

THE WORD AND WORK

(Volume XLV, September, 1951)

“White are the fields for the harvest;
Workers are all too few;
Souls are awaiting the Message;
Christ still depends on you.”

—Selected

WORDS IN SEASON

R. H. B.

THE WORD OF CHRIST'S PATIENCE

The outstanding praise which the Lord bestowed on the faithful church in Philadelphia was, “Thou didst keep the word of my patience” (Rev. 3:10). It was not merely that they had kept the oft repeated injunction to be patient, but they had kept the word of *His* patience. This could mean nothing else than the example of Christ's own patience. This church had stedfastly followed it. And what was his patience? The record of Christ's earthly life and ministry is the record of it. He had come down from heaven to do great things; but above all not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him (John 6:38). It was a severe test of His loyalty and subjection to the Father's will when through “the 18 silent years” (from 12 to the age of 30) He must work in the carpentershop of that wretched village of Nazareth. Would not His heart have been burning with desire to go before the world to do the great work for which he had come? However that may have been, Nazareth was the place assigned to Him, and there He must abide and do His daily work in the carpentershop through all the years, until the Father sent Him forth to begin His ministry among men. And throughout all that ministry, the great watchword still was patience, patience, all the way. “I go on my way today and tomorrow,” He said, “and the third day I am perfected.” And, again, “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened [i. e. “limited”] until it be accomplished!” So day by day He continued, waiting, working, trusting, obeying, in utter dependence on the Father's will and direction, until He had finished the task which the Father had given Him to do. (John 17:4.) And for the joy that was set before Him, He “endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb. 12:2.)

CHRIST'S PATIENCE NOW

His patience did not end there. Though exalted to God's right hand, and having all authority in heaven and on earth, still He waits and bides the Father's time; “from henceforth expecting until his enemies be made the footstool of his feet.” There is a work He is patiently carrying on now in the heavenly sanctuary on behalf of

His people on the earth (Heb. 7:25; 8:1, 2.) The great day of triumph is yet to come: the redemption of the purchased inheritance, His vindication and the binding of Satan; the "revealing of the sons of God" (for which event the whole creation waits); the glorious reign on earth, and the times of the restoration of all things, of which God spoke by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. "Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee: ask of me and I will give thee the nations for thy inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession . . ." (Ps. 2:7, 8.) Has He asked it yet? Nay—and He will not until the seventh trumpet shall be sounded, and the proclamation is heard, "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). For that day He waits; and we also wait for Him.

THE PATIENCE OF HIS SAINTS

"Thou hast kept the word of my patience." Perhaps there is no harder trial for men than just *waiting*—waiting on God, waiting for His will and guidance, praying and trusting, and never letting up on faith and hope and love. We are too prone to "run before Him"; or else get discouraged because we do not see things shaping up as we had wished, and apt then to think that perhaps it was all a mistake. There is nothing we need so much, first and last, as patience. "Let patience have her perfect work," says James, "that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing." And the patient waiting for Christ's return is the master-key to all other patience. For patience is ever linked with hope; and the hope of His Coming is the secret of the church's patience. "Ye come behind in no gift," Paul writes to the Corinthians, "waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be unreprouvable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 1:7, 8.) "Be patient therefore brethren until the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it . . . Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is at hand." (Jas. 5:7, 8.) And one day He will come — it may be very, very soon. It is the patient waiting for Christ that enables us to endure (2 Thess. 1:4) and to hold the "moderation" (R. V. "forbearance") that keeps us from "flying off the handle" when things go wrong (Phil. 4:5), and that keeps us from murmuring against our brethren (Jas. 5:9). It is the God-appointed preventive against the world's blandishments. "When the Bride became a harlot" says Auberlen, "she ceased to look for the Bridegroom." And the vice-versa of this is true also—when she ceased to look for the Bridegroom she became a harlot. Now "the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ." (2 Thess. 3:5.)

A MYSTERIOUS PROMISE

"Because thou didst keep the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:

10). Here is a promise of exemption—from what? From what world-wide hour of trial shall the church (or the individual Christian) that has kept the word of His patience be kept? The answer would certainly lie in the Revelation itself, and also in Luke 21:36, and in Matt. 24:21, 29—where great unparalleled tribulation (immediately preceding Christ's glorious appearing) is spoken of. Into that we cannot here go further. But one thing is evident—that those who have kept the word of His patience will be kept out of some terrible event or events that will come upon all the inhabited earth—which exemption will more than compensate for all they may have patiently suffered for Christ's sake. But if this hour of trial shall come upon the whole world, and Christ's own are kept from it (Greek, "ek." out of it)—where will they be at that time? Surely then they are of those who are "caught up" to meet the Lord in the air, and who shall henceforth "be ever with the Lord." (1 Thess. 4:16, 17.) It is a great promise, and much worth all our thought and endeavor. When the hour comes we shall know it perfectly.

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MONOD'S LAST TALKS

By mere accident I picked out of a shelf of old books a little volume, old and dingy, which I had bought at a second-hand junk sale years ago, stuck away, and never looked at again. Why I picked it out now I do not know, for it was not anything that would have appealed to me. It almost seemed as if Providence had put it in my hand, for it carried a message that I needed.

The little volume contained a series of short talks by Adolph Monod, a celebrated French preacher of evangelical faith; once a powerful speaker and of a fascinating eloquence. But these last talks were given when he was laid up with a fatal and painful affliction. From his sick-bed, to a small gathering of friends, who came every Sunday to take the Lord's supper with him, Monod made these little talks, often while racked with great pain. It was the spirit of those messages given in his suffering, that made the deep impression on me. He spoke briefly each time—his strength admitted of no more. The old eloquence was gone, save that now and then for a moment his spirit rose above the weakness of the body. There was nothing but humility, simplicity and sincerity, peace and love and deep earnestness in those memorable speeches, with never a thought or tinge of self—only the desire to speak a few words to the glory of God and for his own and his hearers' blessing. His talks cost him much, but they were not gloomy. They were unstudied, yet not rambling. Back of them was much experience and a deep spiritual understanding of the scriptures. He spoke as in the sight of God, as if already in eternity, knowing how short his days were.

Of the substance of his teaching I will not speak at length. But the impress these last words of Adolph Monod left in my mind was that of reality, sincerity, and faithfulness such as becomes a true servant of Christ (2 Cor. 2:17). Why should not all our preaching and teaching be always like that?

"A DYING MAN'S REGRETS"

Those death-bed talks (if we may call them that) of Adolph Monod ran from Oct. 14, 1855 to March 30, 1856, twenty-five brief lessons. The last one, significantly, titled, "The Love of God." Four of these talks were given under the head of "A Dying Man's Regrets."

1. The Secret of a Holy, Active, and Peaceful Life.
2. The Study of the Word of God.
3. The Use of Time.
4. Prayer.

Probably Monod had less to regret than most of us as he looked back over his life. Yet these four sub-titles indicate that in the matters they speak of he had some regrets. What were they? Under the first he mentions the planning of one's life and work—and how prone a man is to map out his own work—even good and laudable work, with but little consulting of God. It is well—even needful—to have a plan, he says; but all must always be held in subjection to God; as the book of Proverbs has it, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy way." He cites at length the life and work of our Lord, showing how He sought always and only the will of His Father; and the wonderful holiness, activity, and inward peace that marked the ministry of Jesus,

Under the second title, Monod spoke of Bible-study, of which he had indeed done much, yet wished that he had done more and better study of that precious word of God. And what he has to say of the Use of Time—ah, the dying man can have the deepest appreciation of the value of time, and the keenest regret of missed opportunities, and misspent days!

