

# THE BANNER OF TRUTH

*"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth" (Ps. 60:4)*

Volume 35

January 1998

Number 12

## The Pillars in the Heavenly Temple

*"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out" (Rev. 3:12).*

Here is a promise from the reigning Christ to the uncensured Philadelphian church, and to all who through faith seek to overcome the world. The Philadelphians had kept His Word and had not denied His Name (v. 10). He warns them, however, that the proof of their faith was not yet over, but that a time was approaching which would further try it. In this prospect, they are exhorted to "hold fast" that which they have, that no man take their crown (v. 11). Then follows the incentive of the heavenly pillar, together with that of the threefold inscription set forth in the latter part of verse 12, to impel them--and us--to "stand fast in the faith," and "having done all, to stand" (I Cor. 16:13; Eph. 6:13).

**The Inevitable Warfare.** Thus, Christ's reward for faithfulness is not immunity in this life from, but strength in, trial and conflict. ("Because thou hast kept the Word of My patience," He declared, "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth"--v. 10). However mature and advanced may be the believer's experience of grace, it is never lifted above the possibility of temptation. As long as we are in the world there will be forces warring against us. We shall have to fight our worst selves and the tendencies which tempt us to prefer the visible to the unseen, and the present to the future. There is always the need to struggle, even for the most mature, if we would keep what we have. The treasure will be filched from slack hands; the crown will be stricken from a slumbering head. So it is not inappropriate that the promise to this church--which received no rebuke from the Lord--should be couched in the usual terms, "to him that overcometh." The conclusion to be drawn is the solemn and simple one that the faith-life is always a conflict, even to the end.

**The Incentive for Victory.** As an incentive to keep the faith, standing fast in Him (I Th. 3:8), the enthroned Master held before the embattled saints in Philadelphia--and all His brethren in the world--the prize of our caption--the experience of being made a pillar in the temple of God. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out." It would appear that the two clauses in this commitment are closely connected. In the second one, the metaphor is dropped, and the point of the figure is brought out more clearly. Among other things, a pillar is a natural emblem of stability and permanence. Thus, the poet speaks of men who "are bot-tomed on the basis of faith, mounting up with the clear shaft of a shining life, and having their persevering tops garlanded about, according to God's promise, 'I will give thee a crown of life.'" That idea of stability--of permanence, of fixedness--is the

one that is prominent in the metaphor here, it would appear.

**The Meaning of the Figure.** While the general notion is that of stability and permanence, let us not forget that it is permanence and stability in a certain direction, for the promised pillar is "in the temple of My God." It will be recalled that elsewhere in Scripture the present relation of the saints to God is set forth under a similar figure. "Ye are the temple of the living God," says Paul (II Cor. 6:16); again, "In whom ye also are build-ed together for a habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22). In that great Word which is the foundation of all such symbols, the Lord Jesus Himself declared, "We will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (Jn. 14:23). Thus, the individual believer and the community of all such are, even here and now, the dwelling-place of God. While there are ideas of dignity and grace attaching to the metaphor of the pillar, the underlying meaning of it is substantially that the individual souls of redeemed persons shall be themselves parts of, and collectively shall constitute, the temple of God in the heavens.

This book of the Apocalypse has several points of view in regard to that great symbol. It speaks, for instance, of there being "no temple therein" (Rev. 21:22), by which is meant the cessation of all material and external worships such as belong to earth. It speaks also of God and the Lamb as Themselves being "the Temple thereof" (ibid.). Here we have the converse idea that not only may we think of the redeemed community as dwelling in God and Christ, but God and Christ as dwelling in the redeemed community. the promise, then, is of a thrilling consciousness that God is in us, a deeper realization of His Presence, a fuller communication of His grace, a closer touch of Him, far beyond anything that we can conceive of on earth, and yet being the continuation and the completion of the earthly experiences of those in whom God dwells by their faith, their love, and their obedience.

**The Prospect of Enlargement.** We have nothing to say about the new capacities for consciousness of God which may come to redeemed souls when the veils of flesh and sense, and the absorption in the present drop away. We have nothing to say, because we know nothing about the new manifestations and more intimate touches which may correspond to these new capacities. There are vibrations of sounds too rapid or too slow for our ears as at present organized to catch. But whether these be too shrill or too deep to be heard, if the ear were more sensitive there would be sound where there is silence, and music in the waste places.

So with the new organs, new capacities, there will be a new and deeper sense of the Presence of God. And utterances of His lips too profound to be caught by us now, or too clear and high to be apprehended by our limited sense, will then thunder into melody and with clear notes sound His praise. There are rays of light in the spectrum, at both ends of it, as yet not perceptible to human eyes. But then "in Thy light shall we see light" flaming higher and deeper than we can do now (Ps. 36:9). We dwell in God here if we dwell in Christ, and we dwell in Christ if He dwell in us, by faith and love. But in the heavens the indwelling

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# THE BANNER OF TRUTH

(ISSN 1089024)

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Requested donation to pay for actual cost of publication, \$7.50 per year

Sent Free for Three Months upon Request

Periodicals, Gary, IN 464

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## Christ's Appearances and Their Effects

"Now once in the end of the world hath He *appeared* to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9:26). "Christ is" entered "into Heaven itself, now to *appear* in the presence of God for us" (v. 24). "Unto them that look for Him shall He *appear* the second time without sin unto salvation" (v. 28).

As can be seen from the paragraph above, there are three significant appearances of Christ mentioned in the Hebrews 9 text and all three are viewed by the Apostle as having an absolutely indispensable bearing on the salvation of men. Two of the appearances occur on earth, and one is occurring before the Father in Heaven. One appearance has already been completed and the great redemptive work associated with that appearance has been accomplished by the Lord Jesus. The appearance in Heaven is presently in progress where Christ's intercessory and mediatorial work are currently being carried out by the Savior. Christ's second and final appearance on earth is yet to occur at a time which the Father has "set within His own authority" (Acts 1:7, ASV).

Let us consider now the vital significance to us of each of

these three appearances of the Savior. Each appearance is associated with distinct accomplishments by Christ and each produces its own marvelous *effect* and conveys its own particular *benefit* to men. We are speaking of effects and benefits which are spiritually substantive and vitally utilitarian to those who are living and walking by faith.

**The Effect of His First Coming.** (This coming, or appearance, includes, of course, the days of His flesh, His death, burial, and resurrection.) The primary purpose for Christ's first appearance was to put away sin, to condemn sin in the flesh, and to inaugurate the firstfruits of the "great salvation" (Heb. 2:3) that shall find its completed fruition and consummation in the world to come. Without the first coming of Christ there would be no basis for Christ's intercession for the saints in the present time and there would be no preparedness, on the part of men, for entrance into the world to come.

**The Effect of the Appearance before the Father.** "He ever liveth to make intercession for" us (Heb. 7:25; cf. Rom. 8:34). "And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (I Jn. 2:1). Our relationship now with the living God can be one of delightful constancy because there is presently a "Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5). Ignorance, and especially deliberate neglect of, this Mediator will result in men making shipwreck of the faith (I Tim. 1:19).

Christ's present appearance in the Presence of God for us ensures that "the work" that He "finished" (Jn. 17:4) in this world (and particularly on the Cross) shall not be in vain. For it was "by His own blood" that "He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12).

**The Effect of Christ's Second Coming.** (We are speaking here of that effect for the reconciled ones.) At Christ's second coming faith will be blessedly exchanged for sight; it shall not, however, be the limited sight of these mortal eyes, but rather it shall be sight that is associated with newness and expanded perception. We shall then be invested with our new bodies, with new eyes, and with new and greatly enlarged capacities for involvement in and enjoyment of the resurrection life in the world to come. This shall come to pass when "this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality" (I Cor. 15:54; see also vv. 51-53). Thus, in the present time, Christ's second coming produces in believing men and women *the effect of purifying hope* (cf. I Jn. 3:3).

*The Effect of Transformation.* Christ's second coming shall produce a wonderful transformation in those who are living by faith. As it is written, "when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (I Jn. 3:2). And again, "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we "also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4). And again, "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (II Th. 1:10). This transformation shall take effect when, at His coming, the Lord Jesus Christ "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:21).

*The Effect of Change of Residence.* Christ's coming again the second time shall effect a blessed change of habitat and residence for the saints of the Most High God. "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: *and so shall we ever be with the Lord*" (I Th. 4:17). The Savior Himself promised, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; *that where I am, there ye may be also*" (Jn. 14:3).

