

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 36

March 1998

Number 2

The Threefold Name for Overcomers

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the Name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new Name" (Rev. 3:12).

Thus, does the exalted Lord encourage the Philadelphia saints to "continue in the faith," holding out to them the "recompence of reward" for such perseverance (Acts 14:22; Heb. 10:35). Having already given attention to the promise embraced in the first two clauses of the text ("The Pillars in the Heavenly Temple," January 1998 cover article), let us now consider that contained in its remainder--- "I will write upon him the Name of My God," etc. Together, the two promises present a twofold aspect of the overcomers' reward.

Let it be noted that it is the person himself upon whom Christ is to write the threefold Name. "I will write upon him," etc. From such passages as Ezekiel 9:4; Revelation 7:3; 9:4; 14:1; and 22:4, where God's servants are said to be sealed in their foreheads, it is assumed that the writing of reference is to be located here. It is possible that there may be an allusion to the "golden plate," or "holy crown" which flamed on the high priest's forehead, and on which were inscribed the words, "Holiness to the Lord" (Exod. 28:26-38; Lev. 8:9). Obviously, the writing of these names by Christ implies ownership and its clear and open visibility.

The Name of God. Hence, the first of the triple inscriptions evinces that the victor shall be conspicuously God's. "I will write upon him the Name of My God." The underlying ideas, as we have said, are that of complete ownership by God and that manifested in the very front of the character. The overcomers, of course, belonged to God all along. He chose them in Christ Jesus "before the foundation of the world," even as He elected the Son to the office of Savior in that era (Eph. 1:4; I Pet. 1:20). In the new Jerusalem, they shall be unmistakably manifested as His own and complete possession, to the praise of His glory (Tit. 2:14). This, then, will be the "due time" for "the manifestation of the sons of God," to which all creation looks forward "in pain," with groaning and travail (Rom. 8:19-25; I Tim. 2:4-6; I Pet. 5:6).

This public acknowledgment and certification of His saints as His children will also confirm the outworking of the divine Nature in them, which had its beginning and progress in this world. How do we possess one another? How do we belong to God in an experiential and responsive sense? How does God similarly belong to us? There is but one way in which a spirit can so possess a spirit. That is by love, which leads to self-surrender and to practical submission. In relation to God's foreknowledge of His loved ones, it must be remembered that it was

"through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:2). Or, they were chosen to salvation "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (II Thess. 2:13-14). Such faith and obedience thus become in this life the tokens of divine ownership. Without them, none is warranted in assuming it.

When, therefore, the Name of God is written upon the victors in the heavenlies, it is to attest before the universe that they are His very own. Implied in this acknowledgement is the fact that the whole nature of those so marked shall be owned, and know itself owned, and be glad to be owned, by God. That signifies--whatever else it may signify--perfect love, perfect self-surrender, perfect submission. That fullness of assimilation to the divine Nature is the perfecting of the filial relationship to God which is begun here on earth. And that Name will be stamped on us, in recognition of both our status and character as the children of God, that every eye that looks--whoever they may be--shall know whose we are and whom we love and serve (Acts 17:23).

The Incentive Provided. The function of this gladsome prospect as an incentive for increasing conformity to the divine Image here and now needs to be stressed. Since we are God's, being "of" Him (Heb. 2:11), it behooves us to be followers of Him, "as dear children," as He urges us to do (cf. Eph. 5:1-4). If we yield ourselves to God here, we shall reach that blessed state in which we shall be wholly God's, and at the same time wholly possessors of ourselves, and blessed thereby. Clearly, the purpose of our Lord in holding forth the promise of reference is to provide us with the constraint for such submission. It is offered only to the overcomers, it must be remembered. This yielding to God involves departing from that foolish and always frustrating attempt to be our own masters, so escaping the misery of selfhood. It ultimately results in our entering into the glorious liberty of the children of God, the sphere in which there will be no murmuring and incipient rebellions, no disturbance of our inward submission, no holding back of anything that we have or are. "He that loveth his life shall lose it" asserted the Lord Jesus; "and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (Jn. 12:25).

The Name of the City. The second inscription to be written upon the overcomer by the Savior, according to our text, declares that he belongs to the holy city--that he is no alien there. "I will write upon him . . . the name of the city of My God." We learn from Revelation 3:5 that He promised those in Sardis who overcame that He would not blot their names "out of the Book of Life." Evidently, this book suggested the idea of the burgess-roll of the city, as well as the register of those who truly live. Here the same thought is presented by converse metaphor. The name of the victor is written upon the rolls of the city, and the name of the city is stamped upon the forehead of the victor.

That is to say, the affinity which, even here and now, has knit people who believe in Jesus Christ to an invisible order, where is their true mother-city and metropolis (Gal. 4:26), will then be uncontradicted by any inconsistencies, unobscured by

(THREEFOLD NAME, Concluded on Page 3)

THE BANNER OF TRUTH

(ISSN 1089024)

FRED O. BLAKELY, Founder and, for the first 31 years, Editor
Published Monthly by the Independence Hill Christian Church
2230 W. 78th Ave., Merrillville, IN 46410

Please do not send any mail to above address.

PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

ALBERT G. STONER, JR., Editor Phone: (219) 769-7048

DEAN E. BOELT, Mailer Phone (219) 844-8699

MR. AND MRS. RICHARD SANKOWSKI, Mailing List Preparers
Phone (219) 696-1110

MR. AND MRS. JASON SANKOWSKI, Mailing Assistants

ROBERT COBB, Web Page Manager Phone (219) 987-3049

Editor's Address : 7903 Hendricks Street, Merrillville, IN 46410-5023

Editor's E-mail Address: editor@banner.org

The Banner of Truth's Web Page Address: www.banner.org

Mailing List Address : 18912 Delaware, Lowell, IN 46356

Mailing List E-mail Address: mail@banner.org

All Other E-mail Messages, Send to: banner@banner.org

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

Sent Free for Three Months upon Request

Periodicals, Gary, IN 464

Regarding the Contents. All writing herein should be ascribed to the editor, with the exception of that which appears within quotation marks and/or is specifically credited to other sources.

Responsibility for Views. In the very nature of the case, THE BANNER OF TRUTH, in its editorials and editorial policy, represents only the views and attitude of its editor, and those of the other writers whose articles appear or whose assertions are reviewed therein. The paper is not to be understood as necessarily speaking for all members of the Independence Hill Christian Church, as would be the case with the expressions of any person or agency of any congregation.

Reprint Permission. All material, except that indicated as excerpts, condensations, or reprints from copyrighted sources, may be reprinted in full or in part without further permission. We appreciate a credit line in case of reprinting, but it is not demanded. We are anxious to share as widely as possible the truth which God has made known to us.

Acts Compared to Today

The Acts of the Apostles, as the book is so named, is a record of workings of the glorified Christ in and through the Apostles and first-century saints *at a time of beginnings* (cf. Mk. 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4). This book maps the launching of the church of the living God and chronicles the beginning of a unique proclamation among the sons of men: namely, that of a Savior who died, was risen again, and is now exalted to God's right hand, and of sins being remitted by Christ's blood. That same proclamation is still being heralded forth today, and it shall continue to be declared until the end of the world.

Acts also marks the time of the inauguration of the new covenant, particularly when that covenant's benefits began to be enjoyed by believing men and women. Those benefits include such things as a perceived sense of belonging to God on the part of men, God's laws being written upon the heart and mind, sins and iniquities being forgiven, mercifulness to unrighteousness, etc. (cf. Jer. 31:31-34). And in the Acts of the Apostles we see for the first time common men receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit,

which reception first occurred on the day of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:38-39). And the Holy Spirit, with all of His sanctifying effects (II Thess. 2:13; I Pet. 1:2), is yet the portion of those who obey the gospel even to this day.

The time period covered by the book of Acts particularly marks the onset of a very significant era when those receiving the Savior would be justified *by faith* and when living *by faith* would be the indispensable norm (Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38). "Even unto the end of the world" (Mt. 28:20) every man and woman who is accepted of God through the Lord Jesus Christ has been, and shall be noted for possessing faith, which "is the substance of things hoped for" (Heb. 11:1). And there are no exceptions to this.

But for the thinking person the question will eventually arise: *Why are not all the same things occurring today* as were recorded in the Acts of the Apostles? Such as: the Lord audibly speaking out of Heaven? the Holy Spirit enduing men with noticeably sensational abilities, angels unmistakably appearing unto men? undeniably miraculous healings and deliverances? men speaking in unknown languages? the smiting of those that oppose the proclamation of the gospel with death or blindness?

Those that are in Christ naturally feel compelled to trace their roots back to days of the Lord and the Apostles. The church (and we are using this word in a strictly non-sectarian sense as it is used in the Scripture), which the enChristed ones are presently a part of, had its beginnings with the events recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Since we have our origins in the times covered in the book of Acts, why then have not all the accompanying occurrences and enduements (recorded in Acts) continued the same, especially the more visible and spectacular ones like those mentioned above?

Before we proceed to answer the questions posed in the two preceding paragraphs, let us first affirm that *the most fundamental and most important things* (pertaining to the gospel age in which we are living) are occurring precisely the same as they always have since the time when the Acts of the Apostles was written. These are, of course, things pertaining to the reception of God's salvation in Christ Jesus and men's preparation for entrance into the world to come.

