theory of “Evolution” knows absolutely nothing about the ultimate origin of anything; and, if it were possible, even less of ultimate destiny. And such a question as “What must I do to be saved?” is wholly outside of all the scope of man's finding. But if

God has spoken, *then*, then we can know something. Then we can have the soul-satisfying assurance that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"; and that by His will all things were created and continue to exist. The same word declares that He made man, and made him in His own image—a strange being, indeed, formed of the dust of the ground, yet patterned after the likeness of God and made to live by the breath of his Maker, and destined for great things. There, too, we get the one explanation of the puzzling imperfection of all things and of that mysterious final break-down we call "death," and the significance of it. "Through one man sin entered into the world," we are told, "and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men for that all have sinned." And how by the fall of man, who was designed to be nature's master, all nature fell: and in consequence there came clash and suffering and ruin and anarchy. "For the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, even until now." The word of God tells of sin, what it is, and what is its inevitable outcome. In it, too, God is revealed to man—for somehow man is incomplete apart from God; and how God Himself acted to close the great gulf of alienation that had sprung up to separate man from God—how God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have eternal life. This is the word of the gospel, which is preached by the authority of heaven.

A MEASURING REED

2. If God has spoken to us then we have something to go by. How vain are the manifold views and thoughts and ideas and philosophies of men. There are indeed many men of many minds, and many conflicting thoughts, and there is no ultimate standard by which we can distinguish and discern between the true and the false. We may rejoice for a little in the flickering lights of the vain systems and the many opinions and notions of the world's thinkers and leaders; but at last weary and unsatisfied we turn away from them all. "What is truth?" said Pilate—and he was not jesting. That is still the deep cry of human hearts. But if God has spoken, then we can have truth. "Sanctify them in the truth: *thy word is truth*," said Jesus in His prayer to the Father. Then we have a final standard of judgment, then we have test and measurement by which we can discern and determine right and wrong, truth and error.

LAMP TO OUR FEET

3. Moreover if God has spoken we can have guidance. All the history of mankind proves the truth of the saying in Jeremiah's prophecy: "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Many have thought they had some inward sense of direction; and the multitudes have chased the deceptive gleam, and have never got anywhere nor found any goal. But of the word of God we read that it is "a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path." It alone can guide us through the tortuous mazes of the labyrinth of life; in it alone have we the chart and compass by which we can reach the desired haven at last. The test of experience has corroborated this.

THE FOUNDATION OF HOPE

4. Finally, if God has spoken we can have a hope. "Hope springs eternal in the human breast," said one of our poets. But what this poet speaks of is not really "hope." Yea—there has always been an abundance of "wishful thinking," and much dreaming of better things. There have always been optimists who have assured themselves and others that everything will "turn out all right in the end." But a little thought and observation should convince reasonable men that things do *not* turn out all right. What real foundation is there to much of the good, consolatory talk and sentiments we hear and read? What assurance, what guarantee, can any one offer that all will be well? Are not the laws of nature inexorable? Do not men—often in this life already—reap terribly what they have sown? Are you and I exceptions? And is it certain that the reaping will end when the present life ends? "It may be, my dear Plato," said Socrates to his pupil, "that the Deity can forgive sins, but I don't see how." Nature, law, human experience—they offer no reason for future life and blessing. One of the wisest of the earth saw only "vanity and vexation of spirit" in the dreary treadmill of human striving. What is it all about? What is the use of it all? Is there any purpose or prospect or hope? Where is true hope to be found? Only in God. If He has spoken, if He has loved us; if He gave His Son, His only-beloved, His all, that we might be saved through Him; if He bore our sins in His body on the tree, and made reconciliation for iniquity; if He accepts those who come to Him and will in no wise cast out the least nor the weakest that so come—then there is hope and home and heaven and glory beyond. But if God has not spoken then all that man can have is the vain longing, or the illusive desert-mirage of the starving souls who have visions of cool fountains which would slake their burning thirst. So does a man dream of a peace and home, and happiness which he does not possess and can never attain.

But God has spoken. Herein lies the foundation of our faith and hope. To the sincere and humble seeker the Bible will vindicate itself. The old Book is most wonderfully self-authenticating. If any are distressed and in doubt I would commend to them the saying of the Lord Jesus Christ: "If any man willeth to do his (God's) will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself." (John 7:17.)

CHASTENING

Chastening, like operations, is costly and never joyous. The cost is in proportion as to whether the operation is minor or major, and if the operation has to be repeated the expense is greater. Paul says, "But if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world." (I Cor. 11:31, 32). If we judge ourselves we save our loving Lord the task. If He has to do it, and we are chastened, it is in order to save us from condemnation. "Faint not when thou are reprov'd of Him." That is evidence that He loves you and chastens because He loves.—Stanford Chambers.

NEWS AND NOTES

Oakdale, La.: "Work at Glenmore is in fine spirit. The two services there yesterday were well attended. We plan to add two Sunday school rooms and a baptistry there. The Lord has been good in providing almost \$600 for this new building project. Pray for the work and for our other field of labor which embraces Oakdale and surrounding territory as far as Upper Pine Prairie, La.

"A few faithful members in Oakdale, a city of 6500, are doing all they can and giving beyond their ability to support their work. Others among them are not so faithful. Here also we hope to add Sunday school rooms and a baptistry so we can do more in the Master's service."—Sidney Mayeux.

"Some friend, I know not who, sent me a gift of \$20 about Christmas time. I can only hope the eyes of this kind but unknown giver may fall upon this acknowledgment."—E. L. J.

Los Angeles, Calif.: "I am enclosing \$2 for Word and Work. We still love it—I think because there is so much of Jesus Christ in it. And may it have more and more of Him, as the years come and go.

"The church of our Lord on Hollywood Boulevard is growing, we believe, in love and grace and in knowledge of God's word; also in numbers and in the grace of giving. Our present minister, James C. Gordon of Long Beach, is preaching Jesus Christ, and is loved by the whole church. We extend a hearty welcome to one and all to worship with us.

"Brother E. L. Jorgenson, our past minister, is greatly loved and missed by all of us. May his kind increase."—Gordon A. Himes.