Let us, then, consider well these appearances of the Savior and give place to their intended effects in our hearts. --Editor

## 1998 Renewal to be in Crown Point, Indiana!

July 28-30

# The Coming of the Lord!!

The ninth annual **Refreshing Waters Renewal** is scheduled to be held at **First Christian Church in Crown Point, Indiana**. David Maddack is the minister there. The general theme of the three day gathering will be *The Coming of the Lord*. The exact dates of the coming Renewal are July 28-30, 1998.

Some of the subjects to be dealt with in the coming Renewal are as follows: The Fact of His Coming (Acts 1:11; Jn. 14:3), Looking for His Coming (Heb. 9:28; Tit. 2:13), Coming in Power and Glory (Mt. 16:27; Mk. 13:26; Lk. 9:26), When He Shall Appear (Col. 3:4; I Jn. 3:2), The Response of the Lost (Rev. 1:7; Rev. 6:15-16), Our Gathering Together unto Him (II Th. 2:1), The Passing of the Natural Order (II Pet. 3:10-14), The Necessity of Readiness (Mt. 24:44; 25:10), His Reward Will be With Him (Mt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12), He Will Come Quickly (Rev. 3:11; Rev. 22:7, 12, 20), The Reapers (Mt. 13:39-43; 24:31; Mk. 13:27), The Wise and Foolish Virgins (Mt. 25:1-13), Waiting for His Son from Heaven (I Th. 1:9-10), The Resurrection of the Dead (Jn. 5:28-29), The Judgment of the Wicked (II Tim. 4:1; I Pet. 4:5; II Th. 1:7-9).

On this wonderful theme there will be 13 to 16 powerful messages, 12 to 15 personal testimonies, and at least three audience discussions. By the Lord's grace these gatherings will prove to be very profitable to the nourishment and sustaining of our faith.

For further information you may contact: Michael Blakely, 4437 Chatham Drive, Brownsburg, IN 46112-8531, (317) 293-9745. David Maddack's address and phone number are as follows: First Christian Church, 495 S. Indiana, Crown Point, IN 46307, (219) 663-1853. We will supply more details as they become available to us. We urge all of our readers who are within travelling distance of these meetings to plan to be in attendance there next July. --*Editor*

## LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

If you appreciate what we are doing in *The Banner of Truth*, we earnestly ask that you write us and let us hear from you. This is not intended to be a solicitation for money, although we would take this opportunity to say that *The Banner* is almost entirely supported by the brothers and sisters at Independence Hill Christian Church. If you are able to send some monetary support, that would be greatly appreciated. But if not, then we would ask that you would simply write us to tell us how you are making use of the paper. You may write us at: The Banner of Truth, 7903 Hendricks Street, Merrillville, IN 46410-5023. The E-mail address is: editor@banner.org. --*Editor*

## Audio Recordings Available!!

As of October 1997 brother Jason Sankowski, and his wife Angie, will be overseeing the recording, duplicating, and mailing out of audio tapes of the messages preached at Independence Hill Christian Church. For those interested in receiving audio recordings of the sermons ministered at this assembly, you may

## Divers Musings for the Times

Living is a piece of earth; doctrine is a piece of heaven.  
--*Martin Luther*

The Lord Jesus had to *lose* something in order for us to *gain* something (cf. II Cor. 8:9). --*Given O. Blakely*

Obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ is the determining factor of our spirituality, *not how we feel*.

"For he that is dead is freed from sin" (Rom. 6:7). This is objective reality. Our task is to implement this into daily living.  
--*Fred O. Blakely*

What was addressed to Archippus in the first century may be rightly directed to all ministers of the Word: "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it" (Col. 4:17).

*The tissues of the life to be  
We weave with colors all our own.  
And in the field of destiny  
We reap as we have sown.*

"Self-indulgence in food is not a conspicuous mark of sainthood." "We scarcely ever fast at all, and are not famous for our prayer lives. Do you suppose that is why all is not well with most of our souls?" --*Fred P. Thompson, Jr.*

**A Vital Distinction.** "If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom. 7:16-17). We are to completely distinguish between ourselves and our sins, "renouncing the latter while claiming immunity to condemnation for the former."

**The Law of Faith.** If we are to live unto God, we must once and for all have done with the law--any law, except that of faith (cf. Rom. 3:27)--as the way to spiritual life. All men are prone to revert to the law principle as a means of spiritual life. Life unto God is sustained through faith in Christ--centering on who He is and what He has done for us.

**The Great Tribulation.** "The great tribulation" (Rev. 7:14, ASV) "is not a single episode awaiting the church somewhere down toward the end of time." It is "a synonym for the rough and rocky road which all the saints of God, with bruised heel, have ever trod as we journey through this vale of tears." Jesus said to His disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33).

**Crucified through Weakness.** Our Lord was "crucified through weakness," yet He lives by the power of God (II Cor. 13:4). Christ's weakest moment here in this world was, from this perspective, His strongest moment. And with us as well, the most potent and effectual times in the kingdom of God are often those in which weakness is felt to be most apparent. "For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God . . . " God will not permit His purpose to be accomplished through man's strength and ingenuity. --*Expanded from Given O. Blakely*

## (Pillars, Concluded from Page 1)

shall be more perfect, and transcend all that we know now.

**The Element of Steadfastness.** The special point in regard to which that perfection is expressed in our text is to be kept prominent. "He shall go no more out." Permanence and stability, and uninterruptedness in the communion and consciousness of an indwelling God, is a main element in the glory and blessedness of that future life. Stability in any fashion comes as a blessed hope to us, who know the curse of constant change, and are tossing on the unquiet waters of life. It is blessed to think of a region where the seal of permanence will be set on all delights, and our blessedness will be like the bush in the desert--burning and yet not consumed. But the highest form of that blessedness is the thought of stable, uninterrupted, permanent communion with God and consciousness of His dwelling in us.

The contrast forces itself upon us between the equable and unvarying communion and ups and downs of the most uniform Christian life here--today thrilling in every nerve with the sense of God, tomorrow dead and careless. Sometimes the bay is filled with flashing waters that leap in the sunshine; sometimes, when the tide is out, there is only a long stretch of gray and oozy mud. It shall not always be so. Like the lands of the equator, where the difference between midsummer and midwinter is scarcely perceptible, either in length of day or in degree of temperature, that future will be a calm continuance, a uniformity which is not monotony, and a stability which does not exclude progress.

**The Blessed Promise to the Victor.** I cannot but bring into contrast with that great promise, "He shall go no more out," an incident of the night in which our Lord was betrayed. Christ and the Twelve were in the upper room, and He poured out His heart unto them, and their hearts burned within them. But "they went out into the Mount of Olives" (Mt. 26:30)--He to Gethsemane and to Calvary; Judas to betray and Peter to deny; all to toil and suffer, and sometimes to waver in their faith. "He shall go no more out." Eternal glory and unbroken communion is the blessed promise to the victor who is made by Christ "a pillar in the temple of My God." What a precious promise it is, indeed! Surely it ought to constrain us to be strong in the faith and to put to flight the adversary, as it is designed by our glorified Head to do. ---Adapted and Supplemented by Fred O. Blakely from Alexander Maclaren, "The Victor's Life-Names," in *Expositions of Holy Scripture* (1910).

"May God bless you abundantly in your ministry. Your obedience to and furtherment of the truth are so greatly appreciated." --Lynn M. LaMar, from our *Internet Guestbook*.

"To worship with God's people in the church is not optional but imperative, and watching TV services is no substitute, except perhaps for 'shut-ins'." --Frank E. Gaebelein

"Fading is the worldling's pleasure---  
All his boasted pomp and show.  
Solid joys and lasting treasure,  
None but Zion's children know."

"No generation of Christians has ever possessed more Bibles than ours. 'According to a 1978 survey,' *Time Magazine* reports, 'the average American home has four Bibles, and virtually every family has one Bible.' Yet in this time of multiple translations of Scripture, the average church member lacks an intelligent, ordered knowledge of God's Word." --Frank E. Gaebelein

## "Satisfied"

When I shall wake on that fair morn of morns,  
After whose dawning never night returns,  
And with whose glory day eternal burns,  
I shall be satisfied.

When I shall see Thy glory face to face.  
When in Thine arms Thou wilt Thy child embrace,  
When Thou shalt open all Thy stores of grace,  
I shall be satisfied.

When I shall meet with those whom I have loved.  
Clasp in my arms the long-removed,  
And find how faithful Thou hast proved,  
I shall be satisfied.