To cite some examples of this: Men and women are, in fact, *turning to the Lord* today just as they did in time of the book of Acts (9:35; 11:21; 15:19). And so turning these individuals are, at the same time, *being turned* by the exalted Savior away from their iniquities (3:26), and from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God (26:18, 20). And right down to today men are still found here and there turning away from the vanities of this life unto the living God (14:15). In the present time also men and women are *yet* found repenting, and being baptized, receiving remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit (2:38). Such ones are *yet* gladly receiving the Word of God (2:41) just as was occurring in those beginning times. And God is still granting repentance to men, and remission of sins to Jews and Gentiles alike (5:31). Incidentally, what things could have greater importance than the kinds of things which we have just enumerated? The things pertaining to the reception of God's salvation are those which are the truly significant things in the light of eternity. And of the things mentioned in this paragraph there has been a continuity of participation by men and women since the day of Pentecost.

To answer the questions that were set forth above, it appears evident that the extraordinarily spectacular and miraculous occurrences and enduements recorded in Acts were given by the exalted Christ *at the first* to confirm to men the new covenant's vital significance and importance for acceptance with the living God and preparation for the world to come. --Editor

(THREEFOLD NAME, Concluded from Page 1)

the necessary absorption in daily duties and transient aims and interests, which often veils to others, and renders less conscious to our selves, our true belonging to the city beyond the sea. The name of the city shall be stamped upon the victor. That, again, is the perfecting and the continuation of the central heart of the believer's life here--the consciousness that we are come unto "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels" (Heb. 12:22). It is the public ratification by the Captain of our salvation of the fact that all along our citizenship has been in Heaven (Phil. 3:20-21), and that during the sojourn here below we were "strangers and pilgrims," in quest of the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 11:10, 13-16; I Pet. 2:11). Thither, by God's grace, we shall then have come, and within those impregnable walls of jasper we shall be forever ensconced. And it will further be to herald abroad for all to perceive that we are perfectly at home in that glorious metropolis, having been made "meet" (that is, perfectly suited and adapted) for citizenship therein (Col. 1:12), and so having belonged to another order of things than the visible and material around us in the world.

The Name of Christ. The last of the three inscriptions declares that the overcomer shall be conspicuously Christ's. "I will write upon him My new Name." In a subsequent portion of the Revelation we read of a new Name of Christ's, which no man knoweth, except Himself (19:12). What is that new name? It well could be an expression for the sum of the new revelation of what He is, which will flood the souls of the redeemed when they pass from earth. That new Name will not obliterate the old one --God forbid! It will not do away with the ancient, earth-begun, relation of dependence and faith and obedience. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). And His Name in the heavens, as upon earth, is Jesus the Savior. But there are unfathomable depths in Him which no man moving amidst the incipencies and imperfections of this infantile life of earth can understand. Not until we possess can we know the depths of wisdom and knowledge, and of all other treasures which are stored in Him. Here we but touch the fringe of His great glory. Yonder we shall penetrate its central flame.

That new Name no man fully knows, even when he has entered on its possession and carries it on his forehead; for the infinite Christ, who is the manifestation of the infinite God, can never be comprehended, much less exhausted, even by the united perceptions of a redeemed universe. But for ever and ever, more and more will well out from Him. His Name shall last as long as the sun, and blaze when the sun itself is dead (cf. Ps. 72:17).

"I will write upon Him My new Name" was promised to the overcomers of a church which had not "denied My Name" (Rev. 3:8). If we are to pierce the heart and glory there, we must begin on its edges here. If the Name is to be on our foreheads then, we must bear in our body the marks of the Lord Jesus--the brand of ownership impressed upon the slave's palm. In the strength of that Name we can overcome. And if we overcome, His Name will hereafter blaze on our foreheads--the token that we are completely His forever, and the pledge that we shall be growingly made like unto Him.

Having this promise, dearly beloved, what manner of persons ought we to be, as Peter would say, "in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God," when we shall enter into our glory with the Lord (II Pet. 3:11-12, ASV). Let us press toward the mark for the prize of God's high calling of us in this hope. --Adapted and Supplemented by Fred O. Blakely from Alexander Maclaren, "The Victor's Life-Names," *Expositions of Holy Scripture* (1910).

Divers Musings for the Times

Doubts are the beginnings of darkness. --Harold F. Lohse

If we do not walk in the light, our children will bear our whoredoms. --Sam Nugent

"Nadab and Abihu will rise up in the judgment and confess that it is important to do what God says, exactly the way that He says to do it" (cf. Lev. 10:1-3). --Adapted from *Given O. Blakely*

"From God's own lips Moses gets an account of all that is deepest in His disposition and relations toward man. It can be seen in this revelation of Himself that mercy rules in the character of God" (see Exod. 34:6-7). --Source Uncertain

With regard to those who are outside of Christ, they are "not a people" (I Pet. 2:10), meaning that God does not approve of them in their natural state and does not acknowledge them as belonging to Himself. --Expanded from *Fred O. Blakely*

David and his afflictions may be seen in Psalm 22 in a very limited sense, "but as the star is concealed by the light of the sun, he who sees Jesus (here in this Psalm) will probably neither see, nor care to see, David." --C. H. Spurgeon

Man Remains the Same. We who travel today by automobiles and jet airliners are exactly the same kind of beings as those who rode in oxcarts and later in stagecoaches. The great facts of existence remain the same in all generations of time--"birth, death, sin and sorrow, hope and fear. A picture is not altered because you put it in a different frame." Man continues unchanged in his essential nature; hence, he has the same need of the divine Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, that men of all ages have had. --Expanded from *Fred O. Blakely*

A Wearying Effect. The Lord Jesus Christ is to believing men and women "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isa. 32:2). If this world, therefore, does not have a definite wearying effect on those who make a profession of faith, they must examine themselves to see whether or not they actually are in the faith (cf. II Cor. 13:5). This priceless "Shadow" of refreshing means absolutely nothing to those who do not find themselves being wearied, and occasionally worn out (cf. Dan. 7:25), by the incessant contrariness and oppositions of this present evil world. --Editor

At What are You Looking? The Apostle Paul, in Second Corinthians 4:18, expressed in passing the gazing posture of both himself and all the saints. He said: "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."

This is the basic stance of all those who are living by faith. Faith rightly judges that eternal things have an incomparably greater value than temporal things and, therefore, it is so often as possible preoccupied with them. "Faith is the substance of things" (Heb. 11:1) which shall far outlast all the things which can be seen with these mortal eyes. To the believer in Christ faith imparts substance to the eternal things, and enables him or her to get a fervent grasp on them. --Editor

The Healing Waters

By Given O. Blakely

The Ezekiel 47 Text. "Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side. And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water came up to my ankles. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water came up to my waist. Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed. He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this? . . . This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed.

"And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes . . . But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary" (Ezek 47:1-12).

The Prophecy's Significance. Here is an intriguing text. God reveals to the prophet a different kind of water--water that flows from the sanctuary of God. It has remedial properties, and heals everything in its wake. It not only is fresh and refreshing, but brings life, vitality, and productivity. This is a depiction of the life of God in Christ Jesus, as made known through the Gospel.

Notice that the waters became deeper and broader as they progressed. This is indicative of the nature of the Kingdom of God. At first, one could navigate in the waters, but at the last, their expanse was so great they were "water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed." These waters originated with God, and flowed to places of defilement. Only "swamps and marshes" were not affected by these mighty waters. The fruitage in the wake of this swelling river would not fail, and the leaves on the trees springing up on its bank would not wither! This is a revelation of the spiritual life that sprang up when the glad tidings of good things was announced to the sons of men. Allow me to paint a brief picture of the glories of these healing waters.

The Prophecy's Fulfillment. These waters began to flow on the day of Pentecost. Then, through a convicting message, the waters washed over 3,000 souls, bringing moral and spiritual healing (Acts 2:41). The waters seemed to pick up momentum as they swept through the ancient city of Jerusalem. It is written that "many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand" (Acts 4:4). On the waters flowed, deepening and healing as they went! In the wake of the heavenly flood "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5:14). But the waters were growing deeper, and would not long be confined to

the city of Jerusalem.

The mighty waters flowed down to Samaria, where a deacon named Philip "preached Christ unto them." The healing that occurred was unparalleled. It is written, "the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city" (Acts 8:5-7). Continuing to flow, they reached out into a desert, washing over a political official from Ethiopia, inducing confidence and joy (Acts 8:39ff). Before long, these waters, like a rushing torrent of blessing, caught Saul of Tarsus in their wake, and he, renewed and healed, "straightway preached Christ," causing amazement in those who heard him, and increasing in spiritual strength (Acts 9:20-22).

On the waters flowed, deepening and broadening as they went. Soon they were found in Caesarea, cleansing the entire household of a Gentile centurion named Cornelius (Acts 10). On the river flowed, gathering momentum! It washed over Salamis, Paphos, Perga, Pamphilia, Antioch of Pisidia, and Iconium, bringing spiritual renewal (Acts 11-13). The waters continued to flow into Lystra, where the hearers of the message could scarcely be restrained from offering sacrifice to the proclaimers, thinking the gods had come down to visit them (Acts 14:12ff). On to Philippi the waters moved, cleansing Lydia and a group of women who were praying by a river side (Acts 16:14ff). They even flowed into a prison in that city, purifying a jailer and his household (Acts 16:29ff).

Gathering momentum, the waters moved into Greece, where they healed "Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them" (Acts 17:34). In Corinth the waters cleansed the ruler of the synagogue, his household, and many Corinthians (Acts 18:8). A powerful exhorter named Apollos was also changed in Corinth by these flowing waters (Acts 18:28).

Time would fail to mention how pervasive these waters were! It is written that "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10). When they flowed into Ephesus, the people were shaken to the core, gathering their books of curious arts and burning them in public contrition, while confessing their deeds (Acts 19:18-20). They even washed upon the shores of a barbarous island, bring life to its inhabitants (Acts 28:2ff). Finally, in the citadels of Rome itself, the waters gushed out in providential grace (Acts 28:30-31).

