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The Passover Story from the Bible

THE word "Passover" is used many times throughout the Bible, but on one occasion in the New Testament the word "Easter" is wrongly used to refer to this season of the year; this is in Acts 12:4. However, as the word "Easter" has become so largely used, and is so well understood by most people, even more so than the word "Passover," it is helpful to know why the word "Easter" is used at all in the Bible. Quoting from a commentator, the following is presented,—

"The name Easter was adopted from the heathen. It is of Saxon origin, and imports a goddess of the Saxons, or rather of the East, Estera, whose festival was celebrated in the spring of the year, about the Passover season. The adoption of this name, and the application of it to the period celebrating our Lord's death and resurrection and ascension, down to the coming of the Pentecostal blessing, was evidently an attempt to let Christian institutions the more easily supplant those of heathenism. Like most of these concessions, it dates from somewhere about the 3rd century." This commentator adds—"This heathen origin of the name Easter need make no particular difference in our minds, for we no longer use it to celebrate the goddess of the East."

Should anyone use the word Easter in reference to the time of our Lord's sacrifice and resurrection from the dead, we do not complain about the name used. The main thing is appreciating fully what our Lord did on our behalf, and the graciousness of our Heavenly Father in providing such a Saviour, who will ultimately give an opportunity of salvation to all humanity; this is what we really rejoice about.

The word Easter is not found in the Old Testament at all, but the word Passover is first used in Exodus 12. Israel had been in Egypt for over 400 years, and the time had come for their deliverance; Moses was raised up, at the age of 80 years, and directed of God to lead Israel out of Egypt. In Exodus 12 we find God's means of accomplishing this deliverance by what is called the Passover.

Previously various plagues were placed upon the Egyptians, and each time Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he would not release God's people. But God determined that Israel should be delivered right on time; God knew all along what would happen, until such time as the tenth plague was used on the night of the Passover. (Please read Exodus 12:1-14, 29-33.) We know that the Lord followed up this protection of Israel and delivered them through the Red Sea by a mighty miracle, at the hands of Moses.

It is of much interest and importance to notice that the destroying angel killed all the firstborn in the houses not protected by the blood of the Passover lamb, so that any Israelitish family not obeying the instructions would have lost their firstborn, along with the firstborns of the Egyptians. The Egyptians, of course, were taken by surprise. They knew nothing about God's arrangements with the slaying of the lamb and the sprinkling of the blood which would protect the Israelitish families.

After Moses had given instructions to the elders of Israel, we read his words in the latter part of Exod. 12:22,— "And none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning." This was important; all Israel had to show a deep interest in the passing-over of their firstborns. This shows that while only the firstborns were in danger of death during that Passover night, all the Israelites were to respect the covering of the blood and remain under it throughout that night. This shows, antitypically that the household of faith of this Gospel Age all rejoice in the sacrifice of Christ, even though they do not belong to the "firstborns unto God of His creatures."

It may be asked, What has the subject of the Passover with the nation of Israel in Egypt to do, with our Lord Jesus and

His followers of this Gospel Age? From the Scriptures we find a very close connection between the Passover in Egypt and the lives of Christ and His disciples. All that happened in the passing-over of Israel's firstborns, and the deliverance of all Israel as a result of the Passover, was typical of a greater passing-over of a class of firstborns during this Gospel Age, and then the deliverance of the whole human family from the bondage to sin and death in the morning of the Millennial Age. The type pictures a much larger antitype.

In explanation we have a description of the Passover Lamb in Exod. 12:5,—“Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year.” It was to be an animal as perfect as possible, in its prime. This undoubtedly pictured Christ, our Passover Lamb, and His perfection. He who was rich in heavenly glory became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich.

In Exod. 12:3, 6, we read that the lamb was to be chosen on the 10th day and kept until the 14th day of the month, and “the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.” The Lord wanted every individual of every house to be vitally interested in this procedure. We specially note that it was kept for **four days**, from the 10th to the 14th day. Our Lord presented Himself in consecration when He was baptized in the River Jordan, and within **four years** (3-1/2 years afterwards), He finished His sacrifice on the cross. How beautifully the type depicts what happened! John the Baptist said, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” Our Lord completed His sacrifice for the benefit of the class of firstborns during the Gospel Age, and then for all mankind in the Millennial Age, all mankind being pictured by Israel, who were able to leave Egypt after the passing-over of the firstborns.

