Articles by Archie Naismith

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The Levitical Offerings (May–June 1971)

From Ministry in Focus, May–June 1971.

Editor's note: This is another of Archie Naismith's articles on the Levitical Offerings. Our brother served the Lord for many years in India. His ministry was a blessing there; it has also been a blessing in Britain, United States of America and Canada.

The sin-offering and its laws occupy more space in the records of the early chapters of Leviticus than any of the others. In the order of presentation to God, the sin-offering took precedence over the others at the priests' consecration, the cleansing of the leper and on the day of atonement. Cain, chagrined and enraged because his offering was unacceptable to God, was told that a sin-offering was available for him, crouching at his very door. The wages of sin is death, and sinful acts must be paid for either by the sinner or by an innocent substitute. In order to make forgiveness possible sin must be expiated: atonement must be made.

The sin-offering was the divine provision, not for wilful or presumptuous sins but for sinful acts committed ignorantly or inadvertently. Only one sacrifice for sins, that of the offering of the body of Jesus Christ 'once for all,' can bring forgiveness for wilful sin of which all have been proved guilty. Only that perfect sin-offering of which the millions of Israel's sacrifices for sins were typical can bring pardon for wilful sin. If that is rejected or despised there is no other sacrifice for sins available.

A true and devout Israelite was liable to be overtaken in some sinful act, and so is a true believer; therefore let us heed the warning, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' God's provision of the sin-offering for sins of ignorance displays His absolute holiness, His perfect equity, His impartial justice and His matchless grace. Ignorance does not nullify guilt in the sight of a holy God, though it may palliate it. For the murderer or adulterer or desecrator of the sabbath day no sin-offering was available to the nation of Israel. For such, as for the Gentile who trangresses God's holy law, a more adequate provision, a better and a perfect sacrifice, was necessary.

Sin is a heinous thing in the eyes of Him Who cannot look on iniquity and will by no means clear the guilty. It is God's defiant enemy, raising a rebel hand against His revealed will, trampling under foot His righteous laws, and invoking His wrath and curse.

Like the other offerings, the sin-offering must be entirely without blemish. It must be killed: its blood must be shed and sprinkled before the Lord: and the blood 'made atonement for the soul' of the offerer who had brought it and penitently laid his hands on his head. The animal or bird selected for the offering might be a bullock, or a lamb, or a male or a female kid, or a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons, according to the status or wealth or poverty of the offerer.

The teaching in the Letter to the Hebrews makes it clear that the daily and frequent sacrifices offered under the Jewish economy could never take away sins. A better covenant based on a better and final sacrifice offered by a better Surety, and negotiated by a perfect infallible

Mediator, has been ratified by the blood of Jesus. The offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all has brought perfect satisfaction to a righteous and holy God, and by its finality and efficacy brings pardon from an offended God to all who in faith approach Him on that ground. In Hebrews 10:10-19 seven proofs of the perfection of that sin-offering are enumerated.

I. The sacrifice for sin at the Cross never need be repeated: that offering was once for all, and all who approach God by it are sanctified (v.10).

II. Jesus, our great High Priest who offered Himself a sacrifice to God, is now seated in evidence of a finished work, and in contrast to the unfinished ministrations of Israel's priests who stood daily in the performance of their priestly duties; for no chair or stool was provided for them in the tabernacle.

The place our Lord Jesus occupies, as Adonai, the Sovereign Lord at the right hand of God who said, "Sit Thou on My right hand until I make thine enemies Thy footstool" (Ps. 110:1) would never be assigned to one in whose ministry there was the slightest flaw or defect (v. 12).

The glorious Person, our Lord Jesus Christ, as He occupies that throne of honour, does not contemplate a return to earth to add something to the efficacy of that sacrifice He offered for sin on Golgotha's tree. He is there in anticipation of the day when all His enemies will be finally overthrown and become the footstool of His feet (v.13).

Not only is His work for us as our Sin-offering complete, but His work in those whom by His death He has

sanctified is perfect: He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified (v.14).

The affirmation of the Holy Spirit is that in terms of the new covenant the sins of those who have been sanctified by faith have not only been forgiven but also forgotten, and on their hearts and minds God's holy law has been inscribed (vs.15-17).

The way into the holiest of all, closed to the nation of Israel, is open to all who come by faith through the blood of Jesus, whether they be Jew or Gentile, and they are invited to come boldly as purged worshippers (v. 19).

