

The
PRESENT TRUTH
 and
Herald of Christ's Epiphany


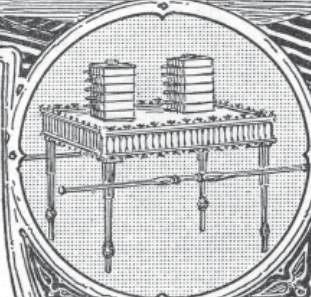
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THE COMING AGE
 OBITUARY

"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 HALF WAS NOT TOLD ME

“Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard” 1 Kings 10:7.

The Old Testament is filled with historical accounts, typical of better things to come. Let us not neglect it, “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15:4). The account of the Queen of Sheba’s visit to King Solomon is given in 1 Kings 10:1-10, 13; 2 Chron. 9:1-9, 12. Solomon was in all his glory at the time of her visit, in the 20th year of his reign, when he was about 40 years old. His fame as the most wonderful and wise monarch on earth had made him renowned not only among the lesser nations surrounding Israel but also to the extremes of the civilized world of that day.

The visit of the Queen of Sheba tells of a great appreciation in that day respecting learning, wisdom and

understanding. She herself evidently was a more than ordinarily brilliant woman, but she had heard of the great wisdom of the wisest man on earth, and she wished to prove whether or not it could be the truth that had reached her ears regarding him. She came to prove him with hard questions, not merely, we may suppose, with riddles and conundrums, which then were popular in the East, but probably also with questions relating to the sciences, arts, and wise government.

Nor did her inquiries cease with these, but extended evidently to religion, as intimated in 1 Kings 10:1; for she had heard not only of his earthly wisdom, but also that which was in connection with “the name of the LORD.” Apparently, she rightly associated in her mind Solomon’s greatness, wisdom, and wealth with some special Divine blessing. The Gentile Queen of Sheba made a long, tiresome, and very expensive desert journey to visit King Solomon and to learn of his wisdom.

In vs. 2-5, Sheba was in southern Arabia, a land noted at that time for its immense wealth and particularly for its spices, perfumes, and precious stones. Of these the Queen brought a royal present to King Solomon. The zeal of the Queen for wisdom is evidenced by the fact that she brought so valuable a treasure so long a distance partly at least on camels, and to some extent through a wilderness where she was liable to the attacks of Bedouin robbers. Deservedly her quest for wisdom was rewarded. She communed with Solomon concerning all that was in her heart (mind) and was richly rewarded by having her every inquiry answered. Learning of all Solomon’s wisdom and seeing the wonderful temple built to the glory of God, Solomon’s own palace just completed, the elaborate arrangements of its cuisine, the standings and attendance of his various servants and their apparel, and the remarkable passageway leading from the palace to the temple, “there was no more spirit in her”—it took her breath away; she was overwhelmingly amazed.

1 Kings 10:5: “And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her.” My dear Consecrated Epiphany Camper Brethren, especially those of the highest order, The Queen of Sheba class (PT ’54, pp. 41-42), pictured



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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.

by the Queen's response in v. 5, have been privileged to eat from the Lord's table, understand the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; yes, the deep truths. Our text says: "the half was not told." This applies to the Gospel Church, once afar off; they come and confess that the half was never told them of the riches of divine grace in our Lord (R2068:4). "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Cor. 2:9) "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. 2:10). As God's consecrated children; having heard His call, we like the Queen of Sheba can say we feel the same overwhelming astonishment as did the Queen!

We cannot apply this lesson of the visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon better than it has already been applied by our Lord. "Behold, a greater than Solomon is here" (Matt. 12:42). As we have already noticed, our Lord Jesus was "the greater than Solomon"—the antitype greater than the type. He is the embodiment of wisdom, of justice, of righteousness, and in his possession God has placed riches of grace and glory and honor and dominion. When the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor amongst the nations, all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto him. And the majesty of his Church, the true finished and glorified temple, the grandeur of all of his appointments and the blessings upon all who are his ministers or servants, they, with the Queen of the South, will agree that the half was never told them: that they had never dreamed of so wonderful and excellent a kingdom as that which God will thus establish amongst men, for which we pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth," etc.

Concerning that New Jerusalem it is written: "The nations shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it" and as the willing and obedient shall then present their homage and riches and spices and odors (prayers and good deeds), these will be accepted of them; and in return they shall have from the Greater than Solomon the riches of his grace, including divine favor and life everlasting: "And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart" (1 Kings 10:24).

In vs. 6-8 the Queen confessed that, although she had been somewhat skeptical before coming, and had only half believed what she had heard, yet the half had not been

told her of what she now heard and saw, bearing witness to Solomon's wisdom and prosperity; and the summing up of her tribute of praise shows that she appreciated the wisdom of Solomon more than even his wealth and splendor, so that she almost envied his servants, who, continually with him, were blessed by the wise and gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.

We next consider the Queen's highest compliment and tribute to King Solomon: "Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice" (1 Kings 10:9). In this tribute she attributes his excellent glory and wisdom to Jehovah's love of Israel; and she shows in this connection that she herself was a wise woman in attributing God's blessing and favor upon Solomon to be for the purpose of establishing "judgment and justice" (truth and righteousness) for His people Israel.

In vs. 10, 13, the Queen has concluded her visit and given her gifts, she received presents from King Solomon; and although the kind and extent of the gifts given to her is not mentioned, they were doubtless of greater value than those she brought to him; for it is a custom in oriental countries for kings and princes to give presents to one another according to their wealth, and Solomon was no doubt much more wealthy than the Queen.

THE RESULTS OF TRUTH INVESTIGATION

We recognize that as the consecrated Epiphany Campers progressively come to know and understand the Truth as given by Bro. Johnson and as contained in the Truth writings as shown in vs. 4 and 3 of the 10th chapter of 1 Kings: "And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house he had built; and Solomon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the King." How nicely the Lord's Epiphany people as arranged in their several classes and in their Epiphany work, and Bro. Johnson's sphere of executiveship which he had established (the house [either the temple or Solomon's palace could be referred to here] that he had built); the kind, abundance and varieties of spiritual food that he had provided (the meat of his table); the arrangements for his assistants (the sitting places [places assigned] of his servants); the service of his foreign representatives, pilgrims, etc. (the attendance of his ministers), and their official authority (their apparel); his chief supporters (cupbearers), and their official authority (their apparel); and Bro. Johnson's kind of life as a servant of God (his ascent [beautiful stairway] by which he went up into the house of the LORD [though not admitted

into the temple, the Sabean queen doubtless saw it from the outside; antitypically, though not admitted into the standings of the Little Flock, Great Company or Youthful Worthies, the consecrated Epiphany Campers will because of their consecration have a keener appreciation of matters pertaining to these higher standings than will any other Campers])—as they comprehend all these things, their reactions will be:

(a) They will be amazed and overwhelmed with astonishment (there was no more spirit in her).

