

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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THE FOUNDATION IS CHRIST

Many persons are failures in life. They have not lived it with sufficient success so that they achieve that joy which should be the portion of all men upon this earth. The affairs of life serve only to contribute to and increase their misery, and no true pleasure or satisfaction is derived from the experience of living. The blame for their failure may rest squarely upon their own shoulders, or it may be due to circumstances, which are beyond their control. In the race of life, time and chance happens to all men.

It is a positive fact, evident in the life of multitudes who bear the name of Christ, that many make a failure of the new life in Christ Jesus. They do not live that new life granted to them by God with that success, which should bring to them the joy and peace that should be the portion of all who have placed their faith in Christ Jesus. The requirements of the life in Christ are a burden to them, and no true pleasure or satisfaction is derived - from being a child of God. If this is true, then the blame for this failure must rest squarely upon the shoulders of the individual or else upon someone else whom he permits to control or dominate him. It cannot be due to any circumstances that are beyond the control of Christ, for a God of love would not permit this to be so. Neither time nor chance can have any effect upon the spiritual life of a believer in Christ. It can be lived successfully no matter what may be the circumstances. We should mount up on every circumstance and use it as a pulpit from which to extol the power of our great God and Savior.

If the new life in Christ Jesus is lived successfully, it will be characterized by such things as peace, quietness, confidence, courage, strength, knowledge, assurance and victory. These things will be present even in spite of unfavorable circumstances, which normally would destroy and make such characteristics impossible. In fact this is the real distinction between the redeemed and forgiven and the unredeemed and unforgiven. Trouble will arise to challenge our peace, disturbances will come to

upset our quietness, fears will come near to challenge our courage, tests will arise to try our strength, and forces will seek to rob us of our victory. But the one who possesses Christ is equal to all such things and when they arise he emerges from the conflict victorious over them. In fact, these are our possessions in Christ and failure to lay hold of them is often the determining factor that means failure in the new life in Christ Jesus.

However, let none think that success in the Christian life is to be measured entirely by our possession of the good things of God, or that a present lack of these is a positive mark of failure. The Christian life is successful when its quality or character is of such nature that it satisfies, pleases and glorifies the Father. Such a life is a spiritual life, it is the successful Christian life. This is God's desire for everyone of His children.

But since *so* many fail to reach this ideal, it becomes necessary for those who proclaim the Word of God and who seek to apply it to the personal spiritual problems of men, to give careful thought to the causes of these failures. As a rule it can be attributed to a lack of desire upon the part of those who profess faith in Christ. However, this is not fully true as there is evidence that a vast multitude of professing Christians deeply desire to be spiritual, to live God-honoring daily lives, to be what God desires them to be. Any claim of a teacher that he has discovered the secret of success in the Christian life will be eagerly heeded by a myriad of Christians. Some admit they have tried everything, and they confess they are not yet spiritual. They have sought "holiness," "sanctification," "eradication," "second-blessing" and "sinless perfection" but they have not achieved the desire of their hearts - *to* live a life of such character that it will satisfy and glorify the Father.

When the causes of failure and defeat are investigated by means of the white light of God's Word, it will be repeatedly discovered that the whole fault is with the foundation. There is no solid foundation in the plan upon which a spiritual life can be erected.

A house that is able to withstand wind, rain, flood and the ravages of time must of necessity have a good foundation. Even *so* a character of life that endures under the troubles, sorrows, disappointments, temptations, persecutions and testings, which this world will certainly lay upon it must also have a sure foundation. This is the lesson that is so simply and forcefully taught in **Matthew 7:24-27**.

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon, that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

In view of our Lord's own teaching concerning the importance of the foundation, it is apparent that before one determines to live the successful Christian life, before determining to be what God desires him to be, he must carefully consider the foundation. If the foundation is lacking, or if it be something other than the true foundation, anything built upon it, no matter how good, will surely fall.

The stubbornness of the human spirit is such that even after years of building without success, very few are willing to even consider whether the foundation is false or lacking. Nevertheless, the exhortation, "examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves" (2 Cor. 13:5), must apply to the foundation upon which we build. Therefore, before we build we must make sure (1) that our foundation is Jesus Christ, (2) that we possess this foundation and have the right to build upon it. In other words everything in the true Christian life depends upon our possession of Christ. It must be established beyond all shadow of doubt that He belongs to us and that we belong to Him, that He bears a personal relationship to us and that we bear a personal relationship to Him. Anything

less than this will mean that we are building upon something concerning which our title is open to question.

There are many who are in no way sure of these things. They fully realize that Christ is the foundation, and that apart from the possession of Him they are nothing and have nothing. But whether they possess Him or not, whether they are related to Him or not is a troubling doubt in their minds. If being related to a church were the same as being related to Christ, then they would be sure, inasmuch as their relationship to a church is an established fact. But since relationship to a church has nothing to do with relationship to Christ, they must live out their lives with a miserable doubt in their minds, not knowing whether their acts joined them to a church or united them to Christ. If "church connections" meant "Christ connections" they would have complete assurance, but the ties that link men to churches do not in any manner bind them to Christ. If confessing their faith in Christ were the same as having faith in Him, then they could rest assured that they possess all that God gives to men of faith. But it is plain that to claim or confess the possession of a thing does not mean that it is actually ours. No confession of Christ can ever be substituted for the actual possession of Christ.

We need not be ignorant of the devices of Satan, and we know that confusion is one of his strategies. Into the life of the one who would seek to establish himself upon Christ, Satan will inject a multitude of issues that have nothing to do with our relationship to Him. To the one intent upon receiving Christ he will so arrange it that the seeker is striving to make a confession, join a church and receive Christ all at the same time. The result is that all issues become confused, and Christ must withdraw until His claim can have sole consideration. Therefore, the earnest seeker ends with an empty confession and church connections and the hope that somehow, somewhere in the scrambled confusion he obtained Christ.