Jennings, La.: "The New Year's eve watch service here in Jennings was a blessing to all who attended. The house was about filled even though it was Saturday night. There were several visitors from out of town, as well as from here. Kenneth Istre led the singing. The speakers were John Burgess of Alexandria, who brought us a very timely and inspiring message on 'Watching for the Coming of Our Lord,' Steve Hazelton of Oakdale,

who spoke on 'Sin, Its Strong Attraction, and Terrible Consequences,' Maurice LaFleur, who spoke in French on 'Time, Past, Present, and Future.' At 10 o'clock we had a brief intermission. During the next session we had some special singing, with Sidney Mayeux of Oakdale bringing the principal message. Others who spoke were Gabriel Istre, Kenneth Istre, and Ivy Istre. Several led in prayer during this watch service, which ended with prayer." (Taken from **Friendly Visitor**, briefed from Ivy J. Istre report.)

N. Wilson Burks of Fifth and M congregation reports three accessions by membership in the last two weeks. He plans to give a series of sermons on the church, its organization and work in the near future. Some material improvements on the building is contemplated.

Linton, Ind.: "We are starting our Bible Reading class again this year with good interest. This time we began with I Chronicles."—Waldo S. Hoar.

The Ormsby Avenue church, 622 E. Ormsby, Louisville, is announcing a protracted meeting to continue from May 7 to 22. R. H. Boll is to be the evangelist in this special effort for the Cause of Christ. Good reports come from the work at Ormsby. We wish for them a fruitful meeting.

Gratz, Ky.: "The Work at Drennon mission continues with 27 additions since it started. Pray for us and the work and may God bless you all is my prayer."—Quintis Risor.

Wichita Falls, Tex.: "The church here is at peace and making some progress in the Lord's work."—J. C. Tate.

WANTED, a copy of the Boll-Boles debate. If you have a copy you wish to sell please contact this office.

Camp Taylor, Ky.: "Last night in a business meeting the Camp Taylor church decided to have a special type of meeting in which they would hear several of the good Gospel preachers of the Louisville vicinity. Thus we plan to have a

different speaker each night from March 19 to 26. We have yet to contact the preachers and make detailed announcements. We look forward to a spiritual awakening in the Camp Taylor church."—J. R. Clark.

YEAR-END CLUBS

The following sent four or more names, as indicated, either in December or January. This is another way of expressing our appreciation to our helpers in our work of sending out the printed Gospel. We would like to be able to publish another such list in March or April. The club rate on four or more names is \$1 each. Why not send us a club?

Please notify us in case of mistakes.

Mrs. S. P. Edens, Ky.	8
Mrs. Retta Scott, Ind.	4
Ross Frump, Ind.	6
Charles A. Wright, Ind.	7
Mrs. John Stoner, Ind.	5
H. L. Moody, Ky.	4
Harvey V. McMahon, Ill.	4
Chester Gilbert, Ky.	9
L. L. Owens, Ia.	7
Mrs. Garnett Gabhart, Ky. ...	5
Maurice Clymore, Ind.	16
Mrs. L. E. Campbell, Ark. ...	4
O. E. Shields, Ky.	10
Mrs. R. C. Trice, Ky.	4
Mrs. Henry Gray, La.	4
Mrs. J. W. Gorin, Ky.	4
L. C. Carter, Tex.	5
Carl Kitzmiller, Tex.	16
Ben J. Elston, La.	20
O. C. Nicks, La.	8
Etta Wagstaff, Tenn.	5
Sidnev Maveux, La.	8
Mrs. W. J. Fitts, Tenn.	4
O. L. Cauble, Ind.	5
Waldo S. Hoar, Ind.	19
H. N. Rutherford, Ky.	6
Florence Hottel, Ind.	9
D. R. Bridges, Ga.	6
Mrs. George Leffler, Ky.	60
Mrs. T. B. Simpkins, Tenn. ...	7
Tillman Terry, Okla.	4
Mrs. Roy Cecil, Tenn.	4
Bryan Darland, Kv.	4
R. B. Boyd, Tenn.	17
G. B. Whitenack, Kv.	12
Charles E. Kranz, Ind.	5
Alfred Smith, La.	4
E. C. Ringer, Ind.	11
Mrs. J. L. Allen, Ky.	15
Orell Overman, Ind.	4
Ivy J. Istre, La.	21
Willis Allen, Ky.	6

Mrs. H. S. Westerfield, Ky. 5
 Quintis Raisor, Ky. 11

A GOOD WORK

How do they do it? For a quarter of a century the Portland Christian School has carried on an educational program and paid six or more teachers without charging tuition. And now a Christian College has been added. This educational program under Christian teachers is a great and good work. Christian training means Christian homes, church leaders, preachers, and missionaries in the days to come. We can make no better investment than to uphold the hands of those who are engaged in this project. We hear that the school is short of funds to pay teachers. Also we know that the college needs more gifts for operating expenses, though it does charge a small tuition fee. First pray and then do as the Lord lays upon your heart.

MORE COMMENTS

"I would hate to not get the Word and Work as I have been a subscriber since about 1917. I love its pages; it surely has wonderful reading material."—Mrs. R. C. DeForce, Huntingburg, Ind.

"I enjoy reading the Word and Work so much. I wish I could afford to send for more to give to my friends."—Mrs. David Martin, Jennings, La.

"I inclose check for Word and Work subscription. Have just been reading January issue and it surely is a worthwhile magazine chuck-full of spiritual food. I would not want to be without one single copy."—Joe McKinley, Borden, Ind.

"Have just received my January issue of the Word and Work and it certainly is a gem."—Carl Kitzmiller, Abilene, Texas.

"We enjoyed the last Word and Work so much; it had so many good things in it."—Mrs. S. A. Lawyer, Sacramento, Calif.

"I feel that I cannot do without Word and Work."—Mrs. W. J. Fitts, Gallatin, Tenn.

HEAR "WORDS OF LIFE

Each Saturday morning from 9:30 to 10 Words of Life is broadcast from WGRC, Louisville. This time is divided between a radio chorus and a speaker.

THE CHRISTIAN'S CROWN

J. R. Clark

"I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown." (Rev. 3:11.)

"Thy crown," says the Lord Jesus in this passage. So the true child of God has a crown! In speaking of this crown the apostle Paul said that it "is laid up for me" and for "all them that have loved his appearing." This blessed truth is just as real as if God had a crown-room filled with crowns and among them one labeled with your own name.

In New Testament times there were two kinds of crowns, the royal crown and the victor's crown. The latter was a garland woven of leaves and presented to the victor in the games. Thus Paul says, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them that have loved his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:7, 8). Again, "And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible" (1 Cor. 9:25). The figure, for so it is, is borrowed from the games and not from the king's court (though the Christian does have promise of reigning with Christ, which is another matter). The word used in the Greek for crown (when applied to the Christian) is always a form of *stephanos*, which means a victor's crown. It carries with it the idea of victory, of joy and feasting.

