



The
PRESENT TRUTH
and
Herald of Christ's Epiphany

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WHOLE NO. 712

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"The Lamb opened the seventh seal." "Ye have approached Mount Zion, and the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem. . . See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh . . . saying . . . 'Yet once more I shake not the earth only but also heaven' . . . Wherefore, receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and Godly fear." "Christ being come an High Priest . . . by a greater and more perfect Tabernacle . . . obtained eternal deliverance."—Rev. 8: 1; Heb. 12: 22, 25, 26, 28; 9: 11, 12.

THE LORD REIGNETH

*“Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; and let them say among the nations, the LORD reigneth!”
I Chronicles 16: 31*

THE MOTTO TEXT that we have selected for this year are descriptive of world conditions as they affect the Lord's consecrated people. God's Holy Prophets of the Old Testament and of the New give us numerous descriptions of our day and the events now taking place in the world. The above text is talking prophetically from a standpoint of observation into the future. This began to be true when our Lord Jesus, having returned to earth in His Second Coming to set up His Kingdom, took unto Himself His great power. Yet, not until His

Kingdom has been fully established in the earth, will His glorious Reign be clearly recognized.

That the Prophet David is referring especially to the present time, from 1878 down to the full inauguration of the Kingdom, is clear from his succeeding statement: “Clouds and darkness surround Him; Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. A fire goes before Him, and burns up His enemies round about” (Psa. 97: 2, 3). How true it is that the storm clouds are all about us in this Day of the Kingly presence of Jehovah's great Representative, the Executor of His great Purposes! Daily, the darkness of gloom and perplexity deepens on every side for those not acquainted with Jehovah's purposes.

A FIRE GOES BEFORE HIM

If we inquire: Why is this Day of His Presence such a Time of Trouble and distress of nations? The answer comes; because righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His Throne, and He is judging the nations and weighing them in the balance. Judgment is being laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet (Isaiah 28:17), to the intent, that before long, the equitable principles of His Government may be established in all the earth. Not only will all unrighteousness be made manifest, but a fire goes before Him and burns up His enemies (symbolically) (Psalm 97: 3). All the willful and persistent opposers of His righteous course shall be cut off, destroyed, burned up, and devoured with the fire of His jealousy—Zeph. 3: 8. This work of judgment and the consequent Time of Trouble being a necessary preparation for the glorious Reign of Righteousness that shall succeed it, and all being wisely directed by the High and Holy One, who is too wise to do wrong, too good to be unloving—the Prophet bids us to discern in it an abundant cause for rejoicing and gladness (Psalm 96: 9-13; 98: 1-9). Indeed, there is great cause for rejoicing, not only among God's people, in the whole earth; and it is the privilege of true Christians to tell the glad tidings to all who will hear.



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Free from all sects, parties, organizations, and creeds of men, but bound to God as it understands His Word, this magazine stands for —

- The defense of the Parousia Truth, given by the Lord through “that Servant,” as basic for all further development of the Truth;
- The defense of the arrangements, charter and will given by the Lord through “that Servant,” as binding on controlling corporations and associations among Truth people; and for
- The exposition and defense of the unfolding Epiphany-Basileia Truth, as meat in due season for the Lord's people, as He is pleased to provide it.

But whether men hear or whether they fail to understand, let us tell it out, and by and by, when the great afflictions of this Judgment hour begin to seal the instruction upon the hearts of men, then the joyful testimony will be as a healing balm. They will see that He who smote them in His wrath and scourged them in His hot displeasure, is also merciful and gracious and unwilling that they should perish, but desirous, rather that they should turn unto Him and obey His counsels and live.

LIGHTNING FLASHES FROM THE THRONE

It is in the midst of the clouds and darkness of this Day of Trouble, incident to the setting up of Messiah's Kingdom, that the statement of the Prophet is proven true: "His lightnings light the world; the earth (society) sees, and trembles." How well chosen is this figure! Truly like lightning flashes in the midst of the gloom and perplexity of this cloudy day, come to men the remarkable glimpses of the great principles of Truth and Righteousness in contrast to the world's present disorder, which is so manifest! A flash of lightning from the obscured Throne discloses here, one error, and there, misconduct, and another, sin.

Soon the whole world will be aroused. Already it is becoming so. Every day adds to the intensity of the trouble, and the whole world trembles for fear, not knowing what the outcome will be, but dreading the worst. The editorials of some of our great newspapers read as if written from the standpoint of Harvest Truth, so remarkably do they foretell what they declare to be almost certain to follow this present terrible war. Revolution and black anarchy (terrorism) are freely prophesied to precede a great reconstruction period. The great French Revolution is referred to in contrast as an April shower, compared to a destructive hurricane of the tropics. How truly are the Master's words concerning this time being fulfilled—"Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" (Luke 21: 26)!

It is remarkable that these lightning flashes are continually calling attention to the Word of God, to the Golden Rule, to the equal rights and privileges of human brotherhood, to the faultless character and loving and self-sacrificing disposition of Jesus Christ, to the Law of Love in contrast with the law of selfishness everywhere prevailing. It seems remarkable, too, how often in these days of war and stress, worldly men are drawing attention to the prophecies of the Scriptures, and wondering whether present conditions, and the troubles which all intelligent people see just

ahead, are not fulfillments of these Bible prophecies. All this is leading men to reason of righteousness and of coming judgments (Acts 24: 25), when they hope and believe, that in some way, present wrongs will be righted and righteousness established.