The fourth matter of regret has to do with Prayer. Oh for how much more our time and work would count if we but prayed! Oh the vain endeavors, the lack of power, the fruitless toil, the needless strain of prayerless service! And the sad thought of what might have been, and what we might have had, had we but asked in earnest, persevering faith!

These and all his other words are given in such love, such tender consideration of human weakness, and such understanding of the grace of Christ, that if they wound it is but to heal, and to fill us with new desire to live for God. What the dying man out of his great weakness and pain spoke from his sick-bed—so earnest was it, yet so hopeful and cheerful, above all so humble and true, that it went to my heart; and it seemed as if a voice whispered above the admonition of the little book: "So must you live, so you must speak and teach." May God grant that at the journey's end we may have done so.

"Lord, when we pray, 'Thy kingdom come,'
Then fold our hands without a care
For souls whom thou hast died to save,
We do but mock thee with our prayer."

NEWS AND NOTES

Louisville, Ky.: "On July 20 Dennis Allen and I closed a two weeks' Daily Vacation Bible School at the Parksville church of Christ. The church gave splendid cooperation, and the average attendance was around 100. Bro. Robert Boyd is to begin a meeting at Parksville, September 26 and close October 7. We need the prayers of God's people."—Winston N. Allen.

Dallas, Texas: "The Lord blessed us with an unusually good day at Mt. Auburn Sunday, July 15. Attendance was better at all services, with one response for reconsecration at the morning service, and six responses in the evening, two of which were for baptism. Your prayers for the work here are appreciated."—Robert B. Boyd.

Louisville, Ky.: "Have arrived home from tour among ten Indiana churches in Sullivan and Greene counties, greeting hosts of old-time friends and kin, many of whom were pupils when I was a 'Hoosier Schoolmaster.' Met Milburn Bledsoe and wife, the first couple I ever married—date, 1899. Two 'basket dinners,' at Palmers Prairie, where lie the ashes of grandparents Thomas and Charlotte Chambers, and at Shiloh, where grandparents on both sides belonged, also parents, and where wife and I made that good confession, and were baptized the same day in the same pool, being not then even sweethearts. Present among the many others at this Shiloh 'basket dinner' was Brother Ed Neal, in Christ there before me by a few months. His presence added to the enjoyment of the occasion. Preaching brethren whom I contacted were: Clymore, Hoar, Neal, Van Tassell, Plunkett, Squires, Stivers, Griffiths, Campbell. Also I met many leaders of song. May the Lord bless every one, great and small, old and young."—Stanford Chambers.

New Orleans, La.: "The Seventh and Camp Streets Church of Christ in New Orleans has just had three glorious nights of refreshing fellowship with Bro. Willis H. Allen. Brother Allen preached in New Orleans 1923-1927, and his good work here is well-remembered. The at-

tendance and interest for these three nights were excellent, and that right in the midst of unusually hot weather.

"The Seventh and Camp Streets Church of Christ at present sends regular contributions to Brother Vernon Lawyer, Brother Garrett, Kentucky Bible College, Boothville Church of Christ. The ladies of the church have 'adopted' one of the boys at Sellersburg Orphans' Home. Most of the support for our Sunday morning radio broadcast comes from members of the local church, and the rest of it from Christians nearby.

"As of July 19 we have \$580.46 in a fund to be used by Vernon Lawyer to establish a new mission in Africa. Other churches endorsing Vernon as a bonifide representative of the Churches of Christ and giving approval to this mission are: Amite, Oak Grove, Shiloh, Boothville, Alexandria, all of which are in Louisiana; and South Side Church of Christ in Abilene, Tex., and Portland Avenue Church, Louisville, Ky.

"Brother Francis Holdeman is doing a splendid work in the church at Boothville. This small band meets regularly in the home of Brother Leon Buras. They have about \$130 in a building fund. Next week Brother Holdeman and I are to conduct a revival meeting there.

"We are grateful to all for keeping our names on their prayer lists. We can do nothing except that God be with us."—Richard Ramsey.

Dedication at Eastview

The Eastview church near Okolona, Kentucky, dedicated their new church building on Sunday afternoon of August 12. Many visitors were present, including some ministers, who had a part on the program. The local minister, Claude Neal, made the dedication speech. This small congregation has paid \$7,000 on their building, which cost around \$13,000. A special offering on the occasion came to \$209.57. Following the dedication the church had six nights of preaching, hearing a different preacher each night. Bro. Neal reports good messages and good crowds for the week.

J. L. Addams was recently in a week's meeting at Lily Dale, Indiana, with six baptisms. During the meeting they had home coming day with a record crowd. On Sunday, August 19, in the afternoon the Kentucky-Bible-College sponsored song rally was carried to Lily Dale. Nine cars made the trip from Louisville and New Albany to this rally. The house was filled and an hour and fifteen minutes of wonderful praise and fellowship was enjoyed by all. The service was highlighted by a speech by Winston Allen, President of Ky. Bible College. Dale Jorgenson, head of the music department, was present and had a part in the program.

Waldo Hoar of Linton, Indiana, informs us that they have had a fine meeting at Linton, with Brother R. H. Boll as evangelist. By special request Brother Boll brought several messages on prophecy. There were eight baptisms and one reconsecration during the two weeks. Interest was high from the first.

Report comes from two of Brother H. L. Olmstead's meetings. At Nelsonville, Ky., there were two baptisms and two reconsecrations with unusually good interest. A real revival broke out at Antioch, near Frankfort, Ky. Up to the last Sunday sixteen souls had been baptized into Christ.

The Jefferson Street church, Louisville, is rejoicing over the good meeting just completed there, in which Brother Ernest Lyon brought the messages. Seventeen in all responded to the invitation, five adults for primary obedience, ten for reconsecration and two for membership. Brother Lyon based most of his messages on the great Roman letter. His messages were clear, spiritual and strong. Brother Lyon states that Brother Hardison, local minister, is doing an excellent job of personal work.

WELCOME TO LOUISVILLE BIBLE CONFERENCE!

This number of Word and Work should be in your hands about Louisville Bible Conference time. The Word and Work would like to voice a hearty welcome from the planning committee, made up of a few faculty members of the College and some local ministers. Homes are be-

ing opened to entertain visitors. Noon meals will be served in the school lunch room. The Bible class taught by Brother Boll at 9:30 each morning will be followed by round table discussion. The afternoon speeches will be delivered from 2 to 4; at night the session begins at 7:30 with two addresses. This is not just a preachers' meeting; it is a time of great revival, a time of Bible study and Gospel preaching. It has no bearing on the local autonomy of the churches, except to champion it. Come, let us hear the message of the Lord!

Johnson City, Tenn.: "We the Locust Street and Mountain View churches of Christ wish to express our appreciation to the different ministers and churches of the Louisville area for the support that was given to us during the time we were without ministers.