When this vile body shall arise again,  
Purged by Thy power from every taint and stain,  
Delivered from all weakness and all pain,  
I shall be satisfied.

When I shall gaze upon the face of Him  
Who for me died, with eye no longer dim,  
And praise Him in the everlasting hymn,  
I shall be satisfied.

When I shall call to mind the long, long past,  
With clouds and storms and shadows overcast,  
And know that I am saved and blessed at last,  
I shall be satisfied.

When every enemy shall disappear,  
The unbelief, the darkness and the fear;  
When Thou shalt smooth the brow and wipe the  
tear,  
I shall be satisfied.

When every vanity shall pass away,  
And all be real, all without decay,  
In that sweet dawning of the cloudless day,  
I shall be satisfied.

--H. Bonar

**Divine Influences.** "The influences which impel a man calmly and trustingly to submit to God's all-wise but often inscrutable appointments are not human, but Divine. There is nothing in mere earthly considerations that is at all calculated to inspire this patience. It is only as we bring the realities of eternity to bear upon our present experiences that we become lifted up to a higher realm, and are enabled patiently to endure." --Source Uncertain

"Even the Devil does not care if one searches and 'learns' the Scriptures, if he can succeed in causing him to give them a false interpretation. The power of Scripture lies in its true meaning and contemporary significance; hide those elements, and you neutralize the power." --Source Uncertain

"God is concerned for the consolation of believers, as well as for their sanctification (Heb. 6:18). He would have His children walk 'in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 9:31)." --Source Uncertain

# About God's Transcendence

By Dave Maddack

*"Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. 57:15).*

Some people hold to a view of God's transcendence that all but eliminates the possibility of His intelligible communication to mankind. Rather than seeking to identify them, we will seek to identify these thoughts, and to respond with Scripture and reason.

They will view God as "wholly other;" that is, God is so completely unlike mankind as to be incapable of communicating to us. God is of heaven and Man is of earth. This view shuts God out of real involvement in His creation. The effects of this teaching can be seen, for example, in Paul Tillich who wrote that, "no definition of the contents of revelation is possible." In other words, nothing can really be said about God, because He is so beyond human beings. That statement, as has been repeatedly noted, is itself an attempt to define the contents of revelation. Perhaps he should have said that, "no definition of the contents of revelation is possible, except mine." Positions like this one are self-refuting; their very affirmations presuppose the opposite of what they are affirming. It is self-referentially incoherent, on the level of "I never tell the truth."

But what of the "otherness" of God? We must seek to move away from the extremism of the "wholly other" group to a more Biblically accurate view of God: the God Who may not be "wholly other," but Who is definitely the "holy other." Some areas of investigation, not all of which could be addressed here, would be: Has the transcendent aspect of God's nature been itself transcended by the very act of the Incarnation? How has this divide in history affected what is taught in the Old Covenant Scriptures? How has this Supreme Act of Immanence (nearness, presence) affected the understanding of Transcendence? Did Jesus and the Apostles emphasize the "otherness" of God, like the Neo-orthodox theologians do? Let us now examine a key text.

*"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways M ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8-9).*

This is a significant text for the consideration of God's transcendence. As an initial observation, it is the same word for "thoughts" in both verse 7 and 8. When the LORD says that His thoughts are not "your" thoughts He is not speaking of all humans, at least not in the context of the passage. Notice that it is the thoughts of the wicked man, of the unrighteous man, to whom the Lord is comparing His own thoughts. God contrasting Himself and the wicked man on the matter of morality, not intellectual capacity. This is important to note, for some might seek to use this text to argue for the impossibility of knowing God.

As an application of this truth, we could note that we are all

under Adam, and left to ourselves have no means of knowing God. Thus, His thoughts are far higher than our thoughts. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14). But in context, God's emphasis in Isaiah 55 is not on His "unknowability," instead it is actually on the fact that He can be known and that man will be held accountable for his lack of response to Him. God could not hold mankind morally accountable if His holy character was incommunicable. The "wholly other"-camp is right to affirm the great Divinity of Yahweh. They are right to remind the "God is my buddy"-camp of His augustness, of His awesomeness. They are wrong to push that "otherness" to the point of obscurity. To overly "transcendize" God is to veer toward deism, where God is the absentee factory owner; (He, as it were, pushed the "ON" button, then left to Florida with neither phone nor fax).

If someone would want to cite vv. 8-9 to argue that God cannot be known, surely they must mean only that God could not be known in His fullness. Because to argue that He could not be known *at all* has two major problems. *First*, that someone would try and argue that mankind cannot "know" God and then base that argument on what they "know" Isaiah 55:8-9 teaches is contradictory. God could not be teaching here that humans are incapable of understanding Him at all, for here He is imparting understanding to us. *Second*, v. 6 commands the pursuit of God by mankind, and promises that He can be found. *Additionally*, v. 11 promises that God's Word will accomplish His divine purpose. This, at the very least, includes His purpose in even having this very passage written by Isaiah. The text presumes to be understandable; the text claims to be spoken by God. This shows that though "His thoughts are above [human] thoughts" He is able to overcome this distance and to communicate to us effectively.

How do we know that God said it and that the text is not merely the religious reflections of ancient holy men? Two brief arguments are predictive prophecy and literary style. *First*, when the prophets would say that the LORD had said thus-and-so, then it would actually happen that way, the people could be assured that the LORD had indeed spoken, for the mere man could not have made the prediction. *Second*, the literary style of the prophets is bold and declarative. There is no "I think that . . .," or "It is my opinion that the LORD would say [such-and-such]." Isaiah is not a religious speculator. The very life of the prophet hinges upon the truthfulness of what God had told him to say. What great faith the prophets must have had to endure the abuses heaped upon them simply for accurately relating the prophecy of the LORD.

Yahweh (Jehovah) is a revealing God. He revealed His intentions concerning the destruction of Sodom to Abraham (Gen. 18:17ff). And He even was willing to change His immediate intentions for the sake of ten righteous in Sodom based on Abraham's appeal (v. 32). Ask Moses if He thought that Yahweh was "wholly other" or completely transcendent. "And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend . . ." (Exod. 33:11). As for Moses' communication back to God, consider the deep passion of Moses' bold petitions (Exod. 32:31-32, 33:12ff, Num. 16:15, 22, etc.). We are told through Amos that, "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (3:7).

Daniel chapter two heavily emphasized that Yahweh is the Revealer of secrets. When Nebuchadnezzar asked the Chaldean magicians to tell him not only the interpretation of his dream but also the very dream itself, they sided with the Neo-orthodox,

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## (Transcendence, Continued from Page Five)

that is, they appealed to the transcendent nature of "the gods."

The astrologers answered the king, "There is not a man on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, *and they do not live among men*" (Dan. 2:10-11, NIV).

But Daniel and his three companions prayed to the LORD for wisdom, and God gave him the answer (vv. 19-23). Daniel praised Him as the revealer of secrets (v. 22). Later when Daniel was brought before the king, he noted that no man could have known these things but "there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets" (vv. 27-28). The preceding passages demonstrate that God's actions in history sometimes show in the very action itself that He can clearly communicate to mankind. Though there is much that we cannot know, we must acknowledge with the ancient king that Yahweh is a "God of gods, a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets" (v. 47). God can be known.

Was God transcendent in the Garden? If we define transcendence as being mutually exclusive of immanence, then, no - God is clearly involved with His children. If we define transcendence as that aspect of God's nature whereby He is beyond the created order, where He is the Creator and is not at all dependent for His being upon the creation, then, yes--God is not contained with the natural order. God is transcendent but is able to curb, control, (cloak? - Gen. 18), His otherness in a way so that He can communicate intelligibly with finite humans (Exod. 33:21-23).

Even in the Garden of Eden, we see dialogue. God is not transcendent like some oxygen leak on the Mir space station, where the gas escapes into the cosmos never to be recaptured. God is not transcendent like the unreachable Andromeda galaxy. He is not some unexplored region, inaccessible to humans. He is a Person. And as Divine Person, His core essence is beyond us. But as Person, He can choose to descend and to communicate with us using an appropriate means and level of thought transmission. Let us not be too hasty in denigrating either thought or language. Both of them originated in Him. We are able to think because God thinks. We have language because the LORD has language. He used both of these things even before mankind existed. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion . . ." (Gen. 1:26). Again, even before human intelligence, there is language, communication (God to the Word: Father to Son), and thought. As a side issue, I am not too certain that deep thought and language can even be readily distinguished. It is significant that the pre-Incarnate Son is "the Word," and not "the Color" or "the Sound" or "the Feeling" or "the Emotion."