By the sudden, and now increasingly frequent, flashes of light which issue from the storm clouds that surround the invisible, spiritual presence of our glorious King, these principles of the Word of God are being illuminated and brought to the front for the consideration of all men. They are discussed not only in the daily press, but on the internet, and on television, in popular periodicals, in the official labor organs, in stores and factories, at public gatherings. Even heathen nations are discussing them, and are contrasting both the daily lives of professed Christians and the present course of the professed Christian nations with the character and the teachings of the great Founder of the Christian religion, extolling the latter and ridiculing the former.

WHY ARE YOU SO FEARFUL?

As a result of God's lightning flashes which are enlightening the world, there is great commotion everywhere manifest. Never before have such conditions prevailed. There are ominous mutterings of dissatisfaction, strikes and unrest; and the whole current of popular thought throughout the earth is set in a revolutionary direction. The lightning flashes are revealing the corruption in the world, the misconduct in religion, the dishonesty in government, and manifesting to the world that they are living far below the dignity of manhood. Even so, leaders in government and in high ecclesiastical positions are not able to perceive how to rectify this present evil society. The conflicting ideas, voices, theories and threats, reveal the facts which the Prophets foretold; for the nations are angry, the heathen [Gentiles] rage, and the whole earth trembles from the din of a wordy conflict and from the blows which even now are beginning to arouse the world.

ZION HEARD—AND WAS GLAD

But in the midst of all this trouble and tumult in the world, what is the attitude of the Lord's truly consecrated and faithful people? Are they, too, in fear? As the judgments of the Lord fall heavily upon the wayward and disobedient so that the whole earth reels and staggers as a drunken man (Psalm 107: 27), are the consecrated in dismay and distress? Ah, no; for it is written: "Zion hears, and is glad, and the daughters of

Judah rejoice because of Your judgments, O Lord." It is the sinners in Zion that are afraid. Why did the saints rejoice and were at rest in heart and mind during their earthly development time as stated in Psalms, chapters 91 and 46, while others are sorrowful and weep. It is because they dwelled in the secret place of the Most High [represented by the Holy of the typical Tabernacle], and abided under the shadow of the Almighty (as the typical Tabernacle was covered by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night). It was because God was their Refuge and Strength. The secret of the Lord was with them that revered Him, and He has shown them His Covenant (Psalm 25: 14).

These spirit-begotten new creatures who were represented as dwellers in the secret place of the Most High (the Holy), but are now living in the spirit-born condition (the Most Holy), were provided for in the perilous times existing then, with a clear knowledge of the Divine Plan with its times and seasons, which enabled them to see both the necessity for the method of Divine discipline upon the world, and also the peaceable fruits of right-living which shall accrue as a result.

YOUTHFUL WORTHIES AND CONSECRATED EPIPHANY CAMPERS

Now that the two spirit-begotten classes have finished their earthly sojourn and are spirit beings, ministering with their Lord in the spirit realm—what is our relationship to the Lord as potential Youthful Worthies and Consecrated Epiphany Campers, who are in preparation for our places in the earthly phase of the Millennial Kingdom? We must remember that the Lord is still in charge, and that He is working with the assistance of the glorified Christ and the Great Company, to overthrow Satan's evil empire that has become entrenched in every facet of human society. The adversary is not going down without a fight and that is why the world is undergoing much adversity.

In the midst of the storm and battle of this great Day of the Lord, we hear the commanding voice of the Lord as Scripturally set forth, and our hearts rejoice; for we have full confidence in His ability to bring order out of all the confusion. We have come to understand, that in the judgments of this Day, it is the Lord that speaks from Heaven—from the high place of authority and control; therefore, we give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness (Psalm 30:4)—of His Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power, which insure His doing all things true and right.

THOSE WHO WILL NOT HEAR

But the Psalmist intimated that, while the world at large would be in ignorance of the real portent of present events, and therefore in fear and dread; and while God's people, with clear knowledge, will be rejoicing and lifting up their heads because they see the outcome, some—not heeding either the world's distress nor the Voice which speaks from Heaven—will still boast themselves of their idols. God says: "Confounded be all they that serve graven-images that boast themselves of idols." These words call to mind the warning of the Apostle Paul: "See that you refuse not Him that speaks from Heaven" (Hebrews 12: 25). St. Paul addresses these words to those who know the Lord's voice and recognize it, warning them against, at any time, refusing longer to heed it when He speaks in wrath and judgment.

But alas! There are some who heed not the warning, and who, although they recognize the voice of the Lord, refuse longer to obey it. They turn away from Him that speaks from Heaven, toward the idols which their wayward hearts have set up instead of God. These graven images are indeed the work of their own hands—the human philosophies and science—falsely so called—of this evil day. And those of us who reject the testimony of God, when once we hear it and understand it, invariably fall into some one of the many forms of idolatrous worship now so prevalent; or else they drift into error restlessly from one form to another of them.