"The Lord has blessed us here. We have witnessed six persons baptized into Christ just recently. Three of them at Mt. View and three at Locust Street.

"Again we express our appreciation to our brethren for their support."

—Elders of the Locust St. Congregation.

Dallas, Texas: "The Lord continues to bless here at Fair Park. There is good attendance at all services with increase in Bible school. The young people's chorus is doing fine work on the radio. There is some response to the Gospel invitation along, enlarged vision and faith in leadership, interest in other fields.

"A recent meeting at Turkey Creek, La., of five nights yielded 22 responses, seven of which were baptisms. To Him be the praise.

"Lord willing, I plan to begin meeting with the Highway church at Pekin, Indiana, on August 22, and continue through September 2, and be on hand for the Bible Conference. Eugene, his wife and baby plan to come this year also."—Frank M. Mullins.

Word comes that the seventh consecutive meeting conducted by Howard Marsh at Borden, Indiana, is the best so far. There were eleven baptisms and four other responses.

UNDENIABLE CONFUSION

Stanford Chambers

It has always been intensely interesting to watch the flocks of wild geese flying south in late fall, back north in early spring. Their movement is always with fixed purpose onward. Evidently they always have a leader, yet he does not advertise himself, is never showing off. It is interesting to note their rhythm, expressive of peace and unity.

Once in Indiana, however, we watched a flock that was different. Instead of unity there was disintegration. Some of the flock flew one way, some the opposite, then together again they all turned back south a distance. Then they got the stroke together and swung round and got headed again for the north. That flock was confused. What had happened? Mutiny? Had their leader fallen to earth? Were there rival leaders? Whatever the cause, that flock was confused.

Confusion is unmistakably the situation in Christendom today in all its divisions. Every denomination thereof presents the same spectacle of disunity, disintegration, confusion. There is a people loud in their proclamation and plea for unity on the ground of "the Bible and the Bible alone as the rule of faith and practice." If human religious names were disregarded, human organizations dissolved, human creeds destroyed, and then if all would just "speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent," the Lord's earnest prayer would be answered and then, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Amen. It has a good sound.

But what does the world see being demonstrated by the people who have voiced this plea? Alas, it is disunity, disintegration, dissension, strife, disfellowshipping of one group by another, a situation nauseating to thinking people of the world and blighting to the people directly concerned. The members are confused and are divided, and kept so by their leaders. Their preachers are crying, "Lo, here," or "Lo, there," and the people follow their chosen leader, and probably they make choice largely by the noise he makes. "You just ought to hear our preacher; he has a voice like a lion." So the people are going, some in one direction and others the opposite. Confusion is the word. A people *how confused!* Where can be found people in all Christendom *more* confused?

Put up over your door "Church of Christ" but not "Church of God." You may have a Christian man, a Christian character, a Christian journal, a Christian hymn, but never a Christian church! You are permitted to use U. S. as a *carrying* agent of mission funds, for instance, but it is unscriptural for even a Church of Christ to be used as a *sending* agency. You must speak of our Lord's chosen emblem as bread, but not as the loaf. You may believe that the Lord will come again provided you do not have Him come till after the millennium, also provided you do not have His feet touch the earth.

The Lord may not approve of your communion if it precedes the "offering," and He may disapprove of the "offering" if it comes after communion. Baptism is "for the remission of sins" only when the candidate understands it to be so. And thus we might go on and on: there is the controversy over the eldership, the laying on of hands, the Christian's bearing of arms, in fact where is there any point of doctrine over which there is not divided sentiment and controversy? And every one speaks "where the Bible speaks, and is silent where the Bible is silent!" And every one emphasizes that he is out for no sort of compromise.

Is there no healing medicine? Yes, a *new conception of our Lord*. As long as He is thought of as austere, exacting, taking up where He has not strewn, reaping where He has not sown, condemning one for his very last sin if he dies before asking forgiveness: as long as this is the conception of Him, just that long will they be tithing mint and anise and cummin, and be leaving undone the weightier matters of God's holy will. Motes will be magnified into beams, gnats will be magnified into camels. Until people go to their knees in shamefacedness about this state of distrust and confusion they will not cease to be a confused people, preaching one thing and practicing its opposite.

One consoling fact remains, since we live in a free country, a congregation of Christians can "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free," and can be acceptable with Him as was Philadelphia of old. "The strong congregation can bear the infirmities of the weak ones, can practice in the Spirit the practical instruction of the fourteenth of Romans. May God increase the number of those strong enough in spirituality to do that.

THE FRUITS OF INFIDELITY

Infidelity's only *standard* of morality is the lusts and passions of the flesh. *One may be a smut dealer, a liar, a gambler, a thief, a drunkard, an adulterer, a blasphemer, a murderer, a tyrant, an anarchist, and still be an apostle of infidelity.* In fact, infidelity breeds just such deeds. It is a rotten tree, and so are its fruits. Infidelity caused the early Christians to be put to death by the thousands under the tyrant emperors, Nero and Diocletian. It caused the Reign of Terror in France. Infidels tied the Bible to the tail of an ass, and with a harlot for its rider they dragged the Sacred Book out of the city. Then they closed all the church houses and set up the "Goddess of Reason."

The apostles of infidelity have all been corrupt. Perhaps David Hume was the most decent one of the entire number, and he was a blatant hypocrite. After converting a young "clergyman" to his foolishness, he advised him to continue his preaching. He wrote to his mother while she was on her deathbed and admitted that he did not "think so differently to the rest of mankind," but only "throw out my speculations to *entertain* the learned and metaphysical." Voltaire

spent most of his life sneaking from one country to another to escape the punishment of the law on account of his misdeeds. And he did not stop at attacking the church, but assailed the highest and best ideals of all time. At his death he was rotten with disease.

Thomas Paine was never a patriot in the true sense. He was paid five hundred pounds by the Pennsylvania Legislature for writing his "Common Sense" and Congress paid him three thousand dollars for writing his "Crisis." The State of New York also deeded him about five hundred acres of land. In his "Crisis" he wrote: "This country is the gift of heaven, and God alone is its King." Again, he said: "America has a King, but he reigns above. With God's blessings we will maintain our independence against the world." It was not till about 1787, when he went to France and took up with some of these infidels, that he was gulled in his distorted and mischievous beliefs. Not long thereafter he had the honor (?) of sitting in the convention which wrote the blackest page in France's history. This convention precipitated the Reign of Terror, of which we have already spoken. He returned to this country in 1802 with the wife of another man. He willed the most of his property to this harlot, who became the mother of his child.

Ingersoll was a ne'er-do-well till he was thirty years of age, when he left Carbondale and went to Peoria, Ill. When he went to make the train, he drove an old "skate" of a horse hitched to a one-horse wagon with scarcely enough rope harness to hang together. Just preceding the War between the States he ran for Congress on a pro-slavery ticket, and during his campaign he would often get drunk. On one occasion he fell in a store and ran his arm into a tub of butter. On another occasion he sprinkled a baby with beer in mockery of "baptism." When the Republicans became popular and the war was begun, he turned over to their side when offered a commission. But he was captured by a sixteen-year old boy early in the struggle—dragged from under a house. When he ran for governor in 1868, his speeches were so coarse that the committee had to keep him off the speaker's stand. He let his sister die in poverty without extending either help or sympathy, then made a loud, swelling noise at the grave of his brother. In 1878 he was chairman of a committee that prayed the United States Senate to repeal a postal law which forbade the mailing of obscene and smutty literature. At that very time D. M. Bennett, another apostle of infidelity, was serving a sentence in Sing Sing for violating this statute.