(b) They will affirm as true the report that in their own sphere of activity they had received concerning Bro. Johnson's work and the Truth (she said . . . true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom, v. 6), stating that no one can grasp, believe and appreciate the Truth by merely hearing others tell about it—that they must first come into direct contact with it and study and perceive it for themselves (Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it, v. 7), and that even half of the depth, beauty and grandeur they see in it, after their personal investigation, had not been explained to them (behold, the half was not told me). They will acknowledge that the marvelous unfoldings of the Truth as due, through Bro. Johnson and his writings (the greatness of thy wisdom), and the rich blessings of the Spirit (prosperity), far surpass any reports that they had heard concerning them (exceedeth the fame which I heard).

(c) They will recognize the blessed condition of the Little Flock brethren (Happy are thy men, v. 8), and the Great Company and Youthful Worthy brethren (these thy servants) who served faithfully and continue to serve in harmony with the Truth as due and its Spirit, and its arrangements, under Bro. Johnson (which stand continually before thee), and who have the privilege of getting the Truth as due through his ministry (and hear thy wisdom).

(d) In gratitude and love for the blessings received, especially for their increased insight into God's great attributes as revealed in the Truth as due, they will ascribe all praise, honor and glory to Jehovah (Blessed be the LORD thy God, v. 9) and will rejoice that He blessed Bro. Johnson with His Truth as due and its Spirit (delighted in thee) and placed Bro. Johnson in charge, as His executive, of all His Epiphany people, except the Little Flock, though Bro. Johnson did have a charge toward them also (set thee on his throne, to be king for . . . God . . . throne of Israel), because of His enduring love for His people (because the LORD

loved Israel for ever), which caused Him to appoint Bro. Johnson as His Epiphany executive (made he thee king), to help establish His people fixedly in their various standings before Him (to establish them for ever) and to preside over His Epiphany people in Truth and righteousness (to do judgment and justice).

(e) Because of what they will have seen, heard, and experienced in contacts with Bro. Johnson and the Truth, these already or about-to-be consecrated Epiphany Campers will from their human all present to Bro. Johnson their knowledge of Divine matters, recognizing him as a Divinely appointed servant of God in the Little Flock (she gave the king 120 [10 x 12] talents of gold, v. 10).

(f) They will present an abundance of choice human powers which are ingredients of the graces (of spices very great store).

(g) They will present character graces (precious stones) which they had already more or less developed.

From these last two or three responses we see that all the members of the antitypical queen of Sheba who were not consecrated before coming into contact with the Truth will at least by this time have made their consecration. And since the call to Youthful Worthiness closes before any of these Epiphany Campers consecrate (otherwise they would have had a standing in the Epiphany Court, instead of in the Epiphany Camp), and since the antitypical queen of Sheba class is the last class to consecrate prior to the opening of the Highway of Holiness for the world of mankind in general, it follows that they will be the last Gospel-Age class of God's consecrated people to bring their choice human powers as ingredients of the graces to the Lord in consecration during the reign of sin, while the privileges of suffering for righteousness' sake are still open, for the purposes of the Epiphany temple, i.e., to help build the Epiphany Camp, under Bro. Johnson's direction (there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon).

We understand that since the fall of 1954 the faithful Epiphany-enlightened brethren have conformed themselves to these transitional changes and adjustments as the Lord has brought them about and revealed them through His Word and providential leadings which continue to this very day. And now (2023) there are more and more brethren who have consecrated since the fall of 1954, who have their standing in the Camp, as Consecrated Epiphany Campers. The Consecrated Epiphany Campers in the Truth are the highest class of the antitypical Nethinim, who serve in sympathetic unity

with their Youthful Worthy brethren, who are antitypical Levities in the Court. Furthermore, they are very closely related to these Youthful Worthy brethren, both being of the same antitypical tribe of Manasseh.

My dear consecrated brethren: the Consecrated Epiphany Campers have consecrated unto death while sin is in the ascendancy, so the Consecrated Epiphany Camper enters a strait gate and walks on a narrow way as they faithfully remain dead to self and the world and alive to God amid much besetment and opposition! Yes, so close do they in many ways come to being of the elect. With these greater privileges come greater trials that prove them to stay true to their call. However, if they fail willfully, they will come under a much stronger sentence for their wrong doings! Consecrated Epiphany Campers are the “virgins without number” in Cant. 6:8 who had a close relationship with Solomon though not a connubial relationship. Oh, the Consecrated Epiphany Campers have been given the commission by God through David to serve the Levites, “Also of the Nethinim whom David and the princes had appointed for the service of the Levites” (Ezra 8:20). And, with the time of transition comes increased friction for the Consecrated Epiphany Camper hopefuls.

This thought is brought to our attention in the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon’s court. The distance she came is estimated at 1,500 miles, and as the means for traveling was by camels, and their average speed twenty miles per day, it is estimated that the journey to Jerusalem and back to her home consumed five months; besides whatever time she spent at Solomon’s court. Tradition tells us that the Queen sent her ambassadors with a letter to King Solomon before she went herself. The legend declares that when this embassy reached Jerusalem King Solomon told the bearers the contents of the letter before they presented it and made light of their mighty problems. When the emissaries reached the Queen of Sheba, their reports of these matters determined her to visit King Solomon in person.

The Queen’s astonishment at what she found, and her declaration that the half had not been told her, reminds us of the Scriptural declaration respecting the greater than Solomon and the wonderful kingdom glories in reservation for his faithful. We read: “Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath in reservation for them that love him.” Now we know in part and see as through an obscure glass, but then we shall see as we are seen and know as we are known, and be like our Lord and share

his glories (Gospel age and expanded Gospel Age work, 1 Cor. 2:9; 13:12; PT ’84, p. 22).