All such shall surely be confounded; they shall be put to shame and confusion; their idols shall be destroyed. The willful sinner, once enlightened and blessed with the hallowed influences of the Holy Spirit and the Truth, shall not, the Apostle declared, escape the just punishment for his deeds (Heb. 12: 14-19.) He points out this danger to the children of God, and warns them of the fearful penalties of turning away from the holy commandment delivered unto them. The Apostle Paul here depicts the scenes accompanying the inauguration of the old Law Covenant, and shows it to be a picture of events which will accompany the establishment of the New Law Covenant at the close of this present Age under the greater than Moses—our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Mountain (Kingdom) of the Lord's House is now being established in the top of the mountains, superseding the great kingdoms of this world, and is being exalted above the hills—the smaller

governments (Isaiah 2:2). Clouds and darkness, trouble and perplexity and distress of nations are round about; and the thundering and lightning (trouble and unrest) are making all the earth to tremble as did Israel at Mt. Sinai. (Exodus 19: 1-25.) And now—since the Spring of 1878—God has set His King upon His Holy Hill of Zion (Psalm 2: 6). Therefore, if those who refused to obey Moses, and presumptuously disgraced the ceremonies of the occasion at Sinai, met with instant death, how can we escape if we disregard the voice of the great Mediator of the New Covenant, and the remarkable circumstances which will accompany its establishment?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

We see the deepening clouds of trouble. We hear the thunder tones of judgment that call to the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof (Psalm 50: 1)—from the east to the west. We see the lightning flashes of Truth and Righteousness, and observe how the whole of earth's society is now in the shaking process which will eventuate in the complete overthrow of all unrighteous, existing institutions, systems and governments. Present events, indeed, speak in trumpet tones. How shall we regard these things? Surely, dear brethren, it will be with

thoughtful and reverent hearts! Surely we shall watch and pray, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it (Hebrews 4: 1)! We shall guide our course with the greatest carefulness that we may make our calling and election sure.

In this eventful period, everything that can be shaken will be shaken; that only the unshakable things of truth and righteousness may remain (Hebrews 12: 25-29). Every one called to share in the coming Kingdom, in either its heavenly or earthly aspects, must be a lover of righteousness; one who will courageously and lovingly stand for the Truth however much it may be spoken against. All who are not obedient to its requirements of Truth and Justice will be shaken out of their position in either of its companies. The snares and delusions of this evil day are accomplishing this very work. In the end, only the true will remain. Seeing that we see these things, let us be diligent, that we may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless; ready for the entrance into that rest which yet remains (2 Peter 3: 14). Praise to our Almighty Jehovah for the wonderful prospects now before us and for the future.

* * *

BYGONE ERA



The following is a transcript of a question meeting conducted by Brother Johnson at the Philadelphia convention in 1948. It is, for the most part, self-explanatory. It was recorded before tape recording was in general use and so it was no doubt taken down in shorthand and then typed. We are not sure who acted as the recording secretary, but assume that it may have been the work of the late Sr. Madeline Samek of the New York class because it was found in with other recorded events that had her signature. Many of the questions that were asked then seem to be much the same as are asked today. It is an interesting historical record and we trust that you will enjoy reminiscing of a year in the past.

* * *



THE EPIPHANY TABERNACLE

Brother Johnson
Question Meeting on Sept. 6, 1948

Brother Johnson opened the meeting thusly --

"I want to praise our Heavenly Father for His grace, mercy and truth so richly bestowed upon all of us and upon me through the merit and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. I want you to know that he is my strength and my stay. My sentiments can be best expressed in Hymns 273 and 176 and my sentiments with respect to our Lord are probably best expressed in Hymns 299 and 168. I want all of you to know that I love you. I want all of you to know that I take great pleasure in serving you, and that I expect to serve you until my life ends. You know, my brethren, I am the last rose of summer. In my earthly family I am the only one living. I am the last one of the pilgrims that served in our beloved Pastor's day. I am the last one of the star members. I am the last one of the priesthood to leave the world. And so I sometimes sing that song "The Last Rose of Summer" -- I put the spiritual thought in it. I do not look much like a rose.

a blessing to
I trust that the ministry will be ~~blessed through~~ all of the three elect classes and extend to the ancient worthies in the next age. I believe that in the writings of the Parousia and Epiphany messengers, the 66 books of the bible were opened and explained. So the Lord has been very gracious, very good and very kind to me. Join with me in praising God and thanking him and adoring him. Amen.

- - - - -

At the Memorial Supper, should each one break the bread as is done at the Love Feast?

Yes. "The bread of blessing which we (the Church) break, is it not the partnership of the body of Christ. For we being many all eat of that one bread." So we are to break the bread.

Will the revolutionism sifting have a parallel sifting after 1956 involving the Youthful Worthies?

I do not know that there should be a parallel. Parallels mean in the Parousia and Epiphany. In 1914 the last one was spirit begotten, so in 1954 the last one of the Great Company and the Youthful Worthies will begin to come into such a knowledge of the truth as by Passover 1956 will bring them away from the world and nominal church and revolutionizing levites.

Can a convention of this kind conduct business binding on the whole church?

It is only when a convention is called with specific instructions. For the Detroit convention, forms were sent out to the churches to have them signed and notarized naming who was to come as their delegate. In a case like that, the resolution would be binding on the church.