O, child of God, the Gospel of Christ is a mighty force! It has brought life and vitality wherever men have had the courage to declare it. If ever the church will again return to its fervent and faithful proclamation, the river of healing water will begin to flow again!

In Conclusion. Let us pray that God will give us grace to never become accustomed to a lack of Kingdom productivity! May He open our eyes and heart to see the greatness of the Gospel we have embraced, and to play a key role in bringing it to the sons of men. --406 S. Sergeant, Joplin, MO 64801

The Highway of Holiness. "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isa. 35:8). Maintain the stance of a wayfaring man (one who is not inordinately attached to this present evil world) on the way of holiness, and you shall not err therein. --Given O. Blakely

The Promise of the Coming Savior

The First Promise of the Savior Given. Some four thousand years before Christ entered into the world the first time, the promise of the coming Savior was given. It was actually spoken by the Lord Jehovah to the Devil in the audience of our first parents while they were yet "in Eden the garden of God" (Ezek. 28:13). As it is written, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed; It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel" (Gen. 3:15). The promise of a coming Seed was heard aloud by the first generation of those created in God's image, and was rehearsed in the ears of practically every generation thereafter.

Many Lived in Hope of the Promise. Down through the centuries and millennia of time many godly women thought about this promise and lived in the expectation that they might be the one that would be "highly favored" (Lk. 1:28) to give birth to this Seed. (Think of such ones as Sarah, Jochebed, the wife of Noah, Hannah, and many others.) They all lived in hope of possibly being a vital part of the fulfillment of this promise, yet their hopes were not dashed to the ground when they realized that this promised One would probably come to a generation other than theirs.

The exceedingly long duration of time from the giving of this promise, no doubt, had introduced some skepticism and possibly even scoffing by some, that this promise of the coming Savior had been misunderstood. Perhaps, as the scoffers were likely to have charged, the devout men and women of those early times had been misinformed and were vainly watching and waiting for the Savior's first appearing? Perhaps this promise of a coming deliverer had already been fulfilled in the person of David the king, or in one of the other holy men of old time? But no, this was certainly not the case!

The Fulfillment of the Promise. The ancient promise was brought to fulfillment precisely as God said that it would be. "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4-5). And it was to this end "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil" (Heb. 2:14). As it is written elsewhere, "for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil" (I Jn. 3:8). This was that "Seed," "to whom the promise was made" (Gal. 3:19).

The announcement of the bruising of Satan's head was a somewhat veiled prophecy (Gen. 3:15), but it was one that had sufficient clarity to buoy up the hopes of many generations to come. It seems that the lack of specific detail in prophecy is calculated to generate hope in God among the godly. The objective of such undetailed prophecy, it seems, is to make a strong appeal to men's hearts and to the sanctified employment of their minds, causing them to trust, not in the wisdom of men, but in the living God, whose promise cannot fail.

The promise of Satan's bruising was certainly in the mind of the Lord and of the Apostles as they preached the gospel to every creature under Heaven. Paul, speaking to the brethren at Rome, declared, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20). This is because the Father had bruised the head of Satan under Christ's feet at the Cross. The point that we want to see here is that this ancient promise found its fulfillment at the Cross, when Christ made a display of principalities and powers openly (cf. Col. 2:15; Ps. 68:18; Eph. 4:8; Rev. 12:9).

If the godly put all their hope and trust in a promise such as this in the first four millennia of time and were not disappointed, (and we can clearly see that they were not), how much more should we hang all of our hopes upon the promise of Christ's coming the second time? Those who were living in that early time of the world's history were hoping in a promise that did not afford a lot of specificity regarding its involvements and outworking. It was simply that **the promised Seed would bruise the serpent's head**, meaning that this would be a final and deadly infliction that would be brought upon "that old serpent" the Devil (cf. Rev. 12:9; 20:2).

Though there was a lack of specificity contained in that ancient promise, yet from another perspective there was sufficient clarity to generate confidence in the godly that would resurface and flourish time and again for the next four thousand years. *Only God could speak a promise like this!* It was spoken in wisdom so as to beget in men and women a genuine expectation of the coming Savior, and not idle curiosity or speculation.

[As a side thought, this is one of the primary purposes of God's promises. It is to make appeal to men's hearts, to make them desire the living God more than anything else. And it is by the promises that we are made partakers of the divine Nature (II Pet. 1:4)].

Some Important Comparisons. Let us affirm again that the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets were not disappointed in their waiting for this promised Seed, even though the promise was somewhat obscure. How much more ought we to possess "the full assurance of hope unto the end" (Heb. 6:11), in view of the great clarity with which Christ and the Apostles have spoken and promised in these last days? We do not have a few veiled promises as Israel did. We have an abundance of revelation holding forth to men "exceeding great and precious promises" (II Pet. 1:4).

Another consideration is that Israel waited twice as long (4,000 years) as the Church has been waiting with only comparatively obscure promises to buoy up the faithful, but finally "the hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20) was brought to fruition. The godly of Israel lived and walked in the light of the Seed that was coming to bruise the serpent's head. And now it has been done! The Lord Jesus Christ has, in truth, bruised the serpent's head and the serpent now knows that he has "a short time" (Rev. 12:12).

The Promise of Christ's Second Appearing. We, too, are living in the hope of something that God has promised, except that in these last days He has spoken to us with much greater clarity than what was promised by Him in the garden of Eden. In the words of Paul these words committed to us have been spoken "with great plainness of speech" (II Cor. 3:12). Summarizing the great and blessed benefits that are held out to those in Christ Jesus, the Apostle John declared, "This is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life" (I Jn. 2:25).

Consider the following selected promises which have been given unto us by the Lord and the Apostles regarding Christ's coming again, illustrating how that our expectation is tied to His blessed appearing. The crystal clarity with which these promises are spoken will become very evident to the reader. We will let the words of the Scripture speak for themselves.

Hear now the promise of the Savior, where He emphatically declared that *He would come again and receive us*. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (Jn. 14:1-3).

Again, those who witnessed the ascension of our Lord into Heaven were given the following gracious assurance by the

(THE PROMISE, Continued from Page 5)

attending angels: "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 1:11).

And Paul, as he sought to comfort the grieving Thessalonian brethren, declared: "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thess. 4:13-18).

And finally let us consider the gracious words of the Apostle Peter, where he declared: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (I Pet. 1:3-9).

Let us, therefore, take firmly to heart the great clarity with which Christ and the Apostles have spoken of the Lord's second coming. Let us not permit any of the false prophets of the day (such as the promoters of the so-called *realized eschatology* doctrine) to talk us out of the certainty of this promise. Let us earnestly cleave to the promise of Christ's coming to receive us unto Himself. Let us wait for the promise. And let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised)" (Heb. 10:23). --*Editor*

Miscellaneous Quotations

Don't forget, God is your God! --*Harold F. Lohse*

Whenever the prayers of the saints are heard, the earth suffers the consequences (cf. Rev. 5:8; 8, 9, 11:15). This is a vital aspect of prayers and supplications that most church people have not considered. --*Expanded from Given O. Blakely*

Christ's earthly ministry was preparatory for His heavenly one (cf. Heb. 9:24-28), just as our time spent in this world is readying us for the next (cf. Rom. 8:18). Life in the Spirit is a foretaste and specimen of the glorified life (cf. Heb. 6:4-6). --*Gleaned from a Men's Meeting Discussion at this assembly*

Sin is no longer the problem; it has been thoroughly dealt with at the Cross: whether it be iniquity, transgression, moral weakness, or whatever form it may take. Let us then glory in the Cross of Christ and wash our garments white in the blood of the Lamb! --*Fred O. Blakely*

Let us Make Friends of Time

A Neutral Commodity. Time is essentially a neutral commodity as it pertains to men living in this present world. That is to say, the passage of time can result in men coming into either a better condition, or a worse one, with regard to their standing before God. And those results stem entirely from men's own proper use, or misuse, of time, as the case may be.

Time's Blessed Potential for Men. We ought to give thanks for the blessed potential for good that time now affords us while we are yet in the body, and then exploit that potential to the fullest! [In the case of the Devil and those of his camp, time has irreversibly become their foe, promising them only endless torments, and they know it (Mt. 8:29; Jas. 2:19; Rev. 12:12)].

Consider the parables of the talents and pounds (Mt. 25:14-30; Lk. 19:12-27). For those men who diligently increased that which was committed to their trust, time proved to be their ally and friend. But for the ones who "buried" that which was entrusted them, time turned against them and became their enemy.

Redeeming the Time. We are exhorted at least twice in Scripture to *redeem the time* (Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5), implying that time can and will be our friend if we make the proper use of it. Time, that is "redeemed" by men who are now living by faith, will translate for them into great rewards in Heaven. But contrariwise, time and opportunities that are left *unredeemed* by men will cause them to suffer great loss.

High Time to Awake. And we should also be swift to affirm here that "*now it is high time* to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13:11). *Now is the time* for devoting ourselves to the great salvation which God has provided in Christ Jesus: for seeking after the things which are above (Col. 3:1-2), and for washing our robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:14). These kinds of things are not one-time involvements, but rather are things which are to occupy the saints' primary attention and affection all through their earthly sojourn.

The Accepted Time. We are presently living in "the day of salvation" and in "the accepted time." As it is written, "I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2).

Contrary to what is commonly taught in many circles today, "the accepted time" is not merely the proper time for men to take hold of God's salvation *at the start*, with that being the end of the matter. (But this is precisely the position held by those who promote the "once saved, always saved" doctrine.) As is made abundantly clear in the Corinthian text, mentioned above, "the accepted time" and "the day of salvation" speak of an extended time (particularly from the Day of Pentecost to the end of the world) that God has appointed for receiving men unto Himself *and for* nurturing (succoring) on to perfection all those who obey the gospel and continue in the faith.