The crown of leaves soon withered, but our crown is a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Theirs was a corruptible crown, but ours an incorruptible. As to its nature Paul refers to it as "a crown of life" and "a crown of glory." If we can imagine the ecstasy of that moment, in which the crown was placed on the brow of the victor, lengthened to all eternity and intensified many-fold, and if we can imagine our short span of life here lifted out of all imperfections and continued forever—then we can have some idea of the nature of the Christian's crown.

Our text says, "that no one take thy crown," indicating that there is danger of one's losing his crown. Does this mean that some one might filch our crown and have it for himself? In Col. 2:18 we read, "Let no man rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, . . ." In robbing the Christian of his prize does the thief get the prize himself? Or, seeing that our crown is laid up in heaven "where moth and rust doth not corrupt and thieves do not break through and steal," is it not safe? Somehow this crown, though laid up for us, is bound up in our lives down here, and we can hold it or lose it. "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown" proves as much. The false teacher, or tempter, who snatches our crown, cannot place it on his own head; if so, it surely would become a crown of thorns! He snatches it from the Christian and yet does not have it for himself. What kind of diabolic procedure is this?

Ordinarily the thief steals in order to enrich himself.

Let not temptation deceive you. She comes with soft raiment and an innocent face. She offers you fleshly gratification and, seemingly, only a slight deviation from the course of duty. But behind her innocent face is an evil purpose. She wishes to snatch away your crown! If we only could tear from her face the outward mask and see her evil purpose and aim, we would loathe her presence, and resist her or flee from her. For, indeed, she wishes to wreck our lives, to rob us of heaven, of truth, of the Lord Jesus Himself. She would have us lost forever, banished from the presence of God, suffering the torments of hell.

"Hold fast that which thou hast"; so may you preserve your crown. We can hold it or lose it up there, by holding or losing what we have, as Christians, down here. But what did the Philadelphian Christians have? In verse 8 of this third chapter of Revelation, "thou hast a little power, and didst keep my word, and didst not deny my name." Again in verse 10, "Because thou didst keep the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial . . ." We must cling to His word; we must not let go His Name; we must trust Him to keep us.

Our anchor, hope, is cast within the veil, yea, Christ is our anchor, for the Hebrew 6:19, 20 passage which says, "which we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and stedfast and entering into that which is within the veil"; also adds "whither as a forerunner Jesus entered for us." The anchorage down here is God's promise, strengthened by His oath, and the chain reaching from our anchorage to our Anchor is vital faith. Will your anchor hold in the storms of life? It is most certainly constructed to so do. Only by our carelessness, lack of prayer, Bible study, and vital faith, may we lose our crown. Let us not hold our prize lightly with our finger tips, but let us tie the cord firmly around our wrist and grasp our precious prize with all our might. "I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no one (devil or men) take thy crown."

THE CONSECRATED LIFE

When a man is right with God, God will freely use him. There will rise up within him impulses, inspiration, strong strivings, strange resolves. These must be tested by Scripture and prayer; and if evidently of God they must be obeyed.

But there is this perennial source of comfort: God's commands are God's enablings. He will never give us a work to do without showing us exactly how and when to do it, and giving us the precise strength and wisdom we need.

Do not dread to enter this life because you fear that God will ask you to do something you cannot do. He will never do that. If He lays aught on your heart He will do so irresistibly; and as you pray about it, the impression will continue to grow, so that presently, as you look up to know what He wills you to say or do, the way will suddenly open; and you will probably have said the word or done the deed almost unconsciously.—*F. B. Meyer*,

CHRIST'S PRAYERS

R. H. B.

The communion of the Lord Jesus with His Father in heaven was unclouded and constant. Specific instances of Jesus' praying are mentioned always for some special reason. When face to face with a crisis in His work and career, we see Him praying. Thus, when He came up out of the waters of baptism, as Luke tells us, He came up praying (Luke 3:21). When He must choose His apostles He spent all the night before in prayer (Luke 6). At Caesarea Philippi, before putting the great decisive question to His disciples (Matt. 16: 13-20; Luke 9:18-20) He prayed. On the Mount of Transfiguration, where the great demonstration of His power, His coming, His majesty, honor and glory was to take place (2 Pet. 1:16-18) He prayed. "He went up into the mountain to pray"; and "as he was praying he was transfigured before them."

CHRIST'S INTERCESSORY PRAYING

"Intercession" is prayer on behalf of others. The outstanding Old Testament example is the intercession of Moses on behalf of guilty Israel who had brought condemnation on themselves by flagrantly breaking the solemn covenant which had been ratified only six weeks before, when they made and worshipped the golden calf. It is evident that but for Moses' prayer on their behalf the whole nation would have been consumed in the fire of the wrath of God. He said to Moses, "Go get thee down, for thy people that thou broughtest up out of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed unto it. . . . And Jehovah said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold it is a stiffnecked people; now therefore let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation" (Exod. 32: 7-10). Moses' quick ear caught the invitation implied in this speech. The fate of the nation, he saw, depended upon him: if he would "let God alone," their doom was sealed. Instantly he set himself not to let Him alone (Ps. 106:23). When judgment is due and there is no intercessor—when no man qualified and acceptable to stand before God could be found to avert that judgment, the judgment must fall (Isa. 63:5, 6; Ezek. 22:30, 31). Moses had access to God. "Thou hast found favor in my sight, and I know thee by name" (Exod. 33:17). And he pressed more and more for a perfect knowledge of God in order that his intercession might be right and effective (Exod. 33:13, 18). How much the intercession of Moses for his people availed, how he not only saved them from destruction but step by step regained for them all their forfeited privileges will be seen in the narration of Exod. 32-34.

If the intercession of Moses availed wonderfully—how much more should not the intercession of the Son of God avail when He lifts up His prayer before the Father's throne on behalf of His people?

"Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7:25.)

One instance of Christ's intercession for His own while on earth is found in Luke 22:31, 32: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan asked to have you that he may sift you as wheat: but I made supplication for thee that thy faith fail not; and do thou, when thou hast turned again, establish thy brethren."

The hour and power of darkness was near at hand. Satan had gone in before God (comp. Job 1, 2) and had asked to have Christ's disciples that he might "sift them as wheat." The demand was not refused. ("Satan has obtained you by asking." R. V. margin). The Lord Jesus, foreseeing the test and trial that was about to befall His disciples, prayed most particularly for one of them—the key-man, against whom He knew Satan would launch his fiercest attack. For Simon especially did He make supplication: not that he should not be sifted and tried; nor even that he should not fall, but *that his faith fail not*. Simon (He didn't call him Peter this time) did fall badly. Under the ruin of such a failure a man might easily lose all hope and sink into spiritual paralysis and despair. But there was the intercession of Jesus. Simon rallied. His faith revived, and it was a humbler and much chastened disciple that three times confessed his loyal devotion to the risen Lord, and was reinstated that day on the shore of Lake Tiberias (John 21).