Have we Christians really been the light of the world and the salt of the earth as our Master expected us to be?

The faithful have.

What was the mark and special sin of Korah?

Stirring up murmuring and contradictionism.

Was Moses under the Law?

Yes, and at the same time the Mediator.

Would you advise having a mortgage on a home or would you advise paying it off as soon as possible?

I am not giving advice of that kind. Each case requires individual attention.

What covenant do the Youthful Worthies come under?

They come under the ~~Q~~axthbound Covenant in its second earthly phase. The Little Flock and Great Company are the partakers of the spiritual features. The Ancient and Youthful Worthies are the partakers of the ~~Q~~axthbound Covenant in its earthly features.

How often should the School of Prophets be held and how conducted?

That depends upon the church, size of the school, meetings that the church holds, number that can take part in the service.

Who are referred to in "the sands upon the seashore"?

1st, Fleshly Israel, and 2nd, the Restitution Class.

Psalms 91:10 One of my fellow workers recently told me that he canceled all his insurance policies?

Depends upon in whose favor, how long, etc.

Please explain meaning of disinterested love.

Good will based upon delight in good principles, that delights in those who are in harmony with good principles, abhors those who are not, pities the world in their mistreatment, etc.

Is the situation in Palestine working out according to plan?

Evidently there are features of God's plan that are connected with that. I am not just positive how this thing is going to end up. The first part started in 1881 has to be completed by the time the concentration camps are emptied and by the time the believing Jews can get back to Palestine.

Does anyone who disagrees with Epiphany truth become a sifter?

No. Some of the Little Flock are deceived about the Epiphany messenger. It will be some time before they will be cleared up.

Can a Youthful Worthy be classed as a second-deather?

No. Not on trial for life in this life, but they can forfeit their justification.

Will all Youthful Worthies who lose their standing have to be manifested during the Epiphany?

Not all Youthful Worthies who are deceived and misled by sifters will forfeit youthful worthyship. Youthful Worthies turn against Epiphany truth and do not become sifters. Sifters are liars.

Where would you think most of the priestly class is at the present time?
In the Society on account of the great numbers that are there.

When was the beginning of the Youthful Worthy class?

Came into existence in 1878 but were not recognized as such until 1881 and God began to deal with them as a class. Since 1914 all who consecrate are Youthful Worthies.

Is there any considerable number of Jews who have accepted Jesus as the Messiah?

There are probably 100,000 and 200,000 converted Jews in the world. Rabbi Wise urged his congregation to read the Gospels. He says that Jesus was the greatest of the prophets.

Will there be no need of conventions after the Little Flock have left the earth?

We will find out when the due time comes. If Brother Jolly may die, a convention will be called to appoint a successor. That authorized convention to be held immediately after Brother Jolly's death to locate a successor to have charge of the work, which will be mainly office work.

Have you thought that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is one of the Little Flock?

I certainly believe that she is. I believe that Mary has been horrified (to see how the Catholic church has arranged for her) to take the place of Venus.

Should nominations for officers be seconded?

No. Anyone can nominate. It can be seconded if anyone wants to. It is valid.

Psalms 25:5 To what class does this apply and to time of trouble?

Applies to Little Flock and into time of trouble. Not here through the time of trouble. Armageddon to start in Europe in 1956.

Why was the tribe of Levi chosen to replace the firstborn?

Because they stood by Moses in the type of the infidelism sifting (golden calf) and due to the fact that Moses and Aaron were in that tribe.

Is the marriage supper taking place now or is it a future event?

The Marriage of the Lamb is now taking place in the first resurrection. The marriage wont be complete until 1956. Some time later the marriage supper will be performed when Great Company is present. Simply investing Jesus and Church and Great Company with their powers to work restitution.

Is it not always right to do good to our fellow creatures --- ?

Yes, it is good.

Have you anything to say about the Russian and American situation?

So far as I can see, I do not think that at least before Armageddon there will be an actual war between so-called democratic powers and the soviet powers. I doubt whether there will be an actual war. I think it is a war of words, a war of maneuvers which in the end will be destructive to the soviet powers, just as Hitler found it ended destructive for him. No actual warfare but they will hold back as long as they can, bluffing all the time. Their 14 men in the Politburo are devising the lying schemes and lying propoganda to confuse the Russian people and try to mix up the other side, but at least before Armageddon no war, if even then. Rather think it will be a wordy war and a quasi-military war pretending.

May we look for beginning of Armageddon by Fall of 1949?

I think so. Devising of plans that will be set into motion or it may be the actual ~~of~~ fighting; do not know which of the two. Probably the former. First lay the different plans.

-- -- -- ?

Serving tracts at the churches is preferably done after their morning service. Preferable to evening services where mostly young people gather to attract each other.

Has there been a change made in the grand gallery in the Pyramid of Giseh? A step cut, etc.

Yes, I think so. (There have been two things I have wished to do. One was to visit Palestine to make a thorough study of the terrain and the other to go to the Pyramid, but could not see my way to take the necessary months.)

What is the Lord's opinion of those of his consecrated who gamble money on gambling machines ----?

I will leave that in the Lord's hands. He knows how much to account for weakness, etc.