From Rev. 13:8, we read of “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” In other words, in God's great Plan of the Ages Christ was the Lamb slain before ever mankind was created. God, knowing the end from the beginning, had provided for man's salvation before they had sinned in disobedience. This does not mean that God caused mankind to sin. Christ no doubt rejoiced to do the Father's will and co-operate with the Father in becoming God's wonderful Lamb to give Himself a ransom for all, which will be testified to all in due time. Also, what a lovely picture we have of Christ in Rev. 14:1. Here we have the symbol of the Lamb on Mount Zion, the Lamb victorious, and all the firstborn of this Gospel Age also victorious with Him on Mount Zion, which depicts the heavenly kingdom. Verse 4 of this 14th of Revelation explains that the 144,000 with the Lamb had been faithful followers of Christ, “being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.” These firstfruits, or firstborns, were pictured by the firstborns of Israel, passed over on that night in Egypt. So the Gospel Age of about 2,000 years is the antitypical Passover Night, wherein God's firstborns of the spirit are passed over, as they remain faithful in the steps of Christ, even unto death.

A helpful comparison between Christ and the Church of the Firstborns or firstfruits unto God is shown in 1 Cor. 15:20,—“Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” This shows that our Lord slept in the death condition for parts of three days, until His resurrection; thus, He was the first of the firstfruits.

Another helpful reference to God's selection of the class of firstborns is found in James 1:18,—“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” The Lord's people should have an intellectual understanding of their calling, and must present themselves a living sacrifice, so that they may be accepted and begotten of the holy spirit through the knowledge of God, on the basis of faith. “Of his own will” means, “of God's good pleasure.” Our Lord said, “Fear not, little flock, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” He delights to have a company of firstborns to be associated with Christ in the heavenly kingdom. He brings “many sons to glory,” and of these many sons, we are told Christ is “not ashamed to call them brethren.” “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth,”—it is the word of truth that calls and attracts this class, that they may give themselves fully to the Lord on the basis of faith in Christ's sacrifice, and are begotten in hope of the heavenly inheritance, and become firstfruits unto God.

With this background in mind, we call attention to the last Passover season when the Lord was with His disciples. Israel had been instructed to keep their Passover year by year after their deliverance from Egypt, to remind them of God's favor and overruling providence in such a mighty intervention on their behalf. Also at our Lord's first advent the Passover observance impressed those able to grasp the fact that Jesus was to be the real Passover Lamb, to bring about complete deliverance from sin and death of the whole human family, following firstly the passing-over of the firstfruits unto God of His creatures.

In Luke 22 we have the record of the Jewish Passover just prior to our Lord's death. This was a special Passover, because it was the last the Lord would observe while on earth. He knew this. He knew it was the last occasion He would celebrate the Jewish Passover with His followers, and knew He was about to institute something greater. He was going to institute the Memorial of His death for His disciples to keep every year in observance, but every day in their hearts. It was something solemn and precious to remind them for all time of His great sacrifice, typified by the lamb slain every year by the Israelites. “With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.” (Luke 22:15.) Our Lord knew the lesson He was about to impart to His disciples; within twenty-four hours He would be the actual Lamb slain.

He wanted to impart to His disciples His parting blessing and love, and also His message of peace and comfort, so they would not be too terribly shaken and distressed when He was crucified.

In Luke 22:19, 20, we read that Jesus used the unleavened bread to picture His own perfect body, and offered it to the disciples to partake of so they would assimilate or partake of His perfection, representing justification by faith. "This do in remembrance of me." "Likewise also the cup, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." This cup, representing our Lord's shed blood, was also to be assimilated, again picturing justification by faith, on the basis of which the followers of the Master commit their lives unreservedly to Him, to be dead with Christ, if so be that they may live with Him.