THE "HIGHPRIESTLY PRAYER"

The great prayer of John 17 is chiefly a prayer of intercession. The long-looked for hour when the Son should be glorified had come. With holy satisfaction the Lord Jesus reviewed His work. "I have glorified thee on the earth," He said to His Father, "having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do. And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (Vs. 4, 5). From this point on His prayer is for His own, His disciples, "the men whom thou gavest me out of the world." And not for those only who had come to Him during His earthly ministry, but for all those who should afterward believe on Him through their word (v. 20). He prays not for the world, but for His own (v. 9). And what does He petition for them at the Father's throne? Two things:

1. That they might be kept. "I am no more in the world, and these are in the world. . . . While I was with them I kept them in thy name, and I guarded them. . . . But now I come to thee. . . . I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one." (Vs. 11-15.) These are those whom Jude calls the "kept for Jesus Christ" (Jude 1).

2. But the object of that keeping and of all the prayer is *that they might be one*. Four times (five times in the King James Version) this petition recurs. "Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are" (v. 11). "That they may all be one; even as thou Father art in me

and I in thee; that they also may be [one] in us; that the world may believe that thou didst send me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them that they may be one even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me" (vs. 21-23).

Many questions may arise here. But without attempting to answer them let us simply observe what the Lord said in His prayer. Let us note,

- (1) Who it is that is to be thus united.
- (2) What kind of unity it is that He speaks of.
- (3) How that unity is to be effected.
- (4) What the effect of it upon the world.

The answer to item (1) at once eliminates the idea of a federation of religious sects and bodies, although no doubt the world would (and will) hail that as the long desired "Christian Unity." It cannot be a union of all sorts. It is the oneness of those mentioned in vs. 2, 6, 11, 14, 20—the men whom God gave Him out of the world. Only those are included in Christ's prayer.

2. The answer to item (2) shows that the oneness contemplated is a vital and essential oneness—like that of the Father and the Son (vs. 21, 22); Christ in them, the Father in Christ, that "they may be in us" and may be "perfected into one" (vs. 21, 23). This is something more than doctrinal agreement. It evidently means more than having their names on the same church-book.

3. In looking for the answer to item (3) we find that this unity is effected by the Father's keeping of them (v. 11), through Christ's prayer (vs. 20, 21), and by Christ's bestowing His glory upon them (v. 22).

4. Finally—as to the effect on the world—it does not say that the world will behold the unity of Christ's people, and will thereby be convinced of the Divine mission of Jesus Christ. That never has been the case, nor ever can be. The eyes of the world will not behold such a unity. So long as the enemy can sow tares among the wheat, so long as there are erring children of God and children of the devil mingled in the congregation of Christ, some division is inevitable (1 Cor. 11:19). It was so in the days of the apostles. "Some went out from us," says John, "but they were not of us" (1 John 2:19). There was division. The world would not be able to judge between the one side and the other. The world would look on and say that "they are divided among themselves." More evil than those who went out, were those who "crept in" (Jude 4)—"false brethren, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 2:4). And these cause division. Nor does the inspired apostle hold out better prospects for the future. "I know that after my departure grievous wolves shall enter in, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20:29, 30).

Far from justifying the divided state of Christendom—these passages are given simply to set forth the facts as they have been, are

now, and will be, until "the time of the harvest." Never till then will the world see the spectacle of the church united in Christ Jesus, in such a unity as the Lord described and prayed for. But if so, how can the world be brought, by the oneness of Christ's people, to believe that God has sent Him? Not by *seeing their unity*, but by the spiritual force and power of those, be they few or many, who are thus united one with another and with Christ.

In this unity every faithful child of God can and ought to have a share. Into this we must enter, for this we must work and strive. And whether they be few or many, the Lord knoweth them that are His. Those who maintain this ground in faith and love are in God's sight united, whatever may be the respective pretensions of prestige or number of the sects and parties of Christendom.

"Numbers is no sign that we should right be found,
But few were saved in Noah's ark and many millions drowned."

Two other features of the great prayer we must note, both concerned with the men whom the Father had given Him.

(1) They were chosen and called out of the world—"sanctified"—i. e. separated and set apart from the world unto God. The words which the Father had given the Son, He gave to them (v. 8). The immediate result was that the world hated them because (by the reception of the word) they were set apart from the world: "they are not of the world even as I am not of the world" (v. 14). Yet He prays not that the Father take them out of the world: He has a work for them in the world. "As thou didst send me into the world so sent I them into the world" (v. 18. See also 20:21).

(2) The great work of Jesus toward His disciples was to reveal the Father to them (John 1:18). "I have made known unto them thy Name." That work was not finished, for He goes on to say, I "will make it known." The outcome of this gracious work would be twofold: (1) that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them; and (2) that "I [may be] in them." (V. 26. Comp. Eph. 3:14-19.)

His love for His own is such that the present absence cannot endure forever. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (v. 24). The full, final fulfillment of this petition is seen in 1 Thess. 4:14-17.

SECTARIANISM

The spirit of sectarianism is to take up some passages and to stand on them, bringing all other passages in line at the expense of further truth.

The greatest sectarian in the world is the person who thinks that he has encompassed the whole body of truth. No one is quite that far advanced. God has more and more for us, which unfolds as we study His Word.—R. H. B.

SEED THOUGHTS

J. R. C.

(More gleanings from Brother Boll's Bible classes, including "Gems of Truth.")

THE DEVIL'S HELPER

A young preacher approached an upright moral man about salvation. The man began to boast that he was above reproach.

"No man can put his finger on a fault of mine," he said airily.

"You are the worst man in this community," shot back the young man.

"How's that," asked the shocked moralist.

"Many young people will take you as an example and fail to turn to the Lord. You are the devil's best helper," answered the young man with spirit.

The man became very angry and went away, but he could not erase the conversation from his mind. Later he heard Brother Boll preach and humbly came forward for salvation. The young man's words had struck home.

THE SINFULNESS OF SIN

"Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death." (Rom. 7:24.)

A lady in Toronto had a sore throat, and though it persisted, she would not go to the doctor.

"It is only a little sore throat," she said. "It will be all right soon."

But it did not get all right; rather it hung on and grew worse. Finally, at the urging of her loved ones, she reluctantly went to the doctor.