It seems that some want to keep God as the 2nd grade owner of an aquarium. She talks to her fish, but they do not understand. They "know" her only as some bizarre, "transcendent," force that feeds them and scoops out their dead. Perhaps some fish speculate about the *mysterium tremendum* that they experience when her shadow looms near their world. The primitive fish may seek to offer gifts to placate the angry god that has failed (forgot) to feed them. Perhaps others notice that their god is "totally other"; there is no intelligible communication from their god, only unexplained deeds in their history. Still others probably speculate that their god was once like them, and they teach that some day the faithful will each one become like the heavenly *Ichthus* and have worlds (aquariums) of their very own to populate.

Clearly there is a problem in this comparison; humans are not guppies, and God is not in the 2nd grade. If the preceding

scenario was an accurate representation of the human circumstance, then perhaps the various "fishy" theologies would have merit. But it is not accurate. To be so, the girl would have to have created the fish in her own image; she would have to be of a higher order of existence than they. (Of course, as a human, she is "higher," but is not sufficiently beyond the fish to create them.) The fish would have to have some degree of reason, of emotion, of "creatorship" about them. She would have to have intelligently communicated with certain members of their race throughout their history in actions and accompanied by explanations. Action without explanation is only confusion. Further, the little girl would have to be three persons in one essence; one of those persons would have to have entered into the tank to actually become one of them and testify then of the god outside of the aquarium.

Obviously the original scenario is terribly inadequate a picture of our situation. Likewise, the proposals of the *ichthian* theologians are terribly inadequate. Their proposals might be acceptable alternatives if it was not for contradictions raised by the record of God's intervention in world history. That the One on the outside of the tank could and did communicate to the highest of His physical creatures underlies the whole of both testaments.

If the preceding comparisons are offensive, bear in mind that the offense comes from what they deny and teach, not from the construct of the parable. It is their teachings that reduce both God and man. It reduces God, because a God outside of the creation that cannot communicate with His creatures is far less than a God that can and does have fellowship with them; and it reduces man, because humanity has been given far more information than these misguided theologians would allow.

Now what of the impact of the incarnation of the Word (Jn. 1:1, 14)? Paul was able to encourage the brethren at Philippi that they were to have the same "mind" as Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5). And later in the same letter he was able to write, "let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." (Phil. 3:15). In other words, any of that congregation that were growing toward maturity in Christ could (and should) have this mind, this understanding. In addition, if they did not have this correct thinking, God would even show them the right thoughts to have. Paul taught not only that Christ, to some extent, could be known, but even that the believers were expected to grow in their knowledge of and likeness to Him.

Next we need to consider a passage from the New Testament Scriptures that might be taken to teach the inability of mankind to "know God." "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33). Here Paul acknowledges the unsearchableness of God's ways and yet the Spirit, through Paul, is actually revealing some of those previously hidden areas.

We can be quick to affirm that ALL of God has not been made known. We know that God could not reveal Himself to us completely in our present form. For as the Lord told Moses upon his request to see His glory, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live" (Exod. 33:20). And even in the glory to come it seems that we will be unable of truly comprehending God in *all* His infinite richness and glory. But this does not necessitate that God is incapable of revealing to us some of His attributes, some of His thoughts, and some of His ways. Paul affirms that God's judgments and ways are beyond us, and yet, again, he is showing us some of those very judgments and ways. Though Paul is affirming that the fullness of

**(Transcendence, Continued on Page Eight)**

## Continuing in the Son

*And now, little children, abide in Him”  
(I Jn. 2:28).*

Because of the rampant carelessness today among religious devotees concerning their relationship with the Father and the Son, it is necessary that we make the following observations. It will become evident to the sincere reader of John's first epistle, as well as all the other apostolic writings, that honest self-examination and earnest effort, coupled with a love for God and His Word, are absolutely indispensable if men and women are to arrive safely in the world to come.

**The Indispensable Involvement with God.** “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But *if we walk in the light*, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (I Jn. 1:6-7).

*Abiding, dwelling, remaining, continuing, walking* are all *active words* that appear again and again in this epistle in one form or another. They are words which realistically express and depict the nature of things as they pertain to the people of God while they are yet in this world. They all speak of the moment-by-moment *deliberate involvement* of believers in Christ with the God of their salvation.

In the new covenant times (from the Day of Pentecost forward) the state of things, as it pertains to men, is as follows: God has sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (I Jn. 4:10, 14), Christ has put away the sins of the world by the sacrifice of Himself (Jn. 1:29; I Jn. 2:2; Heb. 9:26), and the Holy Spirit has been sent forth into the earth and into men's hearts to bear witness to the truth (of what both the Father and the Son have done salvationally) (Jn. 14:17; 15:26; 16:7-11, 13-15; Gal. 4:6). It only remains for the unbelieving to repent and obey the gospel, and for believing men and women to devote themselves to abiding, dwelling, continuing, etc., “in the Son, and in the Father” (I Jn. 2:24). This is in order that they may continue to be partakers (Heb. 3:14) of what God has already done in their behalf salvationally.

Let us underscore the need for this deliberate and constant abiding on our part by making this observation. We do not live in a vacuum, and therefore we are not immune to the many assaults upon our faith, nor to the consequent erosion of godliness and moral virtue, which inevitably result from living in this present evil world. From this can be seen the absolute need for daily succor and renewal (cf. II Cor. 4:16; 6:2). The continually tearing away at, and tearing down of, of our faith makes it absolutely essential that our faith be regularly built up again (cf. Jude 20-21), or else that faith will fail (cf. Lk. 22:32).

And we are not in paradise yet (as the realized eschatology people ignorantly and hopelessly affirm). We are still housed in “the body of this death” (Rom. 7:24), and we are yet journeying through the realm of “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2). We are, bless the Lord, on our way to that resplendent domain of everlasting safety in the world to come, but we are not there yet!

**The Effort is Not One-Sided.** Words such as *abiding, dwelling, walking, continuing, etc.*, are words that call for the putting forth of effort on the part of men, but the effort is not one-sided. Men are exhorted in Scripture to “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16, 25), and to “walk in the light” (Isa. 2:5; I Jn. 1:7), but

God has also said, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them” (II Cor. 6:16). We are exhorted to *abide* in the Son several times in this epistle, but not without the help of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit *dwelling* in us. The Anointing is abiding in us, so long as we let Him so abide (cf. I Jn. 2:24), and, in like manner, the Father and the Son are abiding in us as well (cf. Jn. 14:23).

Walking in the light calls for deliberateness and resolution on our part. It implies motion and action that is Godward, and it implies a preference and love for the light on the part of the one who is walking. The light spoken of here is *not* the light of legal requirements, but rather the light of what has been accomplished in our behalf salvationally in the gospel. It is “the light of the glorious gospel of Christ” (II Cor. 4:4)!

**The Necessity of Abiding.** “He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked” (I Jn. 2:6).

Abiding, or continuing, in Christ is of the most critical nature if men are to be accepted of God. The necessity of abiding is entirely consistent with the new covenant, in which God's laws are written upon the hearts of men and women. God's laws are definitely inscribed upon the heart, and yet men must be good stewards of their hearts and of the Divine writing recorded thereupon. They must permit God's thoughts and His laws to properly affect their hearts in the face of the many distractions, afflictions, and vicissitudes that this life will certainly bring upon them.

The *once-saved-always-saved* perversion would never have stood a chance for wide-spread acceptance among men in the days of the Apostles, because of their consistent representation and proclamation of the nature of things, as they most certainly are, in the new covenant. The *abiding, dwelling, remaining, continuing*, spoken of here in this epistle, and elsewhere in Scripture, are never assumed, or taken for granted, but rather the Apostles are continually exhorting the brethren to examine themselves to make certain that they are *in fact* abiding in the Son. And where men are not continuing by faith in the Father and the Son, they have no part nor lot in God's salvation.

**Some Involvements of this Abiding.** Abiding in the light entails dwelling, remaining, standing, continuing in the knowledge, by faith, of what God has done in their behalf in order to save them. It means that the abiding ones have been enduring, and are continuing to patiently endure through the passage of time, with all of its trials and vicissitudes. They are enduring with their confidence in, and love for, the Lord God firmly in possession. They are persevering with the love of the truth, and the love of the brethren in firm grasp as well.

