

THE WORD AND WORK

(Volume XLIV, April, 1950)

ROSES AND THORNS

Mrs. Paul Knecht

'Tis not for rose strewn paths I'd pray
With sunshine all around,
But grace to thrust the thorns away
Which on my path I've found.

The rose strewn paths are beauteous things
And sunshine's glorious too,
God also made the thorn that stings;
His love is shining through.

His love for us is greater far
Than any rose that blooms,
So push aside the thorns that mar
And trust Him through the gloom.

WORDS IN SEASON

R. H. B.

ROMAN CATHOLIC PROPAGANDA

Too many in these days are caught in the toils and snares of Roman Catholic propaganda. People who do not know the Bible, or who, though they know better, or for the sake of social ties and other worldly reasons are inclined to regard Romanist claims favorably, fall easy victims to their specious arguments. Most frequently heard is the argument that the Roman Catholic Church is the oldest, therefore the original, and the one and only Church. This claim is utterly false and unfounded. The oldest church, and the one only true church is that which was established in Jerusalem on the Pentecost following Christ's resurrection—and that long before the gospel ever reached as far as Rome. The form and character of this original church is given in the same chapter which tells of its beginning, and additional details of its nature, its constituency, its life and worship, are found in subsequent parts of the New Testament.

THE OLDEST CHURCH

The pattern of the earliest and only true church there outlined is so utterly different from the Roman Catholic church, that a man knowing only the word of God would not be able to recognize any likeness between that organization and its worship and the New Testament church. The original church, the one true and oldest church, had no temples, no earthly sanctuary, no human priesthood (except that all Christians were priests, and the Lord Jesus in heaven,

the Highpriest)—no altars, candles, incense; no masses; no such "eucharist" as Rome sets forth; no saint worship, images, relics; none of the mystery, mummery, and ceremony with which the Roman cult seeks to enthrall the multitudes. The church of the New Testament was composed of believers, who, having heard the gospel, accepted it ("hearing, believed, and were baptized," Acts 18:8), and thus received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). They were all brethren. There were not among them any "rabbis," "masters," "fathers," "reverends," "most reverends;" no "archbishops" (no bishops in the modern sense at all), "monsignors," "cardinals," nor any "pope."

Their worship was very plain and simple. They met together on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7). They "continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching, in fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). All participated in this alike; and all the men might take part in the public teaching, exhortation, prayers. No special locality nor consecrated house or place was needed. In any and every place they could meet to worship the Lord "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:21-24), and where two or three met together in His name, there was He in their midst (Matt. 18:20). Sinners responded to the gospel call by faith and repentance; they confessed their faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37); they were buried by baptism with Him, and with Him they were raised in baptism, "through faith in the operation of God who raised him from the dead" (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12); the Lord added them to His church (Acts 2:47); and the Holy Spirit was given to them, individually and collectively (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19). They had "elders" who were "bishops" (the word means simply "overseers"), but they were not superior in rank or standing above the rest of the church; it was simply that they were appointed to see after the flock. In like manner the apostles, evangelists, prophets, and teachers had each their special work and function. In all other respects they stood on the same level with all the rest of the church; and Peter (the alleged "first Pope") specially warns the elders *not to lord it over* God's heritage, but to make themselves examples to the flock. Such was the New Testament church.

DEGENERATE CHRISTIANITY

If the Romanist be asked how the strange thing he calls his "church" could have had its origin in the simple church of the New Testament, his answer would be that it became what it is in the course of the centuries by development. But it would be as fitting to say that a lily-bulb had brought forth a thornbush as that the pure, simple church which Christ established had developed into the anomalous and monstrous international organization that calls itself the Holy Roman Catholic Church, with its grotesque worship and practices. This was not a development, but a radical change, brought about by the intrusion of human traditions, additions, and perversions, a degeneration such as can be observed in all religions; until today it has hardly an element of resemblance to the true, original

church of Christ, but has been transformed into something altogether foreign and different, a semi-pagan, semi-idolatrous religio-political cult, the product of man's perverted religious instincts; which also explains its appeal to the masses of unregenerate humanity.



THE LIGHT THAT DAWNED ON MARTIN LUTHER

"God takes ages to prepare His work; but, when the hour is come, accomplishes it by the feeblest instruments. To do great things by small means is the law of God. Everything must manifest to the world that the work is not of man but of God." In these words does D'Aubigne begin to tell the story of the life and work of Martin Luther. That was a combat royal twixt the powers of darkness and light! And Luther was God's prepared instrument, feeble but mighty in God, for the terrible work. "He who is to become great must begin little," he says of Luther's hard childhood, "and if children are brought up with too much delicacy and tenderness it does them harm all the rest of their lives," which is true, and good to know and remember.

As a student at Erfurt, Luther found the Bible in the old Augustine convent; and the entrance of God's word, like the dawning day, began to diffuse light within the young man's heart. Having joined the order of the Augustine monks at the Erfurt convent, the providence of God put him near and under the rule and care of a man named Stanpitz, a great and good man beyond his day and environment. Now Luther had entered the convent in search of peace, but did not find it in the cloister any more than he had found it in the world. His fellow-monks and the theologians told him that only good works could satisfy the Divine justice. "But what works," said he, "can proceed from such a heart as mine? I felt myself to be a great sinner before God, and deemed it impossible to appease Him by my merits. . . . I tormented myself to death in order to procure peace with God; but, surrounded with fearful darkness I nowhere found it." But the gentle and wise Stanpitz knew the way of the heart before God, and drew out the young monk's confidence. "In vain," Luther said to Stanpitz, "do I make promises to God; sin has always the mastery." "O my friend," answered the vice-general—"more than a thousand times have I sworn to our holy God to live piously, and I have never done so. Now I no longer swear; for I know I should not perform. Unless God be pleased to be gracious to me for the love of Christ I shall not be able with all my vows and all my good works to stand before Him. I must perish. . . . Instead of making a martyr of thyself for thy faults throw thyself into the arms of the Redeemer."

THE SINNER'S REFUGE

"Truth," D'Aubigne observes, "which is the great means by which God gives peace to man, must necessarily begin by removing the false reliance which destroys him." And that was what was happening to Luther. He must learn the futility of all penances, self-castigations, good works, ceremonies and ceremonials and all human performances

on which he had been taught from youth to base his hope, and turn his eyes to Jesus only, the sinner's refuge.

And thus Luther began to learn the great lesson." Nobody has died for our sins," he said sometime afterward, "but Jesus Christ the Son of God. And if it be He alone who takes away our sin, it cannot be ourselves with our works. But good works *follow* redemption, as the fruit appears on the tree."

When in October, 1512, he was made doctor of theology, he was, again in God's providence, made "Biblical Doctor," not "Doctor of Sentences," and in this way was called to devote himself to the study of the Bible and not to that of human tradition. The oath he took then was, as he said, "to his well-beloved Holy Scriptures." "He promised to preach it faithfully, to teach it purely, to study it during his whole life, and to defend it by discussion and by writing as far as God should enable him to do so." Little did Rome, and little did Luther himself dream what great consequences were attached to this!