-- -- -- ?

Throughout the Gospel Age the Church has been prophet and reformer to the world as antitypical Elijah, and so in the Church up until the harvest time it was thoroughly proper for brethren to preach repentance to the world.

Why is it necessary to exhort ~~of~~ priests that they (may lose their crowns) if all the crowns were allotted in 1916?

Many a lost crown is not yet manifested.

At one of the conventions you mentioned that the Lord had given you a special text and hymn for your birthday. Do you think everyone has a special text and hymn for their birthday?

I do not know. Keynote hymn for the whole Epiphany experience is "Though all the world my choice deride --- " Oct. 4, 1916

What do you think of prospective youthful worthies occasionally drinking beer?

I think he is making a mistake -- stumbling. I do not know how much of heredity is in that or how much weakness is in that. In danger of stumbling weak brothers.

We love you --- --- and the timely truths you have announced over the years. Are you greatly encouraged with the reports of the results?

Cut your earthly obligations as closely as you can so that you have more time for the Lord.

What is God's foretold order of events for the ----- ?

Worldwide revolution and worldwide anarchy for the world. For the church, it strives to make the calling, the Great Company to become cleansed, the Youthful Worthies to become cleansed, the justified to live justified life for they can still consecrate to youthful worthyship.

What scriptural punishment does God have for those who besmirch God's name, character, etc?

In nominal church, there will be special punishment in Armageddon.

In view of the American dollar gradually losing power, was it allright for a brother to sell his automobile at a higher price than he paid for it?

Yes. The money values are changing so rapidly, it is better.

Seeing that the present generation is so degraded, what do you advise about consecrated parents sending their children to public schools?

It depends. There are different conditions. There are some public schools in which it may be safe but some are very unsafe. Lately I most earnestly advised the grandfather and parents not to send their children to that school. (The Jolly family) I advised the grandmother to teach the children music and the grandfather who is highly educated and an excellent teacher be the child's teacher. But the laws in that state require public school attendance. I believe if these facts were made known to the authorities, it could be arranged, etc.

MY RESPONSIBILITIES

LOUIS XII of France was a man of ordinary gifts and an indifferent sense of responsibility. Happily, his prime minister, George D'Amboise, was a wise and capable statesman. So, when important issues needed to be resolved or problems met, Louis habitually retreated from responsibility with the remark, "Let George do it." In due time this casual phrase became a palace joke and the motto of those intent on shifting responsibility, or any unpleasant or difficult task, to someone else.

It should be noted, of course, that Louis XII was neither the first nor the last of the "Let George do it" kind. One of the most striking of all Old Testament parables reiterates the "Let George do it" theme. It is found in Judges 9: 8-15. According to this parable, the trees wanted to select a king to reign over them. Their first choice was the olive tree—a wise choice, because it stood preeminent in the Middle East, honored for its good fruit, its abundant shade and its other resources. The invitation was given, "Be our king." But the olive tree, "fat" and comfortable, had no wish to be disturbed for the sake of serving the others. It was pleasant to be "at ease in Zion" (Amos 6: 1), honored and unburdened by greater responsibilities.

The trees next called on the fig tree, not so distinguished as the olive, but nevertheless a tree of much value and importance. However, the fig tree also dissented, saying, "Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?" It felt quite satisfied in producing its good sweet fruit and was not interested in any greater service for the others.

I AM COMFORTABLE WHERE I AM

The trees then invited the vine to reign over them, but it likewise declined, saying, "Should I cease my new wine, which cheers both God and men, and go to be promoted over the trees?" It, in effect, drew its righteous robes around itself and turned down the offer, remarking with casual indifference, "I'm comfortable where I am."

Finally, in desperation, the trees turned to the bramble. It wasn't much of a tree, hardly worthy of being called one. Certainly it possessed none of the kingly qualities of the olive, or the fig, or even the vine; but someone had to be king; someone had to take the responsibility of ruling the trees with whatever wisdom and ability could be mustered. The bramble had some doubts about the good faith of those who had come asking it to be king over them. Quite possibly it suspected it had fallen heir to the throne by default. But, urged by the trees, the bramble proudly accepted the great responsibility, for which it was so ill fitted. It bound the trees to "come and put your trust in my shadow; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon" (even the greatest of all trees).

MY TALENTS

Obviously, the parable of the trees bears the stamp of ridicule. But it also rings with realism because it is so true to life. Many of the Lord's people are gifted with many talents, having what is needed for special service—excellent education, good powers of speech, fine ability to organize, pleasant personality, *etc.* But instead of using their choice powers fully for the Lord and His people, they are given over to lives of self-interest, community or family association. They are willing to provide partial service whereby they can retain their position at home, somewhat undisturbed and comfortable with an occasional vacation to break the monotony and being careful to retain their worldly associations. These brethren enjoy studying the Bible to a point, but they do not see the importance in making a full application of their consecrations to attain and understand the deeper things of the Truth, for to do so, would make them feel obligated to serve the Lord to a greater extent than they wish to do. As the Lord's people, we at times, make use of providentially provided bulwarks such as ill health, dependent children or parents, *etc.*, that seem to give

convenient excuse for not serving the master beyond what is comfortable (Matt. 8: 21, 22). Some do profess to serve Him, but it is often with God-dishonoring doctrines, such as the creeds of the Dark Ages, that teach eternal life in torment, instead of death, as being God's punishment for the non-elect, with no hope for any except the comparatively few who have heard of Jesus and accepted Him as their Savior—many of the great leaders of Christendom even deny Jesus' death as essential for salvation, His virgin birth as the Son of God, His resurrection from the dead and the inspiration of God's Word in general.