“But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes” (I Jn. 2:11). Where men are walking in darkness, this evidences that there is a preference on their part for the darkness. It also means that, regardless of what they confess, they do not perceive the direction in which they are going (as God see things), and they are woefully bereft of the knowledge that God accepts them. And so long as they continue to walk in darkness, God does not and cannot accept them. He would have to compromise His Godhood in order to receive them while they are yet in an unbelieving state.

**Strength Resulting from this Abiding.** “I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one” (I Jn. 2:14).

If brothers and sisters in Christ are strong, it is owing entirely to the fact that the Word of God is abiding in them, not to any fleshly strength or merit that they may possess. With the

Word of God abiding in us, and our hearts' devotion being duly affected by it, we are enabled to overcome the wicked one. This demonstrates that Satan's power lies primarily in the realm of seduction and temptation. Wherever the Word of God is abiding in men and women, the Devil is rendered powerless to tempt men to sin, and seduce them away from the glorious gospel of Christ. Let us, therefore, continually take to ourselves "the shield of faith, wherewith" we "shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6:16).

**Abiding Forever, the Preeminent Consideration.** "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I Jn. 2:17). *Abiding forever* must be the preeminent consideration with us, and that which continues to draw us in the heavenward direction. This is a matter that is never to be assumed, or taken for granted.

The preaching of our Lord, in the days of His flesh, had the effect of creating a consciousness of, and a fervent desire for, eternal life in those that heard. It will be recalled that the rich young ruler asked the Lord the question: "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" (Mt. 19:16; Mk. 10:17; Lk. 18:18).

Yet in our day, alas, it appears that there is very little thought given to everlasting life and to the matter of abiding forever in the Presence of God and of the Lamb! This is a case-in-point demonstration of how that "truth is fallen in the street" (Isa. 59:14), and of how that the "two witnesses," spoken of in the Revelation (symbolically representing truth's effect or lack of effect in the earth), have been slain (ch. 11:7-10). There is little or no consciousness of "the life" "which is to come" (I Tim. 4:8) among the masses of men because the gospel is not being preached. "Religion" of every kind is definitely flourishing in many parts of the world, but not the "pure religion, and undefiled" (Jas. 1:27), and not "the faith of God's elect" (Tit. 1:1).

**The Anointing's Indispensable Assistance to Us.** "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth" (I Jn. 2: 18-21).

*Antichrist* is essentially a satanic *religious phenomenon*, not a *political one*, (in spite of what is almost universally taught today in the churches). Antichrist consists in a fierce endeavor, on the part of the Devil, to seduce (cf. I Jn. 2:26) men and women away from the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. Again, let us affirm that antichrist does not coerce or threaten people to depart from Christ, but rather seeks to allure or seduce them away.

The anointing, however, imparts to *believing* men and women a knowledge of "all things" (I Jn. 2:20), that is, an inward conversancy with all things pertaining to life and godliness (II Pet. 1:3) and the necessary wisdom for arriving safely in the world to come. The anointing, which assists us with the discernment of the truth, is our protection against antichrists (I Jn. 2:18).

The Holy Spirit is this anointing, of which John writes, and He is *continuing* in us as we continue to *abide* in Christ. His ministry to us enables us to perceive how that the truth is all interrelated. He assists us in making the personal application of the truth to our hearts sufficiently so that we are enabled to abide in Christ, and not be seduced away from Him. Men can-

not abide in Christ unless they know the truth and love the truth, along with comprehending somewhat of the truth's implications and bearing upon living.

**The Exhortation to Abide in Christ.** "And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (I Jn. 2:28).

The whole reason for abiding in Christ is not merely to have God's blessings in the present time (with that being the end of the matter), but it is rather so that we may not be ashamed of Christ when He appears the second time. It is only as we abide in Him that we may earnestly and rightfully anticipate the Savior's coming.

The Lord has promised to us *eternal life* (I Jn. 2:25), which consists in a ceaseless knowledge of, and intimacy with, the Father and the Son (Jn. 17:3). But, alas, there are myriads of "church" people who have contented themselves with having hope in Christ only in this life (I Cor. 15:19). In closing, let us affirm here that any hope, which is not set firmly upon the promised eternal life in the world to come and in the ages to come, is spurious and it will not save men (cf. Rom. 8:24). As it is written, "Hope that is seen is not hope." --*Editor*

### The Summer Land

If we who sing a parting song  
Have mortal meeting never,  
There is a journey, short or long,  
Where summer lasts forever.  
All hail, O fairest land of lands,  
Whose blossoms never wither!  
Although we here unclasp our hands,  
Our feet shall travel thither.

--*T. Tilton.*

### (Transcendence, Concluded from Page Six)

God's mind could not be known, he is at the same time nevertheless declaring a portion of the Divine mind that can be known.

For more detail on the above passage consider Paul's use of the same term, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ . . ." (Eph. 3:8). Here he is using the term in a similar manner; "unsearchable" means that the riches of Christ are inexhaustible in their variety and depth. No one will ever be able to say that they have catalogued, labeled, and shelved for display "the riches of Christ." Similarly, no one will ever be able to claim to have thoroughly explored all of God's judgments and ways, though some of those judgments and ways are indeed known to us.

"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." (I Jn. 5:20). Again, John reminds of the whole point of Scripture, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name" (Jn. 20:31). Clearly an immense opportunity has been given to mankind to seek and to find the Creator God Who invaded our space and time in the person of His Son. With His promise of a successful search, how could we fail? --*Brother Maddack ministers at First Christian Church, 495 S. Indiana Ave., Crown Point, IN 46307*

# Praying in the Holy Spirit

By Given O. Blakely

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. 6:18). "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20).

There is a great deal of folklore promoted today in regard to prayer and the Holy Spirit. There are people that equate praying in the Spirit with unintelligent utterances--even though there is no such affirmation in all of Scripture. Superimposing their tradition upon the Word of God, spiritual bondage has been forced upon those lacking familiarity with the Word and ways of God.

In Scripture, "praying in the Holy Spirit" is related to edification, or "building up yourselves." This process is more associated with the mind and the heart than with the body and its senses. Edification is the result of the clarification of the truth of God. We are edified when the objective of truth is seen, and the Word of God is understood, and, through faith, its relevance to us is comprehended.

Being "built up" involves being made stable; able to stand against the wiles of the devil. It is becoming strong enough to stand against the gales of error, as well as assaults upon our persons, like those experienced by Job. Edification results in being "rooted and grounded" -- that is the express statement of the Spirit Himself (Eph. 4:12-14).

It makes no difference what fanciful arguments are presented to justify the purported reception of "a prayer language," no such affirmation is made in God's Word! Were this practice a pattern for us all, it would have been found in the Lord Jesus, Who is the very embodiment of truth. It is important that men and woman face this truth! If God had wanted to say "prayer language," that is what He would have said. Furthermore, when Paul spoke of "the tongues of men and angels," he was not referring to prayer, but to interpersonal relationships with our peers (I Cor. 13:1ff.).

Praying in the Spirit is praying with "the mind of the Spirit." This occurs when our prayers are uttered with an acute awareness of things as they really are! Such prayers are the result of divine fellowship, walking in the light, and not grieving the Spirit. When men pray "in the Spirit," they are in harmony with their Redeemer, and thus are strengthened by Him. Although they are "built up" by their prayers, it is not their effort that builds them up, but that of the Spirit, with Whom their efforts are in harmony.

Much contemporary prayer is more characterized by the flesh than the Spirit. It is too tainted with this world, and too little influenced by the world to come. Such prayers do not, and cannot, build up the saints!

Notice that those who pray "in the Spirit" are building themselves up "on their most holy faith" -- and faith involves our hearts and minds! It is "the assurance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Things "hoped for" are things perceived! A "conviction" involves the intelligent persuasion of the reality of things beyond the limitation of our senses. You cannot build irrationality upon a rational foundation! You cannot blend thoughtlessness with thought, or mystery with revelation. When we pray in the Spirit, our minds are at their apex; our understanding is at its keenest; and our hearts are most supple!

**Conclusion.** The ministry of the Holy Spirit is an effectual one, accomplishing the good pleasure of our God. Without it, we cannot hope to land safely on that heavenly shore; with it, we will not fail to do so! This is our protection against sinful involvements: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:16-17).

With great energy and aggressiveness, the Spirit seeks for our wills. He lusts, or desires, against the flesh, counteracting its influence with "the powers of the world to come." Those who yield to Him, keeping Christ dominate, and feeding upon His Word, will find themselves no longer dominated by sin. This is a divine commitment: "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." You do well to believe that, depend upon it, and never let it go.