"The accepted time" speaks of the acceptable and appointed time for drawing near to God, for taking hold of His salvation in Christ, for perfecting holiness in the fear of God, for increasing in the knowledge of God, and for making firsthand acquaintance with the living God through the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is the time when men, who are accepted of Him, are living and walking by faith. Such believing ones are continually being succored and helped by the living God while on their way to the world to come. --*Gleaned and expanded from a Wednesday night discussion at this assembly*

The Necessity of Relying on Christ

An Exposition of John 6:53

By Fred O. Blakely

The spiritual life which comes from partaking of Christ has its precise opposite in the spiritual death associated with the lack of such participation. That is to say, just as people can only live by eating and drinking of the Savior, they will certainly be bereft of life if they fail to do so. He is, indeed, the Bread and Water of life, and, apart from a personal and continuous imbibing of Him, "ye have no life in you," as He Himself declared (Jn. 6:53).

The Proclamation by the Lord. This is the categorical proclamation as He spoke at length of these things in the Capernaum synagogue following His feeding of the multitude on the other side of the Galilean Sea. "Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life," He asserted; "and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." On the other hand, He declared, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (Jn. 6:53-55).

In order to perceive the full force of the negative assertion, it is necessary to understand what is intended by the positive one. What does it mean to eat Christ's flesh and drink of His blood? Whoever does this, He went on to say, "dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" (vv. 56-57). The disciples were wholly unable to decipher this pronouncement at the time, accounting it to be a "hard saying," and taking offense at it (vv. 60-61). Neither, we fear, is the experience which the teaching contemplates generally comprehended or participated in today by churchmen.

Sustenance by His Flesh and Blood. "I am the bread of life," the Savior had earlier told His audience (v. 48, ASV). Thus, to eat of His flesh and drink of His blood is to partake of that bread, even as Israel, in eating of the sacrifices which they made, partook of the altar upon which they were offered to God (I Cor. 10:16-18; cf. Lev. 7:15; Deut. 12:27). "God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" [but not apart from Him], John later stated (I Jn. 4:9). This life Godward was made possible, the Apostle went on to add, in that God "sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (v. 10; cf. 2:1-2).

As spiritual death consists in alienation from God because of sin (Isa. 59:2), so spiritual life essentially is to be reconciled to God by sin having been taken away. And this removal of sin, of course, was only by the efficacious sacrifice of Christ (II Cor. 5:18-19), which sacrifice "put away" sin (Heb. 9:26). So are we "reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. 5:10). To heartily receive this reconciliation and continuously depend upon it for our life unto God, is to be "partakers of the Lord's table," and thus sustained unto life eternal (I Cor. 10:21).

Elaboration of the Doctrine. The applicability of the figures used by our Lord---eating His flesh and drinking His blood---becomes apparent in the scriptural elaboration of the work of atonement for sin accomplished by Him. He, previously existing "in the form of God," was "made flesh" for "the suffering of death" on behalf of those in the flesh, who had incurred the death penalty because of their sin (Jn. 1:14; Phil. 2:6-8; Heb. 2:2-9). He thus partook of flesh and blood "that He, by the grace of

God, should taste death for every man," and in so doing "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14-16). "God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us" (Rom. 8:3-4). "Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (II Cor. 5:21, ASV).

The enfleshment of Christ for the purpose of redeeming those who were in the flesh is a bedrock truth of the remedial economy. John fully recognized and contended for it in his first epistle, as he combated the Gnostic falsehood, which insisted that Christ had not come in the flesh. So the Apostle's declaration: "Hereby we know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist" I Jn. 4:1-3). If Christ be not "come in the flesh," to follow the diction of Paul, our faith is vain, and we are yet in our sins, since they have not been borne "in His own body on the tree," and taken away (I Cor. 15:17; I Pet. 2:24). His body, it will be remembered, was "broken" for us (I Cor. 11:24); it is "with His stripes" [sustained in His fleshly body] that "we are healed" (Isa. 53:4-5); and our acceptance with God is inextricably bound up with that breaking and bruising of our Lord's body.

What is true of the flesh of Jesus in relation to our reconciliation to God is, of course, equally true of His blood, which was "shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mt. 26:28). "Without the shedding of blood is no remission," is the law of God's rule over man (Heb. 9:22). And it was only by the blood of Christ, poured out for us in His death, that could justify us before God and save us from "the wrath to come" (Rom. 5:9). Hence, Peter's proclamation of the situation: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (I Pet. 1:18-21). By the shedding of His blood for us, Christ has "perfected for ever them that are sanctified," having "obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12; 10:14). So do we have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," since we have been "washed" from our sins therein, and constituted "kings and priests unto God and His Father" (Heb. 10:19-20; Rev. 1:5-6).

The Applicability of Christ' Figures. The applicability of Christ's metaphors is evident in view of this nature of the case, as we have said. To eat His flesh is to completely depend is to completely depend upon His enfleshment for us, with its involvement of His bearing and putting away our sins by the offering of Himself "without spot to God" (Heb. 9:14). It is to fully reckon on the fact that we are truly circumcised before God "by the circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2:11), and so stand wholly "complete in Him," being "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6). To drink our Lord's blood, similarly is to receive "the atonement" (Rom. 5:11), and to continually rely on that blood to cleanse us from all sin (I Jn. 1:7-10).

This partaking of Christ, of course, is by faith. So do the just "live by faith" (Rom. 1:17), or have their life toward God in this manner. That is, they do so by implicitly depending on the Scripture's representations of our Lord's effectual work in bringing them to God (I Pet. 3:18). In the language of John, they simply believe "the record that God gave of His Son" (I Jn. 5:9-13), and, believing, "have life through His Name" (Jn. 20:30-31).

The Other Side of the Matter. But the other side of the matter is made equally emphatic by the Savior. "Except ye eat

the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (Jn. 6:53). To not eat His flesh and drink His blood is to not depend upon His enfleshment and the shedding of His blood for our acceptance with God. It is to seek righteousness before God by some other means, or to depend on something else for our acceptance with Him. Like the Jews of old, it is not to seek God's righteousness by faith (Rom. 9:30-33). Or, in the language of our Lord's parable, it is to not enter "by the door into the sheepfold," but endeavor to climb "up some other way" (Jn. 10:1). In so ignoring Christ's flesh and blood, one may be religious---even intensely so (see Rom. 10:1-3). But he cannot have spiritual life, inasmuch as that life is to be had only in the Son. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I Jn. 5:12; cf. Jn. 3:36).

The Current Application. As we contemplate the widespread lack of the "full assurance of faith," with the spiritual life which it alone can produce (Heb. 10:22), we cannot but feel that multitudes of churchmen today fall into the category of nonparticipation in Christ's flesh and blood. They do not appear to be eating and drinking of them as He signified in His Capernaum discourse. They give the impression of counting on something else for whatever expectancy of acceptance with God that they may have---denominational activity, and the like. Certainly, they do not evince a robust life toward God. "Well, I am trying," or, "I hope so," are typical responses elicited by inquiries touching spiritual life.

To all such, the words of our principal text should come with special force: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." Let us forever have done with that deadly ignorance of "God's righteousness," and "going about" to establish our own righteousness, and wholeheartedly and continually submit ourselves to "the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:1-3). So shall we constantly be "partakers of Christ," eating the true "spiritual meat" and drinking the true "spiritual drink," which is "Christ our Passover," "sacrificed for us" (I Cor. 5:7; 10:3-4; Heb. 3:14). Thus, and thus only, can we have spiritual life---by living before God in Christ, not ourselves---and know the peace with God and joy in Him which that life confers.

* * * * *

The Necessity of Waiting on God

"Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD" (Ps. 27:14).

The deep need for this waiting on God lies equally in the nature of man and the Nature of God. God, as Creator, formed man, to be a vessel in which He show forth His power and goodness. Man was not to have in himself a fountain of life, or strength, or happiness. The ever-living and only living One was each moment to be the Communicator to him of all that he needed. Man's glory and blessedness was not to be independent, or dependent upon himself, but dependent on a God of such infinite riches and love. Man was to have the joy of receiving every moment out of the fullness of God. This was his blessedness as an unfallen creature.

When man fell from God by sin, he was still more dependent on Him. There was not the slightest hope of recovery out of his state of death, but in God---His power and mercy. It is God alone who began the work of redemption. It is God alone who continues and carries it on each moment in each individual believer. Even in the regenerate man there is no power or goodness in himself. He had and can have, nothing that he does not each moment receive; and waiting on God is just as indispensable, and must be just as continuous and unbroken, as the breathing that maintains his natural life. --*Source Uncertain*

Lord in the Fullness of My Might

By Thomas H. Gill

Lord in the fullness of my might,
I would for Thee be strong;
While runneth o'er each dear delight,
To Thee should soar my song.

I would not give the world my heart,
And then profess thy love;
I would not feel my strength depart,
And then Thy service prove.

I would not with swift wing-ed zeal
On the world's errands go:
And labor up the heavenly hill
With weary feet and slow.

O not for Thee my weak desires,
My poorer baser part!
O not for Thee my fading fires,
The ashes of my heart.

I'll give to Thee my golden time,
In my dear joys have part!
For Thee the glory of my prime,
The fullness of my heart.

Jesus, How Much Thy Name Unfolds

By Mary Howley Peters

Jesus! how much Thy Name unfolds
To ev'ry opened ear!
The pardoned sinner's mem'ry holds
None other half so dear.

Thy Name encircles ev'ry grace
That God as man could show;
There only could He fully trace
A life divine below.