The tragedy of all this is a heavy burden upon those who seek to cooperate with the Spirit of God in His work of bringing men to Christ. Therefore, we are forced to insist that if man is to be sure of his foundation, everything else must be thrust aside and the matter of our possession of Christ must have the right-of-way. It must be settled between God and man alone. We must obtain Christ in such a way that full assurance becomes a characteristic of our lives and all His benefits become our possessions. In view of this, the question we must now answer is, "How can this be done?"

A careful reading of the New Testament, even the reading of that single portion called the gospel of John, will bring the conviction that Jesus Christ is obtained, and all the blessings that inhere in Him are obtained by believing in Jesus Christ, therefore by faith in Him. This declaration may sound to some like a trite and overworked theological formulae, but I do not intend to let it be that in the mind of any. It is my purpose to explain it so fully that it will become simple and practical to all who honestly consider it.

In the English language, the words *belief* and *faith* are synonymous terms, with *belief* signifying mental assent, and *faith* implying the idea of trust and confidence. In the language in which the New Testament was originally written the word for *faith* and *belief* are the same Greek word, and no distinction can be made between these words as they appear in our English versions. In changing-Greek into English the translator is forced to use two words, but we should never permit this necessity of translation to confuse us. When we come upon the word *faith* we should read into it the idea of *belief*, and, likewise, when we come upon the word *belief* we should read into it all that is found in the word *faith*. Do not hesitate to do this for it does not alter the message in the least when we say "has faith" in place of "believeth" in John 3:16.

In the gospel of John alone, as stated before, we find enough to convince us that Christ and all the benefits that inhere in Him are obtained by believing or through faith.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth (has faith) in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16.

He that believeth (has faith) in Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not (has no faith) is condemned already, because he has not believed (has no faith) in the name of the only begotten Son of God. John 3:18.

He that believeth (has faith) on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not (has no faith in) the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. John 3:36.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth (has faith) on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. John 5:24.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth (has faith) on Me hath everlasting life. John 6:47.

If a man reads these passages, and if there is a divine quickening of his mind to the truth they contain, he will have the conviction that Jesus Christ and the blessings that are inseparable from Him-are not obtained by working, praying, paying or joining. They are obtained by believing. Therefore to have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ or to have exercised faith in Him is the most important and far-reaching step that any individual can ever take in his entire lifetime. In fact this is the one thing that God most desires of us. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith must be a characteristic of our lives if they please and satisfy the Father.

What Is Faith?

It has been said: "Faith is a mystery to many, a stumbling block to not a few. At times it appears like a new barrier set up between the soul and God, when the work of Christ has broken all the old barriers down." A ready response to these words springs from the heart of all who have tried to bring men to God through Christ. And in order to remove faith from the realm of the indefinite and mysterious, it will be profitable if all will seek the simple Scriptural explanation of it.

In the simple Scriptural explanation, faith is seen to be taking God at His word and acting, thinking or responding accordingly.

This idea is expressed in the words of Christ, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them." This is faith, and nothing less than this can be regarded as faith. A clear illustration of this is found in Luke 5:4-5. Two fishing ships were standing in the lake of Gennesaret, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Speaking to one of them the Lord said: **Simon, launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all night long and taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net.**

This is *faith*, in all its simplicity and reality. They had a word from Christ. It was instruction and advice. It told them what to do. They took Him at His word and acted accordingly.

There are innumerable things to be believed in the Word of God. These are to be believed and responded to in thought or deed as the case may require. Those who are constantly considering the Word will always be finding something to believe and respond to or act upon. Thus they can be living lives of faith. But we are not considering just now those innumerable things in the Scripture in

which faith can be exercised. Our task is to consider faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of God.

To have faith in Jesus Christ, or to believe on Him as the only begotten Son of God is to believe the record that God has given of His Son. There is no other way to have faith in Christ, there is no other way that one can believe in Him - our forgiveness, our redemption, our hope - all these depend upon believing the testimony God has given of His Son. Our belief in Christ is, first of all, the belief of a record that God has given us of His Son.

There is no ritual or ceremony involved in or connected with our believing in the Lord Jesus. It is useless to devise one or perform one another has devised. Faith in Jesus Christ is belief in God's record, and we believe this in the same way we believe any other record, witness or testimony. *There are no two ways of believing anything.* We cannot ignore the record and claim we believe in Christ. We are forced to begin by believing the record, even though afterward our faith in the record becomes our trust in a person, Christ Jesus.

The record that God has given of His Son is contained in the sixty-six books, which we call the Bible. The Scriptures testify of Him. But before a record can be believed, it must be known. Faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17), and he who has not heard cannot believe. To illustrate this let us imagine the following conversation between two persons whom we will designate as A and B.

A. "I am going to tell you something. Do you believe what I am going to tell you?"

B. "I will need to hear it first before I can tell you whether I believe it or not."

A. "*But* I will not tell you until you say you believe it."

B. "You must be joking. I cannot honestly tell you I believe a thing before I hear it."

A. "I will tell you this much - it concerns our friend John Smith. Now will you say you believe it?"

B. "That is no help at all. I cannot say I believe a thing until I hear it. And since I know it concerns my friend Smith, I tell you emphatically that I will not say that I do or do not believe it until I have heard it and considered it."

I am sure that all who read these lines will agree that B is the sensible and honest man while A is playing the fool. Apart from hearing or knowing there can be no belief or faith. Apart from careful consideration there can be no true faith. It is dishonest to say that we believe a thing which we have never heard or with which we are unfamiliar.