The Apostle Paul was used of the Lord to impress the participation which the firstborns of this Gospel Age have with their Master in their walk of sacrifice with Him, in 2 Cor. 11:23-26; 10:16, 17. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (common-union, common-participation) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion (common-union, common-participation) of the body of Christ?" What a wonderful thought this is, that those whom the Lord has accepted and recognized as "members of his body" in the flesh, are all counted in as parts of His sacrifice, because associated with, and under Him who is our Head. So our Lord instituted the Memorial of His death, and gave it as an annual observance that we may remember especially His atoning sacrifice, and seek to keep the spirit of this remembrance in our hearts day by day in our Christian life.

After the institution of the Memorial, we find the Lord encouraging His disciples, as recorded in Luke 22:28-30. It is of note to mention that Judas, the betrayer, had left the Passover gathering before our Lord gave the emblems representing His body and blood to the eleven apostles. And so He could say, "Ye are they which have continued (faithfully) with me in my temptations." The Lord knew that their hearts were fully devoted to Him and His service, as He continued,— "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Here we have the picture of Israel as a nation on the earth, and through whom all nations of the world will come in under the administration of the kingdom, with the twelve Apostles (Paul taking the place of Judas) under Christ in special places of authority, and 144,000 associated with them as the Bride of Christ. There will also be the Great Company serving "before the throne" and with the Ancient Worthies as "princes in all the earth," we know that the administration from heaven to earth will be perfect. God will have His servants in heaven and earth to dispense the blessings of salvation to "all the families of the earth," to His praise and glory.

We surely rejoice, then, in this wonderful Passover story. It has so much significance, and enters into every phase of the Christian's life. All the various features fit together and make up the whole plan of God for the salvation of humanity.

"O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker"—Psalm 96:6.

When once we get a glimpse of the glories of the divine character through the divine plan, when once we get a true view with the eyes of our understanding of Him with whom we have to do, as the great heart-searcher and caretaker of His church, we fall before Him humbled to the dust, realising that we are imperfect, that we cannot stand before our Master, that we are unworthy of His favor and blessing. But as He touched John gently, raising him up, so He has spoken to us comfort, peace, and love, assuring us that we have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but on the contrary, One who is able to sympathise and mercifully to assist, One who has bought us with His own precious blood, who has accepted us and will number us as His body members so long as we abide in Him, seeking in our hearts to know and to do His will.— Z '05-169.

Passover Memorial 1968

The anniversary of the Memorial of Christ's death falls this year on the evening of Thursday, 11th April. It is the privilege of the Lord's people to observe this memorial at this season "in remembrance of Christ."

Memorial Services

Melbourne—Sunday, 7th April, at 6.30 p.m., at Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond.

Adelaide—Sunday, 7th April, at 6 p.m., at Manchester Unity Building (2nd Floor), 16 Franklin Street, Adelaide. (Perth.—Thursday, 11th April, at 7 p.m., at 7 Harvest Terrace opposite Parliament House). Sydney—Thursday, 11th April, at 7 p.m., at 53 Bennett Street, West Ryde.

Adelaide Easter Convention

The Adelaide brethren are arranging to hold their Easter Convention this year from Good Friday to Easter Monday (D.V.), in Manchester Unity Building (2nd Floor), 16 Franklin Street, Adelaide. Further information from the secretary—Mr. J. Jordan, P.O. Box 47, Kingswood, South Australia, 5062.

Well, God loves patience! Souls that dwell in stillness,

Doing the little things, or resting quite,

May just as perfectly fulfil their mission,

Be just as useful in the Father's sight.

From "At the Beautiful Gate."

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The Harvest Work

“I tell you that in that night there shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken and the other shall be left.”- Luke 17:34.