The Queen’s exulting remarks at the conclusion of her visit were, Happy are thy men, and happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee and hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the LORD thy God: which delighteth in thee to set thee on the throne of Israel; because the Lord loved Israel forever, therefore made he thee King to do judgment and justice (based on 2 Chron. 9:7,8).

Jesus the greater than Solomon, in harmony with the divine arrangement, has prepared to have his faithful servants of the present time with him to share his glory and his Kingdom, and the blessings of that time will be specially theirs. Happy those men who will be in his presence, who will see him as he is and be like him and be the recipients of his favors. And although the blessings of the Millennial kingdom will come first and chiefly to the Church of this Gospel age, which will be associated with the Lord in the kingdom glory and sit at meat with him and participate in his honors and be blessed by his presence and wisdom, yet indeed a great blessing will remain for the Consecrated Epiphany Campers and the world of mankind. As the Queen expressed it of the typical King, that God’s blessing upon Israel was manifested in choosing him for King, so God’s blessing to the world of mankind will be manifested in the establishment of Messiah’s kingdom.

We Consecrated Epiphany Campers are not considered to be of the church of the firstborn; however, we are not to think that the Lord will cease to give His faithful people Truth as due and needed for their guidance at that time; however, it will then be in other connections. Since the Epiphany Campers are a pre-Millennial class, those of them who believe in Jesus as their Savior have pre-Millennial justification, tentative justification by faith, and Christ’s merit is tentatively imputed to them. The Queen of Sheba, the highest order of the Consecrated Epiphany Camper class, have the privilege of understanding as stated above the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD. By faith some of us have heard of the Lord’s fame in advance of the establishment of his Kingdom; by faith some of us have come from afar and offered him our treasures, laying our all at his feet; by faith these have been accepted of him, and instead he has given us exceeding great and precious promises and hopes far outweighing and out valuing the little all that we gave to him.

While we find in the Bible many passages that apply to people in general, both in this life and in the world to come, we find a great abundance of texts that apply specifically to The Christ, Head and Body. And as should be expected, we find fewer Scriptures that refer specifically to the Great Company, even fewer that refer specifically to the Youthful Worthies, and fewer still that refer specifically to the Consecrated Epiphany Campers *as distinct from God's four elect classes*, and also *distinct from the restitutionists* in general (italics ours). The restitution class are not a faith, but the unbelief class. Hence the conditions amid which it will be given at that time will not be faith-requiring, but belief and obedience-requiring conditions—Millennial conditions, still future.

A GREATER THAN SOLOMON IS HERE

We cannot apply this account of the Queen of Sheba's visit to King Solomon better than it has already been applied by our Lord Jesus: "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth [the then-known world] to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here" (Matt. 12:42). Our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Anointed, is the "greater than Solomon"—the antitype being greater than the type. He is, under God, the embodiment of wisdom, justice, love, and power; and in His possession God has placed the immense riches of grace, glory, honor, and dominion (Matt. 28:18; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:10; Phil. 2:9-11; Col. 2:3; Heb. 1:2-9; Rev. 5:12, 13).

It is a certainty that Christ's Kingdom will be established in the earth, with its reign of Truth and righteousness. God will make the promised "new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah" and will write His law in their hearts (Jer. 31:31-34); and Jesus Christ, its Mediator (2 Tim. 2:3-6; Heb. 8:6), will in "the times of restitution [restoration, ASV] of all things" (Acts 3:21) bless "all the families of the earth" (Gen. 22:15-18; 28:14; Gal. 3:8, 16, 29).

"When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD" (Psa. 22:27, 28; Rev. 11:15). "And the Gentiles shall come to thy [the Christ's] light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. . . The forces [wealth, margin] of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. . . All they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense [spices]; and they shall show forth the praises of the LORD. . . They shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory" (Isa. 60:3-7; compare Psa. 45:12; 68:29).

What a wonderful picture of restitution (restoration), of Paradise restored (Acts 3:19-21), of antitypical Solomon's glorious reign and of antitypical Sheba coming with the figurative multitude of camels bearing gifts as expressions of gratitude and consecration!

The "sheep" class of restitutionists (Matt. 25:31-40) will "inherit the earth" and "dwell therein for ever" (Psa. 37:9-11, 22, 29, 34; Eccles. 1:4; Psa. 119:90; Isa. 45:18; 2 Pet. 3:13). They will come to antitypical Solomon, to learn of Him (John 1:9; 12:32; Isa. 2:2, 3). They will witness and appreciate the glory of Christ and the greatness of His Kingdom under the whole heavens, the majesty of His Church, the true finished and glorified Temple, the grandeur of all of His appointments and the blessings upon all who are His ministers, or servants, and their various spheres of service, such as the "great multitude," arrayed in white and serving day and night before the Throne of God, in His Temple (Rev. 7:9-17), the Ancient Worthies, from Abel to John the Baptist, in the earthly phase of the Kingdom (Psa. 45:16; Luke 13:28; 16:16; Matt. 11:11), and the Spirit-enlightened, non-Spirit-begotten consecrated, who are gathered after the High Calling closes here in the end of the Gospel Age, who also will be in the Kingdom's earthly phase.

As they enjoy the bountiful feast that God through Christ, antitypical Solomon, then prepares for all people (Isa. 25:6-9; 11:9) and meditate on the wonderful things of the Divine wisdom revealed to them, they will respond as the Queen of Sheba did in the type, that the half was never told to them, that they had never dreamed of so wonderful and excellent a Kingdom as that which God will establish among men, for which we still pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).

Concerning the New Jerusalem, the Kingdom of God as it will come down from heaven to earth, it is written, "The nations . . . shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it" (Rev. 21:2, 3, 24). The willing and obedient of mankind, in gratitude and love for the blessings received, especially for their increased insight into the Divine wisdom as manifested in God's great Plan of the Ages and His provisions through Christ for the salvation of the elect and the non-elect—that whosoever will may come and take of the water of life freely (Rev. 22:17)—will ascribe praise, honor and glory to Jehovah (1 Kings 10:9), and will rejoice greatly that He made Jesus their great Prophet, Priest and King, to bring them salvation unto eternal life and to establish truth and righteousness in the earth (Rev. 5:13; Psa. 72:96; 98; 107:42).