We have only touched the surface of this subject; I have not intended to be thorough. You will, no doubt, recall many additional affirmations of Scripture on this subject, for there are many more. My desire is to impress your heart with the glories of our salvation, and the abundant provision God has given us in Christ Jesus. The child of God, through the Holy Spirit, is given the advantage in the good fight of faith!

It is fitting that we close with an Apostolic admonition. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal.5:25). If our sensitivity to God is the result of the Holy Spirit, then does it not make sense to maintain our lives in His influence. You were made sensitive to sin by the Holy Spirit. The truth of the Gospel registered upon your heart by the Holy Spirit. You obeyed the truth of the Gospel through the Spirit. He has brought you joy, and caused you to abound in hope. The likenesses of Christ that are found in you are His fruit. Why would you not want to walk in the Spirit; to live your life without causing Him grief, or quenching His influence? Take the word into your heart, and God will empower you to fulfill it. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." --406 S. Sergeant, *Joplin, MO 64801*

## Concerning the Millennium

"Neither the teachings of Jesus, nor the sermons and history of Acts, nor the 21 epistles make any allusion to a millennial period to be anticipated at the end of time. Only one short chapter (ch. 20) of the book of Revelation says anything which of itself could be so interpreted. And a study of that chapter in the perspective of the whole of the book will reveal that the millennium mentioned there is not that of popular theory. The fact that the concept is only mentioned in an apocalyptic setting ought of itself to establish the fact that a literal thousand-year era is not to be understood. Researchers have determined that millennialism was first introduced into the early church subsequently to the death of the Apostles, in the period called the sub-apostolic era. Contrary to the claims of ardent millennialists, the doctrine was not by any means with practical unanimity by the churches of the first few centuries." --Russell Boatman

**On the Taking of Human Life.** According to Bible doctrine, "no one can with impunity take human life except by authority or permission of God," i.e., acting as "His servant or executioner." Human life is "a sacred thing, and shall not be taken without authority from Jehovah." The implications of this principle are far-reaching, indeed, and need to be carefully pondered in this day when the principle is so little known and lightly regarded by the masses of religious people. --Source Unknown

# Faith Brings Understanding

By Robert Cobb

*"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear"  
(Heb 11:3 KJV).*

Faith in Christ is the prerequisite to pleasing God. The scriptures are very clear on this vital issue. If we are to properly understand the scriptures, we must first have a heart that has been purified by faith. The natural mind approaches the scriptures from the standpoint of explaining them while the spiritual man looks into the scriptures in order to believe them.

Christ told us in mat 13:19 "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart..." (KJV) hearing the word of God preached is essential to believing but if we do not receive what we have heard then it is swiftly removed from our grasp. This is because we have an enemy that stands ready to distort and confuse anyone who will refuse to believe Christ. Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have. (Luke 8:18 KJV) Christ did not leave the presentation of this vital subject to the theologians; He personally presented the facts of the case in detail so all those who would believe him would be comforted with the promises associated with believing.

We understand because we believe. The natural mind is only concerned with figuring out how things work. It is not enough to approach the scriptures with this mindset. When we expose ourselves to the Word of God we are empowering the Holy Spirit to work in our renewed minds, in order for us to understand the purpose of God. It is only then that we can make proper judgments in our daily walk with Christ.

The truth concerning the creation of the world is very clearly laid out in scripture. Yet there has been no end to the controversy concerning this truth. Instead of men reading the scriptural account and believing it, they have come up with "reasonable" theories, which replace the powerful reality of the Genesis account with a more palatable humanistic approach to creation. Some have even thrown overboard the entire scriptural account for the "big bang" theory. This is evidence of an unbelieving heart that departs from the living God.

The reality of God and Christ will be evident on the judgment day. On that day men will no longer need faith to see the invisible things. The validity of truth will become evident in every person who ever lived. All will stand before the God that created them and shall give an account of the deeds done in the body. Faith will give way to sight. Then, the scoffers will cease their troubling chants of unbelief forevermore. Then, those who believed the record, which God made of His Son, will be given crowns of righteousness that will never fade away.

Faith is not of this world. If we are to be pleasing to God we must believe that He IS and that he will reward all those who seek his face. Faith proceeds from God to all those who will hear his voice. The scripture tells us that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Faiths primary function is to cause us to believe God. Yet today it is all to often thought of as a tool

by which we might receive earthly fulfillment and monetary gain. Faith gives substance to what God has said. It puts teeth in the promises of God and it removes the fear of the tormentor.

Faith delivers us into the realm where all things are possible with God. It properly associates us with the world to come and disassociates us with the present world that is soon to be destroyed. It does not ask us to pretend or assume but rather, it reveals that God has accomplished, in Christ for us and the knowledge of that drives us further than the commandment ever could. --You may E-mail Brother Cobb at [banner@banner.org](mailto:banner@banner.org).

## Considering Abortion?

By Given O. Blakely

Would you consider abortion in the following four situations?

1. There's a preacher and wife who are very, very, poor. They already have 14 kids. Now she finds out she's pregnant with her 15th. They're living in tremendous poverty. Considering their poverty and the excessive world population, would you consider recommending she get an abortion?

2. The father is sick with sniffles, the mother has TB. They have 4 children. the 1st is blind, the 2nd is dead, the 3rd is deaf and the 4th has TB. she finds she's pregnant again. Given the extreme situation, would you consider recommending abortion?

3. A white man raped a 13 year old black girl and she got pregnant. If you were her parents, would you consider recommending abortion?

4. A teenage girl is pregnant. She's not married. Her fiancee is not the father of the baby, and he's very upset. Would you consider recommending abortion?

If you have answered "yes" in any of these situations: In the first case, you have just killed John Wesley, one of the great evangelists of the 19th century. In the second case, you have killed Beethoven. In the third case, you have killed Ethel Waters, the great black gospel singer. If you said yes to the fourth case, you have just declared the murder of Jesus Christ! --You may E-mail brother Blakely at [GivenB@aol.com](mailto:GivenB@aol.com)

### Lofty Ideals

Our safety is in having lofty ideals, and in constant labor to secure their realization. Let the getting of money be a man's ideal, and he will of necessity grow toward the dust; let a man hunger and thirst after the kingdom of God, and he will grow into strength and enjoy an unspeakable peace. --Joseph Parker

### UPWARD AND ONWARD!

We do not believe there is any force in today to rival or recreate that beautiful yesterday. We linger in the ruins of the old tent, where once we had bread and shelter, and organs, nor believe that the spirit can feed, cover, and nerve us again. We cannot again find aught so dear, so sweet, so graceful. But we sit and weep in vain. The voice of the Almighty saith, "Up and onward for evermore!" We cannot stay amid the ruins. --R. W. Emerson

"The craze for the froth of the so-called charismatic phenomena is a sign that the true Holy Spirit should be more evident in our lives and service." Let us, therefore, continually walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16) and be filled with Him (Eph. 5:18).

## The Day of the Lord

**It Shall Be the Day of His Exaltation.** "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of His majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day" (Isa. 2:10-11). The Lord alone shall be exalted in *His* day.

It shall be my purpose here to persuade you anew that the day of the Lord will come (II Pet. 3:10). We shall consider how this expression is used again and again in Scripture, and then seek to draw some conclusions. In the prophets this expression "day of the Lord" is used frequently to denote times when "the arm of the Lord" (Isa. 51:9) and His "mighty hand" (Deut. 26:8) were revealed, and that without question and without competition from men or evil angels. It seems as though that God, having created man in His own image and likeness, lets man have "his day" for a prolonged set time, that he may prove men to show what is in their hearts. And when men have reached a limit, known only to God Himself, of glorifying themselves and not giving all the glory and honor to the only wise God and the Creator, who is blessed forever, then the Lord brings an abrupt halt to men's lofty looks, and haughtiness, and their evil works.

*The day of the Lord*, as the term is used in the prophets, generally spoke of a time in earth's history (that has now come and gone), when God displayed His mighty power. It usually manifested itself in a calamity of some sort with the intent of humbling Israel when they departed from the Lord, or humbling other nations when their cup of iniquity was full (cf. Gen. 15:16). Such things as famines, pestilences, plagues, nations invading, conquering, and taking into captivity other nations, were actually manifestations of the behind-the-scenes workings of Jehovah, the Sovereign Lord, and the exclusive Governor among the nations (Ps. 22:28).