The lesson for all of us is that, whatever we have in our hand (Ex. 4: 2), in our power, in our grasp, whether it be abilities and opportunities corresponding to those of the olive tree, the fig tree or the vine, whether we have five talents, two talents, or only one talent (Matt. 25: 14-30), let us render unto God all our love, devotion and service, and find our chief delight in so doing. Let us not bury our talents or occupy them for self and the world.

ISAIAH'S VISION

"I heard the voice of the LORD, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.'" Isa. 6: 8.

This is another exhortation dealing with the subject of serving God. When Isaiah, in the vision, cried out lamenting his own imperfection, and that his lips were wholly inadequate to the telling of the Divine glory, one of the seraphim in the vision (not reality) brought a live coal from off the altar, and therewith touched the prophet's lips. Then, in the symbolic language of the vision, the Lord said to Isaiah: Since you have realized your own blemishes and Divine provision on your behalf, you shall be granted powers of speech and eloquence and words that are not your own, but which are beyond your natural ability; and, inspired by the Lord; your lips shall be inspired with the message of the great salvation, the message of love, the fire, the zeal, which shall prompt you to engage in full service for the Lord and thereby consume your sacrifice unto death (Rom. 12: 1); and with the grand results which shall flow from it to others you may, in your lips at least, be cleansed from all sin, even in advance of the great sacrifice of which you shall speak as my prophet and mouthpiece.

The vision had its designed effect upon Isaiah, establishing more firmly his faith and manifesting to

him the Divine greatness and power for him in the highest of holy things. Then Isaiah's heart was quickened with a desire to further engage in the service of the Almighty, no matter what the content of the message would be that the Lord would send. Consequently, when further on in the vision, he heard the Lord inquire for a faithful servant, he immediately responded, offering himself to serve with the message as directed, resulting in his receiving Divine acceptance to serve as God's representative in this task.

It is also with those whom the Lord would specially use in his service during this present time. None are forced into Divine service; all soldiers of the cross must be volunteers—none will be drafted. The Lord does not even press us to become his servants, but, as was illustrated here with Isaiah, he shows his character and plan to His faithful ones, and lets them know that he is seeking these to worship and serve Him in spirit and in truth. This is quite sufficient for all who have tasted of the Lord's grace appreciatively; for these brethren to know that there is an opportunity of rendering service to the King of kings to volunteer their services, to pray that the Lord will grant them the privilege of using all their talents for the highest vocation of all, which will fit them to sacrifice in his service. Only such are true mouthpieces of the Lord.

FALSE PROPHETS

The false prophets and teachers of error are those who serve the Lord's cause for hire of money or for praise of men, for self-adulation or aggrandizement. The message, of which Isaiah was thus made the channel or mouthpiece of the Lord, was, as already intimated, an unpleasant one. It was a message to the effect that the Divine counsel had already foreseen that all the warning, threatening, chastisement, which had come upon Israel and Judah, and which would yet come upon them, would fail to reach their hearts and turn them to repentance; and that, as a consequence, the land would be made desolate, the people being carried away into captivity. Such a message would be difficult to deliver to any people, yet this was the message which the Lord sent, and for which He specially prepared His servant. We are not surprised to learn that the message was resented, and even despite this, Isaiah lived to the good old age of seventy. Even the ray of hope which his message contained, to the effect that a remnant of the people would be spared and returned to their land and that the national hope would be revived, was probably considered to be the addition of insult to injury by the proud and self-willed people of Israel.

It was not long after Isaiah had this vision that the ten tribes were carried away into captivity, and a reformation set in with Judah. It was but temporary, and Judah's share in the prophesied captivity occurred about one hundred and fifty years later.

ANOTHER REMARKABLE EXAMPLE

Another remarkable example of the spirit of "Let George do it," is found in Judges 5. Here the Prophetess Deborah sings with Barak of the glorious victory that God had given to Israel over King Jabin of Canaan and his captain, Sisera. She praises those people who had valiantly taken part in the battle, and condemns those who had found excuses for not going up to the battle. Reuben declined the service; there were divisions of thought in the midst of this tribe, and as a result, instead of going to battle, they continued to abide "among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleating of the flocks" (vs. 15, 16); a warmer and safer place than the army camp. "Gilead abode beyond Jordan: and why did Dan remain in ships? Asher continued on the sea shore and stayed in his breaches" (v. 17). Dan and Asher lay on the Mediterranean seacoast. Dan wished to be excused; probably pretending that it would not be wise to leave their ships unprotected or to discontinue their sea trade. Asher shifted responsibility and declined to go up to the battle with their brethren, probably claiming that they must stay at home to repair the breaches; which the sea had in some places, made upon their land. Such excuses remind us of our Lord's parable (Luke 14: 15-24), in which "they all with one consent began to make excuse" as to why they should not attend the feast; also of the Apostle's words (Phil. 2: 21), "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."