Jesus--- it speaks a life of love,
Of sorrows meekly borne;
It tells of sympathy above---
Whatever makes us mourn.

Jesus--- the One who knew no sin,
Made sin to make us just;
Thou gav'st Thyself our love to win,
Our full confiding trust.

The mention of Thy Name shall bow
Our hearts to worship Thee;
The Chiefest of ten thousand Thou,
Whose love has set us free.

In Christ we have been called to rule as kings and priests in the midst of our enemies (cf. Ps. 110:2; Rev. 1:6). Our sinful flesh is our primary foe. Base thoughts from "the mind of the flesh" (Rom. 8:7, ASV) are enemies and aliens. We must not permit them to develop strongholds in us. --*Dean E. Boelt*

Spirituality Versus Carnality

By Fred O. Blakely

"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6).

"We are the circumcision," wrote Paul to the Philippians, "which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3). On the other hand, there was a fleshly religion in that day, as there is now. The Apostle warned the brethren against it—"the concision," as he dubbed it (cf. Gal. 6:12-13)---calling upon them to beware of its snare (v. 2). We do well, indeed, to be acutely alert to this deceptive and entangling carnality which masquerades as devotion to God, and diligently steer clear of it (cf. Col. 2:4, 8, 16-23).

The Way of the Fleshly Mind. Fleshly religion has an outstanding and unfailing earmark: it has its "portion in this life" (Ps. 17:14). Whatever its pious claims and energetic display of activity in the Name of Christ, it is essentially earth-bound. When thoroughly sounded out, its devotees will be found to be "of the earth, earthy" (I Cor. 15:47). They obviously have not been "born from above" (Jn. 3:3, Moffatt). Hence, to think or speak of, and realistically anticipate, "heavenly things" is to leave them (Jn. 3:12). Their feet are planted solidly on terra firma, and any application of religion by them is confined to that sphere, or couched in its concepts and experiences. They are "at home in the body" (II Cor. 5:6), but when you, on the wings of faith, ascend to the heavenlies in Christ, they are strangely ill at ease, and unable to follow.

Another distinguishing characteristic of fleshly religion--which actually is nothing more than death posing as life (Rom. 8:5-8)---is its inherent and inveterate selfishness. Human ingenuity and culture have devised some very effective disguises for this evil trait of nature. Under the penetrating and revealing light of the divine Spirit, however, they can be discerned. The rule set forth by holy Scripture is that the heart which has been divinely renewed "seeketh not its own" (I Cor. 13:5). Those who habitually do so, at the expense of principle and the interest of others, thus demonstrate themselves to be basically unrenewed, whatever their pretense.

These are those who, for example, boast of what they have done for Christ and the church--a particularly prominent characteristic of the professional clergy. For these men to admit themselves to be "unprofitable servants," as they are commanded by the Lord to do (Lk. 17:7-10), would be altogether unthinkable. That would degrade their image as productive preachers and so reduce their stature in the denomination, which, in turn, would lessen their chances for a "big" church and a plush situation. It is true that such and honest and humble attitude would please God, but it would not serve the preacher's fleshly and earthly interest. So do they that are "after the flesh" choose, like the "profane" Esau and his very prodigious kind, to despise the "praise of God," in preference for self-interest and the "praise of men" (Jn. 12:42-43; Rom. 8:5; Heb. 12:15-17; cf. 11:24-26).

The Nature of the Reborn Person. In marked contrast with the religious earthling is he who is "after the Spirit," that is, "born of God" (Rom. 8:5; I Jn. 5:1). In conscious recognition, his "citizenship is in Heaven," whence also he awaits the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:20-21). With the Psalmist, he exclaims to God, "Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee" (Ps. 73:23-28). So does he, being "risen with Christ," constantly "seek those things

which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God," as he is exhorted by Scripture to do (Col. 3:1-4). In a word, he of the true "circumcision" is "spiritually-minded," and so minds "the things of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:5-6). He worships God "in the spirit," rejoices in Christ Jesus, and has "no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3). This spirituality necessarily constitutes such a one a stranger and a pilgrim in the present evil world, as it did all who have gone before him (Heb. 11:13-16; I Pet. 2:11). Being "of God," he is not "of this world," which unworldliness is as prominent a characteristic of his kind as that of world addiction is of those who are of the earth (Jn. 17:16; I Jn. 4:4-6).

In opposition to the self-centeredness of the man of the flesh, the man of the Spirit, having "put on Christ," is wrapped up in Him (Gal. 3:26-27). It is no longer he that lives, but Christ who lives in him (Gal. 2:20). It is his earnest desire, as it is the good pleasure of the Father, that "in all things" Christ shall "have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18). Hence, he says with John the Baptist, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (Jn. 3:30). As the spiritual person lives, therefore, he lives "unto the Lord," and when he dies, he dies "unto the Lord" (Rom. 14: 7-9). Bless God! With the Apostle, he is determined that Christ, not himself, shall be magnified in his body, "whether it be by life or death" (Phil. 1:20-24). In consequence of this spirituality, you will not hear the truly reborn man exalting himself. He will speak little, or not at all, of himself and what he has done. But he will be long and vociferous on what the Lord has done, and will do, for those who will submit themselves to Him. He does not have to seek his own welfare, since, like his Lord, he has committed that to Him that "judgeth righteously" (I Pet. 2:21-25).

In a day when great confusion prevails concerning true religion, it is indispensable that those who would really "follow the Lamb" be imbued with discernment (Rev. 14:4). Pursuant to the Master's warning, many indeed are crying, "Lo, here is Christ!, or there!" (Mt. 24:23-26). We must seek wisdom from Above to try and discern the spirits (I Jn. 4:1), lest, "being led away with the error of the wicked," we should fall from our "own steadfastness" (II Pet. 3:17-18). Only the genuinely spiritual can please God (Rom. 8:8; Heb. 11:6). Those who are otherwise minded are "earthly, sensual, devilish" (Jas. 3:16), it matters not what may be their claims.

Death Inducts into Life. "Someday you will read in the papers that D. L. Moody of East Northfield is dead. Don't you believe a word of it. At that moment I shall be more alive than now. I shall have gone up higher, that is all---out of this old clay tenement into a house that is immortal; a body that death cannot touch, that sin cannot taint, a body fashioned like unto His glorious body. That which is born of the flesh may die. That which is born of the spirit will live forever." --*Dwight L. Moody, Taken from Draper's Quotations*

The Matter of Lostness. "The man who dies out of Christ is said to be lost, and hardly a word in the English tongue expresses his condition with greater accuracy. He has squandered a rare fortune and at the last he stands for a fleeting moment and looks around, a moral fool, a wastrel who has lost in one overwhelming and irrecoverable loss, his soul, his life, his peace, his total, mysterious personality, his dear and everlasting all." --*A. W. Tozer, Taken from Draper's Quotations*

"This world is the land of the dying; the next is the land of the living." --*Tryon Edwards*

We Have a "Blessed Hope"

By Given O. Blakely

The "living hope" to which we have been begotten is one bringing joyful benefit. It has been given and sanctioned by God. His Holy Spirit facilitates its realization within us. Contrary to the unregenerate, we are looking forward to the "appearing" of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, that is our "blessed hope." "Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:13).

The present may well have dealt us some hard blows. Within and without, foes may beset us. Our life may not be attended with things that make for temporal happiness. But that is no matter. We are looking for the "blessed hope." When Jesus appears, trouble will disappear. When Jesus appears, we will also appear.

Hope, The Effector of Personal Purity. Purity of mind, heart, and body, cannot be accomplished apart from sanctifying hope. Law is not sufficient for this task. You cannot be holy because you "have to." I have tried, and so have you. Using such a procedure, our success-rate has been something less than acceptable. But God provided a way for purity to be accomplished -- it is HOPE.

"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (I Jn. 3:3). No one will let go of this world until he is sure of his inheritance in the world that is to come. The salvation of Christ ministers this knowledge.

The seriousness of a condition in which hope is not dominant cannot be overstated. A lack of hope enslaves one to the flesh. There is no way to escape the powerful effects of sin and guilt if hope is not enthroned in the heart. This is a circumstance requiring the consistent and arduous effort within the believer.

Hope is Necessary. Hope is not an option, it is a necessity. Our participation in Christ is dependent upon our hope! This is a weighty consideration, but we must not shun to embrace it. "But Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end" (Heb. 3:6).

I am afraid that many do not take this saying seriously, if, indeed, they are even aware of it. Do not miss what it says! We are Christ's house IF we keep confidence and a rejoicing hope. They both must be kept FIRMLY, not loosely. It ought to concern us that this posture is scarcely known in any degree in the contemporary church! The condition is inexcusable!

"For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end" (Heb. 3:14). When we were baptized into Christ, we knew we had done the right thing. There was a sense of fullness and cleansing. Joy and rejoicing was ours. A fire was ignited in our hearts that we thought would never go out or diminish. We were made "partakers of Christ." The Word of the Lord is that we maintain that status only to the degree we maintain "the beginning of our confidence, steadfast to the end." That is hope, and it saves!

The Definition and Prominence of Glory. What is "GLORY"? There is something about the word that frightens flesh. We are not speaking of "vain" or fading glory. That is what sinners seek. Their pleasures are only "for a season," appropriately called "the passing pleasures of sin" (Heb. 11:25, NKJV).