YOUR GOD IS TESTING YOU

“The LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul” Deut. 13:3 (NKJV).

The Justified, Consecrated, Sanctified Children of God are to consider Him that endured opposition His entire life! Heb.12:3 invites us to take note of, to ponder and not easily forget how our Lord endured various trials and oppositions of sinners against Himself. In our own experiences, we have, as the Lord's followers, endured some opposition of sin and sinners against ourselves; but we have not yet resisted unto blood. We have not yet passed through the trying experiences through which He passed. When we remember that while we are poor, imperfect creatures, He on the other hand was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” then it is good to reflect that He endured patiently the opposition of sinful men. When trying experiences came to Him, He did not consider them as being merely from the individual Satan with whom they originated, but as being permitted by and under the supervision of the Father. When the Father permitted such experiences to come to Him, He was required to prove His loyalty by patient endurance. As He said, “the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it” (John 18:11)?

So, it is with us, Spiritual Israel. We are guided gently but strongly with the words of Deut. 13:1-3 (NKJ), “If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods’—which you have not known ‘and let us serve them,’ you shalt not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

We must stand strong in the LORD when we hear “Let us follow other gods.” Oh, in proportion as we are able to take our Lord's viewpoint in our experiences in life, we may need to be acquiescent. If the Father permits trying experiences for our testing, or for the testing or proving of others, in ways we may not fully comprehend, it is for us to rejoice to have His will done. The poet has beautifully expressed this thought when he so aptly says: “My times are in thy hands, My God, I wish them there.” If we faithfully endure to the end, the reward will be ours. If we prove our loyalty and keep our faith that God is supervising our affairs, and that no-good thing will be

withheld from those who are walking uprightly, we shall someday hear His “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

We know that our Lord endured physical opposition. However, our English word contradiction properly translates the original, implying verbal contradiction of His words. As we consider our Lord's case, we see that people opposed Him, not only physically, but in His words, His teachings. It was left for the High Priest and Sanhedrin and soldiers to do Him physical violence and put Him to death; and He could have resisted them if He had so chosen. The Apostle, therefore, seems to refer also to the contradiction of His words. This is implied by St. Peter, who says, “who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;” (1 Pet. 2:23 NKJ). So, when we consider the 3½ years of Christ's ministry, we find that His doctrines were disputed and that He was slandered. The Jews said that He had a demon, that He performed His miracles by the Prince of demons and that He was a blasphemer. These contradictions and oppositions on their part might have called out from Him some very just, truthful statements, respecting them. He might have given them as good as He got, and better. He might have told them that the devil was working with them, etc. His perfect power of language would have given Him the ability to more than cope with them. When they sought to entrap Him in His words, He entrapped them in their words. But He reviled not. He did not render evil for evil, nor insult for insult. This, the Apostle shows, is the proper course.

JEHOVAH YOUR GOD IS TESTING YOU

“Blessed is the man that endureth [faithfully under] temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (Jas. 1:12). Class troubles amongst the brethren are means which the Lord permits to test and to demonstrate the character of his people (R5948:1). When trying experiences came to Him, the Lord considered them as being under the supervision of the Father. So, it is with us: if the Father permits trying experiences for our testing, it is for us to rejoice in them. The Lord will not accept us merely because we are consecrated. He requires that the consecration be tested!

Teachings for this article were in part taken from a

discourse given by Bro. R. G. Jolly. Dear friends and students in the word, this article is not written to heathen people. This is not written to those that are unacquainted with God. This is not written to even those that have been in covenant relationship with God but are disobedient and rebellious under that covenant against God's will. This [Deut. 13:3] is written to the covenant people of God that proclaim Him as their God in Truth. Moses spoke this message to the children of Israel who were in covenant relationship with God.

Antotypically, it is spoken by the antitypical Moses, primarily Jesus, to God's covenant people. During the Gospel Age, these are those who have made a covenant with God by sacrifice and those who have come into relationship with God under Christ as their head, those who are in covenant relationship with God. It was wonderful to be of that class! Our Lord gave in the Gospel Age the message of the High Calling and He will give a similar message of the earthly salvation in the Millennial Age as people then come into covenant relationship with God through Christ the Mediator. His message will be the same to them that it is to you and to me now. Jesus enlarged upon this text. Moses says with all of your heart and with all of your soul, those two things. But Jesus adds something in Mark 12:30. He says that the first commandment, that great commandment, is that we must love "God with all of our heart," then he says, "with all of your soul" then he adds something that is very important for us who are under His headship. He says, "And with all of your mind and with all of your strength."

Well, a consecrated Child of God might say, isn't that included in what Moses said, "All your heart and with all of your soul?" Yes, in a way. Still, it brings out two specifications that Moses did not utter. It must not only be with all of our heart, but we must keep our mind on it, that it continues to be with all of our heart. It must not only be with the whole soul, the whole being, but it must be with the full strength of that whole soul and being. You know, some people can love God half-heartedly. Some people can give their whole soul to God and, in a weak way, endeavor to serve him with the whole soul. But the Lord says, Oh, you must have, not only the fullness of heart but the fullness of the mind, to be thinking along the line of your heart disposition; to be fully minded and active, in other words in keeping that heart fully minded in the Lord's service.

Oh, the words of Deut. 13:3 are wonderfully wise but, Mark 12:30 adds the weighty word "strength!" We must consider that some consecrated individuals have

a whole soul that is asleep, weak, so the Lord wisely adds the word "strength." Bro. Jolly says: I think we have there a fullness of thought that we can appreciate, that the Lord takes what Moses says and makes it very practical in its application and enlarges it in many of its ramifications. So here, we have these thoughts that are added in Mark 12:30.