LIGHTNING FLASHES OF GOSPEL TRUTH

Here are a few of the lightning-flashes of gospel-truth that stirred the souls of that time. Most of them are in Luther's own words.

"If our labors and our afflictions could give us peace of conscience, why should Christ have died? Thou wilt find peace only in Him by despairing of thyself and of thy works, and learning with what love He opens His arms to thee, takes upon Him all thy sins, and gives thee all His righteousness."

"For we do not become righteous by doing works of righteousness; but when we have become righteous we do such works. The man must first be changed, then the works."

"The real goodness of a work consists not in its external form, but in the spirit in which it is done."

"It is a sad religion and a sad philosophy which throws a man back upon his natural powers. The doctrine which unveils to us our importance in order to acquaint us with a Divine power which shall enable us to do all things is a generously consoling, and true doctrine."

"Man is more hostile to the grace of God than he is to the law itself."

"Not to kill and not to commit adultery, externally, and in regard to action merely, is the righteousness of hypocrites."

"It is far better to enter the kingdom of heaven through much tribulation, than to acquire a carnal security by the flattery of peace."

There is no such thing as a once-for-all fullness; it is a continuous appropriation of a continuous supply from Jesus Christ Himself: a moment-by-moment faith in a moment-by-moment Savior, for a moment-by-moment cleansing, and a moment-by-moment filling. As I trust Him, He fills me; so long as I trust Him, He fills me; the moment I begin to believe, that moment I begin to receive; and so long as I keep believing, praise the Lord! so long I keep receiving.—From Charles Inwood.

NEWS AND NOTES

Much of the news this time reaches out into the future, bringing to our attention plans and announcements of various churches. Attend special meetings in your community; enjoy them; be revived; help make them a success.—Pub.

East Ormsby Meeting

R. H. Boll is to be in a Gospel meeting at East Ormsby church, Louisville, from April 7 to 22. Word comes that a spirit of Revival is in evidence at Ormsby. The Sunday school has broken loose from its in-the-forties average and started to climb. On Sunday week an attendance of 61 was a high mark for them; last Sunday the attendance was 71. The house was filled at church with what was thought to be a record attendance for some time. The adults are working, the young people are taking hold, and the work is on the move. Two have been received for membership and three for reconsecration in recent meetings.

Camp Taylor Meeting

The meeting at Camp Taylor, Ky., with a different speaker each night, is well under way as these notes are being prepared. Three came for membership last night (March 22). The house is filled each night, the speakers are bringing wonderful messages, the subjects were prearranged and follow one another in natural order, many neighborhood visitors are coming—how could we wish for anything better in a meeting? We are learning that we have many fine preachers at our doorsteps.

Sermons on Prophecy

The Dugger, Indiana, church is announcing the coming of Brother Boll for a series of five sermons on Prophecy, from April 10 to 14, inclusive. Brethren from all around will gather with the good church at Dugger to be helped by these messages and to catch a glimpse of the "lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise" in their hearts. My guess is that Brother Clymore had better start bringing out the extra chairs. From 900 to 1000 people heard Brother Boll one Sunday night in

years gone by in a series of meetings at Dugger. Overflow crowds came night after night and an even fifty responded to the invitation. The church had to borrow a larger building for that record attendance. Nine hundred people are more than 50% of the population of Dugger.

Work at Jefferson Street

Brother E. E. Lyon has been preaching at Jefferson Street in Louisville since the Home-going of Brother Claude Reader. The brethren there have many commendable things to say of Brother Lyon's messages. However, he is not free to take full time work, and the church is awaiting an answer from Orell Overman regarding work with them. Brother Overman has endeared himself to them in protracted meetings.

Community Sing at Borden

On Tuesday night, April 25, the southern Indiana churches (Lord willing) will gather in the Borden, Indiana gymnasium for a great community sing. There will be special numbers from various groups, as well as congregational singing. This is an annual affair and is always well attended.

New Parsonage at Cedar Springs

The Cedar Springs church is finishing a new parsonage. This will enable them to have a full-time worker on the field. Brother and Sister P. J. Bornwasser have been with them for four years, driving back and forth from Louisville most of the time. Part of the time they live in their trailer home on the church property. They have done a commendable work. Their Vacation Bible Schools in the summer season have been unusually good. Both Brother and Sister Bornwasser are consecrated and able workers for the Lord.

New Benches to be Installed

The up-and-going church at Cherry and Griffin, New Albany, Indiana, are installing new church benches in the next few weeks. They plan to celebrate with a "bench warming" soon, which will take the form of a song rally, and

to which all churches of the area will be invited.

Linton, Indiana, Song Revival

The Linton church has scheduled a Song Revival from May 24-28, with E. L. Jorgenson in charge. Another singing preacher, W. S. Hoar, is minister of this faithful congregation. Will churches nearby please remember this announcement and help pass the word around.

K. B. C. Concert

The Kentucky Bible College will present their combined Kentucky Bible College and Portland High School chorus in a special non-religious concert at the Portland Avenue church on Friday, April 28, at 8 P. M. Dale Jorgenson is the director of this chorus. The public is invited to attend.

The first community sing, sponsored by the Kentucky Bible College was held Sunday afternoon of March 19 at Fifth and M church. Brother Dale Jorgenson, music instructor at the College, made the first appearance with his new combined College and High School chorus. Willis Allen presented the radio chorus and a quartet from Camp Taylor completed the special numbers. Hall C. Crowder brought a short message on "Holding a Straight Course in the Word of Truth." The congregation was led in song by various song leaders. The next monthly Sunday afternoon singing is to be at Shawnee on the third Sunday afternoon of April at 3 o'clock.

Shawnee Home Coming

In their annual Home Coming, April 16, the Shawnee church, 41st and Michigan, Louisville, will seek for a hundred percent attendance of her membership at her regular worship service. In the afternoon she is to have a song rally and is asking that the Kentucky Bible College sponsored monthly song-meet be carried to Shawnee that afternoon. Those who are planning these monthly singings have gladly consented to this arrangement.

Chattanooga, Tenn.: "The McCallie Avenue church is getting along very well. Two placed membership and one was baptized recently. The Word and Work has been very fine in 1949. Blessings

on the Word and Work force and friends for 1950. No telling what another year may bring forth."—E. H. Hoover

Salem, Neb.: "I am certainly thankful for 'Word and Work,' and I trust and pray that His grace and love will abide with you in serving Him. I always pass my copy on to others who are interested in the cause of Christ, after I have read it."—Otis Mendenhall.

Tell City, Ind.: "Our Master's work progresses well in this new year, in attendance, interest, work and additions. We have had four or five for membership up to last Sunday, at which time we had a couple to come for membership and their only son for baptism."—E. C. Ringer.