"There is no need to go," she insisted to the last.

The doctor examined her and informed her that she had cancer of the throat! After that she was very much concerned and was willing to do anything that might bring relief and cure.

All unregenerate men are sinners and, though sin is a terrible disease in any case, men must feel their need before they can receive cleansing. A man says, "Yes I am a sinner," but it doesn't mean much to him. He takes it as a matter of course. He is just that way and he thinks little about it. We should feel the exceeding sinfulness of sin, that we may seek the one true help and remedy.

THE COMPELLING "MUST"

"And he must needs pass through Samaria" (John 4:4).

Why the "must" here? Somehow God had revealed to the Lord Jesus His will in the matter. The more one studies the life of Christ, the more he sees that His every step was according to the will and wisdom of God. When the fog comes down in the Alps and one cannot see, the wise traveller stops until the fog is lifted. So did the Son of God wait for the Father's will. How much more should we not run before Him,

FAITH GROWS

The Nobleman of John 4:46-54 believed three times. First in coming twenty miles from Capernaum to Cana to present his problem to Jesus he showed that he believed. Then when the Master said, "Go thy way, thy son liveth," the man "believed the word that Jesus spoke unto him, and he went his way." And, finally, when he got home and saw that his child was well and that he recovered at the hour when Jesus spoke the word, "himself believed and his whole house." How beautiful this picture of progressive faith. He believed, and believed, and believed!

ABSOLUTE TRUST

A surgeon, after undergoing an operation himself, said, "I never knew before how much and how absolutely a person must put his trust in the doctor." To this same extent one must put his whole trust in God and His Son for salvation.

A MOTHER'S PRAYER

During a protracted meeting conducted by J. A. Harding in the blue grass of Kentucky a middle-aged man came forward to accept Christ as Savior.

"What in the sermon impressed you and led you to a decision for Christ?" he was asked.

"Not anything," was his surprising reply. By way of explanation he added, "When I was a boy a friend and I, having remained out later than we should, slipped up the back stairs of his home. As we did so I heard his mother praying—praying for me, that I might turn to the Lord and live the Christian life. The memory of that prayer has never departed from me unto this day. As I listened to the sermon I seemed to hear her praying. It brought me around after all these years."

"And he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

GEMS OF TRUTH

We do not believe in progressive revelation, but we do believe in progressive understanding.

Christians in Caesar's household are like flowers growing out of a heap of rubbish.

If you are faithful in the first step, you get light for the second step. If you do not take the first step the light goes out!

A friend said to the late Brisbane (columnist), "Brisbane, you will never become rich, but if you do your opinions will change."

It wasn't the spikes that held the Lord Jesus to the cross; it was His love for men, and His Father's will.

There will not be any boasting in the New Jerusalem. All will realize that they got there by grace.

Faith is the one unmeritorious thing we can have. It is simply leaning on another; it is the outstretched hands for the proffered mercy.

LESSONS ON THE BOOK OF ACTS

J. Edward Boyd

STEPHEN: FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

STEPHEN THE STORM-CENTER OF PERSECUTION. Of the seven who were appointed to serve tables (Acts 6:5) only two are mentioned again: Philip, who became an outstanding evangelist, preaching the gospel with great effectiveness in Samaria and bringing the knowledge of the Lord Jesus to the Ethiopian Eunuch (chapter 8); and Stephen, first of the disciples to seal his testimony with his own blood. To both these men came opportunities for greater service; and both laid hold upon these opportunities with great earnestness and zeal. One was permitted to continue his evangelistic labors for many years; the other was cut down at almost the very beginning of a promising career in the service of his Lord. Are we tempted to ask, "Why should this be? Why should not Stephen also have been permitted many years of usefulness in the preaching of the Word? We may not understand fully; but of this we may be sure: it is all according to the Lord's will. Sometimes His will is accomplished by death rather than by life; and perhaps the triumphal death of Stephen had as much to do in the furtherance of the gospel in those days as did the useful life of Philip.

To Stephen, full of grace and power," was granted the ability to work "great wonders and signs among the people." Soon his faithful and powerful ministry brought him into sharp conflict with a group of Jews composed of Libertines (men who had been enslaved by the Romans and later liberated), Cyrenians and Alexandrians, from the northern part of Africa, and men from Cilicia (home province of Saul of Tarsus) and Asia. But all together they were no match for Stephen; they were unable "to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake." Stung by their defeat in argument, they had to resort to other means in their effort to overthrow the truth. Misrepresentation was then, as it is now, a favorite weapon of such men. So they suborned men who declared that they had heard Stephen "speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God." According to their law, the penalty for this crime was death by stoning. (Lev. 24:16.) There was, of course, absolutely no truth in this accusation; but it served its purpose. The people, zealous for Moses and for God, were quickly and easily stirred by such a charge; that having been accomplished, it was a simple matter to arrest Stephen and bring him before the Sanhedrin.

Before the council the general charge of speaking "words against this holy place and the law" was resolved into two specific accusations: (1) "that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place and (2) shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us." Those who gave this testimony are described as "false witnesses." But was there no truth in these accusations? Shortly before His crucifixion Jesus had foretold the coming destruction of the temple and the deso-

lation of the city. (Luke 21:6, 20ff.) Surely His warning words had been recalled and retold. And, while even the apostles little understood the magnitude of the changes to be brought about by this new movement, it must have been already apparent that things could not continue altogether as they had been previous to the coming of Jesus. But the most damaging kind of lie, and the sort most difficult to deal with, is that which contains an element of truth. And that the father of lies knows full well! The temple was indeed to be destroyed! many changes were to be brought about. But the inference that the assertion of these truths constituted blasphemy against Moses and against God was altogether wrong.

STEPHEN'S DEFENSE BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN. As the witnesses finished their testimony, every eye in that crowded court-room was fixed upon Stephen. How we would like to have a true picture of that scene! One man against a multitude—a man with a beaming face, the serenity of his spirit shining through—"as it had been the face of an angel." The voice of the high priest broke the silence: "Are these things so?" Stephen's answer was neither "yes" nor "no." There are questions that cannot be properly and fully answered with an unqualified "yes" or "no." So Stephen responded with a speech of some length. This speech, which takes the greater part of the seventh chapter of Acts, is commonly called his defense. Yet it is not so much a defense as it is an arraignment. It does indeed appear that he had a high regard for Moses and reverence for God, a sufficient refutation of the charge of blasphemy; but as the address continues it becomes clear that his main objective is to convict his hearers of their failure to heed the very law which they professed so loudly to revere.