Frederich Nietzsche, one of the boldest of all infidels, in support of his theory of the superman, says: "To be obsessed by moral consideration presupposes a very low grade of intellect. We should substitute for morality the will to our own end, and consequently the means to accomplish that."

Clarence Darrow blamed the reading of Nietzsche for the dastardly crime of "Babe" Leopold and "Dickey" Loeb. Yet he goes about and publicly defends such "rot." He takes special interest in defending kidnapers, blackmailers, anarchists, and such like. He tries to stir up race riot, flaunts police power and organized govern-

ments. He boasts of violating the prohibition laws and defies the Constitution of the United States.

Judge Ben Lindsey is another one of infidelity's apostles. He flaunts the teachings of Jesus, tries to annul the marriage laws, and holds that "morals have no connection with freedom from sin." Since his "companionate-marriage" theory is not for procreation, it can only be for the gratification of the passions and lusts of the flesh. He encourages licentiousness either in or out of wedlock.

Just a few years back the American Atheistic Association in New York announced in its preamble that its intention was to rid all the hotels, hospitals, schools, libraries, and all other public institutions of the Bible.

Infidelity is negative and selfish. It has no plans for charity or benevolence, such as orphan homes, homes for the aged, hospitals, or other like institutions. It has never built a school, though it has stolen a number. It has never explored a new country or carried the light of truth to those who sit in darkness. It has never saved a soul from sin and death. Its only gospel is the gospel of suicide. It is the fountain of lawlessness, of vice and crime. It breeds all the evils known to mankind. It would destroy our homes, our churches, and our government, and turn them over to the racketeers, whisky breweries, and anarchists. Licentiousness, graft, and all the evil practices of tyranny would go on a wild rampage.—L. R. Wilson, in *Gospel Advocate*, 1931.

One Day at a Time

ONE DAY at a time, with its failures and fears,
With its hurts and mistakes, with its weakness and tears,
With its portion of pain and its burden of care;
One day at a time we must meet and must bear.

One day at a time — but the day is so long,
And the heart is not brave, and the soul is not strong,
O Thou pitiful Christ, be Thou near all the way;
Give courage and patience and strength for the day.

Swift cometh His answer, so clear and so sweet;
"Yea I will be with thee, thy troubles to meet;
I will not forget thee, nor fail thee, nor grieve;
I will not forsake thee; I never will leave."

Not yesterday's load we are called on to bear,
Nor tomorrow's uncertain and shadowy care;
Why should we look forward or back with dismay
Our needs, as our mercies, are but for the day.

One day at a time, and the day is His day;
He hath numbered its hours, though they haste or delay.
His grace is sufficient; we walk not alone;
As the day, so the strength that He giveth His own.

—Annie Johnson Flint

THE THRONE OF DAVID

R. H. B.

"Is Christ on the throne of David now?" That seems to be the central and critical question of the current prophetic controversy. If Christ is now on the throne of David then the ancient prophecies, it is claimed, are already fulfilled, and no "Millennium" or future reign of Christ on earth is to be looked for. But if He is not now on David's throne, the whole outlook upon the future is changed and the way is open for the full and literal fulfilment of the prophecies of the Old and New Testament. Here then is a question of first importance, with which, if settled one way or the other, much will stand or fall. Is Christ, then, on the throne of David now?

In order to answer the question it is first of all necessary to determine what the throne of David is. That Christ is now enthroned on God's right hand in heaven, having all authority in heaven and on earth we all know and believe. So if the throne which Christ now occupies is the throne of David then, of course, Christ sits on the throne of David now. But is it? Is the throne of God, the throne of the universe, on which God sits in heaven, and on which Christ sits on God's right hand, exercising all power and authority — is that the throne of David? If so, the matter ends here. Those who answer this question affirmatively argue that the throne of David is "*the throne of Jehovah.*" In proof of the statement we are referred to such passages as 1 Chron. 29:23, "Then Solomon sat on the throne of Jehovah as king instead of David his father." There David's throne is called "the throne of Jehovah."

But one thing must be cleared up here: Is this "throne of Jehovah" on which David and his descendants sat the throne of Jehovah in the absolute, or is it a subsidiary realm of Jehovah's government which He had delegated to David? To ask this is to answer it. Certainly the latter; for David and his sons never sat upon Jehovah's throne of absolute and universal power in heaven, nor administered His universal government. The term "Jehovah's throne" is, in so far as it referred to David, restricted to God's rule over the nation of Israel. David and Solomon sat "upon the throne of the kingdom of Jehovah over Israel." (1 Chron. 28:5.) And over and over again, the throne of David is simply called "the throne of Israel." (1 Kings 8:20, 25; 9:5; 10:9, etc.) In fact, *so far is the use of the term in the scriptures is concerned it never means anything else than this realm of government which Jehovah assigned to David — the rule over his people Israel.* (2 Sam. 3:10; 1 Kings 1:13, 17, 30, 35, 37, 48; 2:12, 24, 45; 3:6; 5:5. Jer. 3:13; 17:25; 29:16 — etc.) After the division of the kingdom (2 Kings 11) its actual scope was reduced to sovereignty over Judah and Benjamin. (At the Captivity of Judah the throne of David and his crown was said to be cast down to the ground." Ps. 89:39, 44) In passages where the sovereignty of David's throne seems to extend farther than the original dominion over the tribes of Jacob — it still centers there (Ps. 59:13). When the throne of David is specifically promised to our Lord Jesus Christ

in Luke 1:32 it is again the sovereignty over the nation of Israel: "The Lord his God shall give unto him the throne of his father David and he shall rule *over the house of Jacob* for ever." In the scriptures the term "throne of David" never means anything else than the rule divinely delegated to David and his descendants, *over the realm of Israel*. So definitely is that the case that in promising to David the perpetuity of his throne, God at the same time guaranteed the perpetuity of Israel as a nation before Him for ever. See 2 Sam. 7:10, 24; Jer. 31:36. If then we accept the scripture-definition of "the throne of David" we are compelled to the conclusion that such a throne was never occupied by the Lord Jesus Christ nor has ever such a realm of government as yet been administrated by Him.

The only way in which it would seem possible to counter these facts and scripture-statements would be by denying their simple, natural import and meaning. And this of course, is the line pursued by those who would have Christ on David's throne now. They must needs "spiritualize" the whole matter. The literal throne of David, they say, which was indubitably his reign over the nation of Israel, was but a type and shadow of the greater spiritual things to come — of Christ's spiritual kingdom and His reign from heaven over God's spiritual Israel, which (they say) is the church. When such a position is taken the question is no longer one of interpretation, but the validity and veracity of God's word. We may make all spiritual applications of scripture we like, and call attention to all analogies and typical and anti-typical meanings; but if in so doing the fundamental statements of the scriptures are revoked and nullified, and God's oath-bound promise to David and to the nation of Israel is invalidated, then the question is whether it is God that shall be true and every man a liar, or vice versa. For the promises of God concerning the *people* (the nation descended from Jacob), *the land*, and *the city*, are so many, so definite, so specific and clear, that they cannot be denied or diverted without reflecting on God's truthfulness and integrity. If after all He has so solemnly promised and sworn to this people Israel God does not fulfil His word to them, but instead turns all into spiritual and figurative fulfilment to a new and different people, "the church" — then we cannot know that any promise of God can be relied on, nor can we know what He means when He says anything. Promises such as are found (for example) in Isa. 4; Isa. 11-14; 60; Jer. 30-33; Ezek. 34, 36, 37; cannot be said to have been fulfilled in *any sense*. Those who say that they were accomplished in the return of the small company from Babylon either do not know the facts of that return, or else they do not know the terms of the promise.