MORE CLUBBERS

Those listed below have sent in four or more names for the Word and Work since last we published an honor roll. Many have sent in singles and some two or three names. Yet we have quite a list of December, January, and February expirations that have not been renewed and there are many others who should be receiving Word and Work. We could easily have another long list of clubbers. Why not try your hand at making up a club? The price in clubs of four or more is \$1 per subscription for the year. Here are the names of workers.

J. Ray Chamberlin, Mich.	5
Maurice Clymore, Ind.	15
Florence Hottel, Ind.	5
Dan Richardson, Fla.	11
Mrs. S. V. Simmons, Ky.	22
E. H. Hoover, Tenn.	28
H. M. Beck, Fla.	4
W. S. Hoar, Ind.	9
Howard T. Marsh, Ind.	6
Mrs. Rankin Bailey, Ky.	12
F. S. Hays, Kentucky	12
John W. Gill, Ky.	10
Mrs. H. E. Schreiner, Ky.	8
N. Wilson Burks, Ky.	6
Mrs. W. A. Yerk, Ky.	4
Mrs. L. K. Harding, Tenn.	11
A. L. Stultz, Maine	5
Mrs. Charles Marsh, Ky.	7
W. J. Johnson, La.	6

If we have omitted any name please let us know, but remember that we published a long list about two months ago. Thanks to all.

Brother Howard Marsh reports that Sellersburg, Indiana, church

plans to begin tearing down their present building the middle of April, making ready for their new building program. Their plans call for a brick structure far more commodious than their outgrown frame building.

The Apocalypse, lectures on the book of Revelation, by J. A. Seiss, is again available. In its reprint form it is now complete in one volume. This is a famous work by a great Bible scholar of days gone by. The price is \$4.95.

A local report issued by the good church at Borden, Indiana (F. S. Spaulding, Minister) shows that this congregation put out over \$5000 in the year 1949. Approximately

half of this amount was for direct preaching of the gospel, at home and by radio, while a good third of the whole went to missions, orphans, and Christian education.

Gray and Adams' Bible Commentary, Volume I, Matthew to Acts, is again available to readers. This is a complete, popular commentary of expository notes and effective illustrations: devotional, practical, explanatory, illustrative. It is a "treasure trove of sermonic and homiletical material . . . a careful verse by verse, word by word study of the Scriptures," says Hyman Appelman. Obtainable from the Word and Work at \$4.95. Other volumes are to follow.

Calling on The Lord

As one reads the Psalms he begins to realize how heavily David leaned on the Lord. It is evident that the burden of life was too great, and that only God could supply the strength to carry the load.

David had sinned and had made mistakes. The realization of guilt weighed heavily upon his soul. His spirits were depressed, and life became as wormwood and gall. But David did not lose his trust in God. He cried out in his despair and God helped him.

David experienced also the loss and treachery of friends. Every man needs the love and consideration of others. Quite often full confidence is given to another, and the innermost thoughts of the heart are exposed. When those confidences are violated, and friendship is cast aside as something of no value, the heart of man is broken indeed. David suffered all of this. Even his own son turned against him.

Finally, there are always enemies with whom to contend. It seems that life is naturally a struggle. The desires of the flesh breed antagonisms. It has always been true that those who hate us believe that the end desired justifies the means used. It is common practice to lie and to misrepresent matters, when the enemy is involved. David had many enemies. His was a life of strife.

And so David cried mightily unto the Lord, and the Lord heard him and lifted him up as on the wings of the eagle. When our own hearts are weary with guilt, and sore from the wounds of both friend and enemy, we, too, may turn to the Lord. We may say with David: "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear?"—J. H. McCaleb in *Chicago Christian*.

The Lord Jesus was set "for the falling and rising of many in Israel" (Luke 2:34). Some men went down when they came in contact with Christ, and others were lifted. You cannot tell what a person is until he comes in touch with Jesus!

WHEN MICHAEL STANDS UP

R. H. B.

"At that time shall Michael stand up." So opens the last chapter of Daniel's prophecy. Michael is an angel of God; if we may take the statement of Jude 9 strictly, he is *the arch-angel*, that is to say, the very chiefest and highest of God's angels; here, in Dan. 12:1 called the great prince that standeth for the children of thy people."—that is, he to whom God has committed the charge of His people Israel. In chapter 11:1 he is called "your prince"—that is, the prince of Israel.

Now, at the particular time mentioned, Michael stands up. The implication is that previous to that time he had been in a state of non-activity—sitting down, as it were; but that at the time spoken of he rises up to action. Why before this time Michael had been inactive, and why at this time he stands up, and what he does when he so rises up—these are questions of profound interest. We shall try to find the answer to them.

Let us go back to the opening of the 10th chapter of Daniel. There we read that Daniel had seen a vision. What the vision was he does not say, except that it was of a great warfare. The interpretation of the vision, however, is given in much detail, in chapters 11, 12. Now Daniel knew that the vision he had seen was of great importance and significance; and Daniel was anxious to know the meaning of it. So he made his plea to God for light and understanding. "In those days [he says] I, Daniel, was mourning three whole weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine into my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all till three whole weeks were fulfilled." During all this time (as verse 12 shows) he was praying. At the end of 3 weeks, in answer to Daniel's prayer, came a celestial visitor, a messenger from God, an angel so glorious and wonderful that Daniel was utterly overwhelmed and confounded by his presence: "there remained no strength in me, for my comeliness was turned into corruption"; and he swooned away. "Yet heard I the voice of his words," he adds—and goes on to tell how the angel with comforting touch and words restored him. Daniel's companions that were with him at the time did not see the angel, "but a great quaking fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves."

Now the angel spoke to Daniel: "Fear not, Daniel," said he, "for from the first day that thou didst set thy heart to humble thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy word's sake." But why, if Daniel's words were heard from the first day, did he have to pray three weeks before he received an answer? Was the angel sent at once in answer to Daniel's prayer? Why then the three week's delay? The angel explained. "The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me (he said) one and twenty days." Then help came to him: "lo Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me." This enabled the angel to proceed on his errand and to fulfil his mission to Daniel.

All of this is amazing. Who was this "prince of the kingdom of Persia" that was able to hold back that great and powerful angel of God on his errand of carrying God's message to Daniel? Certainly this "prince of Persia" could not have been a man; and if an angel, not a good angel, an angel of God, for he opposed and resisted the message of God. He was one of Satan's angels therefore; yet—and this is the astonishing fact—as great, and as powerful, yea, even more so, than the glorious angel of God whom Daniel had seen, for he was able to intercept and detain him. What does it all mean?