EXAMINATION TIME

Our text says, "The LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love Him with all of your heart and with all of your soul." Some might ask then, should God not know without proving us? Should not God know whether you or I are going to be faithful; whether we have in our heart that which will bring us through to final victory without putting us to the test? Should not God know the end from the beginning? Does not He know all things? Then why does He have to prove us in order to know whether we love Him with all of the heart, mind, soul, and strength? Notice what we read in Hebrews 4:13 which verifies the thought that God, does know, although there are also many other verses that prove this, but notice this one: "Neither is there any creature [that takes in everyone] that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

So, God knows all about us. There is not a thing that He does not know about us. He even knows our thoughts before we think. He knows the words that we are going to say before we utter them, as we read in that wonderful Psalm 139. We do not choose just one verse because the whole Psalm is so beautiful along that line. As His children we might enquire, why is testing required? If He knows all about us, why does He prove us? To know by demonstration! A person that is constructing a building with iron beams may say, Is this good iron? Oh, yes! And he may know it is good iron but he puts it to the test so that there will be no question about it on the part of the people that are buying the building, on the part of anyone that may be interested in that building. Those steel girders are put to the test before they are ever brought to the location of the structure. Would we not think God would use this same principle?

Oh, dear brethren, He could put His okay on our character before He even tests it. But He wants to have it so thoroughly demonstrated that there will be no question in anyone's mind! Therefore, He tests us, and there is not one of the Lord's covenant people, not one of His consecrated people that He is not going to thoroughly test for their position in His great work that

He is accomplishing. Let us ponder our Bible friend Abel! The Apostle Peter and the Apostle Paul particularly show us how these Ancient Worthies were tested and proved. Paul starts with Abel, in the book of Hebrews the eleventh chapter saying it was “By faith” not by accident, not by happenstance, not because Abel happened to be raising sheep. Some might say, Oh well, Abel could hardly offer anything else. He offered what he raised; sheep. Paul says look out, it is not just that. Paul says it was by faith that Abel offered a sacrifice more acceptable than that of Cain. There is good evidence that he reasoned on the matter. He may have prayed to God about it, talked with God about it. God talked with the Ancient Worthies; you know.

Their faith was counted unto them for righteousness and God was willing to fellowship with them because of their faith and because of what He would accomplish for them at Calvary’s cross. And so, as we read in Romans 4:17, “callesth those things which be not as though they were.” This statement begs for further explanation. He dealt with them before Christ ever died for them because He knew that Christ would die on their behalf and so He counted their faith to them for righteousness and He graciously accepted them into fellowship because of their faith and dealt with them in wondrous ways. Yes, God in His wisdom can anticipate the outcome before it happens! We would do well to ponder the character of Enoch, how God walked with Enoch, and Enoch had this record that he pleased God. Let us take time to consider Noah, the one that built the ark, how God walked with him as he walked with God. He was a preacher of righteousness for 120 years! How many converts? None! His sons, of course, and their wives and his own wife went along with him in faith to God, but we read of not one convert. I wonder how many of us would last that hundred and twentieth year. We certainly ought to live up to the standards as the Ancient Worthies did with what little light that they had for we have so much more light. And the Bible says, you know, to whom much is given much is required. So, God is proving us according to the “much” that He is giving us. These examples lead us to examine our faith and strength. Are we walking with God so that He can walk with us?

James 2:23, “Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.” Abraham, the father of the faithful, and did God put him to the test? We can say with confidence that God knew the outcome before He told Abraham to take Isaac, the son of promise, in whom centered the blessing. He

was Abraham’s dearly beloved son that God promised would be the seed for the blessing of the families of the earth. God said take now your son, your son of promise, to a distant place in the mountain where I will show you. This was a long painful journey that Abraham took, and there offered his son for a burnt offering. Did not God know beforehand that Abraham would do that, even to the raising of the knife before God stayed his hand? Yes, God knew it. Suppose God had never given Abraham that test, saying, Well, I knew he would do it, so I will not put him to the test. Would Abraham have ever attained to that which he did attain as an Ancient Worthy? No!

The justified, fully consecrated child of God to this very day must glory in tribulations because tribulations produce patience. The more testings, the more I am going to continue to endure under those trials and the trials work a state of constant endurance. If the trials were to stop, maybe I would endure to the end and maybe I would not. Do I, a consecrated child of God, one who has the heart-warming, energizing, holy Spirit of understanding want the testings of Jehovah that a state of constant endurance can be attained? Do you, do I see that God is testing every step of the way? Rom. 5:4 states, “and ENDURANCE, Approval; and APPROVAL, Hope” (Diaglott). We want God’s approval. And how can we get it without the tribulation, without the trials? The word tribulum is the Latin word for a threshing instrument, and I [Bro. Snyder] know of my grandfather placing the sheaves of grain in a circle on the barn floor with the heads as the inner circle, then threshing them by beating the heads with a flail to remove the grain. Then the chaff would blow away and the straw and the wheat would be gathered up.

It is our privilege to rejoice in this time of trouble knowing that tribulation works this day by day by day by day continuing, and sometimes we cry, Oh Lord, how long, how long? Bro. Jolly suggested we receive God’s testing as a caress, as a complement from our Heavenly Father. God says He will not try us more than we are able to bear and He must see that you are able to bear quite a trial now that you’re strong enough in the strength of the Lord that you can stand a severe trial. So, take it then as a compliment from God that He is telling you that He is pleased with your development, that you have developed sufficient strength in the Lord, that you can take now a severe trial. He is testing you to determine if you love Him with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

FALSE DREAMERS

We give some brief remarks on Deut. 13:1-5 NKJ, “If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams,

and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, [it could really come to pass] of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods’—which you have not known—‘and let us serve them,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, [that speculator] for the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him. But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, [rather a serious offense, isn’t it, to wean anyone away from the Lord and the following of His word in their full consecration and devotion to Him] because he has spoken in order to turn you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage, to entice you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall put away the evil from your midst.”

Here we have, as the Lord in the antitype of Moses would tell us, the spiritual Israelites whom He has delivered from bondage, Egypt representing this present evil world; the bondage of Pharaoh representing the bondage of sin under his taskmasters of sin, error, selfishness, and worldliness; anything that would lead us away from God.

FALSE TEACHERS

The Apostle Peter, after the Lord’s death, puts it very plainly in 2 Pet. 2:1, “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you.” Here, Peter says, that it is going to be among us even as it was back in fleshly Israel. As there were false prophets back there, so he says even as there shall be false teachers showing that the prophets here do mean teachers, those who speak forth the truth or error. And here the false prophets would be those who lead astray by erroneous teachings, “as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies.” This word damnable would be better translated “destructive” as given in the Diaglott: “There will be False teachers among you, who will privately introduce destructive Heresies, even denying the SOVEREIGN LORD who BOUGHT them, bringing on themselves Swift Destruction.” How plain that is! Let us believe it the way that it is given for that is what the Apostle here tells us we can expect in our day and time.