**The Lord Alone Exalted.** We may praise men, and sometimes properly so (Prov. 27:2), but there will always come a point, where that kind of praise is excessive and out of order. However, this is never the case with the exalted Lord and Creator of the universe. He is worthy to be praised (II Sam. 22:4), and He shall always be worthy of more praise and exaltation. Whenever He is properly seen and understood for who He really is, He continues to be praised. His glorious Person provokes continual praise among creatures in both Heaven and earth who perceive somewhat of His nature and ways.

As we have said, there have been many instances recorded in Scripture when the Lord was exalted in His day (referring to an epochal event which has come and gone in history), but more than this, it seems that by this expression, God is teaching men about a glorious day that is yet to come. That blessed day shall be associated with consummation and permanence. It shall not be a day that will come and go, but rather a day that will come to stay. That will be the induction of the new and eternal order. And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that eternal Day.

**The Burden of Babylon.** "Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty" (Isa. 13:6).

Let us draw your attention to the fact that *the day of the Lord*, as the expression was used in the prophets, generally pointed to a day of misery and destruction as it was perceived upon earth, because men, upon whom the day came, were disobedient and they were not reconciled to God. This particular prophecy (Isa. 13:6) had immediate reference to the nation of

Babylon. It graphically illustrates how that the Lord God characteristically permits men and nations to go *so far* in their sin and self-exaltation, and then He suddenly humbles them and brings them down.

But the day of the Lord, to which the above-mentioned former days were all pointing, shall also be day of unspeakable but endless woe for those who have not received God's salvation. When Jesus comes again the second time, to the ungodly that day shall come as a certain destruction from the Almighty. All who are *not* in Christ shall be made to grievously lament and weep (cf. Rev. 1:7). They shall cry out for rocks and mountains to fall on them and to hide them from the face of Him that sits upon the throne (cf. Rev. 6:16).

But to those who are waiting for the Savior, and earnestly looking for Him, that day will spell *the end* to all of their troubles. For them it shall be *the beginning* of everlasting joy and gladness without measure (cf. Isa. 35:10; 51:11).

**A Day of Wrath and Fierce Anger.** "Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it" (Isa. 13:9).

Here again, this is precisely what will occur in the great and terrible day of the Lord. Let us permit considerations such as this to cause us to give the more earnest heed to the salvation which we have received. For it is a salvation from God's wrath and fierce anger upon the unrighteous. The day of the Lord will be a day of unspeakable gladness for those that are in Christ, but it will not be so for the ungodly and sinners!

In the following two verses (13:10-11) it can be seen that this prophecy is also pointing as well to the great calamity that shall come upon all the ungodly in the end of the world. These kinds of instances can be found repeatedly in Scripture: the Prophets will be prophesying about something that immediate pertinence to that time and generation, and oftentimes it will become evident, by the language that is used, that God was seizing upon this occasion to draw men's attention to Christ's first or second coming, and to the consummation of all things at the end of the world (cf. Hag. 2:1-7; Heb. 12:27-28; Isa. 7:10-15; 24:15-20; Dan. 9:1-27; Mic. 4:13-5:2, etc.).

**In Conclusion.** We will only be able to properly regard the salvation that God is working with a due consideration of what we are being saved from. Consider the children of Israel when they were coming out of the land of Egypt. Can you imagine them saying, "we don't want to know about the Egyptians and the trouble they are inflicting upon us. We simply want to be assured that God is saving us from them." But this is precisely the way a lot of people in the church reason.

Regarding the salvation which God is bringing to those in Christ, we are at present often brought face to face with the adversary, so that we may fully appreciate what God is delivering us from. It will be remembered what Paul declared in this connection: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6:11-13).

And finally, as the Apostle Peter exhorted, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (I Pet. 5:8-9). Let us, therefore, continue valiantly fighting the good fight of faith until the Day of the Lord shall come! --*Editor*

## Visitor Response to Banner Web Page

Our hearts have been greatly encouraged by these individuals who have signed our guestbook and made comments in the last month or so. We include the remarks of some recent visitors here for the edification of our readers. (Literally hundreds of internet users visit the Banner's web page each week from all over the world.)

For those wishing to visit our web site, our internet address is **www.banner.org**. You can direct any questions or observations you may have to our staff at our E-mail address: **editor@banner.org**.

\*\*\*"Praise be to His name !" --*Kenneth Chege*

\*\*\*"Your ministry is really a blessing. Thank you." --*Raymond Zakhari*

\*\*\*"Praise the Lord for your Bible studies available on line!" --*Kathie Markel*

\*\*\*"What a great WEB page. Keep up the good work!" --*Neil Summers*

\*\*\*"Praise the Lord! such a wonderful page. Keep up the nice work!" --*Ruth Hare*

\*\*\*"Hello from the church of our Lord in Belfast, Northern Ireland." --*John McCourt*

\*\*\*"Looking forward to many hours of browsing your page. There is a wealth of info here!" --*Kent Compton*

\*\*\*"I read four articles and found them edifying. I will be back again and again. Well done." --*Raymond de Havilland*

\*\*\*"I am glad there are so many Christians out there that are dedicated to the Word of God. I praise the Lord and am thankful you are there." --*Cindy Monroe*

\*\*\*"Greetings in the worthy Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is an ointment poured forth to those who believe. Maranatha!!! Until He comes!!!" --*Stephen Chaffer*

\*\*\*"I would like to spend profitable time reading through the valuable material that you have. I am a new user on the net so kindly help me avail (myself of) your facilities." --*Ruth Bhuvaneswari*

\*\*\*"My minister told me about this location. I look forward to it ministering to me. I just came on this web site for the first time this morning, so I will be learning more about it". --*Polly Anne Long*

\*\*\*"I am a 51 year old returning student majoring in Biblical Counseling at Washington Bible College in Lanham, MD. It is important to me to be grounded in the truth. Thanks for the part you play." --*Vincent G. Blasco*

\*\*\*"This is my first visit here. I always enjoy Christ-centered sites. I think I need to spend some more time here looking around before I can say anything about it, other than: 'Praise the Lord !!'" --*George and Sharon Martini*

## An E-mail Response from Maryland

"Hello in Jesus! I have thoroughly enjoyed by "free ride" for three months, and know I don't want to get off this train! I want to continue receiving the hard copy of monthly editions of The Banner--what can I do to expedite this?

"I have been able to share these copies with my son who is stationed in Europe. We both are believers in Jesus, but travel different organized paths--I am Roman Catholic, while his approach is based on Evangelic Christian beliefs and teachings. We both find we can "harmonize," theologically speaking, in the truly revealing and uplifting messages of The Banner!

"Can I have you add him (my son) for a subscription also as a Christmas gift to him--I'll absorb the cost of both.

"Many thanks to the Blakelys, and your many inspired writers, who give me so much to reflect upon, and to rejoice in, each time I turn the pages of The Banner!" --*Frank Massicotte, Damascus, MD*

### A Letter from Louisiana

"Dear Sirs: A dear brother sent me an issue of your periodical which I really enjoyed. Could you please send me a three-month trial subscription? I am very interested in the contents of the articles and the spiritual depth of the material. Thank you kindly." --*Brian Hamilton, Slidell, LA*

## Peace

By **Eva G. Campbell**

Peace I leave thee, Peace I give thee,  
Jesus said one day. Not as the world would give it.  
"Tis in your heart to stay.  
If on Me, believing, you My will obey,  
Then My sweet peace I leave with you, today.  
Peace that brings a sweet contentment  
May be yours and more; It satisfies your longings,  
Brings joys you're searching for.  
When the Holy Spirit dwells in your heart alway,  
You'll feel My peace and love with you each day.  
Peace our God has proffered all,  
Who accept and serve His Son,  
He then has promised cleansing, if His will is done.  
If our hearts we open, let Him have His Way,  
Then, His sweet peace He leaves with us each day.  
I want the peace that Jesus promised,  
I want the cleansing He supplied.  
I want the Spirit sent from Heaven,  
To some these blessings are denied.  
I'll do just everything He's asked me,  
I'll be obedient to His Word,  
I'll live here so I'll live in Heaven  
Forever with my Lord.