It will not help the matter to say that those promises and predictions were *conditional*, that the nation of Israel failed to fulfil the conditions, and was therefore cast off and disinherited. Nay, those promises and prophecies were given in full view of Israel's future disobedience and her rejection of her Messiah, and her own prolonged national rejection. God promised to preserve the nation

(as indeed He has done to this day) and through the furnace of chastisement and affliction to bring her forth at last purified and regenerated. He will not faint or fail till he has done this, for He will redeem His every word. "Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them." (Jer. 32:42.) The people upon whom He brought all the predicted evil is the nation of Israel, and He brought the evil upon them literally. So will He bring upon *them* all the good that He promised them. God is not limited in His grace. During Israel's national rejection He can and does bestow His greater and more wondrous blessings upon individuals of Jews and Gentiles in Christ as He sees good. He can create and exalt His church, according to His purpose. (Matt. 21:43.) But to bless and restore *the nation of Israel* He has solemnly bound Himself by promise and by oath. He will perform it in His time. Let no man deny His word.

* * *

To return now to our original question: "Is Christ now on the throne of David?" Remember it is not denied that Christ is enthroned in heaven. Nor is there any question of His present supreme and universal power. On this all are agreed; and if it could be shown that Christ's present place on the right hand of the Majesty on High constitutes His occupancy of the throne of David, then we all must and gladly would assent that Christ is now on David's throne. But if the throne of David is what all scriptures show it to be — the sovereignty over the nation of Israel, the house of Jacob, then it must be admitted that Christ has never yet occupied *that* throne. It must be obvious to the most cursory student that David never occupied the throne on which Christ now sits; and that Christ has never sat on the throne which David occupied. Nor can He, or will He, nor would it be possible, till Israel shall nationally own and confess Him as their Messiah and Lord. The day is to come when they shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matt. 23:29.) Then will Christ — the one and only living Heir of David's line, whose alone is the right — assume the throne of David, that is to say, the sovereignty and rule over His people Israel, which God has always claimed as peculiarly His own, and which He delegated to David and his seed for evermore.

The reply, however, is made that if Christ took over such a throne and government, it would be a retrogression in God's dealings and a demotion of Christ from His throne of high exalted place in heaven to the sovereignty over a poor little "earthly," "carnal," "material" kingdom here below. Now, as for demotion — those who make this argument do not themselves hesitate to "demote" Christ at His Coming, when they (erroneously) teach that at His coming He will "give up the kingdom to God, even the Father."* So "de-

* The word "then" in 1 Cor. 15:24 is **not** the word that means "at that time" (Greek, "tote") but a word that means "next in order" or "afterwards" (Greek, "eita" or "epeita"). Speaking of the resurrection Paul says, "Christ the firstfruits; **then** (epeita) they that are Christ's at his coming. **Then** (eita) cometh the end, etc." How long afterward is not mentioned.

motion" should not be used as a counter-argument by them. But there will be no demotion — rather an extension of His power and rule. For though Christ holds supreme and universal authority by virtue of His exaltation to God's right hand (a position which He will in no wise lose or surrender when He returns to earth) — it is obvious that the governments and nations of the world are not subject to Him, the nation of Israel least of all. But the sovereignty of the world is one of His God-given rights. As Son of Man He has the rule over all the universe (Ps. 8; Heb. 2). As Son of Abraham He inherits the world, and shall possess the gates of His enemies (Rom. 4:14; Gen. 22:17). As Son of David he has the sole rule and exclusive right to the throne of Israel. (2 Sam. 7.) As the Son of God He is heir of all things, for all things have been made by Him and for Him, for evermore. Now when He comes to take the throne of David, it will be to reign over Israel, and from thence to the ends of the earth. (Ps. 59: 13; 72:8.) It will be the fulfilment of that which is announced at the sounding of the seventh trumpet: "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ." (Rev. 11:15.) This is no demotion of any sort.

Nor is it true, what some have scoffingly pictured — that Christ will take up His abode in "that dirty town, Jerusalem." Jerusalem is indeed to be the seat and center of His government, the "resting place" He has desired. But that resting-place will be glorious. *How* glorious, the prophets have foretold. (See Ps. 132:13, 14; Isa. 4:5, 6; 11:10; 60.) If this is what God's word declares, why should mortal man object to it or wish to change it?

Finally, as to the position so generally assumed, and so widely taken for granted that "the church is *spiritual Israel*" — the people who confidently assert this (of whom the Seventh Day Adventists, for reasons of their own, are among the loudest) would be hard put to produce proof of this assertion. That believers are Abraham's seed they could show, of course; but not that the church is "the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," or that they are "the house of Jacob," or that Christians constitute the nation of Israel now. They are indeed a "holy nation," but they are not Israel. The only scripture that might give them even a semblance of proof (Gal. 6:16) clearly distinguishes between the Gentiles to whom Paul writes "*and the Israel of God.*" The only "spiritual Israel" there is is that part of natural Israel that has been born again in Christ. But the church, the New Man which Christ has formed in Himself is neither Israel nor Gentile, neither Greek or Jew. Before the church was formed there were only two elements in the World: Jew and Greek. But now there are three: Jews, Greeks, and the church of God" (1 Cor. 10: 32), in the latter of which there is no national name or distinction, but Christ is all and in all. That many things concerning Israel can be spiritually applied, and have spiritual counterparts in the church, is not denied. But Israel is not the church, and the church is not Israel. And the throne of David is that peculiar government which David himself administered, and on which the Son of David never has sat, but on which He certainly shall sit and rule.

DEALING WITH DIFFERENCES

H. L. Olmstead

Nature has made millions of leaves and blades of grass but no two are exactly alike. Billions of snowflakes fall each year and though all have the same general pattern, a crystal of six sides, yet no two are alike when seen under the microscope. What is true concerning nature is also true concerning man. There are in the first place many different races of men. All men have many things in common, yet the races are distinct and different in looks, color, stature, etc. When we break down the various races we find individual differences. Some are short, others tall, some lean, some fat, some walk more slowly, some quickly, some are lighter or darker than others. Within the same racial groups we find these differences in the color, texture and curl of the hair and differences in the size, shape and color of the eyes.

Is it strange then that just as there are natural or inherited physical differences there are also natural and inherited mental differences? Some people beam with sociability, others are retired and unexpressive. Some are phlegmatic, others garrulous. Some are easily excited, others remain undisturbed and possess their souls. Some individuals are musical. Others couldn't play a tune on a hand organ if it were set to play Old Hundred. Some minds are retentive, others seem to be like a sieve. Some minds think logically, others emotionally. Some laugh easily and merrily, others, if they laugh at all, sound like it came from a hollow barrel whose staves were about to fall apart. Some people are orderly about everything, while others leave a wake that looks like a Florida hurricane had passed through.