Above all the alibis, Deborah and Barak condemned the city of Meroz, and a curse was pronounced upon its inhabitants: "Curse Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse its people bitterly, because they did not come to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty" (v. 23). Meroz may have been a city near the scene of battle (the exact location of the city is not known); its inhabitants evidently had good opportunity of rendering special service to the common cause, but declined it for fear of Jabin's 900 iron chariots, preferring to sleep in safety and to let others face the battle in their interests. God needed not their help; He could win the battle without them; but they spurned His offer to let them assist Him and their brethren in bringing victory to Israel, and on their own behalf—they were cowardly, indifferent, indolent and selfish, and cared little about serving and fighting for the LORD and their brethren.

Theirs was the spirit of "Let others do it." God and Christ look upon such as these as being against them, who are not with them (Matt. 12: 30). Meroz fully deserved God's curse for spurning His favor and not engaging in His service.

DOING NOTHING

Judges 5: 23

*"Curse ye Meroz," declared the Lord—
Curse ye bitterly one and all;
For they heeded not My word,
Responded not to clarion call.*

*They came not to the help of God,
To help defeat His mighty foe;
They slept as those beneath the sod,
Nor dealt the enemy a blow.
God felt no lack when Meroz failed
His invitation to accept.*

*Theirs was the loss; but God was hailed
The Conqueror—while Meroz slept!
Must those who nothing do be cursed?
Ah, yes! Our all to God we owe!
His enemies will be dispersed—*

—And Now—Let Us Consider—

OUR DUTY TO THE TRUTH

"His Word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay"—Jeremiah 20: 9.

THE Prophet Jeremiah is here using a very forceful comparison. He had a burning zeal in his heart; a consuming sense of the importance of the message given him to deliver. His previous declaration of the Word of God concerning Israel had been so despised and rejected that he had become disheartened. He himself declared, "The Word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said: I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name. But His Word was in my heart as a burning

fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary of forbearing, and I could not stay!" His message *had to be* spoken. The Lord had instructed him to tell Israel that they were about to be given over into the hands of their enemies. This Word of the Lord to the Prophet Jeremiah was given prior to the seventy years captivity of the Jews. There were false prophets among them who declared that the King of Judah was to gain a victory over their enemies. The people were glad to hear this assurance, and they despised the true Prophet of the Lord, who gave them the true Message from God. Jeremiah told them that they had failed to keep their Covenant with the Lord; that they had failed in their responsibilities to Jehovah, whose people they professed to be, and whom they had promised to serve faithfully; yet it was not too late, even then, for any to be delivered, who would repent; but that the nation was surely to be delivered to their enemies and carried away into captivity in Babylon.

QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT

Jeremiah knew that the false prophets would encourage the king, and that he, himself, would bring the king's wrath upon his own head by reiterating the message which Jehovah had commissioned him to deliver. He shrank from the infamy, the reproach and the persecution which, by experience, he knew would result from loyalty to the Lord. But he overcame the temptation to hold his peace. He would speak as God commanded him; let the cost be what it would. He would tell Israel again the words which had been given him. He would give them a further warning. If Jeremiah had allowed his fears to overwhelm him, and had withheld the message, undoubtedly, he would have been set aside as the mouthpiece of God, and another would have been commissioned to deliver the message. The burning within the heart of the Prophet would have grown feebler and would ultimately have died out. When a fire is kept shut off from a draft for a length of time, it will become extinguished. This is as true in the realm of moral and spiritual forces as in that of physical nature. This is why the Apostle Paul urged: "Quench not the Spirit." We might let the Holy Spirit of God die out in our hearts by a failure to do our duty, a failure to keep our covenant faithfully. The light within us, the holy fire, would smolder for a time, and finally become extinct. The Prophet Jeremiah could not withhold that which God had commanded him to speak; he could not quench the fire within his soul without losing his relationship with Jehovah, which, of course, he did not desire.

Thus it is with us today. God has let us into the secret of His counsels. He has granted us a wonderful spiritual illumination. He has given us a Message of the utmost importance to deliver to His people. We have been given the work of resisting, by God's Word, the misconceptions of the Lord's people in the various Truth groups and vindicating God's character from the aspersions cast upon it by the Mainline Christians through Eternal Torment, the Consciousness of the Dead and the union and cooperation of State and Church. We have been given the mission of blessing our Youthful Worthy brethren and CEC'S through the Word of God. This Message is not to be stated in a rude manner; But it is to be stated nevertheless. The great King whom God has appointed is now being manifested to anyone attuned to the signs of the times. In Jeremiah's time, the message was that the Kingdom of God, His typical Kingdom, was about to be overthrown. The lease of power to the Gentiles, under the domination of the Prince of this world, was about to be inaugurated. This order of things was permitted to run for an appointed time. That time has now run out. The King's Son has now received His long-promised inheritance (Psa. 2: 7-9). We are glad that our Message is not now the overthrow of God's Kingdom, but the Lord is in the process of overthrowing everything that is incorrect, both among Truth people and Christians of all denominations. So we are to tell forth this Message. We are to tell it by our actions, by our words, by the printed page and in every way that the Lord shall give us the opportunity. If through fear of persecution, of losing prestige in the eyes of men or for scorn of our brethren, for love of ease, or for any reason whatever, we should fail to give forth the Message of God, it will be taken from us and given to one who is worthy. The Lord is seeking those who are valiant for Him, for righteousness, for truth. If we prove ourselves weak, we are not fit for the Kingdom. If, on the other hand, this Message is burning within us; are we speaking it forth, that its inspiration may cause other hearts to take fire? If we refrain from telling it, the result will be that the fire of God's Holy Spirit will become extinguished within us. And if the light that is in us becomes darkness, how great will be that darkness! The possession of the Truth—God's Message—brings with it great responsibility. Shall we prove faithful to it? Shall we show to our God our deep appreciation of His loving kindness in granting us the knowledge of His wonderful Message of Salvation, His glorious Plan, with its times and seasons? There is a difference between the operation of the Lord's Spirit in