PRIDE IS SATAN’S TOOL

Now the Apostle John tells us in 1 John 5:21, “Little

children” [he was a very aged Apostle at the time and he could call the dear brethren his children, figuratively of course], “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” And those are the last words he wrote in that first epistle, little children, keep yourselves from idols. Keep that heart, mind, soul, and strength fully God’s. Yield nothing to that which would take the place of God in your heart and in your life. Satan can tempt so much along those lines—how careful we have to be for the working of Satan is with power and signs and lying wonders, or as the Greek has it “wonders of falsehood.” Now Jesus makes this application to the gazers, to the speculators. Satan works through pride, through those who are self-opinionated. Bro. Johnson said, some of the brothers will get some kind of a little old bee that buzzes in their bonnet, and they have just got to tell somebody! Sometimes it is not the proper humility before the Lord; it is sometimes not in harmony with His Word and they go off leading others astray also into error. The Apostle’s words give support to this view by saying: “The working of Satan is with all power, and signs and lying wonders, or wonders [of falsehood], And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness” (2 Thes. 2:9, 10). The Diaglott gives it, “every deception of iniquity,” I think that is very good with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, every deception of iniquity, “in them that perish.” Notice, you do not get eternal life by following error in opposition to God’s word. It leads toward destruction.

TWO WINGS OF THE EAGLE

We read in Psalm 91:4, “He shall cover thee with His feathers, [the individual teachings of Truth] and under His wings [the Old Testament wing and the New Testament wing] shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.” Some are losing their shield. Some are also losing the buckler of consecration, which is the Truth that holds them to the Lord as their Head. Oh, it is a sad picture, my dear brethren! However, it is now being fulfilled in our midst and we should recognize it and warn the brethren against such idolatry that is leading away from the Truth of God’s Word.

All right, but you say, Bro. Jolly, there was something terrible in that passage of Scripture you read, that if anyone was teaching anything that would lead away from the Lord into idolatry, into worshipping of other ideas than the Truth that is given in God’s Word, you read that they should be put to death. Yes, that is what it says. It is in Deut. 13:5, “And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, [that speculator, that gazer that brings out ideas of his own, contrary to the Word of God] shall be put to death; [cut off as a leader among the Lord’s people]

because he has spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, [delivering us from the power of Satan and his dominion in this evil world] and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, [unto sin and death, giving you the liberty wherewith you stand in Christ] to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shall thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.” The fourth verse shows how you should walk: “Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.”

SYMBOLIC STONING

Now, they were to put to death—the one that was sifting them away from full allegiance to God. How were they to do it? It was by stoning. Well, what does that mean? The stones represent the Truths of God’s word. It is a symbolic stoning of course. We do not literally stone anyone. It is the symbolic stoning and the stones represent the Truths of God’s Word. How do we know? Well, we read, for instance, in Numbers 15:35, 36, “And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses.” Now, of course, figuratively, our weapons, you know, are not carnal but spiritual to the pulling down of strongholds, to the bringing down of imaginations, gazings, speculations contrary to the Word of God. These stones are the words of Truth that we find in the Bible. We read, for instance, in connection with David and the stones that he took out of the brook and smote the giant Goliath. 1 Sam. 17:40: “chose him five smooth stones”—Five doctrines: (1) man’s original perfection, (2) the fall, (3) the ransom, (4) the high calling, (5) restitution. The Ransom is the one that put to death the great evolution theory pictured by the giant Goliath. We read in Psalm 102:14, “For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, [speaking of Jerusalem, the City of God] and favour the dust thereof.” Even the finest details of Truth are favored by God’s Truth people. So, the Apostle Paul says that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. We are not to think of literal stoning of the brethren, of course, but we are to take the Truths of God’s Word and refute the errors by the word of Truth.

Now, these first five verses describe the individual that would become an idolater or that would lead others astray from the Truth of God’s Word into their speculations, their gazings, their ideas, and their leadership.

RESPONSIBILITY OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

The second form of idolatry is found in Deut. 13:6-11. Let us notice carefully that this is in connection with blood relatives and close friends. Here, we bring in the personality. We see here even though it be your closest friend that goes out of the Truth, that goes to worshipping idols, other ideas, you can’t go along. It could be the wife of your own bosom; could be your brother, your sister, your husband. You must not go along if you are going to be fully faithful to God; and He is proving you if you love Him with ALL of your heart or just ninety percent of it, with all of your mind, with all your soul, with all of your strength. He is testing you. That is why He allows these things to take place. We are aware of some very, very severe trials that have been stood by a faithful wife when her husband went astray or have been stood by a faithful husband when the wife goes into the world and into idolatry such as the worshipping of power, or position, or social position in Babylon. Some husbands have had to be faithful to God under such stressful conditions where the wife went into Babylon and spoke evil of her own husband saying he had gone crazy on religion. Oh, yes, some very severe trials! And the LORD has been testing His people along those severe trials sometimes, in those severe ways.

UNFAITHFUL MOTHER

I [Bro. Jolly] have known some cases where a mother or a father would follow their own son. I am thinking of a mother that followed her son. She worshipped her son. She idolized her son, and when he went out of the Truth and went into worldly things, and he wanted her to come with him in his worldly functions; he had now a business, and he had to associate with others and they had to play cards and drink liquor and so forth, wanted his mother to go with him. She was a widow lady. She went with him. I know of a case where one of the former pilgrim brothers of Bro. Russell’s day, one that I admired very much when he was faithful to the LORD, but I had to resist him when he went astray, following his son who was a Universalist. And this dear brother turned into Universalism because his son told him that Pastor Russell’s idea of destroying the wicked was foolish; that God is powerful and is going to save everybody, even the devil. The father went into that kind of idolatry and lost his favor with God.