The New Testament furnishes the key to the mystery. Three times our Lord Jesus Christ referred to Satan as the "prince of the world." In the mount of the Temptation this "prince of the world" displayed all the kingdoms of the earth before Jesus, and said to Him, "To thee will I give all this authority, and the glory of them: for it hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship before me, it shall all be thine." This was Satan's claim (and it was not a false claim) to rule and authority over all the world—a claim confirmed in the church in the writings of the apostles.) (2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; 6:12; 1 John 5:19.) We see now that this great evil sovereign had placed his angels (for he has angels at his command) in charge of the kingdoms of the world. This "prince of the kingdom of Persia," and also "the prince of Greece" were great but evil angels to whom the supervision of the kingdoms of Persia and of Greece, respectively, had been assigned. But God had created and reserved to Himself one kingdom of His own on the earth—the kingdom of Israel; and had committed to one of *His* angels the care and supervision of His people Israel, and that high place was assigned to Michael, the archangel. That is why he is called "Michael your prince"; and "Michael . . . the great prince, who standeth for the children of thy people,—that is, Daniel's people, the nation of Israel (Dan. 10:21; 12:1). We can also see now why for a time Michael had retired from his activity. For when after Israel's long and persistent disobedience, God gave them up and they were delivered into the hand of the Gentile power, Michael retired from his position.

Returning now to our text (Dan. 12:1) we read it all as follows:

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince who standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

We are not told here why at this particular time Michael stands up; nor for what purpose. Neither do we learn from Daniel what connection, if any, this action of Michael had with the great unequalled time of tribulation that followed. But the answer to all this is revealed to us in the New Testament. I read from Rev. 12, verses 7-9—

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels; and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven.

And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him."

War in heaven? To many this would seem utterly incongruous and inconceivable; and no less so the thought that Satan and his angels would have had a place in heaven. The difficulty is due to the notion that heaven is just one great place. But oftener than not the word "heaven" is used in plural number. Thus we read in Solomon's prayer of the Dedication, "Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house which I have builded." In the N. T. we read that Paul was caught up to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12); and that the Lord Jesus at His ascension passed "through the heavens," and "far above all the heavens," and was "made higher than the heavens." "Heaven" then is a name applied to the celestial realm, a place whence spiritual power emanates. Satan and his hosts by some technical right had up till then held a place there. But now Michael had risen up with his angels—and in brief decisive conflict cast Satan out of his celestial vantage-ground, and all his angels with him. In heaven this occasions great rejoicing—but what that means to the earth—well, let me read again (Rev. 12:10-12).

"And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time."

It was this valiant victory of Michael by which Satan and his angels were ousted from heaven and cast down to the earth, that caused the great and terrible tribulation of which Daniel spoke. For when Satan is cast down to the earth he has great wrath, knowing that his time is short. Woe to the earth then, for Satan, like a cornered beast, now will do his worst and his utmost. That brings on the Great Tribulation.

In our Lord's great prophetic sermon He speaks of this same unparalleled Great Tribulation (for there can be but one such time); and as yet future, for it is followed "immediately" by the heavenly portents of Christ's glorious appearing (Matt. 24:21, 29). It follows also that if it was because of Israel's disobedience and consequent rejection that Michael had before sat down, then this rising up must be due to Israel's repentance and return and restoration. Not without reason did Michael stand up; and not till some decisive hour could he cast Satan down out of heaven. What had happened to make it possible? There were on the earth those who had won a spiritual victory over Satan. "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and because they loved not their life even unto death." This is the great principle of all spiritual victory—of us today also—but the reference here is

to the remnant of Israel. They had turned to God and to His Christ, and won the victory over the power of darkness which had so long held them in bondage; and this was Michael's cue for action. Out of the great tribulation that ensues, the people, purified and wholly renewed, will emerge into the glorious day of Israel's restoration. And, as Paul declares in Rom. 11, "If the casting away of them was the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?"

THE SET OF THE SOUL

J. R. Clark

In ancient navigation the set of the sails determined the course of a vessel. The sails might even be set in such a way so as to steer the ship against the winds and the waves. The set of the sails made a vast difference. Even so, in the spiritual realm, the set of the soul is vitally important. Which way is your life pointing? Is your soul set to catch worldly winds or heavenly breezes? Are you living your life with reference to God or men? The set of the soul makes a tremendous difference.

A life set to catch the plaudits of men points it in the wrong direction and will end in disaster. There are certain evil trends that result from such a course. The Pharisees of the days of our Lord illustrate the various tendencies and trends of a life lived with reference to men.

Hypocrisy comes first in the list. The Pharisees were champion hypocrites! At least seventeen times did Jesus call them hypocrites. Three times in Matthew 6 He thus speaks of them: because they gave alms to obtain glory of men, because they prayed in public places to be seen of men, and because, when they fasted, they disfigured their faces so as to be seen of men to fast. Six times in Matthew 13 He denounces them as "Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites." In Luke 12:1 He speaks of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

The word hypocrite was first applied to the actor on the stage, and later to those in real life who made a vain show by putting on a front of being what they were not inwardly. The modern hypocrite, like the Pharisees, does things with reference to men, and, even as the Pharisees' reward lay in the bit of glory they received from men, so it is with the hypocrite today. Like the skyrocket, for a moment they live in a blaze of glory which soon vanishes and is no more.

Living with reference to men tends to color and dilute the truth. The Pharisees added many traditions to the law of God and often missed the spirit and deeper significance of the commands. The words of the Lord in the Sermon on the Mount is sufficient proof of this fact. Speaking of those who would turn from the truth, Paul says, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own

lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables." (2 Tim. 4:3, 4.) So today if our eyes are upon men and their approbation, if we are not first loyal to God at whatever cost, the truth to us will become distorted.

Furthermore, such a course will lead to bondage. So long as the Pharisees kept their eyes on men and were afraid of what *they* thought or said, they were not free. In a lapse of memory of their past they once said, "We are Abraham's seed and have never yet been in bondage to any man." Even then they were in bondage to sin, to intricate ceremonies, and to the plaudits of men. We may talk about freedom and yet be in bondage. If our eyes are upon men we shall fear their frown and disfavor and be drawn under their power. Once subjugated it is difficult to extricate ourselves from their dominion.

A desire to please men has caused many to reject Christ and fail to confess Him, even though they believe in Him and wish to so do. In John 12:42, 43 we read, "Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him: but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the glory of men more than the glory that is of God." "What if we were cast out of the synagogue, excommunicated and disgraced? Oh no! that would be terrible!" And they shrink back and continue to be silent—and lost! It is difficult for some to go counter to those who ridicule simple faith in the supernatural or who stand against the teaching of any part of God's word.

However, from all of these wrong tendencies, resulting from a desire to please men, there is a sure and effective cure. Isaiah puts it bluntly when he says, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isa. 2:22.) The Apostle Paul reveals the secret in Col. 3:17, "And whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." The set of the soul makes the difference. Rather than to point the life toward men we should point it upward to God! We should tie every event of our lives to the throne. Whatever we do should be done as unto Him. Such a course will correct the evils of our lives.