In Scripture, "glory" speaks of culmination, maturation, and revelation. It is the realization of the purpose for which we have been saved. It is the conclusion of the process begun by remission. It is the fruition of the work of grace within. It is the end of the race. It is receiving the crown. It is the experience of fullness, and the removing of partiality. --406 S. Sergeant, Joplin, MO 64801

Love's Foundations

Love is the foundation of all obedience. Without it morality degenerates into mere casuistry. Love is the foundation of all knowledge. Without it religion degenerates into a chattering about Moses and doctrines and theories; a thing that will neither kill nor make alive, that never gave life to a single soul or blessing to a single heart, and never put strength into any hand in the conflict and strife of daily life. —Alexander Maclaren

The Happy Choice

Oh, that I could forever sit
With Mary at the Master's feet!
Be this my happy choice —
My only care, delight, and bliss,
My joy, my heaven on earth, be this —
To hear the Bridegroom's voice.
—Charles Wesley

The Love of God

God only knows the love of God;
O that it now were shed abroad
In this poor stony heart;
For love I sigh, for love I pine;
This only portion, Lord, be mine,
Be mine this better part.
—Charles Wesley

The Narrow Path

We get back our mete as we measure —
We cannot do wrong and feel right;
Nor can we give pain and gain pleasure,
For justice avenges each slight.
The air for the wings of the sparrow,
The bush for the robin and wren,
But always the path that is narrow
And straight for the children of men.
—Anonymous

Obscure Martyrs

"The world knows nothing of its greatest men."
They have no place in storied page,
No rest in marble shrine;
They are past and gone with a buried age,
They died and made no sign
But work, that shall find its wages yet,
And deeds that their God will not forget,
Done for the love Divine.
These were their mourners and these shall be
The crowns of their immortality.
—Anonymous

The law of mutation belongs to a fallen world, but God is immutable, and in Him men of faith find eternal permanence.
--A. W. Tozer

Hope's Vital Role in Salvation

By Given O. Blakely

Hope is integral to salvation. It is the means by which we "work out" our own salvation "with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). Without hope, sanctification is laborious, and well nigh impossible. The world presses hard upon the soul that is not confident of its standing with God and inheritance in heaven. It will not be long until such a one will despair and quit the race to glory.

It is in this sense that hope saves us. As it is written, "Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance" (Rom. 8:23-25, NKJV).

This is not salvation in the sense of remission of sins. Hope does not and cannot remove sin. This is "salvation" in the sense of sanctification, or saving ourselves: "save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). You will not be able to separate yourself from this world if you are unsure of your place in the world to come!

Faith Makes Men to be Strangers. Acquaintance with God through Christ drives a wedge between the human spirit and the world. Those alive to God simply cannot feel at home in this world. With the patriarchs of old, they "confess" they are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13). Little wonder Peter pled so effectively with us, "Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (I Pet. 2:11). Such urging is certainly in order today. Each one of you must play a vital role in summoning men to live consistently with this call.

Christ Calls Men to Make a Choice. The Lord is not vague about this call; it is clear and to the point. Everyone does well to take it seriously. "If any man comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (Lk. 14:26). The reason for this requirement is two-fold: (First, God is going to destroy this world and its associations. (Secondly, He is calling you to "the world to come") (Heb. 2:5).

We are Begotten unto a Living Hope. Our new birth not only severed our association with the past, it secured our identity with the future. Therefore it is written, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (I Pet. 1:3, NKJV).

Jesus did not rise from the dead to secure permanency in this world -- and neither have you been so raised. The new birth begins our adaptation for heaven. The reason why you do not fit in here is that you are being fitted for here!

The Sustaining Prospect of our Future Status. It is our anticipation of a glorious future that sustains us in the good fight of faith. This is the significance of the spiritual "helmet" that we have been provided. "But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation" (I Thess. 5:8, NKJV).

Awaiting the Hope of Righteousness. Salvation has made us long to please our God. Yet, in spite of that strong yearning, we must confess that we yet "come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Many a saint has grieved over the small-

ness of their own soul, the meagerness of their efforts, and the lack of satisfactory progress. There is not a day that passes that we are not required to confess our sins, acknowledging our continual need of a Savior and Intercessor.

But we must not despair. Complete righteousness may not be ours yet -- but it will be! Our faith constrains us to wait for the complete conformity to the image of Christ. Is it not written, "For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith" (Gal. 5:5, NKJV). The Holy Spirit enables us to maintain the race. Through the Spirit's "strengthening" of us in the "inner man," Jesus can dwell in our hearts by faith. "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith . . ." (Eph. 3:17).

Let us, therefore, pray that our Father will create in us anew the realization that we do not belong to this world, and that we be fully confident of our place in the world to come. May He enable us, by His grace, to "abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13)!--*GivenB@aol.com*

By Grace I am an Heir of Heaven

By Chr. Ludwig Scheit

By grace I am an heir of Heaven:
Why doubt this, O my trembling heart?
If what the Scriptures promise clearly
Is true and firm in ev'ry part,
This also must be truth divine:
By grace a crown of life is thine.

By grace alone I shall inherit
That blissful home beyond the skies.
Works count for naught, the Lord incarnate
Hath won for me the heav'nly prize.
Salvation by His death He wrought,
His grace alone my pardon bought.

By grace! These precious words remember
When sorely by thy sins oppressed,
When Satan comes to vex thy spirit,
When troubled conscience sighs for rest;
What reason cannot comprehend,
God doth to thee by grace extend.

By grace! Be this in death my comfort;
Despite my fears, 'tis well with me.
I know my sin in all its greatness,
But also Him who sets me free.
My heart to naught by joy gives place
Since I am saved by grace, by grace.

Men, generally, do not know what to do with this life, yet want another one which will last forever. --*Anatole France*

We have all eternity to celebrate our victories, but only one short hour before sunset in which to win them. --*Robert Moffat*

Eternity has no gray hairs! The flowers fade, the heart withers, man grows old and dies, the world lies down in the sepulcher of ages, but time writes no wrinkles on the brow of eternity. --*Reginald Heber*

God is Above All

Our purpose in this writing shall be to exhort you to be of good courage when the circumstances of life become exceeding difficult, yea almost unbearable. In times like these it must be remembered that God is "above all" (Eph. 4:6), and that "all things are of" Him (II Cor. 5:18). He it is "who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11), working all things *together for good* to them that love God, even to them who are "the called according to His purpose" (cf. Rom. 8:28).

There are instances recorded in Scripture where God's people were marvelously aided by Him in times when help did not appear to be in sight. The assistance that was ministered was given "in all wisdom and prudence" (Eph. 1:8), and sometimes consisted in Divine enablement to bear up under the grievous circumstances and to glorify God in them, rather than the afflicted ones being completely delivered from them.

We shall always be the better for having the divine perspective of things, as they are revealed in Scripture. We shall be enabled to glorify God in whatever trial or affliction may be sent our way if we can only see things, in measure at least, as God sees them. Let us now consider two examples which illustrate what we are speaking of. Both are found in the book of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel Among the Captives. It will be recalled, for example, that in chapter one of his prophecy Ezekiel was "among the captives," meaning that he was among those prisoners and slaves who were transported from the land of Israel to Chaldea. Ezekiel, along with the other captives, was wrenched away from his homeland by a foreign king and nation that swept in and took the nation captive. [Incidentally, this thing happened because that Israel, as a nation, had departed from the living God, and God, therefore, severely chastised them for this, summoning the Babylonians and Chaldeans to take them away captive (Jer. 6:22-30; 13:20-21; 25:9-12; II Chron. 36:11-21)].

And here in the opening scenes of his prophecy, we find this Prophet of God himself to be "among the captives." So far as we know he was not given any special favors from the king such as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego eventually were. But there, while he was among the slaves, he was given to see "visions of God" (Ezek. 1:1). And, no doubt, the receiving of these visions and the due consideration of them, made the captivity to be at least somewhat bearable for him.

Regarding the revelation that was given to Ezekiel, the Lord said to him, "Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness" (Ezek. 3:3). This roll that Ezekiel was given to eat contained "lamentations, and mourning, and woe" (Ezek. 2:10). (Thus we see that, though the Lord God has some grievous things to declare in His Word regarding man's disobedience and rejection of Him, yet, if believing men are willing to see things from God's perspective, the vision can and will be sweet to their taste.)

In all of these things what we must see is that God has not changed (cf. Mal. 3:6); His eyes are yet running to and fro throughout the earth that He may show Himself strong in the behalf of him whose heart is perfect towards Him (cf. II Chron. 16:9). Our heavenly Father, who was also the God of Ezekiel, still works in a similar manner as He did with the Prophet. Though we, that are in Christ, and living in this part of the world, have not *physically* been taken captive by the government, (at least not yet), nevertheless, we are often *taken captive*

by a host of grievous circumstances, which are the common lot of those living in this world. We, too, in a similar sense find ourselves oftentimes to be "among the captives." We are frequently ensnared by cares, troubles, afflictions, and trials, even in the normalities of life. In the words of James, we "fall into diverse temptations" (Jas. 1:2). God, however, is able to minister to us greatly in such temptations and afflictions as these, if we will continually draw near to Him.

The Lord "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20). He is able to alter the grievous circumstance that we are in (delivering us from it completely), or, He is able to make us equal to it, as it pleases Him. Let us therefore seek those things which are above, where Christ Jesus sitteth at the right hand of God. Let us wait upon the Lord and cast all of our care upon Him. The heavens are now opened unto us (cf. Jn. 1:51), who are in Christ. Let us see that we take full advantage of this access to the Father (cf. Eph. 2:18; 3:12).

Visions of God. This is precisely what we are needing: *to see visions of God*. We are speaking now of "the eyes of" our "understanding being enlightened" (Eph. 1:18; cf. v. 19), that we may know more of what is the hope of our calling, and the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who have believed. What we all so desperately need is to comprehend by faith more plainly and clearly the great and blessed realities that have already been revealed in Scripture.