If we are sometimes puzzled by the seeming irrelevance of many details of the speech, it may help us to remember that men of the east were not accustomed to come so directly to the point as we westerners. Their modes of thought were not just the same as ours. To those who listened to this address on that day it would not appear as a mere recital of facts in their national history, many of which were unrelated to the subject under consideration. And even as we meditate upon it, its main purpose becomes clear. The key-note is sounded near the close: "As your fathers did, so do ye." The fathers turned against Joseph. Moved with jealousy, they "sold him into Egypt." But in later years he was exalted and became their savior from famine. The fathers at first rejected Moses: "Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?" But "this Moses whom they refused," declared Stephen, "him hath God sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer . . ." He it was—this rejected Moses—who led them forth out of Egyptian bondage.

Moreover, it was this same Moses (Stephen points out) who had said to the children of Israel, "A prophet shall God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me." So, according to his own testimony, his was not the final word; there was to be another prophet like unto him. Some of those present may well have re-

called the use that Peter made of this prediction in his sermon on Solomon's porch. (Acts 3:22, 23.) And they would scarcely fail to catch the implication intended, that Jesus of Nazareth was that prophet and that, therefore, they would incur the penalty pronounced by Moses upon those who refused to hearken unto him. (Deut. 18:19.) For they definitely rejected Jesus and all His claims; and any suggestion that they might be wrong and so should reconsider the case was spurned with indignation and anger.

Relentlessly Stephen continued. At Mt. Sinai the angel spoke to Moses and the fathers; there he received the "living oracles." But even then "our fathers would not be obedient, but thrust him from them. . . ." "And they made a calf in those days, and brought a sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their hands. But God turned and gave them up to serve the host of heaven. . ." All this should have been a solemn warning to his hearers, if they had been willing to receive it! Rapidly Stephen passed over a long period of Israel's history: Joshua, David, and Solomon, whose privilege it was to build a house for the God of Jacob. But quickly he points out that "the Most High dwelleth not in houses made with hands"—that He was not dependent on the temple which they prized so highly—a fact that was attested by their own prophet Isaiah. And then Stephen brought his arraignment to a close with stern denunciation: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them that showed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not."

DEATH OF STEPHEN. These words cut deep; rage filled the hearts of the hearers; there was the sound of gnashing teeth. But the eyes of Stephen were turned upward; and he cried out, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Did this bring back to their minds the answer of Jesus when the high priest, in the presence of this same council, said to him: "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God?" Jesus answered: "Thou hast said; nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." (Matt. 26:63, 64.) On the basis of this declaration they had pronounced Him guilty of blasphemy and therefore worthy of death; and now that Stephen declares that he sees Him standing on the right hand of God their pent-up fury breaks through all its bounds and becomes a raging torrent of hatred that sweeps him on to his death.

Let us remember that this was not the deed of common ruffians. The Sanhedrin was composed of great men of Israel, the religious scribes, and lawyers, men of age and experience, well-informed and leaders of the nation. Within its membership were priests, elders, learned in the Jewish law. It should have been, and probably was

ordinarily, a calm deliberative body. And yet it was here transformed into an unreasoning, impassioned, howling mob. And that against a man who was only speaking the convictions of his heart. How can such a thing be? They were indeed very religious; but their religion was, for the most part, a religion of form and ritual and ceremony, and not of the heart—a religion of outward observance rather than inward purity, righteousness, and love. Many times they had had opportunities to hear and receive the truth; but they had repeatedly hardened themselves against it. Jesus had stood before them, and they had condemned Him. Peter and John had been brought before them, and had boldly proclaimed salvation in Christ Jesus; but they had warned them not to speak any more in that name. Later all the apostles were arrested and brought into their presence, and again they heard the truth about Jesus; but they were deterred from slaying them only by Gamaliel's counsel of moderation. And now they are confronted with Stephen and his unanswerable argument; and they answer with stones. When there is such madness in the opposition, one wonders if there is not a deep inner consciousness of being in the wrong, together with a stubborn unwillingness to make a fair investigation of the question involved.

When Jesus was arrested, the Jews were insistent that Pilate take over and have him crucified. "It is not lawful," they said, "for us to put any man to death." (John 18:31.) Thus, unwittingly, they brought about the fulfillment of prophecy. (Ps. 22:16-18; Matt. 20:19; John 12:32, 33.) But in the case of Stephen there appears to have been no thought of turning him over to the Roman authorities; he was rushed pell-mell out of the city (according to Lev. 24:14) and stoned to death. And as the stones rained upon him, Stephen called upon the Lord and prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." But his last words were a prayer for his murderers—so like the prayer of Jesus on the cross, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do"—so Stephen, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Thus even in death Stephen gained a great victory and glorified his Lord.

REDUCED ONE-THIRD

The book "Living Messages, '48," which was published last fall, contains twelve sermons from twelve outstanding preachers—perhaps you know all of them and have heard them preach. They are, H. N. Rutherford, R. B. Boyd, N. B. Wright, J. Edward Boyd, J. Scott Greer, Howard T. Marsh, John H. Adams, E. H. Hoover, E. L. Jorgenson, R. H. Boll, Stanford Chambers, and H. L. Olmstead. Each brought a vital message from the Word of God. These books would be excellent to hand to a friend, to add to the church library, or to have on your own reading table. Although

they have sold well we yet have about 350 paper bound and 75 cloth bound books left. We lack \$223.75 paying for its publication. It has been selling at \$1.50 and 75¢ for cloth and paper respectively. We are marking the price down to \$1 for cloth binding and 50¢ for paper. Even the paper is sewed and bound in attractive leatherette-finish cover stock. The reason for this reduced price is for quick sale. We have some fine manuscripts from last year's conference that we want to publish when this debt is met. Why not order five or ten and sell them to Christian friends?

SERVICE

J. H. McCaleb

Some one has spoken as follows: "Serving the Lord is not a matter of wearing titles and filling offices, but it is a matter of work. If one would be great among the children of God, he must be a servant."

That is a good expression of a fundamental Bible truth. The organization of the church is built upon the concept of service. Men may be elected to office and wear titles and still perform no real service. They are not truly fulfilling their place. It is a matter of name only and the result of human selection. Conversely, there may be many a Christian who goes unrecognized formally, but who bears the burden in the heat of the day. He truly is a member of the leading group. Service is the true test.

It is an unrefuted fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Unless that statement be true His sacrifice would have been unavailing. Equally true is the statement that His Sonship would have been unavailing had He not been willing to render that humble service to humanity that ended in death on the cross. His life of service, His humiliation and His voluntary sacrifice of life paid the penalty for all who will accept Him as the means of reconciliation to God.