If we have an eye single to the will of God, hypocrisy will vanish as the mists before the rising sun. The light of the will of God will work wonders! What matter, then, whether or not man sees our alms-giving? It will be enough to know that God hears when we pray. Our fasting will be sincere and as unto Him. The truth will flow freely, being unhindered by the views of men. As willing slaves of Jesus Christ we shall be free from bondage to men, for only those in bondage to Christ are truly free. Then we will stand up in open confession, saying, as did Paul, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," knowing well that he who confesses Christ before men, him will He confess before the heavenly Father.

The set of the soul makes a difference. Are you living your life with reference to men or with an eye single to the will and glory of God?

JUDGE NOT, THAT YOU BE NOT JUDGED

Less division and greater Christian unity would obtain if Christians would read carefully and heed the teaching of Paul in the fourteenth chapter of Romans. Here Paul deals with the problem of how brethren can differ sincerely and even strongly in their religious beliefs and yet keep "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The Apostle sets forth a basic principle which calls for conviction coupled with humility and tolerance. He insists that this principle will sustain a unity that comprehends differences in point of view.

The reader is asked to re-acquaint himself with Paul's statement. The following analysis, which sets forth six important aspects of Paul's principle of comprehension, presupposes the reader's acquaintance with the Apostle's own statement.

The immediate problems to which Paul was urging the application of this principle had to do with such issues as (A) differences of belief among Christians of the Graeco-Roman society as to whether or not it was sinful for a Christian to eat meat which everyone knew had been offered up in religious sacrifice to idols, (B) differences of belief among the Jewish and the Gentile constituencies of the church as to the rightness or wrongness of holding certain days, such as the Sabbath, to be of *special* religious significance. Jewish Christians were, of course, strongly inclined, emotionally, to regard the Sabbath as having special religious value.

To prevent these and similar differences from developing into a tension which would result in schisms and division in the body of Christ, Paul urges that all Christians make a secure place in their thinking for the following principles:

(1) *Each Christian should have and hold firmly sincere convictions of truth and right!*

Paul writes: "Let everyone be fully convinced in his own mind." (vs. 5.) And let no one ever allow social pressure or any other kind of pressure to dissuade him from doing what he believes to be right or to influence him to do that which he holds to be wrong. One's most precious possession is the integrity of his own soul.

If one has a serious doubt, therefore, about eating the sacrificed food, he should not eat it. "He who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not act from faith; for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin" (vs. 23).

(2) *Each Christian should respect his brother's right to have and hold his own convictions with firmness of heart.*

One must not judge his brother, says Paul. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of somebody else, he asks, especially when that Somebody Else is God? (vs. 4).

Gentile that I am, I may believe that all days are alike (vs. 5). If my fellow-believer in Christ, however, disagrees with me and holds sincerely (I may think mistakenly) that *true* Christianity means that a certain day must be regarded as especially holy unto the Lord, I am constrained by Christian charity and humility to *respect* this brother and his right to this conviction. With equal humility, of course, he

also must respect me and my right to a more liberal point of view. Each man has a right to his own sincere understanding of what the will of Christ means in a given situation, and each must respect his neighbor's right to his own convictions and therefore gladly tolerate him in doing whatever these convictions involve.

(3) *The only power which a Christian can legitimately use to overcome his neighbor's "error" is the power of persuasion!*

The principle of comprehension forbids one to be dogmatic in a way which would lead him to infringe on his brother's liberties and rights. It is sinful for a Christian or a group of Christians to impose his or their views upon others in any *authoritarian* way. It seems strange indeed that this New Testament principle has been so often overlooked or forgotten by large segments of Christianity.

During the Inquisition of the Medieval Roman Catholic church the religious authoritarianism which violated this principle assumed the form of physical pressure-fires applied to the feet, the sharp point of a sword pressing against the jugular vein, or the body stretched on the rack. The "heretic" knew that if he failed to recant and accept the "orthodox" view of the issue under consideration, there would be no hesitancy in pulling his body apart on the rack, in thrusting the sword through his jugular vein, or in consuming his body in the flame.

The methods of modern authoritarians are a bit more refined and subtle. The heresy-hunter of our day (we still have witchhunts and heresy-hunts) travels around and stirs up a lot of smoke by making vague insinuations and by spreading juicy tidbits of slanderous gossip about a brother. He then suddenly shouts: "where there is smoke there must be fire." Sincere but gullible souls are thus led often to draw away the hand of fellowship from a brother of integrity. Social pressure, however, is just as sinful as physical pressure when used as a method of dealing with differences in religious beliefs. It violates the reverence for other people and the respect for their liberty and spiritual dignity demanded by the New Testament Gospel.

The only method of resolving differences in Christian belief consonant with New Testament Christianity is the method of persuasion. This method calls for vigorous yet humble reasoning in which one takes great care to maintain an attitude of reverence for the other person and respect for his liberty.

The use of this method of persuasion will doubtless enable one not only to help his brother overcome "error," but in the process one will likely become aware of errors in his own understanding and be led thus to a fuller knowledge of the truth. Double benefits thus accrue to Christians who use this method of overcoming their differences.

(4) *The sin to which the brother of strong convictions is peculiarly liable is failure to remember that his mind is after all finite and that therefore he might be wrong in his understanding of the will of Christ!*

Failing in becoming humility, the dogmatic Christian is tempted to sit in judgment upon his brother. Hence Paul admonishes him:

"Let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him." *One must not judge* the brother with whom he differs. The judgmental attitude is sinful, so sinful that our Lord puts it in the form of an absolute imperative: "Judge not, that you be not judged" (Matt. 7:1).

(5) *The sin to which the liberal-minded brother is peculiarly liable is to see through the pettiness and provincialism of the dogmatic brother's belief so readily and accurately that he adopts an attitude of contempt toward him!*

The Apostle reveals this grave danger confronting the liberal-minded brother and warns him: "Let not him who eats despise him who abstains." The liberal-minded brother is thus tempted to fail in love by developing a looking-down-the-nose attitude toward the dogmatic brother. Such a contemptuous attitude is as sinful as the judgmental attitude. Both are to be avoided, for each is in fact a violation of the spirit of Christian love.

(6) *Each one is responsible to God alone for his convictions!*

The New Testament principle of comprehension does not mean that a man may believe *anything he pleases*. The Apostle is not advocating such an unrestrained liberalism at all. On the contrary, he underscores the individual's *responsibility to God*. "If we live," he writes, "we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die we are the Lord's" (vs. 8).

Paul does stress the fact, however, that one is responsible to *God alone* for the convictions of his heart. True Christian liberty frees the conscience of each person from all human judgment. In this inner liberty of spirit one is "lord over all." I do not have to give account of my beliefs to you, nor you to me. But each of us only to the Lord. *God alone* is the judge of a Christian's conscience. But then *He really is* the Living Lord of our hearts, and "each of us shall give account of himself to God" (vs. 12).—R. G. Wilburn, in *The Christian Leader*.