THE Lord, through the Prophet, informs us that though the Millennial morning draws near, a night also approaches. (Isa. 21:12.) It will be a night of trouble in the forepart of which the saints will be gathered out of Babylon. The “bed” here, in harmony with Isaiah’s use of that word (Isa. 28:20), may be interpreted to symbolize human creeds which are long enough for “babes” in Christ, but too short for a developed “man” to stretch himself in it. This is true of the various “doctrines of men,” substituted for but very different from the doctrines of God’s Word whose lengths and breadths surpass human knowledge. For instance, the doctrine of Election, as taught by our Calvinist friends is a quite sufficient “bed” to rest many who are only “babes” in Christ, whose senses have never been much exercised; but as in the light of present day knowledge the babes get awake and grow in grace and knowledge, they will all surely find the old creed-bed too short for comfort; and as each attempts to wrap himself in the promises of God narrowed by an erroneous theology, he cannot satisfactorily cover himself: doubts creep in to chill him with fear that after all he is not certain that he and all his friends are of the “elect”; and by and by such developed Christians find it a relief to get out of such a predicament; and to such God generally sends the light of present truth to guide them to a “large place” of true rest supplied with abundant coverings for all who seek to know and to do the Father’s will. Others, however, the vast majority, remain quite satisfied and comfortable in their various little cribs, because they are “babes” and not “men” in Christian knowledge and experience. “One shall be taken and the other left.”

“Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.”—Matt. 24:40.

“The field is the world,” our Lord explained; and in this discourse it represents a condition outside the nominal “house”;—outside of Babylon. Thus we are taught that not all “come-outers” will be “gathered,” but that the “jewels” will be sought wherever they may be—the Lord knoweth them that are His,” and in this harvest gathering He is making up His jewels,—gathering His “elect,” to be joint-heirs in His Kingdom.

“Two shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left.”—Matt. 24:41; Luke 17:35.

A mill is a place where food is prepared; the ministers and theological schools do the grinding of the spiritual food for “Babylon,” and turn out very poor grist—not “clean provender.” The complaint is a growing one that the food supplied is largely husks and chaff, which will not sustain spiritual life and strength: and each grinder is obliged to prepare what is given him by his own denomination, and he cannot hold his position and yet provide the “meat in due season,” “clean provender,” for the household of faith. Hence “present truth” gathers some of the grinders and leaves others—one is taken and another left. Those who are loyal to God and to His flock will be taken; all others will be left. While the world and the nominal church declare this to be a time of union and “confederacy,” God declares it to be a time of separating.—Isa. 8:12.

Whither Gathered—The Attraction

“And they (the disciples) answered and said unto Him, Where, Lord? (Where will these be taken?) And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body (the carcass, the food) is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.”—Matt. 24:28; Luke 17:37.

The lesson is that in this day, when the Lord is gathering His “elect” from the four winds of heaven—from every quarter of the Church—He will attract them as eagles are attracted, by food, for which they have a keenness of vision and appetite; that in due time the Lord would provide the proper food, and His true people would recognise it and be gathered to it,—the ready and worthy taken and the others left.

The food of “present truth” now provided by our Lord, and the gathering of His saints by and to it, fits the description of this prophecy exactly. The present call is not out of one “mill” into another “mill”; not out of one “bed” into another of about the same size. It is not the gathering by one man or many men, to him or to them, into a new denomination; but a gathering together unto Christ Himself, the true and only Master and Teacher. Where and when before was there ever such a recognition of all who trust in the precious blood of Christ and who are consecrated to Him, as the one household of faith—all brethren—and the one and only Lawgiver Christ, regardless of human creeds and dogmas upon other subjects? Never and nowhere since the days of the apostles, so far as we may judge.

Moreover, it is worthy of note that great human ability, oratory, etc., have been notably connected with other movements, but not with this present gathering to the Lord. Here the truth, the spiritual food which the Lord is supplying, is the whole attraction: human flourish and oratory find little room for exercise here; they are lacking but are not missed. The gathered and gathering ones come together because they “hunger and thirst after righteousness”; and they are finding the satisfying portion which the Lord Himself has provided; and each for himself is eating thereof.