If this reasoning is true, then the conclusion logically arises that if the record God has given of His Son is in the sixty-six books which make up the Bible, then the whole Bible would have to be known and carefully considered before one could honestly say that he believes the record of God concerning His Son. This would place upon man a task that would require the best part of a lifetime, making faith almost impossible of attainment. If this were the whole truth, then we would be forced to admit that faith or belief is practically impossible, or that its attainment must be postponed until such time as the Scriptures have been comprehended. But this is not the whole truth for another great truth enters in here.

God in His love and mercy has seen fit to provide an epitome or summary of the full record He has given of His Son. This condensation of His record is found in the **gospel of John**. There, the inspired writer declares concerning his message:

But these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name. John 20:31.

The gospel of John is not a long book. Its twenty-one chapters can be read in a short time. The

average reader can go through it in about two hours, which is very little time indeed to give to reading the summary of the record God has given of His Son. But one reading is not enough. The testimony must be read, reread, and carefully considered. It must not be read with the idea in mind of discovering something to do. It must be read for the sole purpose of finding something to believe. If the heart is right in this matter, if the book is read for the purpose of knowing God's record of His Son, the reader will find his mind being quickened to the truth it reveals. He will find he is being helped by the Spirit, for he has undertaken a matter in which God can enter into fellowship.

When one is sure that he has become familiar with God's record of His Son, he is ready to take the most important step that a human being can ever take. He is ready to go to God and tell Him the thing that He most delights to hear. He can tell God that he believes the record that He has given of His Son, that he has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

If without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6), then the opposite must be true. Faith is well pleasing to God, it delights His heart and brings satisfaction to Him. The real confession of faith is the one we make to God, to Him alone and before Him alone. This is such a personal matter that the thought of an audience is abhorrent. If there is ever a time when one should enter into the secret place, shut out all else and pray to the Father in secret, it is that time when he first makes his confession of faith in Christ. Public declarations of this faith may come later. In fact, they should come later. *But* the original confession should be a man's personal dealings with his God.

Since man's faith is to be the link that unites Him to Christ, it must of necessity be a sound link. Since we are going to trust our all upon it, it must not be false. In view of this, God in His goodness will test our faith. This is not for His benefit, for God knows whether one believes or not. It is for our benefit that we might be able to do away with the false and continue our quest for the true. God's test of our faith is personal, therefore, different in every case. But if the faith we profess in Christ is found to be real then God seals us in that faith by giving it to us as a possession that can never be forfeited. This is why the believer can never become an unbeliever.

When God acts in response to *our* faith we enter upon a condition that can never be changed. We enter into the full possession of Christ as our Savior, we have the guarantee of redemption and forgiveness, we possess the Holy Spirit, we have the gift of life, we possess the foundation. These things being true we are fully prepared to live successfully the new life in Christ Jesus.

TRUTH FROM *THE SCRIPTURES*

(Continued from Vol. VIII, No. 4)

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST (Continued)

To reason apart from all the facts is illogical. In some things we are forced to do this when all the facts are not available. All the facts that have any bearing upon a Scriptural subject are available for us in the Word of God. To close our eyes to some facts and see only what we desire to see is to think dishonestly. When this is done in connection with Scripture it shows that the one who does it is not desirous for God's truth, as he is using only those facts, which support his ideas.

Many people have learned that the Greek word for *coming* in such places as Matthew 24:3, 27, 37 and 39 is *parousia*, and they also know that the true meaning of this is *personal presence*. Building upon these two facts they have worked out a theory that Christ has been present upon the earth for a

quarter century. This presence is supposed to be known and realized by a very few. They hold that the proof of His presence is seen by the signs given in Matthew 25:5-7. They hold that there are signs that He is now present upon the earth, rather than signs of His return or coming to the earth. Inasmuch as the signs have greatly multiplied in the past twenty-five years, they are convinced that this proves He is now upon the earth and will manifest Himself in due time.

However, they have closed their eyes to a most important fact in connection with His coming or *parousia*. **It is to be as the lightning that comes out of the east and shines even unto the west.** Since these words are spoken of His *parousia*, we can rest assured that His personal presence upon the earth will be attended by the greatest possible publicity, It will be hidden from none. We must never forget that it was a *departure* that caused His *former* personal presence upon the earth to *come* to an end, therefore, it will require a *return* or *coming again* to make His future presence possible. .

"This Generation Shall Not Pass"

The declaration of Matthew 24:34-35 has given trouble to many. In the common versions this passage seems to declare that everything our Lord predicted would take place before the generation then living would pass from the earthly scene, that is, say, in about twenty-five years. This has caused many to look for some event that took place in that quarter-century that followed the death of Christ, which, could be regarded as His second coming. Some have hit upon the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost, others upon the destruction of Jerusalem. There are still many people, including ministers, who toss aside all predictions of the second coming by declaring that these were fulfilled on the day of Pentecost or when Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus.

Many explanations of this difficulty have been worked out, the simplest being that *genea* means *race* or *nation* rather than "generation" and that it refers to Israel, thus making our Lord to have meant that Israel would not pass until all things He predicted had been fulfilled. The most attractive part of this explanation is that it fits the present picture. Israel as a race or nation has been wonderfully preserved to this day. Nevertheless, when we examine each one of the forty-one occurrences of the Greek word *genea*, we find that it means a generation and not a race or nation. Therefore, when all facts are considered, we cannot accept this way out of the difficulty since it would place us in the position of making a Greek word mean what we desire it to mean.

In this passage we find two passages that appear to be quite similar:

**This generation shall not pass.
My words shall not pass.**

The apparent similarity of these two statements in the English version is misleading. They appear to be of the same nature, but in the Greek there is a positive difference. This difference is indicated by the appearance of the Greek word *an* in the first statement. The word *an* is a particle for which there is no translation in English, therefore, it is usually ignored by translators. When this particle appears it "introduces an element of uncertainty, implies a condition, and makes the whole clause hypothetical." It denotes a contingency, the same as our word *may*. In the statement, "I will go," there is no element of uncertainty, no contingency. In the statement, "I may go," there is an element of uncertainty brought in, even though it may be only that of choice of pleasure.