A DESPONDENT PROPHET

J. Edward Boyd

We are reminded that the prophets were quite human. And it is often difficult for men to see things as God sees them. The success of his mission brought no joy to Jonah. The speedy execution of the sentence was what he wanted. When that did not occur, he was greatly displeased, even angry. Like Elijah after his Mt. Carmel experience and flight to Horeb, Jonah became very despondent. "It is better for me to die than to live." But the Lord dealt patiently with him. "Dost thou well to be angry?" He would reason with him; he would give him an object lesson, that he might see things in their true light. He would have him know that God is concerned about other nations, as well as about Israel. Later prophets had glimpses of this truth. Yet it was hard for Israel to understand that they did not have an exclusive claim upon the love of God. Even in this age, it is sometimes needful to remind ourselves that the gospel is for people of every nation.

LESSONS ON THE BOOK OF ACTS

J. Edward Boyd

THE CONVERSION OF THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

A MEETING ON A DESERT ROAD. The latter part of the eighth chapter of Acts has to do with two men. One was from far away Ethiopia, a man of prominence in his country, holding a position of great responsibility; yet we do not know his name, nor anything else about him other than a few facts revealed in this narrative. Was he an Ethiopian by race, or a Jew who had risen to this high position in a country not his own? We cannot know with certainty; but the most natural inference from the few facts we have is that he was a native Ethiopian who had in some way become a convert to the Jewish religion. But the question of his racial descent is unimportant. What does count is that he was zealous for God and desirous of truth. It was a long journey he had made, comparable to a trip from New Orleans to Chicago, and that for the purpose of worshipping in Jerusalem, probably at one of the great feasts of Israel; and now, as his chariot was bearing him along on the first part of his homeward journey, he was earnestly and thoughtfully reading from the prophecies of Isaiah. Here was good ground for the sowing of gospel seed; and the sower was on the way!

The other man was a preacher of the gospel, Philip the evangelist, on his way from the city of Samaria, where he had been preaching the word so effectively to multitudes of eager listeners. Is it strange that he should leave Samaria at such a time—leave a flourishing work in a populous city to go to a lonely road across a desert? But the Lord had spoken through an angel: "Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert." God's thoughts are not our thoughts; His ways are not our ways. It is indeed good to preach to the large crowds; but there are times when the Lord would have us turn aside to deal with some individual soul. That may be the greatest opportunity of the moment. Yet, if we have all that the angel said to Philip, he did not know what opportunity was awaiting him at the end of this journey; it was simply by faith that "he arose and went." And so across the country these two men made their way: one from Jerusalem, the other from Samaria. Let some mathematician calculate the probability of their arriving at any spot at the same time! But the Lord was directing in a most marvelous manner; and so, after a journey which could scarcely have been less than two days, Philip came in sight of the Eunuch's chariot. (If the reader will examine a map, he will see that Philip must leave Samaria before the Eunuch left Jerusalem, or else travel more rapidly—yet the timing is perfect!)

PREACHING JESUS. That the Lord was directing in every detail is again made evident in the Spirit's word to Philip: "Go near and join thyself to this cariot." Promptly Philip obeyed; and as he drew near he heard the Eunuch reading aloud (as was customary in those days) the familiar words of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. But

it was a perplexed student that he found. It was not that he failed to catch the meaning of the language—he didn't raise any question about that; but he was uncertain about its application. "Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other?" Various views about this question have indeed been expressed among the Jews: that this suffering servant was Isaiah himself (said to have been sawn asunder), or Jeremiah, or the Jewish people, etc.; or that, as many Jewish doctors asserted, he was the looked-for Messiah. But Philip answered in no uncertain terms: beginning from this same scripture, he preached unto him Jesus, presenting a message that was positive and convincing.

How we would like to have the record of that discourse! Yet that is all we are told: "Beginning from this scripture, Philip preached unto him Jesus." It is good to ponder that. It was the gospel—the good news—that Philip was presenting; and this is the same gospel that Paul later proclaimed when he determined "not to know anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Any preaching that does not revolve around this central theme is not the gospel of the apostles and early evangelists. We cannot know all the details of Philip's message; but we can be reasonably sure that he did not leave out any important fact: His virgin birth, His baptism and attendant circumstances, the temptation, His ministry of teaching and wonder-working, His rejection by the nation, His death and resurrection, His ascension into heaven and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Especially would Philip point out the exact fulfillment of the details of the prophecy (and perhaps of other prophecies also): His humiliation and sufferings; His patient and gentle demeanor in the presence of His tormentors; the circumstances of His burial. And the triumphal note that follows surely would not be overlooked: "When thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand."

PROMPT OBEDIENCE. If the reader will look again at his map, he will see that a number of streams flow down from the mountains to the Mediterranean Sea, one of them not many miles north-east of Gaza. Perhaps it was as they approached one of these that the Eunuch suddenly exclaimed: "Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Evidently, in preaching Jesus, Philip did not neglect to speak of baptism; and by the time they reached this certain water, wherever it was, the Eunuch was so thoroughly convinced of the truth of his message that he was ready to accept it at once. So, without further delay, "they both went down into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him."* As in Jerusalem on Pentecost, as in Samaria, as in later instances of conversion, so here: baptism appears as an integral part of the transaction, something neither to be ignored nor postponed. By this act of obedience the Eunuch manifested his submission to the will and authority of Jesus as the Son of God; and having done so, he went on his way rejoicing. Here, so far as our record is concerned, his story ends. There is a tradition that he later baptized his Queen in Ethiopia; and we can-

not but feel that one so zealous, so earnest, so full of the love of the truth would not fail to proclaim the gospel to the people of his own land. But of this we have no reliable information.

PHILIP AT CAESAREA. Philip had accomplished his mission of the lonely road; and these two men parted as suddenly (so it seems from the language used) as they had met. Still guided by the Lord, Philip was found at Azotus; and from there he made his way northward along the coast, preaching the gospel in all the cities along the way, until he came to Casarea. And now he, too, passes from our view, until we are told of his entertaining the apostle Paul in his home more than twenty years later. (Acts 21:8, 9.)

* Because verse 37 of Acts 8 is not found "in the principal manuscripts and most venerable versions of the New Testament," it is omitted from the American Standard and other modern translations. However, this is not a proof that this bit of conversation did not take place. It does appear in some ancient authorities, as is stated in the margin of both the American Standard and the Revised Standard. This fact is significant. For it is scarcely conceivable that it would ever have been inserted (perhaps by some ancient copyist, to give additional information) into any of these unless there was good grounds to accept it as true. At least there is proof that in those early days it was the practice of Christians to baptize upon such confession; and the natural inference is that this practice was handed down from the apostles. It is in harmony with the statement of Jesus that has come down to us as a part of Mark's gospel: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" and with the essential confession mentioned by Paul in Romans 10:9. Faith in Jesus is the necessary prerequisite of baptism; so what is more natural than that Philip should so state the condition and that the Eunuch should so respond? It is the writer's firm opinion that this conversation did actually take place, even if it cannot be rightfully regarded as a part of Luke's narrative.