Now, to these physical and mental differences add the difference in education, family background, whether you were reared in the city or the country, the different mental and moral development of people, their religious beliefs and superstitions, political and economic views and standards that people hold, their various intellectual processes and we ask is it any wonder that we have differences?

It is against such an array of different temperaments, traits, training, prejudices, ignorance, characteristics natural, inherited, acquired, that we have the impact of Christianity. It must meet and grapple with a world of variety in mankind and make of them "one new man in Christ Jesus." Jew, Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, wise and fools, must pass through a process which will make them brethren in Christ Jesus. A fraternity out of all groups and individuals and out of society at every level; a fraternity that wears a peculiar badge of distinction that will be known and recognized everywhere. "By this shall all men know ye are my disciples, if ye have *love* one toward another." John 13:35.

However, does this mean that those who enter this fraternity of brotherly love are to be so regimented in their thinking and acting by the process of conversion that they cease to be individuals and be-

come mere religious robots and automatons? Does this mean that there is to be such a unity of thinking and acting that item by item and step by step we will think and believe and act alike in all things? I think not. The question of unity could be solved easily if this were true. In fact, the Roman Catholic Church has solved it upon this basis. I think we could do it the same way. All that would be necessary would be for the brotherhood to all agree with my interpretations of Christian doctrine and practice. Then let me write it down in a book of doctrine and discipline and have it officially adopted with the understanding that anyone who refused to accept my interpretations was to be disfellowshipped. Furthermore, they would have to agree that beyond my findings in Scriptural investigations no one could go. If they did not agree to something of this kind, and stick to it, it is likely someone would get an idea of his own and begin teaching it and disrupt the whole group. So far this has been the history of all groups who have tried the Creed Method. Creeds have not served their purpose in unifying believers, but on the other hand they have been prolific causes of division. They have fostered the party spirit and those who slavishly adhere to them not only limit their own spiritual horizon, but are oftentimes guilty of a Phariseism which scorns all who differ from them and thus they are destructive of brotherly love. There is no difference between written and unwritten creeds in this respect.

If the adoption of human creeds is not the way to deal with differences then what is the way? The recognition of any human authority, whether it be that of Pope and Cardinals, the Synod, the Convention, the religious periodical, or college, cannot be the way to deal with differences.

For myself, long ago, I decided on the seven fundamental things in Ephesians 4 as being a platform broad enough for all Christians to stand upon and narrow enough to exclude all who were not Christians. Within the bounds of this platform all the early Christians stood. There was room according to Rom. 14:1-12 for those Christians who ate meat and for those who did not. There was room for those who esteemed every day alike and for those who esteemed one day above nother. There was room in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-24) for the eye and the ear, the foot and the hand. They must not say one to another, "I have no need of thee."

There must be some common ground agreed to upon which we are to receive one another as Christians. The Creed Method is to either deduce or by induction reach certain doctrinal conclusions, state them and require acceptance of them as common ground of fellowship and Christian action. However, as we have already stated, this method has failed for unity. The 7 unities of Ephesians 4 are not human conclusions, neither are they human statements of them, but the Word of God. The snowflakes, the leaves, etc., follow a general pattern. In them we see a wonderful unity, yet an interesting and almost infinite diversity. There are common characteristics of leaves and snowflakes. All are leaves because of these characteristics, regardless of differences. Snowflakes and fingerprints follow a gen-

eral design but are all different. But all are fingerprints. So because Christians differ it does not mean they are not Christians.

Within this pattern then of Ephesians 4 there is unity enough to stamp a man as a Christian who stands upon it. The only question is: Shall we recognize him as such or shall we ostracize, dis-fellowship and unchristianize him because of differences in understanding and interpretations and minor practices? If we do so ostracize and dis-fellowship we have already raised the barrier which will make it impossible forever for us to arrive at unity of interpretation.

The essential background of keeping "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace" is not, according to this passage, intellectual agreement but it is "lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." These are attitudes of heart and are according to Galatians 5:22 the fruit of the Spirit. Certainly intellectual agreement is desirable, but it can never come so long as I regard the brother from whom I differ as a "heathen man and a publican" and so treat him. Let us look briefly at these 7 points. One Body, One Spirit, One Hope, One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One God and Father of All. Because it is true that there exists these seven unities Christians are exhorted to keep this Unity in the bond of peace. Because these seven things form a Spiritual Union then let that unity be kept in the bond of peace. Man cannot make a platform of Christian unity. That is already made, but he can keep this unity of the spirit by keeping peace. Not one of these items can be missing and there still be Christian Unity. Not a single item can be added either negatively or affirmatively without impairing the platform. Whoever is within this pattern that man is a Christian. A church's policy and practice should be of such pattern as to exclude none who come within these broad bounds.

Now having looked at these seven unities, as a whole, may we examine them one by one and that briefly. One Body, the Church, One Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the third person of the God Head, One Hope, the Hope of Eternal Life through Jesus Christ, our Lord, One Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, One Faith, the System of Faith revealed in the Bible, One Baptism, the burial in water of believers with their Lord in baptism, One God and Father of All, the God revealed in the Bible who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. What an infinite field of study and contemplation concerning each of these seven unities! How much one who prayerfully searches the Scriptures may learn of each! Yet how simple and fundamental these unities are! Shall I refuse my fellowship to one who holds each of them in sincere earnest faith just because he differs from me in his conception of some of the revealed truth concerning them? Shall I deny him both my heart and my hand? Much less shall I say that he is an infidel and an unbeliever and regard him as such! That is exactly what is happening and has happened in the Restoration Movement and unless there is a change the result will be nothing but a group of warring sects within the Movement itself. There are now more than twenty different things over which breth-

ren are drawing lines of fellowship. Each one is, of course, certain that he is right and is just as certain his brother is so dead wrong he will not fellowship him. Am I right about everything? If I cannot claim I am and who will? then God will have to deal graciously with my misunderstandings or I am lost. Shall I deal less graciously with my brother whom I merely think misunderstands than I expect God, who knows, to deal with me? If all the children do not know all the answers to the Geography Lesson, shall I charge that they have repudiated and wilfully perverted the Geography book! That is the way many Church of Christ preachers talk about both their religious neighbors and their own brethren. After all these years of claiming no Creed but Christ and no Book but the Bible, are we dealing honestly with one another and with the general public when we set up our conclusions and interpretations as tests of fellowship?

HOW?

This word begins the one great question in life which cannot be answered. It is the one grand exception.

Almighty God who is all-wise and all knowing, He with whom are hid all the treasures of sublime wisdom—He cannot answer it.

The Lord Jesus Christ, He who identified Himself as “the Way, the Truth and the Life,” He before whom the blessed apostle Peter fell down upon his knees and cried aloud, “Lord, Thou knowest all things,” He who is the Lord of Life—He cannot answer it.

The vast host of the dead, they who have passed on and through unto the other side, where all is known, and without sham—they cannot answer it. The man of earth most fully possessed of all that learning and scholarship can possibly afford and supply—he cannot answer it.