Faith Healing

THERE are various schools of faith healing, such as Christian Science, Theosophy, Spiritualism, Pentecostals, and others, such as Hypnotists and healers by suggestion, who make no profession of Christianity at all. Certain men appear to be born with such powers, enabling them to bring relief to sufferers. All will agree that much of the healing done is not by the power of Christ; the question is whether any "faith healing" of today is of the Lord or not.

The fact that most of it is done under such different conditions to the miracles of Christ should be sufficient to cause suspicion. With the Lord and the Apostles, they went about doing good, and sought no gain in return. They required no promise of joining their party, no promise that the restored ones would even become Christians. There was no attempt at display. There was the simple delight to do good to God's glory. "Silver and gold have I none," says Peter, "but such as I have give I thee, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth arise and walk." So with the Master, there were no agonising screaming prayers, no jargon of mingled shoutings by several praying aloud at the same time, while others sang hymns. There was no blaming the poor patient for lack of faith. The faith was in the Master and in the apostles, and the wondrous words, "Go in peace and sin no more," could not be purchased by gold and silver, but they never failed to accomplish their purpose. There were some beautiful incidents of faith on the part of the cured, or by those who sought help for the afflicted. In such instances their faith was rewarded, "Thy faith hath made thee whole," as in the case of the Syro-Phoenician woman, and the faith of the Centurion resulted in the healing of his servant, but the Lord was not depending upon the faith of others for power to do His mighty works.

There was a purpose in all our Lord's miracles. It seemed but appropriate that He who would one day come again to earth, as the Great Physician, who would cure all diseases, aches and pains, and wipe away all tears, banish death, and empty the tomb, should during those 31 years' sojourn as a man, give some little illustrations of the great blessings which were due at His second presence. Thus we read, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory." (John 2:1 1.)

There seemed more the necessity also for such demonstrations of power at that time. The Lord was operating with natural Israel; none were as yet begotten of the spirit, and therefore they could not understand spiritual things. The natural mind requires natural demonstration; the Jews naturally looked for such demonstration when Messiah would appear. In this way they would expect to recognise Him as is intimated in John 7:31, "And many of the people believed on Him and said, when Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these which this man hath done."

While such demonstration was necessary at that time, because of the great change of dispensation which was taking place, and particularly because of treating with the natural minded people of God, there was not the necessity for its continuance. In fact, to have continued the acts of healing would surely have thwarted the purpose of the Gospel Age. It would have soon won the popularity of the world, and taken away the reproach of Christ. That will be just what will happen when the Great Physician takes up His great power, and reigns, and heals the diseases of all the willing and obedient, not only bringing a temporary release from pain and disability, but He will then even destroy death. When righteousness will be so rewarded, the heathen and sceptics will all be attracted, and the knowledge of the Lord will soon be popular. During this Gospel Age, however, the Lord has not attempted to make the religion of Jesus Christ popular. He has purposely allowed Satan still to reign, and sickness, sorrow, and death to prevail, and His own people to suffer persecution, "They who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." God has purposely permitted such conditions because He has not been desirous of converting the world as yet—that has been quite a mistaken idea on the part of many Christians. If God had desired to convert the world at this time He would doubtless have continued miracles of healing, etc., but the Scripture states that He has only desired to take out a "little flock," "a people for His name," such only as are willing to "suffer with Christ," and be like their great Leader, perfected through suffering. These, far from seeking to escape death, have devoted themselves to death, "as many as are baptised into Christ are baptised into His death." Only if we suffer with Him shall we reign with Him. Such consecrated followers of the slain Lamb are not looking for physical healings; they are rather looking for grace and strength to prove loyal to God in the same way that their Master trod. It is only by having similar experiences that similar character can be attained. The desire is not how to escape suffering but how to be rightly exercised by it.

We see, then, that there was no question for the continuance of miracles of faith healing, etc.; on the contrary, we observe good reasons why such should not be continued. We are, therefore, not surprised to find that the power to pass on the gift of miracles was confined to the apostles, and that these gifts passed away with the generation following.