God, a Gracious and Meticulous Paymaster. The following glimpse of "the high and lofty One" (Isa. 57:15) from Ezekiel's prophecy teaches us a vital aspect of our heavenly Father that all men need to see more clearly. It is that God is a gracious and meticulous Paymaster. This thought is one that will sustain us through all of life's trials and adversities. It will give us the necessary incentives to "continue in the faith, grounded and settled" (Col. 1:23), knowing full well that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Consider well this word of the Lord to Ezekiel. "Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt for his labor wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord GOD" (Ezek. 29:18-20).

Historians tell us that the city of Tyrus was under siege by Nebuchadnezzar for some thirteen years, and that when the people of Tyre saw that their city would be taken, they, being on the seacoast, loaded their vast stores of expensive wares and goods on ships and transported them away to islands in the Mediterranean. Thus when Nebuchadnezzar's army finally gained entrance into the city to plunder it and to take its spoil, there was virtually no spoil left for them to take. Therefore the righteous LORD sent Nebuchadnezzar to conquer the land of Egypt and to take its prey, and *this* would be the payment to his army for overthrowing wicked Tyre.

The Abundant Compensation for the Saints. If the righteous God was this concerned about justice and equity being granted to an unrighteous king, such as Nebuchadnezzar, (who, unbeknown to him, was led to render to the God of heaven the service of conquering wicked Tyre), how much more do you think that God would be concerned about compensating those, who, having believed on the Name of His only begotten Son, have labored diligently in Christ's Name? Would He leave such ones unremunerated? To ask these questions is to answer them!

Christ's second appearing and the day of judgment will be a glorious day of recompense (I Cor. 4:5; cf. Heb. 11:26) for the people of the saints of the Most High God. Every single labor and service that was ever rendered to God in Christ's Name will be rewarded abundantly, even down to "a cup of cold water" given "only in the name of a disciple" (Mt. 10:42). As it is written elsewhere, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love" (Heb. 6:10). And again, "your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58).

A Final Consideration. One final consideration that we can see in passages such as this one in Ezekiel 29 is that the Lord Jehovah is "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose Name is Holy" (Isa. 57:15). He dwells "between the cherubim" (Isa. 37:16) and is "the Governor among the nations" (Ps. 22:28). He is "exalted as Head above all" (I Chron. 29:11) and "His ways" are "past finding out" (Rom. 11:33).

Therefore, when we think of all the distracting things (that is, distracting to those living by faith) that are transpiring in the earth today, (such as violence, wickedness, or nations rising up against other nations, etc.), let us stand back and consider again that "power belongeth unto God" (Ps. 62:11) and that "all things are of" Him (II Cor. 5:18). This is another way of affirming that He acts freely and unhindered "according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand or say unto Him what doest Thou?" (Dan. 4:35).

Let us then call to remembrance what the Scripture says about God's purpose and working. God is presently working all things toward the accomplishment of His eternal purpose which is in Christ Jesus (cf. Eph. 3:11; Jn. 5:17). "He shall not fail nor be discouraged" (Isa. 42:4) until His purpose be fully consummated in the world to come. Let us take comfort in this blessed consideration and rest in Him (Ps. 37:7). --*Editor*

A Spiritual Vocabulary

By Given O. Blakely

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (I Cor. 2:12-13, NKJV). ". . . which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words" (NASB).

In the Kingdom of God, communication is essential. It has pleased the Lord "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:21). The proclamation of a message is the appointed means of bringing people to participate in God's great salvation. Faith, after all, does come by "hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). When the Lord Jesus began His ministry, He did so by preaching. In a home town synagogue, He affirmed that He had come to fulfill the words of Isaiah. "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To PREACH the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To PROCLAIM liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To PROCLAIM the acceptable year of the LORD" (Lk. 4:18-9).

We are apprised in our text that a spiritual message must be in spiritual words; that a message from God is given in the words of God. You cannot deliver the message of God in words that man's wisdom teaches. Spiritual thoughts can only be effectively delivered with spiritual words. Here is an aspect of the kingdom where, in my judgment, much improvement could be realized.

When speaking of the things of God, it is imperative that we

avoid sectarian nomenclature and use the terms found in Scripture. When Jesus described His ministry, He did so in words of Scripture. The Apostles also spoke in this manner, employing the language of Scripture to make known Divine provision. The Divine vocabulary was developed under Moses and the Prophets. Key terms like "sacrifice," "offering," "atonement," "altar," "washing," etc., were introduced under the Law and expounded under the Gospel. Think of words like "justification," "sanctification," "redemption," and "reconciliation." They are "spiritual words," invested with transforming significance.

Life in Christ Jesus is also described with key words, given by the Holy Spirit: "risen," "walking in the Spirit," "living by faith," "communion of the Holy Spirit," and "fellowship of God's Son." These are all descriptive of our new life. Believers are called "saved," "strangers and pilgrims," "sons of God," "salt," and "light." All of these terms are impregnated with life, and are used by the Holy Spirit to affect the will of God within us. One has referred to using them as speaking of Bible things with Bible words.

It is unfortunate that men have introduced differing vocabularies to describe, what they say, is the work of God. These divergent nomenclatures have become the occasion of judging and division in the body of Christ. Without going into these various sets of humanly-devised theological terms, I encourage our readers to make a practice of employing Scriptural language to describe Scriptural experiences. If the experience is not Scriptural, it is unworthy of mentioning. If the language describing it is unscriptural, it will not convey a spiritual meaning. Let all take serious heed to the text: "which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words." By so doing, you will be a "workman that does not need to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). --*406 S. Sergeant St., Joplin, MO 64801*

Let Us Not Take Sin Lightly. Sin is taken too lightly by men in general. Man drinks iniquity like water (Job. 15:16). The separating point between God and man is sin (cf. Isa. 59:2). In the gospel, however, God has made an abundant provision for men to return unto Himself. There is now a copious source of washing, justification, and sanctification for men because of Christ's death and resurrection in their behalf. There is now a fountain that has been opened "for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1). Jews and Gentiles alike may now wash in it and be cleansed from their iniquities. Let us see that we avail ourselves of this blessed provision which God has made through His beloved Son. And let us be careful lest we have a casual regard for sin. --*Expanded from Dean E. Boelt*

Man's Long-Term Problem. The world can only offer short-term help for long-term problems. Man, however, has one basic long-term problem, namely alienation from God because of sin. We bless God that He has provided a marvelous remedy for sins and iniquity in the gospel of His Son. "And by Him [that is, Christ] all that believe are justified from all things, from which" they "could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39). --*Expanded from Dean E. Boelt*

Stability for Men. In God alone there is stability for men. As Deuteronomy 32:4 declares, "He is the Rock." This present evil world is in a state of restlessness. You will be too if you are not anchored to this "Rock of our salvation" (Ps. 95:1). And as James declared, With God there "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," but "a double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (1:17; cf. v.8). --*Expanded from Dean E. Boelt*

When Jesus' Ear was Pierced

By Given O. Blakely

The ceremonies of the Law were a depiction of the coming Savior of the world. The Altar, sacrificial beasts, blood of sprinkling, High Priest, etc., were all introductions to Him. This is involved in Christ's statement to His critics, "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me" (Jn. 5:39). It also is confirmed in the angel's word to John on the Isle of Patmos. "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10). Speaking of the ceremonial Law, the Spirit witnessed in Hebrews, "There are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things . . . For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come . . ." (8:4-5; 10:1).

Paul, in Colossians, adds, "So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ" (2:16-17). The Old Covenant was the projection of the great salvation that is in Christ Jesus. It introduced the nature and extent of that salvation in offices, ceremonies, and sacrifices.

The Exodus Twenty-One Text. Exodus 21:1-6 provides insight into the cost of our salvation. It provides precise language that will help to clarify the "mystery of godliness" (I Tim. 3:16-17). Notice the exactness of the statute concerning the Hebrew slave. "Now these are the judgments which you shall set before them: If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing. If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever." With regard to this passage of Scripture, consider the following points:

1. The time of service was limited. There came a time when the slave could go free (Exod. 21:2).
2. If he was single when he came in alone, he went out alone. If he had a wife when he came in, he took his wife with him (Exod. 21:3).
3. If, while a servant, his master gave him a wife, and the wife bore him children, they were to be left behind with the master. They could not be taken with the freed slave (Exod. 21:4).
4. Provision was made for the servant to refuse freedom in preference for remaining with his master and the wife and children that were given to him. The servant had to declare this preference, declaring he rejected freedom (Exod. 21:5).
5. The master then took the servant before the judges, stood him by a door post, and pierced his ear with an awl. By the piercing of the ear, the man was declared a servant forever (Exod. 21:6).

The Application to Christ. Here the entrance of Jesus into the world, a place of service, is pictured--His incarnation (Jn. 1:14; Rom. 8:3; Gal. 4:4). He came in "by Himself," with no equal or companion. In the capacity of "the Man," God gave Him a wife and children, so to speak (John 6:37,39; 10:28-29; 17:2), and He "received us" (Rom 15:7). Believers are "the children" God gave Him (Heb. 2:13). When the time for His return came,

He refused to be disassociated from those God had given Him. In His death He loudly declared that He loved the Father and us!

Other Mentionings of Christ's Piercing. The piercing of His ear is mentioned in Psalm 40:5-6 and Isaiah 50:5-6. "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but my ears you have PIERCED; burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require." "The Lord GOD has OPENED (pierced) My ear; And I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn away. I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting." The incarnate Word chose to maintain His identity His "wife and children" throughout eternity.

Some Relevant Implications. The implications of this are staggering, and will probably be offensive to those with surface views of redemption. The Lord Jesus paid an enormous price to be joined to His people! His servitude forever is alluded to in First Corinthians 11:3 and 15:23-28. "But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God . . . For He has put all things under His feet. But when He says "all things are put under Him, it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." Let it be clear, that prior to entering the world, there was equality with the Father, not subjection to Him (Phil. 2:6-7).