Even so it is with the Greek particle *an*. This particle appears in the first statement, for much depended, so far as time was concerned, upon Israel's reception or rejection of the crucified and risen Messiah. It does not appear in the second statement, for His words will never pass away. Therefore, by these words the disciples were warned that these events could possibly take place in their

lifetime. But, even if the fulfillment should be long delayed, His words will never pass away. All He predicted will be fulfilled to the letter.

Trusting that these brief notes will help many to more clearly understand Matthew 24:34-35, we will resume our consideration of Matthew 24 beginning with verse 36.

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only. The contingency that was declared in verse thirty-four made it impossible for anyone to know the day or the hour of the coming of the Son of man. This statement must not be enlarged to make it say that no man knows, no man can know and no man ever will know. The contingency that made such knowledge impossible when our Lord spoke these words has now passed. Israel rejected the crucified and risen Messiah and the salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles as a result. This postponed God's prophetic program, but in God's due time the postponement will be lifted. When Daniel's seventieth week begins, it will be possible for men to know the date of the coming of the Son of man. This is proved by 1 Thess. 5:4-6. But, let it be carefully noted, no man can *now* know the date of the Lord's return, as the final week of seven years determined by God upon his people Israel has not yet begun.

But as the days of Noah were, so shall the coming (parousia) of the Son of man be. Here the Lord brings to mind the days of Noah as an illustration, likens these days to the coming of the Son of man, after which He applies the illustration. We must not push the illustration one bit further than the application made by our Lord.

For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming (parousia) of the Son of Man be. There is no inherent wrong in eating, drinking, marrying or giving in marriage. These are the common practices of the human race. In Noah's day they continued without change the ordinary course of life until the day that he entered into the ark. They remained ignorant of the mighty events that were impending until the flood came and took them all away. Even so it shall be at the coming of the Son of man. This passage is used by some to support their ideas of a secret coming of Christ. The passage is opposed to any such idea, for the flood was never a secret to Noah and no secret to any man upon earth when it came to pass. It took men by surprise simply because they failed to heed the warnings.

Then shall two be in the field; and one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; and one shall be taken and the other left. This statement reveals that there is a rapture or a removal of certain individuals at the coming of the Lord Jesus. And it is evident that this rapture takes place at the end of the great tribulation, and that those who have a part in it have lived through those terrible days. The rapture spoken of here cannot be sudden and unexpected as it comes at the end of a long list of prophesied events covering a period of seven years. This rapture at the close of the great tribulation has proved embarrassing to the theories of many, and very definite attempts have been made to prove that there is no rapture here at all. It is boldly asserted by some that those who are "taken" are taken away to judgment, while those who are "left" are the ones who enjoy the blessings of the millennial earth. Arguments in favor of this idea are brought from Matthew 24:39, where those whom the flood "took" were those who were judged. On the surface, this sounds somewhat convincing, but when the Greek is examined the argument falls to pieces. The word translated "took" in verse thirty-nine is *airo*, while in verses forty and forty-one the word translated "taken" is *paralambano*. This word means literally "to take to one's side" or "receive." It is found in John 14:3 where the Lord declares, "I will come again and *receive* you unto Myself." In view of this, there can be no doubt but that Matthew 24 reveals a rapture to take place at the close of the great tribulation.

At this point I fear that some readers may attempt to anticipate my teaching and will feel that I believe "that the church will go through the great tribulation." Therefore, I will state emphatically that it is my conviction that no believer who is a part of God's present calling will ever see the first day of the great tribulation. We play no part in that great drama that marks the time of the end. We will not be in either the audience or the cast of that pageant. God will bring a full end to the work He is now doing before He resumes His purposes for the people of Israel.

Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. This declaration of our Lord is often severed from all that precedes it and used as an exhortation in connection with the "any moment" theory of the second coming of Christ. By the "any moment" theory I mean the idea that the second coming is an event of such character that it could take place at any moment. Of this idea another has well said: "No delusion more pleasing and sweet on the one hand, or more wild, groundless, and injurious to truth and faith, on the other, has ever captivated the minds of men, than this one of an any-moment, unseen, secret advent, resurrection and rapture, a delusion condemned and exposed on almost every page of the Word of God. An unconditional, immediate, impending, any moment imminency of an advent, detached from all the signs that herald its approach, and which has lasted 1800 years, is an imminency that may last for 1800 years more. Such is not the believer's hope."

"But, how can one watch unless the Lord's coming may take place at any moment?" someone is sure to ask. "You would not watch all day for a person if you knew he could not arrive before night." These difficulties would hardly arise if men did not confuse *watching* with *looking*. Furthermore, these difficulties disappear when one discovers from Scripture just how the believer "watches." Surely he does not go into the open and fix his eyes upon the sky. Certainly not! He watches by becoming familiar with every detail the Lord has revealed concerning His coming, then acting in harmony with these truths. If he becomes familiar with the passages that precede the exhortation to "watch," he will not be guilty of detaching the second coming from all the signs that herald its approach. Let us never forget the words of our Lord:

So likewise ye, when ye shall see ALL these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Matthew 24:33.

If the student desires to give full consideration to all that is revealed concerning the second coming of Christ, he will need to examine the balance of Matthew 24 and all of Matthew 25. An exposition of Matthew 25:31-46 will be found in **Vol. VIII, No.1** so it will not be considered here. Inasmuch as the parables of Matthew 24 and 25 deal with events after His coming and with the people who will enter into the Kingdom, the consideration of these would lead us from our subject. A final reference is found in Matthew 26:64, and this passage completes the references to the Lord's return in the gospel of Matthew.