You cannot answer it. I cannot answer it. There is no answer in heaven, on earth, or in hell. Before this question, all must fall into numbed silence, and stand convicted.

What is this question? It is found in Hebrews 2:3: “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?” There is all the weight of eternity wrapped up in that little word, “How,” and it has never been successfully challenged nor disproved. Not one of the millions who have passed through the narrow veil between life and eternity, with their sins yet upon them, have given it the lie. There is no voice, in all these centuries, to shout back across the deep chasm. No angel can avert the catastrophe. No demon can deny the reality. No one has ever escaped, and no one ever will.

It may be that you have heard the message of the gospel, have realized that it is true, realized that personal action *must* be taken, realized the tremendous issues involved, intended to affect a settlement of the matter—but you have gone along through the years “with eyes wide open,” and *neglected* to do what is vital and urgent and necessary—how then will you answer the “how” of this question, or fail to recognize the righteousness of the divine judgment?

Of course you intended to be saved. But you are not. This un-

answerable question hangs heavy over the heart, and the shadows of final ruin are so dreadfully close! Is it to be wondered at then, that Scripture cries aloud with the voice of holy insistence, "NOW is the accepted time, behold NOW in the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2)?

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Sit down with that question for a while. You will not sit for long, for it is a searching, irritating, probing, burning, searing question. It asks no quarter and gives no rest. It brands and condemns and burdens and convicts. Analyze it from every angle, seek out a thousand loopholes, ferret out a million excuses, and it is more hopeless than at the first. And that is what God intends it to be for you, that you shall find no rest, no peace in it. It is meant that the gaunt ghosts of the full score of past neglectings of the message of the gospel shall arise to haunt, and to point the finger to the closing shadows of life and to extended grace. It will rob you of sleep and it will rob the pleasures of the wakened hours. It will run after you and plead with your guilty heart, until you throw down the weapons of your rebellion and surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ, crying out, "There is no answer here, and I flee to Thee for refuge, for Thou art the Only Answer for this weary, sinful heart of mine!"—*Edwin Raymond Anderson.*

LESSONS ON THE BOOK OF ACTS

J. Edward Boyd

Thessalonica and Berea

Of special interest to us is the information contained in 1 and 2 Thess. concerning the content of the apostle's preaching in Thessalonica. The time spent there was short, a few weeks at most; the gospel had never before been preached there; many of his hearers had been brought up in idolatry; yet he by no means confined himself within the limits of those truths spoken of today as "first principles." He instructed them about God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit; about those great fundamental facts of the gospel, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus; about sin and salvation, Satan and the wrath to come; about faith, hope, and love; about God's kingdom and glory; about peace and joy, and the Christian walk that is worthy of God; and about the second coming of Christ and related events. Moreover, his teaching on the second coming had been no mere casual mention now and then; it had evidently been an integral part of his message. Two purposes were in the minds of those Thessalonians who had turned from their idols to God: "to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His son from heaven." (1 Thess. 1:9, 10.) The second coming of the Lord was a prominent part, then, of his message to the unsaved! And so strong was their expectation of His return even within their own lifetime that they were surprised and alarmed at the prospect of death within their ranks. One purpose of the writing of the first Thessalonian letter was to allay their fears at this point. (1 Thess. 4:13-18.) Had Paul failed to instruct them about the resurrection of the dead in Christ when he was with them? We cannot

say that he had; but it does appear quite clear that he placed emphasis, not upon being ready for death, but upon waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And even in this letter he does not discourage this attitude. The apostle had dealt also with other prophetic subjects, such as the day of the Lord, the falling away, and the man of sin — rather tough meat, some would think today, for such “babes in Christ!” “Remember ye not,” he wrote later, “that when I was yet with you I told you of these things?” (2 Thess. 2:5, and context.)

HONEST AND GOOD HEARTS AT BEREА. In the synagogue at Bereа Paul and Silas found a different situation. These Jews “were more noble than those in Thessalonica.” Unblinded by prejudice, they were willing to give honest consideration to the things spoken by Paul. They were not of that class of men who are ready to accept anything new that seems plausible, especially if presented by an eloquent speaker or by some one with a pleasing personality. They wanted to be sure of their ground. So they did not at once accept the apostle’s teaching as true; but for days they made a personal, diligent examination of the scriptures to find out “whether these things were so.” Any true preacher is pleased with an attitude like that. He does not want people to take his word for it, whatever truth he is presenting. We need more such scripture-searching today. A man whose convictions are based upon such personal investigation has a firm foundation upon which to stand. With him it is not what his preacher, or his church, or his favorite religious journal teaches, but what he finds revealed in the Word of God. Such Bible study is the privilege of all; but it is more: it is also the duty of all, and the course of safety. The results at Bereа were just what we would expect them to be: “Many of them *therefore* believed.”

As the world is again torn by war and rumors of wars, we should sit down and estimate the price of peace. And we do not mean the dollars and cents necessary to bring peace as the world would estimate.

“*Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people*” (Proverbs 14:34.) This is the price any nation must pay for peace.

As to affiliation, the church is an independent congregation, which seeks to build up, not some sect or party, but “the house of God,” which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. All who, by a living, obedient faith, have become and are God’s children, and who are satisfied with Christ Jesus as the supreme head, and the Bible as their one and only creed, are invited to stand with us apart from all denominational connections, for the purpose of reproducing on earth the faith, hope, and love, the spirit, attitude, work, worship, life and fruits of original Christianity.

“We are cowed by opposing numbers, and forget the fact that the Bible is a long history of the triumph of very small minorities.”

“FAITH OF OUR FATHERS”

E. L. J.

T. W. Brents was born in Lincoln County, Tenn., Jan. 10, 1823, and spent his last year with his daughter, Mrs. Victor Dorris at Georgetown, Ky. His well-known book, “Gospel Plan of Salvation,” was published in 1874, and his later, most mature work, “Gospel Sermons,” from which this reprint is taken (now out of copyright) appeared in 1891. It was published by the Gospel Advocate Company in the days of the vigorous Lipscomb and Sewell administration, and is probably still obtainable. As late as 1938, the Advocate catalog (or McQuiddy) offered the book at \$2.00, and described the sermons as “written in the author’s well-known, clear, and convincing style.”

The present editor of *Gospel Advocate*, Brother B. C. Goodpasture, asks a question which is of itself a high commendation of the man: “was the gifted Brents less able to detect error than some are now?” (*Advocate*, Dec. 5, 1940, p. 1156); and Daniel Sommer, himself a powerful “reasoner,” said this in *Apostolic Review* (Sept. 29, 1936): “The strongest reasoner that the Southern churches ever had in them was, probably, one T. W. Brents.”

It will interest many readers to know that those few sentences from Dr. Brents that we have made to stand out by italization (besides his own italics) are those that D. H. Friend, beloved and now departed brother, had underlined. It was he who contributed the Brents books to our endeavors in this department.

Nothing is further from the author’s mind and purpose than to spin out a mere human or philosophical “theory” in this latter-day derogatory meaning of the word; that is perfectly clear from his own repeated statements—in his Introduction, his Conclusion, and in the text between. The effort of recent writers to try to break the force of Brents and Lard by stigmatizing their writings with a word *which these later writers themselves* have made opprobrious, and that *since* those great men wrote—such an effort is cheap and unworthy of Christian men. We leave the reader now to judge for himself, regretting only that space is insufficient to exhibit Brents in a single article.—J.