THE OFFERERS of the sin-offering might belong to one or other of four classes according to their responsibility. When in Scripture the order is from the greatest to the least, the order is that of responsibility: when from the lowest upward, the order is that of grace. In the case of the sin-offering a priest, entrusted with the performance of sacred rites and ceremonies and therefore more responsible than the rest of the congregation, must bring an offering of the highest value, a bullock. A priest could be overtaken in a fault and defiled by sin, and for his purification, forgiveness and continuance in service, a sin-offering must be brought. When Israel had sinned and the whole congregation was guilty before the LORD, they, represented by the elders of the congregation, must bring a bullock. Expressions of regret or remorse, however genuine they might be, were insufficient: a bullock must be slain and its blood sprinkled before the LORD. Woe to the nation that transgresses or rejects the laws of God and spurns His provision for it!

Next in order God deals with the sin of the ruler occupying a responsible administrative position in the

congregation of the LORD. 'He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God:' but he too might fall into sin. Whether he transgressed in an official capacity or in his personal life, he had lowered his dignity and brought dishonour on the name of the LORD by his sin, and he must bring a male kid of the goats as his sin-offering. Psalm 51 is the language of a ruler, King David, who had committed grievous sins and with sorrow and grief had penitently to bring his sin-offering to the altar and place his hands on its head. When his sin came to his knowledge, he cried out, "I acknowledge my transgression; and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight. - Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." The sin of the individual man, woman or youth, not necessarily coming before the notice of others yet just as serious in God's sight, was to be expiated by the offering of a female kid.

THE OFFERER must bring his offering to the priest and present it as the divine provision to meet the requirements of a holy God. He must lay his hands on the victim's head, thereby transferring his guilt to the sinless offering that was to die instead of him. The repentant sinner likewise, relying on the blood of Christ to meet his need, can say,

"My faith would lay its hand on that dear Head of Thine

While like a penitent I stand and there confess my sin."

The offering was slain by the priest who sprinkled its blood on the horns of the altar of incense in the holy place, and on the horns of the altar of burnt offering in the tabernacle court where it was exposed to the view of

all the people. After the sprinkling of the blood the offerer stood forgiven and accepted by God.

When the blood of the victim was taken into the holiest of all, as on the great day of atonement, the body was burnt in a place outside the camp. Referring to this, the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews adds, "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us therefore go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:12,13). In other cases the flesh of the offering became the food of the priests.

A special provision was made for poverty. If one who had committed a sin could not afford a kid, that person might offer a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons as a sin-offering. For her purification after the birth of Jesus, Mary His mother brought just that offering in accordance with the law of the Lord, an evidence of her poverty and one of the signs of the poverty that our Lord Jesus Christ who was infinitely rich, accepted when He became Man.

If an Israelite was extremely indigent and could not even afford the turtle doves or young pigeons, he might, if he had committed a sin, bring as his sin-offering what was really the equivalent of a meal-offering which, as already noted, was a type of Christ in the perfection of His life and service and in the intensity of His suffering during His life. This presents a difficulty in light of the statement, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." The words of Sir Robert Anderson in his book The Gospel and Its Ministry may help us to understand this provision for the sinner who was extremely poor:

"If the Israelite redeemed by the paschal lamb, and standing within the covenant which secured to him the efficacy of the blood upon the mercy-seat, should be too poor to bring the appointed sacrifice for his trespass, divine compassion will reach him in his poverty: his meal-offering shall be accepted for a sin-offering and his sin that he hath sinned shall be forgiven him.'

The sinner's sense of sin, and his appreciation of the Sin-bearer, may be utterly inadequate and poor, and men may set him down as spiritually bankrupt; and yet if Christ be the ground on which he comes, divine grace will reach him. But divine grace is no excuse for human presumption."

C. A. Coates has called this the feeblest measure of exercise in which the offerer does not realize that his sin has necessitated the death of Christ. He does not measure it in its true gravity nor realize that his sin is such a solemn thing that death is the penalty; but he has a sense that he has done wrong and he has also a sense of the perfectness of Christ."

The Levitical Offerings (July–August 1971)

From Ministry in Focus, July–August 1971.

Editor's note: This is the sixth article on the Levitical offerings by Archie Naismith, M.A. These articles not only give us an understanding of the laws governing the offerings, but they provide us with divine illustrations of the work of Christ for us on the cross.

VI. The Trespass Offering

Every trespass is a sin but every sin is not a trespass: hence in the trespass offering, but not in the sin offering, amends must be made for the wrong done. The typical significance of the various offerings already considered has involved the use of theological terms which require definition. Though some of the terms are used interchangeably and sometimes regarded as synonyms, there are distinctions in meaning and use which must be made in the interests of clarity.