The student who approaches the first gospel with preconceived notions concerning the second coming of Christ will probably be disappointed at what he finds there. Since there is no teaching there in support of the "any-moment" theory of the Lord's return" the one who holds this idea will be inclined to try to read it into the truth revealed there. This can be done if texts are separated from their contexts. But if the truth is received as God has given it, it will bring the conviction that the second coming of Christ as set forth in Matthew is an event of such character that it could not take place at any moment. It must be preceded by all the events that the Lord declared would come before it.

The Gospel of Mark

The references to the second coming of Christ in the second gospel are found in Mark 8:38, 13:1-37, and 14:62. If the student will examine these passages he will find that they are parallel with those

in Matthew. They establish the truth from the mouths of two witnesses.

The Gospel of Luke

In the testimony of Luke to the Lord Jesus, references to His coming are found in Luke 9:26, 12:40, 13:35, 17:22-37, 18:8, 21:7-38. Many important details are added in Luke's gospel, but there is nothing in it that alters the testimony of Matthew and Mark. In all three gospels the second coming of the Lord Jesus is presented as an event taking place at the close of the great tribulation. There is no hint of any coming previous to this.

The Gospel of John

There is *one* important reference to the second coming in the gospel of John. It is a statement that does not appear in the first three gospels.

"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." John 14:2-3.

In seeking to understand this we must remember that the words of Our Lord about His coming recorded in Matthew 24 and 25 were spoken *one* day and those of John 14:3 were spoken *on* the next. Both of these portions were spoken privately to the same group of men, His intimate disciples. On *one* day He revealed that some would be taken while others would be left. Here, the next day, after Judas had departed, He assures His disciples that when He returned to the earth He would receive them, unto Himself. Furthermore, He guarantees to them a place beside Him in the Heavenly realm of His kingdom. This is seen in His words: "that where I am ye may be also." (See *The Word of Truth, Vol. VII, under title The Kingdom of the Heavens*, for further help *on* this.)

There are those who arbitrarily insist that the "coming again" spoken of here is not the same as that one set forth in Matthew, Mark and Luke, declaring that this takes place seven years before His coming to the earth. There is much talk about two stages of His coming, and of a coming *for* His saints followed by a later coming *with* His saints. These ideas are attractive but it requires more than attractiveness before a theory can be regarded as the truth of God. If these ideas are in the Scripture, then it will be easy to find them there by examining the passages that have a bearing upon this subject. If they are there, then we do not need to read them into any passage. And, while these ideas can be read into John 14:3, they cannot be found there. This is also His *parousia* and it will take place at the close of the tribulation. In order to keep His promise to these disciples, He will need to raise each one of them from the dead. There is no promise here that they would be alive when this took place. But whether alive or dead, it cannot affect His promise. He will come again and receive them unto Himself.

Another reference to the second coming is found in *John 21:22-23*, but this passage sheds no additional light upon *our* subject.

The Acts of the Apostles

In Acts 1:11 we find *one* of the simplest, *yet one* of the most important statements concerning the second coming of Christ. It declares the nature of His return, showing that it will be bodily, personal, literal and visible.

And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven. Acts 1:10-11.

Other references to the second coming of Christ are found in Acts 3:20 and 15:16. The first of these sets forth a promise to send Jesus Christ back again if Israel repented. The last reference sets forth one of the purposes of His return: to build again the tabernacle of David.

Our next task will be to examine the references to the second coming in the Pauline epistles. This we will do in our next study.

(To Be Continued, Vol. VIII, No. 6)

LESSONS FROM JEREMIAH

The Unfaithful Wife 3:1-3

They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to Me, saith the Lord. Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness. Therefore the showers have been withheld, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.

The *King James Version* of this portion is not a very good translation. As it stands, Israel is invited to return, and, while this is true, yet not in the way this translation suggests.

It was a common saying in Israel (referring to Deut. 24:1-4) that if a man should divorce his wife, and she leave him and be married to another man, and her second husband died, she could not return to her first husband. Such an act would utterly defile the land. The force of this is seen at once when Deut. 11:12 is read. Israel, who had forsaken Jehovah, and played the harlot with many lovers, had the vain idea that she could return to the Lord at will. Such would be out of harmony with the very principles the Lord had given to His people. It will be a new Israel (Matt. 21:43) of a future day that will return to the Lord. They are told to lift up their eyes to every hilltop and they will see a place where they have committed adultery. By a figure of speech, idolatry in Israel is stigmatized as being adultery. This is because the connection that existed between Jehovah and Israel was always symbolized by the marriage relationship. Their sins had caused the showers to be withheld and the latter rains not to fall. These rains were vital to the producing of any crop in Palestine. In spite of this punishment, the people had not changed their wicked ways.

Judah's Hypocrisy Exposed 3:4-5

Wilt thou not from this time cry unto Me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth? Will He reserve His anger for ever? will he keep it to the end? Behold thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldst.

By constantly turning from Jehovah and offering to enter into alliances with other nations, Judah

became guilty of wearing the mark common to those who were harlots. She did this without any feeling of guilt or shame. Nevertheless, she cried out, "My Father, the companion of my youth." This was her lip service to Jehovah. Furthermore, Israel asked in view of the cessation of the rains, "Will He keep up His anger forever, will He maintain it perpetually"; as if God were unduly severe. Thus they spoke but they continued to practice evil and walked in their own ways.

THE SECOND MESSAGE, 3:6 to 6:30

The Time of the Message 3:6

The Lord said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king.

The time must be carefully noted if the second message is to be understood.

Jehovah to Jeremiah About Israel 3:6-11

Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto Me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not but went and played the harlot also. And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and with stocks. And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto Me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord. And the Lord said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.

In this passage a distinction must be made between Israel and Judah. Here, because of the context, Israel means the ten-tribe northern kingdom, which is, at the time of this message, already in captivity. As a rule in Jeremiah the term Israel refers to the whole nation as the context will also make plain.