--*R. 1, Box 104, West Concord, MN 55985*

**God's Presence is Enough.** God's Presence is enough for toil and enough for rest. If He journey with us by the way, He will abide with us when nightfall comes; and His companionship will be sufficient for direction on the road, and for solace and safety in the evening camp. --*Alexander Maclaren, The Sage Digital Library*

## Volume 35 Index

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**A Final Note Regarding the Index.** If any of our readers are missing certain issues from Volume 35 or from previous volumes, you may write us and we will gladly send them to you. Brother Dean Boelt is able to furnish complete bound copies of at least some of the previous volumes. (Or perhaps you would consider giving a complete volume of the Banner to someone as a gift.) Brother Boelt's address and telephone number are as follows: *Dean E. Boelt, 6730 Ontario Avenue, Hammond, IN 46323-1440, (219) 844-8699.*

## ***Joy and the Holy Spirit***

By Given O. Blakely

Spiritual resources are administered by the Holy Spirit. Although this activity is transcendent to nature, it is not an intrusion into our lives that excludes our personal involvement. Working through the will and faith of the believer, the Spirit of Christ enables us to rejoice in spite of our immediate surroundings and circumstances. This is a most remarkable thing. Those who rejoice in the Lord are not oblivious of personal difficulties and hardships. Their joy does not blind them. It broadens their perspective! It allows them to rise above the influence of the mundane--to company with Jesus in the heavenly places. Believers remain fully aware of their circumstance, but superior to it.

The Word of God is clear on this point. We must be courageous in our faith, appropriating the blessing. "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit" (I Th. 1:6).

This "joy" falls into the category of "the fruit of the Spirit." "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith . . ." (Gal. 5:22). I do not know that these qualities are listed in order of their priority. If they are, joy ranks high in spiritual virtues. This is the result of the Spirit's activity, not of human creativity or discipline. It involves the submission of the believer: not quenching, grieving, or resisting the Holy Spirit (I Th. 5:19; Eph. 4:30; Acts 7:51).

We must be careful not to lose sight of our subject; "Rejoicing in God." Joy--spiritual joy--is not just a happy feeling. It is not merely a sense of well-being, although that IS involved. True rejoicing finds its Object in God Himself. If there were no

God, or if we did not have access to God, there could be no such genuine joy. This rejoicing depends upon a living, active, accessible God. It requires that His smile be upon us, and that we be welcome in His presence. Such awareness is infinitely greater than any circumstance, no matter how grievous it may be. The possession of this joy has caused men to sing in prison, and boldly stand before condemning councils.

In a nutshell, THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALS GOD TO US IN A MANNER CONDUCIVE TO JOY. He shows us the truth about His "great salvation" (Heb. 2:3). He opens to us the great proclamations of the Gospel, relating them to our need. He shows us that in Christ God is "for us," and not "against us" (Rom. 8:31).

Our text says, "Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom. 5:11, NIV). Do not miss the significance of this text. Get your bearings here!

When the Spirit says, "Not only so," He is telling us that our joy is founded upon an existing situation. That condition is described in the preceding verses. "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. 5:8-10). Allow your faith to exult in these things!

1. God has confirmed His love for you in Christ's death for you, while you were yet a sinner.
2. Now that you have been justified by the blood of Christ, you will surely be delivered from the wrath that is to come.
3. The arrangement conforms to sound reasoning. If we were reconciled to God when we were enemies, surely, now that we are reconciled, the interceding Christ shall bring the work to completion.

These are the considerations that undergird our joy. We rejoice because our state has been changed from an enemy to a son. We have been completely absolved of guilt through the blood of Christ, and are no longer condemned. Christ's current ministry is devoted to bringing us to glory (Heb. 2:10), and we have been delivered from the wrath that will be revealed at the appearing of Christ (Eph. 5:6; II Th. 2:8). The awareness and reception of this truth in the heart drives away the clouds of sorrow. It causes the Sun of righteousness to arise in the heart, shedding healing rays throughout our spirits (Mal. 4:2).

We rejoice "in God" because He is the One behind this great salvation. He is the One that sent the Son. He is the One Whose love was confirmed by the death of Christ. He is the One to Whom Jesus represents us. He is the One to Whom we have been reconciled. He is the One from Whose wrath we have been delivered. Jesus is His Son. The Word is His Word. The Spirit is His Spirit. Rejoice in God, believer, rejoice in God!

The world has nothing like this to offer to us. Relief from the oppression of circumstance is thought to be experienced by mere diversion, indulgence, or ignorance of one's situation. The Spirit gives us joy even when we are conscious of difficulty and hardship. He does so by enabling us to focus upon eternal verity rather than temporal circumstance. This is the meaning of Second Corinthians 4:16-18. "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

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## Why Isn't God More Popular?

By Given O. Blakely

Anyone who has thrown themselves into the work of the Lord has wrestled with the indifference of the masses--even the religious masses. Most professed believers do not have a hearty appetite for God or the things of God. Short and infrequent gatherings are quite sufficient for them. There does not seem to be much objection to activity, as long as it is not spiritually focused, and is relatively infrequent. Religious professionals will even offer explanations for this condition, and structure "church programs" to accommodate mediocre spiritual appetites. But the condition still concerns a great many of us.

Why isn't God more popular? O, people say they desire Him in the crisis, or on special occasions--like weddings and funerals. But they are not asking for Him during the normalities of life. Why not? It is because they see no need of Him during those times, creedal professions not withstanding. They see no connection between God and living, between His truth and their sustenance. Even though Scripture vividly portrays our need of Him and His great salvation, men are blind to that need.

What a graphic picture is painted of those who do not walk with God. ". . . at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). A cloud of absolute and total hopelessness hovers over the head of ever person without a vital connection with God through Christ and by faith. Life simply cannot be lived without Divine fellowship and influence. Those who suppose that it can are simply wrong. There is not the slightest element of truth to their view that life can be lived in isolation from God.

The reason for the condition is spiritual blindness--a blindness imposed upon hard hearts by Satan himself. As it is written, "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them" (II Cor. 4:3-4). Notice, the condition is one of perishing! That is a condition that makes God unpopular, and it is a serious one, indeed! No person will be saved in a state of spiritual poverty. --406 S. Sergeant St., Joplin, MO 64801

**Righteousness and Uprightness.** Righteousness in the moral world answers to straightness in the world of matter. It is the moral rectilinear, or line of "oughtness"---the line along which moral beings ought to move.

"Uprightness is righteousness that is exemplified in moral character. Justice is righteousness exemplified in conduct." The Law is the unerring plumbline, exposing every deviation from the moral perpendicular. --Excerpted from *Pulpit Commentary*

## Miscellaneous Observations and Reflections

"The love of God, and the faith that keeps us running, is our bond, we see the glory set before us and believe it is ours only in Christ. Brother Fred (Blakely) always said, 'It's all right there in the Bible.'" --Richard and Karen Sankowski

*New mercies, each returning day,  
Hover around us while we pray;  
New perils past, new sins forgiven,  
New thoughts of God, new hopes of Heaven.*  
---John Keble

**Revelation's Beast and Harlot.** "The beast of Revelation is the world system. The harlot of Revelation is the corrupt church system. That is why John saw the drunken harlot riding on the back of the beast (cf. Rev. 17:3, 7). That is where she has always ridden. It is the world system that sustains the false church system." --George Hawtin

**Request for Banner from West Virginia.** "I just read the Banner from a copy of Jennings Buck's, one of the elders at the Buck Run Church of Christ near Sistersville, WV, where I am a minister. It is a most interesting publication. I was not aware of it until I read his copy. I would like to receive it here at my home address. I thank God for such dedicated people as you are, and I will be praying that more people desire the truth that this publication puts out. Thank you so much." --Kenneth E. Kiefer, Evangelist, Paden City, WV

**A Noteworthy Contrast.** There is a very noticeable contrast in the term *firstfruits* when comparing its usage under the old and new covenants. Under the law we find men *yearly* being commanded to offer firstfruits unto God (cf. Exod. 23:19; 34:26; Lev. 2:12, 14; 23:17; etc.), which would ensure them the blessing and favor of God *for that season* (cf. Prov. 3:9-10; Lev. 26:2-5; Deut. 28:1-8). But in the new covenant we read of God giving firstfruits to men (Rom. 8:23; I Cor. 15:20, 23; (*earnest*) II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14), to persuade them that everlasting blessedness shall be their portion in the world to come. --Dean E. Boelt

**The Dead are the Living.** "Life is life forever! To be is eternal being. Every man that has died is at this instant in full possession of all his faculties, in the intensest exercise of all his capacities, standing somewhere in God's great universe, ringed with a sense of God's presence, and feeling in every fiber of his being that life which comes after death is not less real but more real, not less great but more great, not less full or intense but more full and intense, than the mingled life which, lived here on earth, was a center of life surrounded with a crust and circumference of mortality. The dead are the living. They lived while they died, and after they die they live on forever." --Alexander Maclaren, in *The Sage Digital Library*