What is meant by Propitiation? In the Authorized version the word is the equivalent of a sacrifice offered in appeasement and used only in the N.T. - in I John and in Romans 3:25. In its three occurrences the Greek word relates it to the Mercy Seat. In English the term signifies the removal of wrath by the offering of a gift or sacrifice. Atonement is a kindred term used frequently in the Pentateuch to translate a Hebrew word that means 'covering.' It is a 'making at one' and refers to the act or sacrifice that makes possible the sinner's reconciliation to God. Expiation, a word not found in our A.V., but used

in some recent versions instead of "propitiation," is payment of the penalty for a transgression committed or an injury inflicted. Propitiation has in view the person wronged, expiation the wrong done.

Reconciliation is the removal of hostility by providing a way of approach by sinners from enmity to God to His pardon and favour. It also implies the penitent approach to God by the transgressor on the ground of atonement made. Substitution is a term not found in Scripture, though its connotation is brought out in several statements such as "Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (I Pet. 3:18).

Reparation, with its cognate term "restitution," is associated largely with the trespass offering in which the offerer must make amends and give satisfaction for injury done to another. The Hebrew word for Restitution, used four times in Exodus 22, means "making whole" or "making good" something taken or acquired wrongfully from another. The same Hebrew word is translated "amends" in Leviticus 5:16 in the context of the trespass offering where it implies restoration to the rightful owner, or payment to the person wronged of the equivalent of the wrong done.

Three pairs of these terms may be descriptive of what concerns the trespass offering, the first in each pair being related to the offering, the second in each to the offerer. These are - Expiation and Reparation: Atonement and Amends: Substitution and Restitution.

In Isaiah 53:10 - "when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin" - the Hebrew word 'Asham' (offering for sin) is the word translated "trespass offering" in

Leviticus, Numbers and Ezekiel. It means "guilt" or "guilt offering." The reference in that verse, as in the whole of Isaiah 53, is to our Lord Jesus Christ. As the perfect "trespass offering," our guiltless and guileless Redeemer "restored what He did not steal" (Ps. 69:4 - R.S.V.).

The Offering in every case of 'trespass,' irrespective of the status or wealth of the guilty person, must be a ram without blemish, to be valued 'according to the shekel of the sanctuary.' The ram is a type of Christ in His maturity and energy. There must be a ram in the flock to ensure a progeny, and it is significant that He Who was cut off out of the land of the living without generation "shall see His offspring" and "prolong His days." In Genesis 22 the ram caught in the thicket was a substitute for Isaac. In Leviticus 8, at the ordination of the priests, one ram was offered as a burnt offering, and the flesh of the other ram was eaten by Moses and Aaron and the priests. Jesus, the Son of God, offered Himself instead of us, and every believer is in God's "holy priesthood" and can feed upon Him Who is the antitype of the ram of consecration.

The Offerer must bring with his offering that which he had wrongfully appropriated or the equivalent of the injury inflicted, to be valued according to the shekel of the sanctuary, God's standard of moral and spiritual values. The guilty offerer must add to what he brought as restitution a fifth of its value, a double tithe. One tithe was for the injury done to a holy God and the other tithe was paid to his injured neighbour. The amount thus restored, with 20% of its value added, then became the property of the person wronged, and when these conditions were fulfilled, the guilty person was forgiven.

Two main spheres of guilt - in the holy things of God and in dealings with neighbours - were covered by the trespass offering. Trespass against a holy God meant 'robbing God' of what was His due in offerings, tithes and firstfruits. The prophet Malachi, the LORDS messenger, brought against his people the indictment that they were defiling God's altar by offering on it polluted bread and animals that were lame and sick. In addition to that, they were withholding their tithes and other offerings that were His due. On account of this God was withholding His blessings. To receive God's overflowing blessing, that He longed to bestow, they must bring their trespass offerings and prove their penitence by restoring what they had withheld, adding to it a fifth of its value (See Mal. 1:7, 8; 3:8, 0[?]).

Jehovah had commanded in His righteous law His people's wholehearted love to Himself and love to their neighbour equal to their love of self. A modern example of restitution to fellow-men who have been wronged or defrauded is the remittance of 'conscience money.' Our daily papers give instances of this from time to time. Not long ago a man over 80 sent 2 pounds to the Constabulary of the district in which he spent his youth to make amends, with interest, for his theft of a policeman's helmet which he had stolen some 60 years before. He calculated that its value then was less than 1 pound. The recipients of that 'conscience money' wrote to the elderly gentleman acknowledging the amount he had sent and assuring him of their forgiveness.