The Lord brings to Jeremiah's attention the apostasy of the northern kingdom Israel. The ten tribes had been utterly unfaithful. In spite of their sin, the Lord had exhorted them to return to Him, but they failed to do so. He declares that Judah, her sister kingdom, saw this. But, even though Judah saw that Israel because of her sins had been sent into captivity, yet she feared not and did the very same things. Judah, the two-tribe northern kingdom, saw the extent and depths of Israel's sin, and even though its extremity was repugnant to her, she only pretended to turn to the Lord. This caused the Lord to declare that Judah's sin, inasmuch as she had been warned by what happened to Israel, was far greater than that of her sister kingdom.

Jeremiah Given a Message to Israel 3:12

Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say: A hundred years before this the ten-tribe northern kingdom of Israel had been carried into captivity by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. Jeremiah is to stand with his face turned northward and speak as it were to the tribes in captivity.

Invitation and Promises 3:12-20

Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause my anger to fall upon you: I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed My voice, saith the Lord. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you; and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: And I will give you pastors according to Mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more. The ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more.

At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.

But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? and I said, Thou shalt call Me, My Father; and shalt not turn away from Me. Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord.

In this message, backsliding (apostate) Israel is invited to return to Jehovah. If she does, He will no longer frown upon her, for He is full of kindness and will not maintain His anger against her. The way of return is through acknowledgment of her guilt, her rebellion against the Lord, her idolatry, and her failure to listen to the voice of Jehovah. These from the first, were, and still are, the conditions of national blessing for Israel (Deut. 30:1-3, Psa. 32:1-5). Apart from the work of the Spirit, Israel could never and will never take these steps. Therefore, it will not happen as long as the salvation of God is among the Gentiles (See Acts 28:28). But, it will happen when the salvation of God returns to Israel again.

Jehovah appeals to them on the basis of their intimate covenant relationship to Him. He declares He is married to them, which in the Hebrew reads, "I am become your husband." This statement alone is sufficient to make repugnant all ideas about "the church is the bride of Christ." The term "bride of Christ" is nowhere found in Scripture and it should be discarded by all who determine to speak the truth accurately.

The Lord declares that all who repented would be taken back to Zion. There they would be given wise leaders and they would multiply in their own land. This will yet take place when the salvation of God returns to Israel. Later it will come to pass that just as the ark of the covenant was the one place where Israel met and communed with God (Exodus 25:22), even so will Jerusalem be the place where all men will meet and commune with Him. The vision goes even beyond this and declares that all nations are to be gathered to the name of the Lord and that Judah and Israel will be reunited.

But, God asks, how can this be done? *How* can apostate Israel be brought again from captivity and be blessed in the land? He both asks, and answers the question. By turning to the Lord, acknowledging Him as their father, and turning from Him no more. The invitation and promises are brought to an end by God reminding them of the sins that caused their judgment (verse 20).

Israel Weeping 3:21

A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the Lord their God.

Here the prophecy leaps far into the future. A response is heard from Israel. Their weeping and supplications are heard by Him. They turn from their iniquity and acknowledge the perverseness of their ways and their forgetfulness of Jehovah.

Jehovah Replies 3:22

Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.

There will be an immediate welcome for backsliding Israel in the day that she retraces her steps and returns to the Lord.

Israel Repents 3:22-25

Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God. Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel. For shame hath devoured the labors our fathers from our youth; their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God.

And so Israel returns *to* the Lord, confessing that He alone is their God, and acknowledging that all hope of blessing and safety from other kingdoms is a false hope. They confess that only in Jehovah their God is the blessing and safety of Israel. They admit that their poverty and shame came from disobedience, for from the time of their fathers they have been disobedient to the voice of the Lord.

Jehovah's Promises 4:1-2

If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto Me: And if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of My sight, then shalt thou not remove. And thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in Him, and in Him shall they glory.

The Lord declares His willingness to receive returning Israel. If they will repent and put away their detestable things out of His sight, He will establish them. Then through them the nations shall come to know the Lord.

The Lord to Judah and Jerusalem 4:3-4

For thus saith the Lord to Judah and Jerusalem, break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings. .

At this point the prophet's words are again directed toward the men of Judah and the city of Jerusalem. The plough and the harrow, signifying searching and repentance, were needed before they can receive the seed of the Word, which God was sending to them by Jeremiah. They were to cut themselves off from all confidence in the flesh. They had the outward sign of this, but not the inward significance. If they fail to do this, His fury will come forth like a fire, burning so that none can quench it. This is the first reference in Jeremiah to an unquenchable or inextinguishable fire. It is a symbol of God's wrath against sin. If it started to act toward them, it could not be stopped until it had run its course.

The Invasion Announced 4:5-9

Declare ye in Judah, and publish in Jerusalem; and say, Blow ye the trumpet in the land; cry, gather together, and say, Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the defended cities. Set up the standard toward Zion: retire, stay not: for I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction. The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way; he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate; and the cities shall be made waste, without an inhabitant. For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the Lord is not turned back from us. And it shall come to pass at that day, saith the Lord, that the heart of the king shall perish, and the heart of the princes; and the priests shall be astonished, and the prophets shall wonder.

The Lord instructs Jeremiah to make known publicly the impending invasion. He is to call upon them to blow the trumpet, thus sounding the alarm as though the invasion had already begun. They are to assemble themselves and go into the fortified cities of the land. The signal is to point toward Zion, and no attempt is to be made to make a stand or to delay the enemy. Nebuchadnezzar has destroyed all the nations that stood between Babylon and Israel, and now their turn has come. They are called upon to mourn and lament, for the wrath of God has not been turned away from them. When the invasion occurs, their leaders will be without wisdom or power. Kings, princes, priests, prophets and people shall be swallowed up in hopeless confusion.