Sometimes it may be a leader that brought you into the Truth, as we saw a while ago; or one that you admire very highly and you put above God in your devotion, a big mistake. So, my dear friends, it says here that he must be the very first one to cast the stone. He has got to resist

his own wife, her own husband when they go astray from the LORD. He is to be the first one to refute her, not literal stoning, not literal killing, no, but cutting her off from fellowship with him in the LORD if she goes to the table of devils or if she goes into the world. You remember the Apostle Paul spoke of Demas as one of these. Demas brought him much grief for Demas had been faithful as a servant of God and had helped the Apostle Paul in the Gospel ministry, but he said, "Demas is no longer with me for he loved the pleasures of this world." Paul could not go along with him. He was the first one that would disapprove of his wrong course.

The third form of idolatry is noted here. That brings in Deuteronomy 13:12-18 where the whole city went into idolatry and led them astray and had made a system of error. Please read the text and our comments follow: The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God! Yes. The cattle are the supporting teachings that they might have; maybe like evolution deriving something from what they think is science. The camels, the cattle, would represent their sustaining and supporting theories.

A RELIGIOUS GOVERNMENT

Indeed, these things were written aforetime for our learning that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. First, we have the individual that would lead into idolatry, with himself becoming an idolater. Second, we have our own loved ones, however close, that would lead us far astray even to worshipping some things that formerly we had never heard of, some new truths, as they call them. Now, this whole system of leaders with followers makes a system, a city. A city represents, you know, religious government; and these sifers frequently get enough following that they have a religious government of their own. The whole system together with its error should be gathered together and burned by God's Holy Spirit. Destroyed! The word of

Truth and the Spirit of the Truth only are to be held. Our devotion to God must be supreme above all other loves, devotions, and affiliations. The LORD your God is testing you, and me, whether we love the LORD our God with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our mind, and with all of our strength. God is proving us in order that He may reward us in harmony with His good pleasure, but we are not to be hireling servants. We are to serve God because we love Him. We are to hold to the Truth because we have the love of the Truth in our hearts! We are to be sanctified by the Truth and not try to be sanctified by any system of error or any individual leader of error or any error itself, even though it may come from the nearest and dearest of our loved ones. We are to be the first to refute it! We are to be the first ones to expose the error or the sin and to hold faithfully to God.

Bro. Jolly's closing remarks: let us be strong in the LORD and in the power of His might. This study is not meant to be negative, but this Scripture is given for our benefit, and we are living in the day that was prophesied that these things would be in our midst. God allows them in our midst to test us. May we rejoice that God is testing us, that we may have His okay on our characters when His work in us is completed. We are His workshop, brethren, and God is working in you to will and do of His good pleasure.

May God go with you from this convention greatly strengthened in the LORD and in your determination to stand faithfully and joyfully under the test that He is giving you that you may have His final, "Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter you into the joys of the LORD!"

I trust for the LORD'S blessing on our study together of this beautiful thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, which was written for our benefit.

God bless you all, Bro. R. G. Jolly

THE AVOIDANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND SERVICE

"The trees went forth *on a time* to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, *and* reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, *and* reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine,

which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, *and* reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, *then* come *and* put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon" (Judges 9:8-15).

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 is built around 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, “Reign thou over us.” 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 as distinguished as the olive, but nevertheless a tree of much value and importance. However, the fig tree also demurred, 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.

The trees then invited the vine to reign over them, but it likewise declined, saying, “Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, 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, “Let George do it.”

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).

Obviously, the parable of the trees bears the stamp of satire. But it also rings with realism because it is so true to life. Some 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 for the Lord and His people, many of them are given over to lives of self-interest or family prestige; and if they do profess to serve God, 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 wicked, 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.

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 bleatings 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 abode 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."

But above all Deborah and Barak condemned Meroz, and a curse was pronounced upon its inhabitants: "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty" (Judges 5:23). 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 basely declined it, for fear of Jabin's 900 iron chariots, preferring to sleep in whole skins 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 George do it." God and Christ look upon those as 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.

WHERE WERE YOU?

Indifference, indolence and the avoidance of responsibility and service are enemies of achievement. During the second phase of the World War Mussolini remarked that one of his top commanders in the Italian army would have to be removed because he was unwilling to move. Then he added, "Never give a man a job unless he wants at least one promotion." When in 1956 Khrushchev delivered his famous attack on Stalin he wept as he recounted how Stalin had killed off loyal Bolsheviks in his "purge." The dead Russian dictator, said Khrushchev, massacred the flower of the Red Army leadership. It is reported that at a crucial point during his address, there was a voice from the floor asking pointedly, "Where were you?"

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 marshalled 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

wearily in the journey? 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 every resource was 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 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 "as one that beateth 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?

We do not print these stories, Biblical and worldly, with the purpose of harassing or making mockery of the choice of someone as to how they live each day; rather we use these examples as a means of making the sleeping ones to awaken. God has two commandments in regard to this thought:

(1) "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

(2) "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates" (2 Cor. 13:5)?

The thought is study to show what God would approve, do not mind what men might think, but seek the approval of God. Yes, a workman which suggests the thought of being engaged in service. The word of Truth rightly divided and fairly presented commands the respect even of its opponents. It is our privilege and duty to try our own selves—look at our present condition as compared with the past. Whether I am something or nothing in God's estimation is to be measured by my love for Him, His brethren, His cause, the world in general, and even my enemies, rather than my knowledge. Doing these things in the faith, trust and confidence of the word can bring great rewards, "Christ in you!"

BIBLE QUESTION

Question: In the Gospel Age Tabernacle, God's Word is pictured by the Laver. How then is God's Word pictured in the Camp that is now being developed?