And so also with us. We are effective only as we are willing to serve. Faith without works is dead. Almost invariably you will find that those who are asked to serve have put themselves in a position of service. Just as surely as we keep coming to the various services and show our interest from week to week, just so surely will our hands find themselves full. And in the measure that we serve, in that measure do we find a high place in God's esteem. And that describes true leadership.

There is room for service for every member of God's family. Many, many matters are crying for attention. Many who have peculiar abilities to throw on the altar have not caught the spirit of service. And perhaps there are some of us who seek to serve where we are not the most effective. There is a proper place for every one of us. A willing and humble spirit will place itself in a position to be used.

"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."

HARDENING

Disallow any hardening of the heart. That results in the stiff neck, and worse symptoms. If the hardening process is going on the Word of God will not convict as it once did, nor will it thrill as once it did. If that is the case a dangerous trend has set in. If you discover anything like that be alarmed, for it is indeed alarming. And it will not be good to forget that "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Have you counted the cost of a wrong course?—Stanford Chambers.

“FAITH OF OUR FATHERS”

E. L. J.

Of making books there is, and there will be, no end—until that day when men shall learn there is but one.

Slowly, but surely—if God wills—we too are driving toward a book. The page you now are reading is a page in that book, and this entire article is a chapter in that volume. Its contributors—a galaxy of stars in the Christian firmament, a great Hall of Faith, a veritable roll call of the worthies: from the “fathers” and martyrs of the post-apostolic age to the great “reformers” of three and four hundred years ago; from the reformers to the great “restorationists” of a hundred years or so ago; yea, down to contemporary writers and preachers who are still striving for the faith of the gospel, still laboring to restore original Christianity—many of them also truly great, as time will tell.

Most purposeful books have some particular subject to be discussed, some proposition to be proved, some problem to be solved, some question to be answered; and so have we. Our primary question is this: *When Will Christ Come?* We ask it not concerning the day or the hour, the month or the year; for we deal not in date-setting at all. Our inquiry is simply, *When Will Christ Come* with reference to the Golden Age of Prophecy? May we scripturally and hopefully “watch and wait” for our Savior? May we reasonably “look and long” for Him? May we scripturally “love His appearing,” while “earnestly desiring” and praying for that day? May we live our lives in the burning, cleansing light of our Lord’s return, and serve our God in the stimulating, motivating power of “that blessed hope” after the manner of life among the early Christians? Or must we cancel out that hope with the false doctrine of a thousand years of waiting and of dying, if not a million! And must good men be charged with heresy for rejecting this deadening error, this over-dose of sleeping pills, this “time-enough-yet” doctrine, this unfaithful servant song, “My lord delayeth his coming”?

For, vitally connected with our primary question, *When will Christ Come?*, is the problem of fellowship and Christian unity. If this difference is not too great for fellowship on the part of those who hold “the premillennial view” (to use James Challen’s convenient, concise phrase in its simple Dictionary meaning), then why not on the part of those who hold the “post-millennial view”? If Christian love and tolerance can bridge the gap from us to them, then why not from them to us? Or is it, after all, the lack of love among us much more than any lack of uniformity in thinking? And if we, on our part have failed in this, may God forgive; and may we all live to see the folly of seeking peace by fighting for it, and of offering fellowship to those only who bow to our opinions!

It is to this end that we quote these men of old, the spiritual giants who were in the earth in those days; not to prove or disprove anything upon their word of by their prestige. But we quote them

first, because what noted men have written other men will read. Their attention will thus be drawn to *what God has said*; and this no man may well ignore. Second, we quote them as the unanswerable proof of our proposition, *That cooperation is possible among those who espouse the great fundamentals, if there be among them a genuine love.* The pioneers were not entirely agreed on this very question, *When Will Christ Come?* But they were wonderfully united nevertheless in the bonds of Christian love. This is the true unity, and there is no other. That we may all find grace and help, example and encouragement, to follow after it, and to attain to it—that is to be the grand and final purpose of this book.

For this noble program we make no apology, except for our mistakes and frailty in executing it; nor yet for the will of our Brother Janes, which provided for it. Those who were in haste to condemn and warn against that will—might they not well have waited to see the form and outline of the program, as we have prayed daily for wisdom to execute that will faithfully, and in harmony with that greater Will of Him whose we are and Whom we serve? Need we be ashamed to print, or afraid to read, what has been written on these lines (on *Prophecy and Unity*) by these and other honored men: A. Campbell, W. K. Pendleton, Robert Richardson, John F. Rowe, Wm. Ruble, J. T. Barclay, Barton Stone, Robert Milligan, J. B. Rotherham, David Lipscomb (on “*Times of Restitution*” and on “*Christian Unity*”); E. A. Elam (on “*Christian Love*”); J. N. Armstrong, J. W. McGarvey, G. Dallas Smith—not to mention again the “*fathers*” and the martyrs, the reformers and the church historians.

Or need we make apology for these who have been laid out to be heard in a more prolix manner during the current year: Walter Scott, James Challen, Jacob Creath, Moses Lard, Dr. Brents, J. A. Harding, Daniel Sommer?—others also in the years to follow.

The year has been well begun with a timely reprint from Robert Richardson on *Opinions* (which see). We offer next the first of two or more articles from James Challen; Elder in the church at Lexington, Ky.; consecrated Christian minister; coworker with A. Campbell; contributor to D. S. Burnet’s “*Christian Preacher*,” 1836; author of the article, “*Reconciliation*” which appears in “*Living Pulpit*,” 1868.

“THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES”

By James Challen

“The times and the seasons” are in the hands of the Father, and are wholly at his disposal. They represent great eras, long periods, and the complexion of events which occur under them. “The times” refer to periods in the history of the world; “the seasons” to the character of those periods. Just as a year is a “time,” and spring, summer, autumn and winter the seasons. Now, both the times and the seasons are under the direction and control of God.

It is of the very essence of Atheism that Jehovah has divorced himself from the world he has created, and takes no care and feels no

interest in the affairs of man. In no case is this seen either in the Old Testament or the New. The earth has He given to the children of men. The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof. In all the events connected with Israel and their enemies, God is spoken of as a jealous God, watching over his friends to do them good, and strong to punish those who are his enemies and theirs. His eyes are on the ways of men. "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the *whole earth*, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." (II Chr. 16:9.)