Various forms of trespass against a neighbour are defined in Leviticus 6:1-7. Each one mentioned is also a "breach of faith against the LORD." The varieties of guilt

requiring the trespass offering, with amends for wrong done, are -

1. Misappropriation of a deposit entrusted to a person:

2. Fraud on sale or purchase of property by charging more or paying less than the real or market value:

3. Unjust acquisition of money or property by oppression of employees in withholding all or part of the amount due.

4. Extortion by menaces and threats - a form of blackmail:

5. Refusal by the finder to return lost property to its rightful owner:

6. Libel, or defamation of character, occasioning loss of employment or prestige:

7. Perjury in bearing false witness against a neighbour:

8. Injury by violence involving loss of health or limb.

What a wonderful provision the LORD thus made for His people's spiritual and social welfare! It was good for the whole congregation and helpful both to the guilty person and to the one wronged. If the principles it contains were followed today, how beneficial it would be to the individual Christian, to the local church and to the testimony of the gospel!

The Levitical Offerings (September–October 1971)

From Ministry in Focus, September–October 1971.

Editor's note: This is the eighth article on the Levitical offerings by brother Naismith. The author was a missionary in India for many years. He now lives in Scotland. His ministry has been enjoyed in Britain, United States of America and Canada.

VIII The Drink Offering

The regulations concerning the drink-offering or libation are given in Numbers 15:1-10. Unlike any of the offerings in the early chapters of Leviticus, it was entirely in liquid form and consisted of wine only. Leviticus is the book of Israel's priesthood, Numbers the record of pilgrimage. The libation was the pilgrim's offering, but it must be accompanied by one or more of the priestly offerings to be "an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord."

In the New Testament the Greek word "spendomai" - translated "be offered" in the K. J. version, signifies being poured out as a drink offering, and occurs twice only, in Philippians 2:17 and II Timothy 4:6. In both Scriptures the apostle Paul uses the expression concerning himself as a libation to the Lord Jesus Christ in life (Phil. 2:17) and in death (2 Tim. 4:6). Though there is no etymological relationship between the Greek word and the English term "spend," the assonant connection is readily recognized; and when Paul tells the Corinthian saints (II Cor. 12:15), "I will very gladly

spend and be spent for you," we can envisage the frail form of the faithful Apostle being poured out for their sakes as a libation in life and in death.

Certain features of the drink offering convey to the student of the Word important truths for the Christian life. In reckoning and in value the libation was one of the least of the offerings. When Paul compared his service to a libation and evaluated the "service and faith" of the Philippian believers laid on the altar of sacrifice as greater and more basic than his own ministry, he displays the "mind that was in Christ Jesus Who ... humbled Himself." The humility of the Apostle, who counted himself "less than the least of all the saints" is manifest in the comparison. Humility as a sovereign grace is the crown of the Christian faith. Paul may also have had in mind their gifts sacrificially contributed out of deep penury and conveyed to him by Epaphroditus who risked his life to take them to Rome.

The libation was always poured around the altar along with one of the major offerings in Jewish sacrifices, Josephus tells us, and most frequently with the burnt offering which sets forth our Lord's complete dedication to His Father's will, even to the death of the cross. In heathen practice the libation was poured on the altar. The Christian's aim, like the Apostle's, should be "that Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death," so that "to live is Christ and to die is gain." Any sacrifice we make, any presentation of ourselves and our service to the Lord, should always be the outcome of our appreciation of "the Son of God Who loved us and gave Himself for us."

The measure of the drink offering varied according to the value of the burnt offering or peace offering and the meal offering around which it was poured. When the victim was a lamb and the meal offering a tenth deal of flour, the drink offering was a quarter of a hin of wine. When a ram was offered with two tenth deals of flour for a cereal offering, the amount of the libation must be increased to a third of a hin of wine. Along with a bullock as a burnt offering and its meal offering of three tenth deals of flour, half a hin of wine must be poured as a libation. On this analogy, our presentation of ourselves as living sacrifices to God will be according to our appreciation of Christ and His sacrifice for us.

The quantity of oil in the meal offering was the same as the measure of wine in the drink offering. It might be a fourth, or a third or a half of a hin. Paul claimed that "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" enabled him to rejoice in the preaching of the gospel whatever might be the motive that prompted it, and confirmed in his own mind the determination that Christ should be magnified in his body by life or by death (Phil. 1:20). His libation, the offering of himself in dedicated service to the Lord, was commensurate in his experience with the supply of the Holy Spirit of which oil is the type. "Be filled with the Spirit," says the Apostle (Eph. 5:18), and He will lead you to a full consecration to Christ.