HOMELY WISDOM OF THE WORLD

"You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift. You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong. You cannot help the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer. You cannot further the brotherhood of man by encouraging class hatred. You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich. You cannot establish sound security on borrowed money. You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than you own. You cannot build character and cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could courage by taking away man's initiative and dependence. You and should do for themselves."—Abraham Lincoln.

According to the best information we have been able to gather, the cost to the American people for tobacco, in the year 1939, was three billion, five hundred million dollars. This does not include the cost of pipes, cigar and cigarette holders, smoking stands, etc. Since the amount spent on tobacco has been increasing about eighty million dollars per year, this would make the cost to date about three billion, seven hundred fifty million per year.

What a wonderful work for Christ could be done with that amount of money!—Robert D. Higley.

SEED THOUGHTS

(Gleanings from R. H. Boll's Bible Classes.)

A LITTLE JUDGE WITHIN

Conscience is like a little judge within. Try as he may, man cannot shake it off. He may go on thoughtlessly in his guilt for a time, with the little voice apparently subdued and stilled, but all at once conscience will shake itself free and confront the man with his guilt. "We are verily guilty concerning our brother," admitted the brethren of Joseph, as conscience went to work after years of silence.

"NONE OF SELF, AND ALL OF THEE"

"And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face" . . . (Deut. 34:10). The 120 years of Moses's life fall into three natural divisions. He spent the first forty years of his life in Pharaoh's court trying to be somebody. In the second forty-year period, on the backside of the wilderness, God showed him that he was nobody. In the last forty years, in which he led the children of Israel through the wilderness, God demonstrated what He could do through a nobody, who was dedicated to His service. It was said of Moses, "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth." God can use such a man in a wonderful way.

JUDGE AND WIFE TO SEPARATE

"Too bad about you and your wife," said a minister to a judge, who was his friend.

"How's that?" asked the judge, bewildered.

"It seems that you and your wife are going to separate," explained the preacher.

"No! no!" cried the judge, "there is perfect harmony between us; no such thought has entered our minds."

"But," said the preacher, "your wife is a Christian and is going to heaven, and you, being without Christ, are headed for hell."

THE LORD IS AROUND

A brother said to Brother Chambers, "Brother Chambers, I don't think of swearing when you are around." Later he said, "Brother Chambers, what do you think is the matter with me? I fall short so much."

"What you just said is a key to your difficulty," answered Brother Chambers; "you need to be conscious the Lord is around."

LOVE AND LOGIC

"Jehovah did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of peoples; but because Jehovah loveth you, . . ." Deut. 7:7, 8.

God loved Israel for no apparent reason. It was not because they were many, nor because they were better or superior to other

people. True love is not based on reason or logic. Why do you love your children? because they are better than other children? because they are good looking?

A boy comes in with mud on him. His mother washes him, puts clean clothes on him, scolds him soundly and gives him a spanking—all of which proves that she loves him.

“My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord,
Nor faint when thou art reprov'd of him;
For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,
And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”

WHY BE DIFFERENT

“After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their statutes. Mine ordinances shall ye do, . . .” Lev. 18:3, 4.

God did not want His people to be like the Egyptians, nor like the Canaanites, but He wanted them to do what He told them to do. Israel chafed under the fact that they were set apart from the nations and different. They wanted to be like the nations, but their power lay in the fact that they were *not* like the nations!

The same is true of us as God's holy nation. Our young people are sometimes put out because they have to be different. They cannot join certain sororities because they dance and have cocktail parties, and for similar reasons they miss out on many things about them. But why not realize that your power lies in the fact that you are different—that “ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” (1 Pet. 2:9.)

GEMS OF TRUTH

Sometime, somewhere, every failure of human justice will be made right. “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.”

There is nothing that God has said but that some one has risen up to dispute it.

“You must never lie to your doctor or to your lawyer; it is against your interest,” says one. “And above all things don't try to hide anything from God.”

Rather than to give you an unprincipled pardon, God let His Son die on the cross.

If one had a splinter in his finger, he might pull it out or have someone else to do so. This action of extracting a splinter involves the basic principle of modern surgery. While prayer should be resorted to in the time of illness, it is no dishonor to God for us to avail ourselves of the means He has provided.

If there is no chasm, there is no sense in talking about a bridge. Even so, sin, judgment and hell give point to the gospel.

The world is both pleased and disgusted when you do wrong, and impressed when you do right.

“FAITH OF OUR FATHERS”

E. L. J.

With this third installment we close the Challen reprints, gathered from the *Harbinger* and other sources of the 1860's. Bold and strong, clear and scriptural, they have been — on “Times of the Gentiles,” and “Kingdom of the Heavens.” These articles set forth—if not always in a prolix manner, then more briefly—virtually every item of “that blessed hope” for which we ourselves have pleaded through the years from the prophetic word. And yet, we have searched, but searched in vain, for any word of criticism against Challen in the journals of his day—such as were available for examination. Again, therefore, we must conclude that the discord of our day is **not** due to doctrinal differences among the brethren but due more to a wrong attitude of heart toward each other; and that the cure is not a forced mental uniformity on these secondary subjects, but a truer, deeper Christian love: “with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Eph. 4:2, 3).—J.

“The Kingdom of the Heavens”

By James Challen

How little do we understand the “new birth” if we think its meaning exhausted by entering into the church, even in its highest sense, and especially so when entering into *a* church! The penitent believer in his immersion does not so properly enter into the church at Rome, in Ephesus, or Colosse, as he enters into “the kingdom of the heavens.” He becomes incorporated with a living, most vital, and as far as our conceptions reach, a universal empire, part of which is now on the earth and visible to our senses, part in the unseen—and part in the heaven of heavens.

In making converts let us remember that we are adding new subjects to the kingdom; filling up the complement of the saved; naturalizing men and women as “citizens of the heavens.” Let us turn away our eyes from the party divisions of the earth and fill up the number of the redeemed. And we who belong to the great family, let us live worthy of our high calling and the glorious destiny that awaits us, if we be found faithful to our covenant relations.

This kingdom is called “the kingdom of the heavens,” not only on account of its origin and nature, but because its King and his subordinates, the dignitaries of state, are in the heavens; and although his government extends to and is exercised over men upon the earth, yet it is not of the earth. “My kingdom,” said Jesus, “is not of this world.” It has a higher origin and destiny than any other kingdom. All others are to be broken to pieces, but this shall stand for ever. All others occupy but a small portion of the earth, but his is universal.