Jeremiah's Protest 4:10

Then said I, Ah, Lord God! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul.

Jeremiah did not like to announce the invasion and destruction of Judah and Jerusalem. The word in him impelled him to say these things, but he could not quite understand them. Even in Jeremiah himself the word of God was in conflict with the messages of other prophets who were foretelling peace. He was inclined to believe that their comforting message was of the Lord. When God impelled him to announce the invasion, he cries out seeking to know if he is speaking the truth or were the other prophets speaking the truth. The people were believing the happy prophets who spoke of peace, and it seems that Jeremiah would have been glad to discover that they were right and he was mistaken.

The Judgment Confirmed 4:11-13

At that time it shall be said to this people and to Jerusalem, A dry wind of the high places in

the wilderness towards the daughter of My people, not to fan, nor to cleanse, Even a full wind from those places shall come unto me: now also will I give sentence against them. Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles.

God confirms the message of Jeremiah, which foretold judgment. It would be like a wind. Not a beneficent wind such as could be used for winnowing or cleansing the grain, but a whirlwind in its fury. Nebuchadnezzar would come upon them like a fog his swift moving chariots would be like a whirlwind.

Jerusalem Wails 4:13

Woe unto us! for we are spoiled.

This is a cry of fear, but not repentance.

Deliverance Offered 4:14-18

0 Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee? For a voice declareth from Dan, and publisheth affliction from Mount Ephraim. Make ye mention to the nations; behold, publish against Jerusalem, that watchers come from a far country, and give out their voice against the cities of Judah. As keepers of a field; are they against her round about; because she has been rebellious against Me, saith the Lord. Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart.

If Jerusalem will cleanse her heart from wickedness, she will be delivered. How long will they hope for deliverance in any other way? But this must be done speedily, for from Dan, at the northern border, and from Mount Ephraim the besiegers have begun to assemble. It is to be made known to the other nations and published in Jerusalem, that swift moving besiegers are coming from a distant country, and that they *cry* against Judah. The cause of this is found in Israel's rebellion against the Lord. *Her* ways and her acts have brought this upon her.

Jeremiah Declares His Grief 4:19-22

My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace; because thou hast heard, 0 my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment. How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?

When Jeremiah heard that the doom of Jerusalem and Judah *were* sealed, he cried out in anguish. The word of the Lord made the impending invasion a reality to him, and he heard the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war, crash following upon crash until the whole land is ruined, Even his own dwelling places and shelters are gone. He cries out in anguish and inquires, "How long?"

Jehovah Declares the Justice of His, Wrath 4:22

For my people is foolish, they have not known Me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

Judah's punishment was because of *her* folly and lack of understanding. They showed skill in performing all kinds of sin and evil, but they *were* ignorant of how to do good.

The Vision of Chaos 4:23-26

I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void, and the heavens, and they had no light, I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heaven were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger.

In language that reminds us of the judgment that came upon the original creation (Genesis 1:2), Jeremiah sets forth his vision of what will happen to the land of Israel when the threatened judgment passes over it.

Jehovah Reaffirms His Purpose 4:27-30

For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end. For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I return back from it. The whole city shall flee for the noise of the horsemen and bowmen; they shall go into the thickets, and climb up upon the rocks: every city shall be forsaken, and not a man dwell therein. And when thou art spoiled what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shall thou make thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life.

The whole land will be desolate, yet God will not make a full end. This is Israel's hope. Both earth and heaven will mourn. The Lord's purpose to judge Israel for her sins cannot be turned aside. All Jerusalem will flee before the invading armies, the people will hide in the woods and the mountains, and all cities of Judah will be forsaken. When this happens, Judah will no longer be able to buy off her enemies. Neither can she look to any other country for help, for they will have become her destroyers.

The Daughter of Zion Wails 4:31

For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, and the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion, that bewaileth herself, that spreadeth her hands, saying, Woe is me now! for my soul is wearied because of murderers.

The "daughter of Zion" is a figurative term that stands for the helpless people of Judah as distinct from the leaders. Jeremiah anticipates their distress.

(To Be Continued, Vol. VIII, No. 6)

MAN'S IMPERATIVE NEED

Man's deepest and greatest need is God. There is in every man a deep longing, a hunger for something that will never be satisfied until he has found God and entered into fellowship with Him. Man's restlessness, his lack of satisfaction, his efforts to find satisfaction are all indications of his longings for God. He hungers and thirsts but does not seem to know what he wants. He spends his money for that which is not bread and his labor for that which will never satisfy. He tries to drown his longings by increasing his possessions, and seeks to silence the cry of his conscience by engaging in ceaseless activity, even in religious activities. But God will see to it that no man ever finds satisfaction in such things. God will never permit him to be satisfied with anything less than Himself.

In the wisdom of God, He has so arranged the state of things between Himself and man that each individual must seek and find God. This is the testimony of Acts 17:26, where we are told that God has caused to come from one forefather people of every race to dwell upon the earth, and that He has set their times and limitations so that they might seek God. No matter what man may secure, even if he gain the world, he does not possess God until he has sought for Him and found Him. No one can do this for another. It must be done by each individual for himself. No church can say, "We have found God, unite with us and you will have Him too. It is necessary that somewhere in the life course of every man, he must ask and find the true answer to the question, "Where can God be found?"

It appears that God anticipated a monumental error that now prevails when He eliminated certain places where we need not look for Him. In spite of our opinions concerning it, God has declared in His word that **He does not dwell in temples made with hands. Acts 17:24.** Those who seek Him there may find religion to still the voice of conscience, but they will not find God. Some will dispute this by declaring that they went to a church and found God. I answer by saying that I question the Deity of any god that is found in a church. The true God is found only in Christ.