His children now, and its operation in the days of the Prophet Jeremiah and the other holy Prophets. During the Jewish Age, the Holy Spirit acted upon the servants and mouthpieces of God in a visible, physical manner. It led them with powerful outward manifestation—for, they did not have the Bible. Now, the people of the Lord have both His Message in His written Word and the Holy Spirit, which gives us a spiritual understanding impossible to His people of past Ages. Therefore it is not necessary anymore, for God to provide us with visible, physical manifestations. We have had the ministries of the last two star members of the Laodicean stage of the Church. We have been enlightened with the Parousia Truth by Bro. Russell and by the Epiphany Truth at the hands of Bro. Johnson.

The mysteries of God are now opened up to His faithful children, the watchers; and we are granted a clear understanding of “the deep things of God,” some features of which were never revealed until the Harvest, under the ministry of that “faithful and wise servant” as to the times and seasons, indicating the great unrest of human society (1 Thes. 5: 1-6). We are also told by the Apostle Paul that the things which were written of the servants of the Lord, in past dispensations, were written for our admonition and instruction and comfort, “upon whom the ends of the Ages are come” (1 Cor. 10: 11). Seeing all these things, brethren, “What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” How earnest we must be using special care, to give heed to the Word revealed to us! Not only by a careful study of the doctrines and promises taught in the Bible, but also to receive the instruction of its precepts in our hearts, and by clearly thinking in this vein, seeking to regulate our conduct to keep it in harmony with the doctrine. Let us be faithful in proclaiming the Message of our Lord, now due. Let us tell forth the words which He has put for us to declare, whether others hear or whether they refuse present truth—whether our faithfulness brings us the favor or the disfavor of the world, or of some of the Israel of God

in or outside of Truth circles (Matt. 10: 16). Shall we not speak His Word in meekness and love, leaving the results with our great Chief Priest? For “The Day is at hand!”

WHERE WERE YOU?

Indifference, indolence and the avoidance of responsibility of the Truth and its service are enemies of our achieving the Kingdom goal. This is indeed the question that every soldier of the Cross should ask himself. Where were you when the Captain of your Salvation called for volunteers and others marshaled themselves to the battle? Where were you when a fellow soldier fell, overcome or wounded in the fight? Were you there to give him the needed help? Where were you when a comrade grew faint and weary in rightly dividing the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2: 15)? Were you there to lift up his hands and strengthen his feeble knees (Heb. 12: 12)? Where were you when the battle was raging and all the resources were needed? Were you occupied mainly with personal, family and non-essential matters, or were you strenuously engaging in “the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6: 12)?

The “battle of the great day of God Almighty” (Rev. 16: 14) is being waged in this great “time of trouble,” which broke out in 1914 (Dan. 12: 1; Matt. 24: 21; see *The Time Is At Hand*, pp. 101, 104). Just where do you stand—on the side of sin and error, or on the side of righteousness and truth? Are you fighting intelligently and diligently for the Truth, redeeming the time and making each blow count, or are you fighting for the Lord only part time, “as one that beats the air” (Eph. 5: 16, 17; 1 Cor. 9: 26)? Are you entangled with worldly cares and allurements, or are you “enduring hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 2: 3, 4)? Are you possibly growing weary of well-doing, forgetting that we shall reap in due season, if we faint not (Gal. 6: 9)? Just where will you be when the victorious Soldiers of the Cross gather joyfully in their home-coming, singing their triumphant songs? Will you be there?

in remembrance

Sr. Carol Augustin

Age 68, of Muskegon, Michigan, died November 4, 2005. Carol the daughter of the late Sr. Sina Siplon, was a member of the Muskegon class. She is survived by three daughters and two grandchildren. Carol served at the Bible House in Philadelphia and again, later, at Chester Springs, Pennsylvania. Sr. Carol hosted

in her home, several hymn sings after the Muskegon conventions. Bro. David Seebald officiated at her funeral on November 12, 2005.

Sr. Esther Nwannediaya Okoro Agbaghighala

Age 103, of Umunkiri, Obingwa, Nigeria, died on May 1, 2005.

* * *

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LHMM U.S. CONVENTIONS

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Michigan	May 19-21	Massachusetts	May
Pennsylvania	July 21-23	Ohio	July
Oklahoma	September	Illinois	September

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