It was this power of passing on the gift by the laying on of hands that Simon the Sorcerer desired to purchase. When Phillip the Evangelist (not the apostle) had been preaching, and had made converts in Samaria, it was necessary that the

apostles should send two of their number along, in order that they might lay their hands upon the converts that they might receive the holy spirit.

The Apostle Paul, after having spoken regarding various gifts of miracles, in 1 Cor. 12:12-31, finishes by saying, "Yet show I you a more excellent way." He then proceeds to describe the principal grace of Christian character, and shows that while the gifts of faith, prophecy, and tongues, etc., should pass away, this grace of the spirit would be eternal, and therefore how much more important it is that we should exercise ourselves to attain the fruits and graces of God's holy spirit than that we should be so interested in such gifts of tongues and healing, etc., which were after all the things of childhood. Things which were essential only during the church's infancy.

Satan has sought out counterfeits for probably everything in connection with the Christian religion, and we have such a warning in 2 Cor. 11:13-15, "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light, therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as ministers of righteousness." Spiritualists, Theosophists, and Christian Scientists all deny the fundamental doctrine of Christianity and the Cross—the ransom sacrifice for all, and therefore any power of healing they exercise cannot be of God. Regarding other "healers," we find them generally much confused on simple Christian doctrines, and we cannot but think that before God will use a man in any such remarkable way He will first lead him to a clear knowledge of Himself and His word. Others, such as the Pentecostals, do not give evidence of God's holy spirit, the spirit of a sound mind, of peace and joy and moderation, but rather by their fanatical ways in screaming prayers and irresponsible actions and unintelligible mutterings and rollings on the floor, give evidence of demoniacal possession. The great adversary has surely greatly succeeded in bringing in strong delusions one way and another that if it were possible even the elect would be deceived.

No doubt all these poor people think they are right; think they are under the influence of God's holy spirit; but that is just where the great adversary has deceived them. There is nothing in the New Testament to indicate that there would be another Pentecostal shower. There is only "one baptism" of the holy spirit, which came on the

Lord Jesus Christ, and flowed down to the church at Pentecost. The only way to participate in this Baptism is by becoming members in the body of Christ by repentance, faith and consecration. "We are all baptised by one spirit into one body."

Three Degrees of Love.

(Convention Address)

NINETEEN hundred years ago the Apostle Peter desired to stir up the minds of the Christians then living by putting them in remembrance of some of the things they already knew. Likewise today, we also desire to stir up your pure minds by putting you in remembrance of some of the things that you also already know.

The subject of Love is very prominent in the New Testament. Indeed, we have one whole chapter on the subject of love. But it is not about 1 Cor. 13 that we wish to speak, but rather about the three degrees of love; three different aspects of love.

For want of better names they might be called first of all, affectionate love; secondly, sacrificial love; and thirdly, objective love. We could preach a sermon on each one of these aspects, therefore we hope it will be appreciated that what follows is merely the outline of each of these degrees.

First of all, let us consider affectionate love. This is simply the feeling of affection of one for another. Take for example the love of parents for their infant child. The parents have a great deal of affectionate love for the child, but it would not be love due to anything that the child has done, but merely of what the child is. So a parent would have pure affectionate love for his child. God had this love for mankind. God had affection for mankind, and set him over the works of His hands. In Titus 3:4 we read, "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward men appeared." In a recent study we found it to mean, "after that the kindness and affection or love for mankind, affection of God toward mankind, appeared." Likewise also, man must have affection for God. In 1 Cor. 16:22 we read these words,— "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." "If any man have not affection for the Lord." The meaning of "let him be Anathema Maranatha" is somewhat obscure, but it probably means excommunicated, or "let him be as he is." Maranatha means, "The Lord cometh."

Besides this, Christians are to have affection for each other. In 1 Thes. 4:9, 10, we read,— "But as touching brotherly love (brotherly affection) you need not that I write unto you; for you yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed you do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that you increase more and more." So Christians also must have a feeling of affection one for the other. Heb. 13:1, "Let brotherly love continue"—brotherly affection.