Jesus is forever scarred, as it were, for our salvation (Rev. 5:6), known as "the Man Christ Jesus" (I Tim 2:5). Oh, the magnitude of the phrase, "He gave Himself!" Here is something for you to probe and appreciate! Give thanks for the glory and magnitude of your salvation! Give thanks!

In conclusion, let us pray, Father, my heart is too small to take in the enormity of the price paid for my salvation. In the words of the Psalmist "I will run the course of Your commandments, For You shall enlarge my heart." Give me the capacity to see more of Jesus than I have ever seen before. --406 S. Sergeant, Joplin, MO 64801

The Regions of Nether Gloom

The Present Place of Consignment for Evil Angels. "For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of nether gloom (chains of darkness, KJV) to be kept until the judgment . . ." (II Pet. 2:4, RSV).

"And the angels that did not keep their own position but left their proper dwelling have been kept by Him in eternal chains in the nether gloom (in everlasting chains under darkness, KJV) until the judgment of the great day . . ." (Jude 6, RSV).

A Place Reserved for Evil Men. "These (false teachers) are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm; for them the nether gloom of darkness (the mist of darkness, KJV) has been reserved" (II Pet. 2:17, RSV).

"These are blemishes on your love feasts, as they boldly carouse together, looking after themselves; waterless clouds, carried along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars for whom the nether gloom of darkness has been reserved for ever" (Jude 12-13, RSV).

Let us derive from these sobering words of the Scripture the necessary incentives to love and to serve our God with "reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28; cf. Lk. 12:5), whereby we shall not cause offense to Him. --Editor

The Faith of Noah

By Robert Cobb

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb. 11:7).

What an amazing text! The Scripture tells us that Noah lived in an unusually evil time. It was a time when men's hearts were continually given over to evil. The account reads: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen 6:5). To think that in just a few generations the entire earth could have turned away from God.

"Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 6:8). God warned Noah of the impending doom, which was about to come upon the world. This warning came in the form of words. Noah then acted upon those words because he believed them to be true. Noah had faith in God and because he believed God, he was moved with fear and built an ark. He did not build a church or a large assembly of men. He did not gather together the leaders of his age to see what they thought of the revelation. No, seeing by faith that it was going to rain, he built the only logical instrument of salvation. He built an ark *because God told him to build an ark.*

This act of faith in Noah's day condemned the world. The fact that Noah began to build the ark should have alerted those around him of the impending destruction. This was a righteous man. He was not the town lunatic! He was a preacher of righteousness who should have been taken seriously! Be sure of this, that when the floodwaters broke loose he *was* taken seriously! But it was too late, for God himself had shut the door to the ark!

We too have been warned of an impending destruction. We have fled for refuge to the only spiritually logical place: the throne of grace, in order to find help in the time of need. We have believed the record, which God has given concerning His Son (cf. I Jn. 5:10). Soon "the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (II Pet. 3:10, 12). Then all our hardships will turn to joys. Then, all those that reside in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our "hiding place" (Isa. 32:2), will be glorified before the entire assembled universe. The fact that we have fled for refuge to Christ will judge the world on that day. Men should have taken notice of the saints of God. They should have listened to their words of reconciliation. All the sermons, which have spoken of this terrible day, will be rehearsed forever in the ears of those who would not believe the record that God gave them through his people.

The "covert" (Isa. 32:2) from the impending doom is the person of Jesus Christ. He has become our "ark" of safety. It is He who came and paved the road back into the presence of God with His own blood. It is He who took upon Himself the sins of the world on the cross of Calvary. And praise be unto our God, it will be that "same Jesus" (Acts 1:11) that went away which shall be returning to receive all those who have believed this record (cf. I Jn. 5:10-11).

Now His people wait in anticipation for that day. They regularly gather together and worship God in Spirit and in truth. They break bread around the Lord's table and remember his death until he comes. The fact of His soon coming is the focus of their thoughts and lives. This fact has permeated their very beings. It has found expression in everything that they say and

do. It has made them pilgrims and strangers in this present world.

The faith of Noah has been spoken of throughout the annals of time. He stands as a testimony to all those would believe what God says. He provides men with an example of how God feels about those who will do what he says and also to those who will not obey.

Let us who believe, hold fast to our faith in Christ. We too, are judging the world by our believing the testimony of Christ. In the ages to come when the record books are opened, then, we also will have the testimony that we pleased God (cf. Heb. 11:5).

--The End--

A Mark of True Religion

By Jonathan Edwards

(We include the following words, not at all implying that godly sorrow is synonymous with genuine faith in God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, it is a vital part of that faith. And it seems to us that this careless, wreckless religious generation that we live in needs to learn about brokenness of heart before the living God so that they may be partakers of His great salvation in Christ Jesus.)--*Editor's Note*

"Religious sorrow, mourning, and brokenness of heart, are also frequently spoken of as a great part of true religion. These things are often mentioned as distinguishing qualities of the true saints, and a great part of their character; Mt. 5:4, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." Ps. 34:18, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Isa. 61:1, 2, "The Lord hath anointed me, to bind up the broken-hearted, to comfort all that mourn." This godly sorrow and brokenness of heart is often spoken of, not only as a great thing in the distinguishing character of the saints, but that in them, which is peculiarly acceptable and pleasing to God; Ps. 51:17, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Isa. 57:15, "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." Chap. 66:2, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit." --*Taken from Religious Affections, Part I*

The Superiority of God's Word

By Walter Jones

Look at the suffering the prophets and apostles went through in their service to God. No one can say they had it easy. The Word of God was as honey when they ate it (Ezek. 3:3), but could sour their stomachs as it hit their system (Rev. 10:10-11). Delivering the Word of God required many trials: imprisonment, crucifixion, and martyrdom. We, in the West, are not called upon to make these sacrifices, but around the world, men and women are called upon to go through prison, martyrdom, and persecution. Throughout history it is the Word of God that has enabled Christians to go through these things. After all, the Word of God went through these things, was tried in all and found faithful, just as a well-made sword is. How much better than a sword is the Word of God? Unlike a sword that relies on the strength and cunning of a man, the Word proceeds from the Father and both seals and protects the Father's children, finally delivering those who know the Son to the Father. --*Submitted to the Banner via the Internet*

Postmaster: Send Address Changes to:
The Banner of Truth
18912 Delaware
Lowell, IN 46356

Periodicals
U. S. Postage
Paid at
Gary, IN 464

Address Service Requested!

**1998 Refreshing Waters Renewal #9 to be held 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 this three day gathering will be *The Coming of the Lord*. The exact dates of the coming Renewal are July 28-30 (Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday), 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, placing emphasis upon that which is stressed in Scripture. By the Lord's grace these gatherings will prove to be very profitable to the nourishment and sustaining of our faith.

For further information about these meetings 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 this July. There is an abundance of available motels for overnight stays in neighboring Merrillville, Indiana. --*Editor*

Not a Small Thing. "The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" (Jn. 6:52). From this remonstrance it is evident that a giant wall of unbelief stood between these Jews and their reception of the words of the Savior. This, of course, was their response to our Lord's famous discourse on the Bread of life. Let us give thanks, therefore, wherever we behold people rejoicing in Christ's death in their behalf, believing right well that it was for them that He died. Such confidence as this is not to be taken for granted and must not be regarded as a small thing. --*Editor*

Miscellaneous Observations and Reflections

An Encouragement from Great Britain. "Dear Mr. Stoner, I recently received my first issue of 'The Banner of Truth' and have thoroughly enjoyed its exceptionally rich and deep content. I feel as though I've been missing a great deal by not finding out about 'The Banner of Truth' earlier! Can you please tell me whether any previous issues are still available and what it would cost to have them sent to me in England?"

"I was also interested to learn that the messages on Confidence and Assurance given at the 1997 Refreshing Waters Renewal conference are available on audio cassettes. Could you please let me know what it would cost to have all the message tapes sent to me here in England? And again, are there tapes from previous Renewal conferences still available? If so, could I please have a list of the titles of the messages and the cost, including postage and packing to the UK?"

"Thank you for your time and trouble--and keep up the good work! Appreciatively, Joel Scott, Hampton, Middlesex (near London), England"

Today's Typical "Churchianity." The following titles represent the way typical churchmen today might sing some well-known hymns if they were really honest: "I Surrender Some," "There Shall Be Sprinkles of Blessings," "Fill My Spoon, Lord," "Oh, How I Like Jesus," "He's Quite a Bit to Me," "I Love to Talk About Telling the Story," "Take My Life and Let Me Be," "It is My Secret What God Can Do," "There is Scattered Cloudiness in My Soul Today," "Onward, Christian Reserves," "Where He Leads Me, I Will Consider Following," "Just As I Pretend to Be," "When the Saints Go Sneaking In." --*Author unknown, Submitted to The Banner of Truth by Joel Scott, Hampton, Middlesex, England*

The Work of God's Word. The Word of God has a lot of work to do in men, if they will let it. It must work grace into the heart as well as work sin out of the life. In this connection, it is very possible for men to memorize the Word and yet the Word still has no place in them (cf. Jn. 8:37). We must let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom (Col. 3:16) so that the Word "may have free course" (II Thess. 3:1) in our hearts and accomplish the work in us that only it can do. We are speaking here of "the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (I Thess. 2:13; cf. Heb. 4:12). --*Dean Boelt*

So Shall it Be. "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Mt. 13:49-50).

Psalm 69. Psalm 69 is a psalm of endurance and comfort amidst sore vexations and reproaches, and of hope that reaches far beyond all the troublesome things of this life.