THE MILLENNIUM — I.

Dr. T. W. Brents

DR. BRENTS’ OWN INTRODUCTION

Of course no one is responsible for anything in this book but the writer, nor does he expect any one to believe it, unless it be in harmony with what the reader conceives the Bible to teach on the subjects treated. We have written for the purpose of aiding the reader in coming to a knowledge of what is taught in the Bible. We believe the Bible to be a revelation from God, and therefore true. It contains all we know of God or the devil—heaven or hell—angels or spirits—eternal life or eternal death. We may misconstrue its teachings, but we are ever willing to be taught it more perfectly. Nor have we any inclination to figure or symbolize it all away either. Some construe its language quite literally

until it comes in conflict with their peculiar hobbies, then it must be symbolic or figurative. Unquestionably there are figures and symbols in it, but where they occur the context will clearly show them to be such; otherwise we accept the plain literal construction **without an "if" or a "but."** Plain literal constructions cannot be set aside for no better reason than the **preservation of a theory.** If we may take such liberties as this, then there can be no certainty as to what the Bible teaches about any thing. One man will figure it to suit him; another will figure it to suit him; and so there will be no end to such figuring. Surely a theory must be **doubtful** that requires such **symbolizing** and **figuring** to support it. It occurs to us that he who is truly loyal to the Master is always willing to accept his teaching without straining it to fit theories. **We propose to form theories by the Bible, rather than to construe the Bible to fit theories already formed.** If there is any thing in this book that cannot survive this treatment, let it die; the sooner it is dead and forgotten the better. But, kind reader, if you find that what we have written is supported by the plainest teaching of Holy Writ, then let not your **prejudice** keep you from receiving it. If it is **not true**, you should reject it, but if it is **true**, you cannot afford to reject it. To this test we most cheerfully submit our work.—T. W. Brents, Lewisburg, Tenn., Aug. 1, 1891.

The revised or new version is a manifest improvement on the above [that is, the King James quotation of Rev. 20:4-6] so much so, that we propose to insert and use it as the *text* for this discourse, rather than the old version. Indeed, we treat the new version just as we do any other version, receive and adopt its *improvements*, but continue to use the old and more familiar version where it is not improved in the new.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshiped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."—Rev. 20:4-6 (R. V.).

Time, the great prover of all things, has shown much of what has been written on the millennium to be false; and public sentiment has about settled down to the conviction that there is nothing clearly taught in the Bible concerning it; hence, those who propose to speak or write about it are judged and condemned without a hearing. The verdict is that it will be all speculation, and so the matter is settled in advance. We have never manufactured much reputation as a *speculator* on theological questions, and we are a little too old to begin that kind of work now. Hear us before passing sentence upon us.

There is surely something taught in the Bible on the subject, and it can do us no harm to study it. While it is *vastly interesting*, it is not so important as that any one's salvation depends upon a knowledge of it. A mistake concerning it, therefore, would be entirely harmless. Hence, we do not see cause for alarm, even were we to indulge a little speculation about it, so long as we make no effort to force our speculations on any one else.

We have read much of what has been written on the subject, and Bro. M. E. Lard is the only man whose writings have fallen under our notice who seemed to have a tangible theory as to *what the millennium really will be*. On this point we believe his theory is correct, but we shall write as though he had not written.

Some writers boldly deny that there is any such thing taught in the Bible as a *thousand years' reign* with Christ by any class, at any time, anywhere, in any way. With this class we propose no argument. *Our text says, as plainly as words can express any thing, that there shall be such a reign, and this ought to settle it with those who believe the Bible; and we propose no argument with those who do not believe it.* All such labor is worse than thrown away.

Others admit that there will be a thousand years' reign with Christ, but they insist that it will be some sort of a figurative affair, and they figure it all away, until there is nothing left that they can describe, or that we can see. We know not how to reason with this class, for they give us nothing on which to reason.

Others think that it will consist in the breaking down of denominationalism, and the universal acceptance of the pure gospel of Christ, as taught by Mr. Campbell and his co-workers. However desirable this may be, we see no prospect of it; nor can we find satisfactory evidence on which to base such a belief. Denominationalism is here, and it is here to stay. It will be here when Jesus comes, perhaps about as it is now. Some of the denominations that are here now will doubtless pass away. Some are dying, and have been struggling in the throes of death for a number of years. The handwriting is on the wall, and they must go; and he is but a poor reader of the signs of the times who does not already see this; but perhaps other parties will rise up and take their place, and thus denominations will continue as long as time endures. All the world has never accepted the pure word of God, and never will. He is dreaming who expects the millennium to come about in this way. . . .

[At this point, the author argues rather vigorously and at length, against the return of Israel to Palestine and their conversion to the Christian religion. His main argument is the bottle illustration from Jer. 19—the bottle that was broken beyond repair. But even if we concede that the bottle represents Israel *for ever* (even beyond Titus, and A. D. 70), does it necessarily mean that *God Himself*, with whom all things are possible, could not make them whole again? For that is precisely what God promises, through the same prophet, *to this same prophet*, in Jer. 30:12-17, that He will do: "Thy hurt is incurable . . . *thou* hast no healing medicine (no, *they* had none) . . . thy pain is incurable; "for *I* will restore health unto thee, and *I* will heal thee of thy wounds." That answers that; and the bottle argument, still used by many, also.

[While we are bound to dissent from Dr. Brents' position on the return of Israel (are they not even now a nation in their land?), his view on this line does not make him any less a clear and definite "pre-millenarian," as the reader will easily observe.—J.]

JESUS WILL COME AGAIN

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called the Word of God."—Rev. 19:11-13.

That this had reference to Jesus is evident from the fact that his name is called The Word of God, and the fact that he is coming as a *judge* and a *warrior*. Then Jesus will come to the earth again. But we are told that the book of Revelation is so highly symbolic that we cannot know what it means. Well, let us see if the same thing is not taught elsewhere. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." 1 Thess. 4:16.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory."—Matt. 25:31.

"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."—Acts 1:9-11.

There is no symbolism in this; but a plain statement of a literal fact. These witnesses are assured that as they had seen Jesus ascend into heaven, he would in like manner come again. They saw him ascend literally—then he will as literally come as he went. Of this there can be no mistake.

"And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." Rev. 19:14. Who were the armies of heaven that followed him? "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him." Matt. 25:31. Then the *armies of heaven that followed him were the holy angels that came with him*. See also Matt. 16:27.

We have seen that while the disciples beheld him going, or ascending up, a cloud received him out of their sight. He shall so come as they saw him go into heaven. Then he will come in the clouds. "And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matt. 24:30. "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." Mark 13:26. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him." Rev. 1:7.

Then, if authority can establish any thing, the statement in the vision of John, relative to the coming of Christ, is made out. He will come; and the armies, or angels of heaven, will come with him. And he was received by, and went up in, a *cloud* and he will come in the clouds. We have these things in Revelation fully corroborated by other witnesses. Then they are true—literally true.

(To be continued)