Let us consider now sacrificial love. This represents the second degree of love. Although affectionate love is not complete in itself, it is a very fundamental part, a very important part, a very essential part of the sacrificial love, and sacrificial love will not exist unless there is a feeling of affection. Perhaps the best definition of sacrificial love would be, the desire to do good unto the one you love. It is a feeling of benevolence, wanting to do good unto the one you love.

As stated earlier God had affection for men. Consequently God desired to do good unto men. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," a supreme example of sacrificial love. Likewise with Jesus Himself, He had tremendous sacrificial love for mankind. In 1 John 3:16, we read,— "Hereby perceive we the love, because he laid down his life for us." It was a supreme example of sacrificial love. Likewise, the Christian should have sacrificial love for the Heavenly Father. This thing reciprocates all the time. We must also have sacrificial love towards our Heavenly Father. Rom. 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." We must be prepared to sacrifice something also to God because of our love to Him.

Christians also must be prepared to sacrifice one for the other. 1 John 3:16 continues, "And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." In 1 Thes. 1:3 the Apostle Paul makes mention of the labour of love that the brethren had shown towards him. In Gal. 5:13 we have, "Use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." Our affection for each other must eventually end up in being prepared to sacrifice for each other. Just as the ultimate in Jesus' life was the laying down of His life, so also the Christian should be prepared to lay down his life for the brethren. "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

Let us now consider objective love. This is the one on which we would like to dwell mostly. First of all, what is it?

It means love with an object. The best verse to illustrate the point is in Rev. 3:19,— "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." This brings us to a new aspect of love. If you consider the affectionate love, if you consider the sacrificial love, both of these convey primarily the idea of doing good unto the one who is loved. But here we have a new concept of love. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." In Heb. 12:11, we read, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous." Isn't that so? Think back to your childhood days. We remember several occasions when we

were chastened, and at the time it seemed unnecessary, but certainly it was for good reasons. But we can feel assured now that this was done with the object of some greater beneficial effect later on.

This is perhaps the most pointed and most touching and most dangerous form of love there is. Let us read Heb. 12:

11 a little further,—“Nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” Unto them which are **rightly** exercised, it has the beneficial effect later on.

In verses 5 and 6 of the same chapter we have a thought much the same as in Revelation, how that God chastens every son He receives; and in 1 Pet. 4:12, 13, we have a similar thought. So this objective love must always have something at the end of it, and the end must be better than the beginning. It is very important to keep that in mind, that the end must be better than the beginning. There must be some purpose in it.

Now we come to the point, Does this objective love apply between Christians? Should you exercise this objective love towards me? Should I exercise this objective love towards you? **Yes**, we really should. In Titus 1:13, we read,—“Rebuke them sharply.” Why? “That they may be sound in the faith.” That is the result, that they may be sound in the faith. And if we dwell on this, it is a good example of a Christian exercising objective love one to the other. It is not very nice to have your thoughts criticised and your ideas pulled to pieces. It hurts sometimes. Yet here we have the admonition to “rebuke them sharply,” or convince them pointedly, clearly. If we are ourselves rebuked or corrected or convinced, we should always remember the last part of that verse; perhaps this one is exercising towards us an objective love, so we also might be sound in the faith.

Gal. 6:1 is on similar lines. “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Here again we have a case where objective love would need to be exercised. First of all you have to realise that a brother or sister may have erred along the way somewhere, and therefore you are ready to restore such an one, to bring them back to their former condition. Let us rest assured also that initially it is not going to be very pleasant. We all like to protect our own personal feelings and ideas. But let us just remember that if one has something to say to us, perhaps that one is trying to restore us to our former condition. For those of us who might be inclined to the idea of correcting and restoring their spirit, the words in Matthew delineate how we should go about it. This is not quite the parallel of what we have been saying, but the principle is the same. “Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.” This would be a very significant point in this type of **love**.

There is a second aspect of this objective love also. To restore anyone is a positive aspect. But there is a negative aspect, when perhaps the greatest love could be shown by not doing anything at all. You all remember the story of the butterfly coming out of the cocoon. A lad was watching the butterfly struggling, and decided to do something to help it. He took a pair of scissors and cut the cocoon open. But the butterfly never flew. It needed the struggle against the opposition to develop its wings and muscles. So really, what was the most loving thing that lad could have done? Was he doing the best thing for the butterfly, or would it have been better in the long run to allow it to struggle for the present? The same thing could apply to Christians.