Kings, rulers, magistrates and nations are specially under his government. He disposes them as he wills. When they answer his purposes, they prosper, and when they fail to do this he puts them down. He raises up one and destroys another. He sends armies from abroad, or incites them from within, to reform, or to utterly subdue or destroy. His own people, Israel, for a long time had their own kings, but when they refused to obey him in accordance with the will of God, he dethroned them and made them subject to their enemies; and when this failed, he utterly removed them from their own land, and put them under the government of a foreign power, until he had rooted out the last vestige of idolatry from them. Thus God said to Israel, "The Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above any, and shalt not be beneath; *if thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord*. But it shall come to pass, *if thou wilt not hearken*, the Lord shall bring thee and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; because thou servest not the Lord, *therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies.*" (Deut. 28:13, 15, 36, 47.)

In the year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon besieged Jerusalem, took part of the vessels of the Lord, and the Lord gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into his hand. After this he took the people away from their own land, after he had slain their young men with the sword. *God gave them all into his hand, to fulfill the word of the Lord.* (II Chron. 36:11-21.) Here we have a striking fulfillment of the prophecy of Moses, which we quoted from Deuteronomy.

To show how intimately God stands connected with human government, and the authority he exercises over it, he says to Nebuchadnezzar, "Thou, O king, art a king of kings, *for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom.*" And again, "I have made the earth, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me."

In the present life, God is the Governor of the nations, and also the Judge. He raises them up, tries and punishes them for their iniquities, or absolutely destroys them. We have no inspired historian now to show in what way God exercises his influence over the destiny of States and kingdoms, but it is no less true now as of old, that he does it; and we have but to read the past in the light of Scripture to see his hand still at work in arranging, disposing, punishing, and controlling the affairs of men in their social and political relations to each other, and to him. God is still known by the judgments which he executes. His hand is seen in effecting changes which baffle the

wisdom of senators, and stain the pride of governors and kings.

Since the days of Nebuchadnezzar until now, the chosen people of God, Israel, have been in subjection to the authority of the Gentiles. They were divested by him of their nationality as a free and independent people, and have never recovered it to this day. Through the four successive universal monarchies they passed, under Gentile domination, being transferred from one to another. The last one—the Roman—broke them to pieces, destroyed their State and nation, burned their city, slew them with the sword, and sent them captive among all nations. In the last divisions of the Iron Empire, into ten petty kingdoms, they have been for the most part under their domination and dependencies, until this day, and will continue in their depressed condition until the times of the Gentiles shall be over. As certainly as the Nile, rising in the Mountains of the Moon, runs its course until it empties its waters into the sea, so the nation of Israel, from the days of Jacob to the present hour, has pursued its course, under the eye and by the direction of an unseen but Almighty hand. It is still his nation, as much so as any portion of that noble river is the Nile. And although frequently punished, and still in the dispersion, Israel is beloved for the sake of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Of the covenant God made with them he is mindful, and the promises of their future glory shall be fulfilled. Jerusalem will be trodden down of the Gentiles, *until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

Blindness, in part, is happened to Israel, *until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.* (Rom. 11:25.) Gentile domination has lasted nearly two thousand five hundred years, and during all this time the Jews have been in a depressed condition. They have survived all that the rage and malice of their enemies could inflict upon them. A miracle, the greatest ever known—contrary to the ordinary miracles, which are momentary, or of short duration—Israel in the *fiery furnace* has been kept for unbroken centuries, and it is probable their number at this time is as great as in the days of Solomon. Judea is still desolate, and they are in exile. In their dispersion, they are still separate and distinct from all people. As long as Jerusalem is trodden under foot, they are to be wanderers away from the home of their fathers. An obstinate unbelief still characterizes the nation, and will, until the times of the Gentiles are over. They still retain the features of their fathers, so that you can distinguish them as Jews wherever you find them. Had they continued in their own land, this would not have been so wonderful, or had they in their dispersion lived in some other country, alone; but the dwellers in all lands, the dispersed among all nations, and yet bearing, even in their features, the national characteristics, is a miracle of wonder among all people! They assimilate with none; everywhere the same, they live under any form of government, adopt the language and customs of the country in which they live, and yet, after the lapse of so many centuries, they bear the original features of their nation.

Their unbelief is as marked as their nationality. With the Scriptures of the prophets in their hands, and their history engraven on the memories of the past, they still reject the Messiah, Daniel's 70

weeks have expired; Bethlehem of Judah is in ruins; the second Temple, destroyed; Jerusalem, the capital of their kingdom, overthrown, and they in the dispersion for eighteen centuries; and yet, holding on to the Scriptures of the prophets in their blindness, bearing as they do their living testimony to the truth of the Christian system, and against their infidelity! No history of any nation can be compared with this. Contrary to the uniform experience of all others, they hold on their way, through all the changes of States and kingdoms, and their own changes—a distinct and separate people.

God has great things in store for Judah and Israel. They will yet play a wonderful part in the scenes opening before us. They have not been preserved down to the present time for nought. "*These dry bones shall live.*"

When Jesus for the last time, in their temple and city, addressed them; when he took his farewell of the nation, after that scathing rebuke he ministered to the Scribes and Pharisees; and when expecting on their part a still higher culmination of threatening and wrath, he stood, and suddenly overwhelmed with grief, uttered these impassioned words: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee! 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 say*, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matt. 23:37-39.)

This wail of grief has come down the ages, and still burdens the air. It is the last note of sorrow over the unbelief of the nation, in the way of teaching, that fell from the lips of Jesus. On the cross he did not forget them. "*Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!*"

When they next see Jesus, they will look on him whom they have pierced, and will mourn and be in bitterness, as for an only son that serveth him. Then, and not until then, will they say, "*Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!*"

—*Millennial Harbinger*, 1862, pp. 202-205.

Tertullian, "the Master," renouncing his Montanistic error, still adhered to his "Pre-millennial" faith, and wrote a book in its defense, now lost, "The Hope of Believers." Champion against the Marcionites, he battled for this truth, as did Irenaeus, Justin, and Polycarp, asserting a post-resurrection kingdom on earth, of spiritual blessings, "*bona spiritualia.*" Cyprian, the "proto martyr of Carthage," once a splendid legal advocate, high in social life, then a noble confessor of Jesus, eminent as an ecclesiastic, was a "Pre-Millenarian."

Commodian, "the genius of virtue," Nepos, "the learned bishop, and poet of Arsinoe"; Methodius, the martyr, whose last battle was against the destructive school of Origen, and in defense of the resurrection; Victorinus, the martyr; Gregory, of Nyssa; Sulpicius; Servetus; old Paulinus, the friend and stay of Athanasius—all shining names—held the Chiliastic faith.—From a paper of Nathaniel West, 1879.