At present, the king is not seen; he is to us invisible. Even the great princes of his empire and the “spirits of the just” are not yet made manifest; they are not known to the world. But the day is coming when he shall appear in his beauty, accompanied by his saint-

ly retinue. The spirits of the just, clothed with the robes of immortality, with bodies spiritual and incorruptible, shall stand revealed to the eyes of men. The angels will then "come forth"—now hidden—and sever the wicked from among the just. They do their blessed ministrations now unseen, but then they will be revealed and fully recognized. As a portion of the kingdom celestial and unfailing, they take the deepest interest in everything connected with our redemption. They sympathize with us in our afflictions. They minister to us in our misfortunes. They defend us in the midst of our perils. They fight our battles and disarm our adversaries. And as many of our enemies are unseen and potent, they meet them in secret and baffle them in their plots and schemes for our destruction. Mighty powers are arrayed both for and against us; but error is always weak, evil is unable to cope with good, or darkness with light. These elder sons of light have had a large experience, and are richly endowed; and they exercise a tender care and watchful vigilance over the minor children of God's great family. They are with us in sickness and carry us to paradise at death, and will be present at the resurrection to escort us to our everlasting home. In the intricate movements of the wheels of providence, they play a mighty part, and the destiny of individuals and families, of churches and nations, are under their agency and control.

A glorious future is reserved for the faithful followers of Christ. If they suffer with him here they shall be glorified hereafter. The rewards of the conqueror are not to be found upon the field but after the war has ended. "The kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the saints of the people of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, which shall not pass away and whose dominion shall never end." Those who shall be found worthy to share in the first resurrection will become kings and priests unto God, and shall reign with Christ a thousand years over redeemed humanity upon the earth. Those who shall escape the desolating flood of fire at the coming of the Lord shall be their subjects and will receive their princely and priestly ministrations. There still will be found on earth men in the flesh, as families and political organizations, but they will be subjected to the rule and authority of the only potentate—the King of kings and his subordinate rulers. "All nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples" shall own his sovereign sway and acknowledge his powerful scepter.

The apostles, as a reward for following Jesus in the days of his flesh, and as the chosen and faithful ambassadors of his reign in the day of tribulation and suffering, shall sit nearest his throne in Jerusalem, and shall have due honors conferred upon them. "Verily, I say to you, that, in the restoration, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you also who have followed me shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." This day has not yet come. The Saviour sits on his Father's throne, and the twelve hold no regal scepters, but the day is at hand when it shall be fully accomplished. Israel in the flesh is still beloved for the father's

sake — Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They shall return to their own home land and they will inherit it. They will be converted there and not before. They will see the King in his beauty and shall say, "This is our God, we have waited for him." "Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord!" shall be heard from the lips of the outcasts and the preserved in Zion. They will become the center of that mighty realm over which the Messiah shall reign, and Jerusalem be the capital of his kingdom on the earth. "All nations shall flow into it, and many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isa. 2:1-4; comp. Ps. 72; Isa. 27:12, 13; Jer. 31:6-8; Ps. 46; Hos. 2:18.

This passage [Isa. 2] may have had a partial fulfillment on the day of Pentecost, but its full complement is reserved for a brighter day than ever yet has dawned upon our sin-ruined earth. "Many people" have never gone up to learn the ways of the Lord. Jesus, as yet, has never assumed the office of judge among the nations. No nation, not even the most Christianized, has ceased to learn the art of war. England and America have made it their special study, and are the most perfect adepts in it on earth. Their spears have not been converted into pruning-hooks nor their swords into plow-shares. It is easy to spiritualize all this away, and accommodate it to our low conceptions of God's infinite and glorious designs; but the word of God is a tried word, and his promises shall never fail.

There is not a Christian nation on the earth. There are Christians among the nations, and the influence of Christian principles is felt in society and over human government and wherever the gospel is known. There is scarcely a shire, a neighborhood, or county in the most favored portions of our globe that has been brought fully under the authority of Christ. Many of these glorious predictions concerning "the latter days" we have given to the sects and parties which have ruined Christendom. We have robbed Israel in the flesh to enrich the church in her present suffering state; and the gorgeous sunrise of millennial glory we have cast over the decayed and waning fortunes of apostate institutions and corrupt forms of the Christian religion. This accommodating spirit has disposed of nearly everything of value in the prophetic scriptures and has tyrannized over the faith and hope of the church for ages. We should displace it by the application of sounder principles of interpretation and the hidden treasures of the scriptures of truth will be disclosed to our wondering and admiring eyes.

Let us be faithful to our acknowledged principles of interpretation as applied to the gospel of Christ and the ordinances of the Christian institution, and permit the prophecies to speak out in their own fearless and robust manner, whether in literal or figurate forms

of speech. We should receive with reverence their oracular communications, whether our reason or philosophy approve them or not. They may dash to pieces our most cherished theories in regard to unfulfilled prophecy. They may render useless many excerpts, skeletons, and preparations for the pulpit. They will undermine our beautiful theories in regard to human progress, and the gradual conversion of the world by modern appliances; but they will open a field of inquiry wide as the heavens and glorious beyond all conception. It will enable us to understand more fully the relations we stand in to the age in which we live, and the duties involved, and to the more glorious age which lies before us at "the appearing and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ."

There is a suffering and a triumphant form and condition of the kingdom of God. The first allies itself to the despised Nazarene—the man of sorrows—the lowly Redeemer of our race. Its great symbol is the cross, outside the gates of Jerusalem. There it stands, and stained with his blood—the blood of the King of Martyrs—the blood of the atonement! It rises up before us as the accepted token of trial and suffering to all who would enter into the kingdom. It reminds us of Bethlehem and of Nazareth, of weariness and want; of painfulness and privation. It speaks to us of insult and outrage, of reproach and persecution. The dew that rests upon it is the dew of tears; the air that surrounds it is full of sighs and groans coming from Gethsemane, and from the Sanhedrim and Pilate's bar; the wail of ages of suffering and sorrow mingle with them and swell the deep diapason from the tongues of martyrs and confessors—the partakers of Christ's sufferings. The faith of all ages is fixed upon it, and every disciple is "crucified with Christ." But if there is a suffering, there is also a triumphant condition of "the kingdom of the heavens." This allies itself to the crown and the King in his glory, and appeals to our hope. The ages which are past have anticipated it. Abraham saw the grand capitol of this kingdom, and walked humbly before God in hope of entering into it. The prophets leaped over the suffering state of the kingdom, to catch the inspiration of its crowning glories. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, overlooked all that lay between him and "the day of the Lord," and saw him "coming with his holy myriads"; and the Saviour in his transfiguration gave to Peter, James, and John a faint idea of its transcendent glory; and the last of the Apostles saw it approach with its descending King, and said: "Come quickly." The Bride, the Lamb's wife, has been waiting for the day, impatient for his return. She has felt her loneliness and poverty, more like a widow in mourning, than as his empress queen. But "The kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven" shall be hers, when Jesus our Lord shall come.

"Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom that can not be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire."—James Challen, in the Mathes book, *The Western Preacher*, Bedford, Indiana, 1865; pp. 170-184, Vol. 1.