Answer: The Transitional (Epiphany) Tabernacle, the Court, is nearly complete and the Camp is now being developed. Those being won for the Lord now (since 1954) are pictured in the Camp and do not enter the Court for access to the Laver (God's Word). For those being developed in the Camp, God's Word is pictured by the Curtain, held up by the 60 posts in the Court. We remember that in the Gospel Age Tabernacle picture the Curtain was a barrier to those in the Camp because they would have had to come into the Court to get the Truth (Laver), into the tentatively (provisionally) justified condition. Since the Tabernacle picture has changed to the Transitional or Epiphany setting and the tentatively (provisionally) justified are shown in the Camp, they still have to come into the tentatively justified condition. Those who consecrate in the Camp have the secrets of the Lord revealed to them by His Holy Spirit, as we read in Psa. 25:14 "the secret of the LORD is with those who reverence Him and to them He will show His covenant." (This text applied in the Old Testament, and it applied when the High Calling was open. It still applies now even though the High Calling is closed. In other words, it applies to all

times.) The secrets of the Lord are therefore for those in the Camp who are justified and consecrated. They receive the secrets of the Lord because they reverence God. The secrets of the Lord are with them and to them he will show his covenant. It is true that there is no Laver in the Camp, nor do we need to move it into the Camp, because God so nicely pictured His Word in the Curtain! Bro. Johnson expressed to us and emphasized that we should (in building up the Epiphany Camp) hold up the Curtain showing Christ as Savior and King. However, some might say, "But that is not the whole Bible." It certainly is, it certainly is the whole Bible. Didn't Jesus say to the Scribes and Pharisees "Search the Scriptures for they are they that testify of me" (John 5:39). Isn't that Christ? Therefore, by the whole Scripture from Genesis to Malachi was referred to when Jesus said "search those scriptures for they testify of me." Therefore, in holding up Christ as Savior and King, we hold up every one of the books of the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. Of course it's the whole Word of God. Again, where was the whole Word of God pictured in the Court for the Levites and the Priest? It was in the Laver. Where is the Word of God pictured for those in the Camp? It is in the Curtain! These matters are so clear when we "rightly divide the word of truth" and just use our sanctified common sense.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Uganda 2023 Annual Memorial Services

"And the day shall be a memorial for you. And you shall celebrate it as a feast to Jehovah, for your generations. You shall celebrate it as a law forever" (Exo. 12:14).

"So let us keep *the* feast, not with old leaven, nor with leaven of malice and of evil, but with unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:8).

This time of the year has become a very special season in Uganda among the truth movement congregation since 2020. We have been always gathering in one place and have one convention with purpose of teaching our fellow helpers from various classes to learn the great importance of the season, the Passover feast and new symbols and what they represent so that no one may sin against the cup. We realize that this is the beginning of a new spiritual year in our lives so we take much time to learn about the season and its full implication to us Epiphany Consecrated Campers, we take two months in meditation until we make sure that every member misses not our common participation in the breaking and drinking of the cup. We realize that it is a time of reviving one self to walk in

the narrow way for another 365 days to the best of their abilities than they have ever done before.

We have had a good time of silence since the memorial service and wonderful testimonies are coming up from time to time how the members have benefited from their experience with cup, some doing it the first time and others this year as very special ones of great refreshment and encouragement.

At Wakiso we had a long day study as we declared it a special holiday and each member were required to announce to their employers and friends and families to set it apart for Lord's service. At 6 pm we started the service with special hymns of the seasons reading of various verses from the holy word that sanctified fully consecrated saints to ready to feast at the master's table and below are some photo drama.

This year has been a very special one and will never be again as we managed to celebrate the masters memorial in four different centers as each one met at the nearby center with convenience of their final meditations: Wakiso Class, Musori Class, Jinja Class and Namaliri Class.



HAVE YOU MOVED OR
ARE YOU GOING TO BE MOVING?
RENEW TODAY!

TO:

THE COMING AGE

Amid events so tragic and stupendous,
The wreck of empires and the fall of kings,
There is a power Divine that will defend us,
Though there should come upon us water things.
Great is the Lord of Hosts, supreme in glory,
Wondrous His wisdom, marvellous His might;
The nations, though renowned in human story—
Lo, they are but as nothing in His sight.
Beneath the tempest of His wrath outpouring,
The heavens like a veil are rent in twain;
The sea and all the waves thereof are roaring,
The hills and mountains levelled to the plain.
Yet is He working out for our salvation
A wonderful and comprehensive plan,
Above our loftiest imagination,
Embracing in its fulness every man.
Beyond this desolating “time of trouble,”
This “Day of God” by prophets long foretold,
Wherein the nations are consumed as stubble—
Beyond all this there comes the age of gold.
His power Divine shall burst the bonds asunder
Which now enslave our helpless fallen race,
And man shall view with reverence and wonder
This mighty miracle of saving grace.
But not alone the living; all that slumber
Within the gloomy caverns of the dead—
These shall come forth, a vast awakened number,
A peaceful renovated earth to tread.
Behold this earth, to liberty uprising,
From anarchy and despotism free,
Endowed with strength and beauty tranquilizing,
Like some fair island of a tropic sea.
Six thousand years of tyranny are ended,
Six thousand years of misery and pain,
And now before us dawns the vision splendid,
The longed-for glory of Messiah’s reign.
From Zion peace and truth are ever flowing
In streams beneficent to all mankind,
New life and hope and happiness bestowing,
Hearing and eyesight to the deaf and blind.
The wilderness and solitary places
With joy abound and “blossom as the rose,”

And nature’s wise and loving hand effaces
The last dark evidence of human woes.
Released from Satan’s rule the world is wending
In eager way to Paradise again,
And Truth and Righteousness and Love and blending
In one great brotherhood the sons of men.
And all shall know the Lord and to Him render
The praise and worship due unto His name,
And own with gratitude His mercies tender,
His wisdom magnify, His love proclaim.
Mankind in harmony and love progressing
Along their spacious, unimpeded way,
Beneath Divine authority and blessing
Shall gain the sunlight of the perfect day.

OBITUARY

Sr. Carlla Olson born Oct. 12, 1934, died Feb. 13, 2023. Daughter of Bro. Carl and Sr. Jennie Seebald. Sr. Carlla was associated with Bible Standard Ministries, dedicating herself and her privilege of serving God by recording the many conventions, digitally editing them, and sending the Word of Truth worldwide. She kept in touch with her countless friends by sending birthday and Christmas greetings each year. Sr. Carlla was a Student of God’s word (2 Tim. 2:15) and was aware of the Bible’s teachings on the death condition, and the Resurrection Promises. Yes, we all understand how she embraced God’s Loving-kindness, however, the loss of her still touches our heart. As her father would say: Keep the Memory green in your Heart, and that we can do! Bro. Larry Williams officiated the funeral service.

In Loving Remembrance

Many sleep, but not forever; There will be a glorious dawn; We shall meet to part, no, never, On the resurrection morn. From the deepest caves of ocean, From the desert and the plain, From the valley and the mountain, Countless throngs shall rise again.

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