Two disciples spoke to the Lord Jesus, asking Him, "Master, where dwellest thou?" He invited them to come and see; which they did. If we seek to know where God dwells, the answer comes clear and unmistakable: in reference to Jesus Christ it is declared, "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Col. 2:9. If you would lay hold of God, if you would possess Him, if you would have all of Him that is possible for men to have, you will find Him in Jesus Christ.

BE THANKFUL

The Word of God most conclusively reveals that one thing in the life of any believer that is well pleasing to the Father is a spirit of thankfulness. Thanksgiving is not an act we perform. It is an attitude of the heart, a continual sense of appreciation of God Himself and all His benefits. Such an attitude of the heart is a source of satisfaction to the Father.

Over and over God has exhorted men to be thankful. Again and again He censures men because they are not thankful. But if one looks upon men today, he finds little that shows a thankful spirit. We are a nation of murmurers and complainers. Even though we are a part of the wealthiest nation upon the earth, we are a nation of grumblers. Our conversation is filled with declarations of grief as

we deplore everything and everybody. Dissatisfaction is expressed constantly, and our days are filled with moanings because of our lot. A satisfied man is a rare thing, and a thankful man seems to be an extinct species.

Could it be that these things reach the ear of God? What must He think after we have spent our day grumbling and complaining, murmuring and bewailing, fretting and lamenting, grieving and groaning, then we come to Him at the close of the day and say "Our Father, we are truly thankful for all the blessings of this day." He who sits in the heavens must certainly laugh.

The End

HISTORY AND PROPHECY

The past thirty years have made more history than the thousand years that preceded them. The first world war started a rapid happening of great events. It is almost impossible for the human mind to comprehend even a part of the events that have occurred between the assassination of Francis Ferdinand at Sarajevo in 1914 and the surrender of Japan in 1945. The past five years considered alone have been the most momentous period that the world has ever experienced.

There are those who insist that all or most of these happenings are the fulfillment of some prophecy in the Word of God. However, this constant succession of mighty events stands as unimpeachable testimony against those who are making a mockery of the Word of God by their insistence that all current history was prophesied by God. Not one thing that has happened in the past three decades has fulfilled any predictive prophecy in the Word of God.

The diligent student of the Bible knows very well that it contains thousands of predictive prophecies. He also knows that many of these have had a literal historical fulfillment, and these now stand as fulfilled prophecies. Other prophecies have not yet had any fulfillment and these are classified as unfulfilled prophecies.

If we would take every predictive prophecy in the Bible, classify these into two groups, those fulfilled and those awaiting fulfillment, not one event that has occurred in the past thirty years would cause us to move a single prophecy to the fulfilled group. No prophecy in the Word of God has ever been moved to the fulfilled group since that day when Paul made his declaration in **Acts 28:28, "the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles."** This declaration suspended that program of God, which was the subject of predictive prophecy and brought in a program that was never predicted. During that period of time that intervenes between that day 1900 years ago when the salvation of God went to the Gentiles, and that day yet future when the salvation of God returns to Israel, no prophecy has been fulfilled. If so, then let those who make the claim point us to some specific prediction that has been fulfilled in such a way that we never need to expect any further fulfillment.

THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS

***** Even though travel is still quite difficult, the end of the war has made it possible for me to resume some of the ministry that had to be suspended during the war years. The Editor and Mrs. Sellers made a twelve-day trip to the East and had the opportunity of fellowshipping with some who

love the truth in Buffalo, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. It was an enjoyable ministry, and we have tentatively accepted invitations to return again in the late spring.

***** The brethren who make up *The Bible Fellowship of Philadelphia* have their own printing equipment and they are turning out literature for distribution. A number of booklets dealing with man's nature and destiny are available. If any readers of *The Word of Truth* would like to have samples of their publications, they can be obtained by writing to *The Bible Fellowship of Philadelphia*, P.O. Box 4715, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The pamphlet on "Where Is Paradise?" is excellent. Meetings are held in Philadelphia every Sunday at 11 A.M. and on Thursday at 8 P.M. in the Reading Y.M.C.A., Kensington and Lehigh Avenues.

***** Hardly a day passes but that some inquiry is not received in regard to resuming the daily radio ministry. There is no prospect of this at the present time, due to the fact that it is impossible to buy satisfactory time over any metropolitan station. Like many other commodities, there is a shortage of radio time and the demand for it is exceedingly heavy. This has led many stations to stop selling time for "religious" broadcasts. The present situation may be radically altered during the coming year as new stations begin operation.

***** One of the greatest rewards that has come to us from this ministry is the many friends that we have made. We prize these friendships and seek to do all we can to maintain them, even though the burdens of the work may cause some of our friends to feel we are neglecting them. Many of these friends we have come to know personally and intimately, while others are known to us only by correspondence. One of our happiest anticipations is that of meeting many more friends whom we have not yet seen, and we will take every opportunity and make every opportunity that we can to do this. Some of our friends have indicated that at their earliest opportunity they plan to contact us by attending the meetings held in Grand Rapids, Chicago or Rockford. We can name forty persons who have expressed their desire to visit the work in Grand Rapids during the coming year. To everyone of the friends of this ministry we extend a hearty invitation, and we assure you we will do all we can to make your visit a pleasant one. As we are absent from the city quite often, we would urge any who plan to visit us to correspond well in advance of their arrival. Several who tried to surprise us were surprised themselves to find us out of town. Furthermore, like most other cities we are now suffering from an acute housing shortage, and hotel accommodations are seldom available except by advance reservation. We wish to offer the hospitality of our home to as many as possible, and where this may not be possible, we will gladly arrange for hotel or tourist-home accommodations for any who may wish us to do so.

***** The Editor teaches the Word once each month at *The Muskegon Bible Fellowship* in Muskegon, Michigan, where Mr. Garret Hazekamp carries on his faithful ministry.

End, Vol. VIII, No.5