In Rom. 14:1-3 there is an account of how to deal with a weak brother. It seems to have the implication not to be too hasty. Sometimes we may like to put a person straight immediately. But perhaps that is not the best thing. Perhaps they should struggle for a while. After all, it is up to each and all of us to be able to give a reason to every man for the hope within us. Therefore we have to struggle for a little while. We have to get our own thoughts organised, and prove things for ourselves.

The same thing could be said when it comes to assisting the brethren. Because we have such thoughtfulness for each other it is possible we are a little too eager to help a brother or sister out. Possibly they would like to be left alone for a while to think things out for themselves and wrestle against their problems. It is a thought worth keeping in mind. Next time an occasion like this occurs, think a while, What would be the best thing ultimately for this person? How can the most advantageous form of love be shown?

Reading Eph. 4:1-3 from a Canadian English Version, it states,—“I urge you then, I who am a prisoner because I serve the Lord, live a life that measures up to the standard God set when He called you. Be humble, gentle and patient

always. Show your love by being helpful to one another. Do your best to preserve the unity which the spirit gives by the peace that binds you together.”

A very good Oxford Bible, with References, India paper, thumb index, Brevier clear type, Persian Morocco binding, is now available at \$9.50. Same Bible with Concordance and Subject Index at \$10.50.

THE QUESTION BOOK

Word is to hand from our brethren in Chicago, U.S.A., who had published the "Bible Students Manual" that they now *expect* to publish the Question Book—"What Pastor Russell Said, His Answer to Hundreds of Questions." These books are expected to be ready about March 1968, and brethren desiring copies may order through us, if they wish. The price is expected to be about \$3.50, plus postage. Orders should be placed as soon as possible for early delivery.

Question Box

Question.—Please explain the meaning of our Lord's words in John 12:24.

Answer.—In this verse and its context our Lord shows the necessity for the sacrifice of His humanity, likewise the sacrifice of the justified humanity of the Church, His body members, in order to the accomplishment of God's great plan of salvation for mankind.

The "corn of wheat" represents the perfect humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ must yield up His life in sacrifice to God, in order to provide the redemption-price for Adam's sin, and for the sin of the whole human family sentenced in him.

Just as a corn of wheat, when planted, must itself perish as a grain, in order to give life to the plant which springs from it and eventually bears grain, so Christ must die as a man in order that the condemnation to death which rests upon all in Adam, may be lifted; first from the church, the "little flock" gathered during this Gospel Age; and later that whosoever will of the whole world of mankind may enter into life during the Millennial Age. ("My flesh I give for the life of the world.")

Before the value of Christ's sacrifice goes to the world in general, however, it is used for the benefit of the church. (Heb. 9:24.) Being first justified by God's grace through faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, the church is invited to follow in His steps, sacrificing their justified humanity. (Rom. 5:1-2; 12:1-2.) The church, "the little flock," must also like the "corn of wheat," fall into the ground and die. So we enter the "narrow-way" of self-denial and sacrifice of earthly good things; we enter into a "covenant of sacrifice" with the Lord. (Psa. 50:5.) To these apply the "exceeding great and precious promises" by means of which "we may be made partakers of the divine nature." 2 Peter 1:4; Luke 12:32; Rev. 3:21; Matt. 19:27, 29; Rom. 8:14-17; 2 Tim. 2:11-12, etc.

As Christ the Lord is the corn of wheat, so the church complete is likened to "a handful of corn . . . the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon." (Psa. 72:16.) As the church now receives her life from her Lord, so she, in turn, lays down this life in sacrifice with Him during this Gospel Age, so that in due time when exalted to Kingdom honour with her Lord and Head, she may share in the grand work of bringing in the blessing of all the families of the earth, according to the promise made to father Abraham.

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