The order in which the various measures of wine in the libation are prescribed in Numbers 15 is significant. It represents a gradual increase in the amount of wine used in the libation. This gradual outpouring of the libation adequately depicts the gradual spending of the Apostle's strength in the service of his Lord and Master, and the gradual ebbing away of his life until he could

say on the eve of his departure, "I am already being poured out as a drink offering" in the final stage of his supreme act of sacrifice.

A beautiful Old Testament illustration of a libation of extreme costliness is found in the devoted venture of three of David's mighty men who, breaking through the ranks of the hostile Philistines at the risk of their lives, brought to their king the water from the well of Bethlehem for which he longed. So precious was it that David, recognizing that it was "the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives," poured it out as a libation to the Lord.

The Apostolic Gospel (November–December 1971)

From Ministry in Focus, November–December 1971.

Editor's note: Our esteemed friend Archie Naismith, well known on both sides of the Atlantic, has sent us an excellent series on the Apostolic Gospel. This is the first of these articles. It is appropriate for this time of the year.

The Coming of the Saviour

In every age men have eagerly sought after news. The nation of Israel desired some new thing in the days of the prophets. Many of the cultured philosophic Greeks in Athens lived for nothing else but to hear or tell something new. Novelties are the craze in the present era of scientific and astronomical advance. The achievements of astronauts landing on the moon, photographing its surface and sending messages to earth, are examples of this. More than seven centuries before our Lord's incarnation God promised to Israel through His prophet, Isaiah, "Behold I will do a new thing: now it shall spring forth: shall ye not know it?" God's news for all men is the good news of the gospel concerning His Son, Jesus Christ. Yet, when He came to His own possessions, His own people did not receive Him: when He came into the world, the world did not know Him.

It was no new thing for children to be born in the likeness of their parents and after the image of the first man, Adam; but it was a new thing for "the Son of the

Highest" to come to earth as "the image of the invisible God." It was no new thing for Jewish teachers of great learning to meet within the precincts of the temple in Jerusalem and discuss the Law and the Hebrew Scriptures: but it was a new thing for a child of twelve years to sit among them and astonish those learned men by His understanding and answers. It was no new thing for Jews to be crucified under the dominion of the Roman Caesars: but it was a new thing for a man, by dying on a cross, to make full atonement for sin, rending the veil of the temple at the time of His death, and the hard hearts of sinners down through the centuries ever since. It was no new thing for men to die and be buried in Jewish sepulchres: but it was a new thing for one who died and was buried to rise from the dead and appear in human form to many who knew Him. All this took place in God's appointed time, in fulfilment of His promise.

"When the fulness of the time was come God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law" (Gal. 4, 4, 5). When the fulness of the time came, the angelic host was summoned to celebrate the advent of the Son of man; the morning stars sang their song of praise - "Glory to God in the highest" - and the sons of God shouted for joy when Jesus, the Son of God, was born in Bethlehem. He Who had come to fulfil the divine promise, to do the will of God perfectly, and to meet every requirement of a righteous God was not man only, but "God over all, blessed for ever." In His earthly life His Godhead was veiled and the divine glory of His spotless human nature shone forth. "We beheld His glory," wrote the apostle John, "full of grace and truth." In Him deity and humanity each found perfect expression. Meekness and

Majesty were perfectly blended in His sinless walk, love and light in His flawless deportment, courtesy and courage in His divine utterances, and pity and purity in His compassionate touch.

"As man He walked as God He talked:

His deeds were miracles, His words were oracles:

Of man the finest specimen, of God the full expression:

Behold the Man! Behold thy God!

Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see!

Hail, Incarnate Deity!"

Jesus Christ came to reveal God to man, to instruct man in the will of God, and to display to man the heart of God. He came to fulfil in His life all the requirements of God's holy law and to carry out the glorious purpose of God's infinite and eternal love. For this He was 'filled with all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' Taking the form of a bondservant, He finished the work His Father gave to Him to do in perfect obedience to the will of His Father - obedience 'unto death, even the death of the cross.' Girding Himself as a servant to wash His disciples feet, He could speak of Himself immediately after He completed the task as their Lord and Master. He came closer to man in His love for the sinner, yet towers far above the best of men in His moral character.

The love of God necessitated the cross of Christ; the righteousness of God required that a sinless substitute should bear the penalty of the guilty; and the power of God raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to His right hand as a living Saviour.

It was no new thing for the Spirit of God to clothe God's chosen men and empower them to do special service for Him: but it was a new thing for the Spirit of God to come to indwell and fill men to be witnesses concerning the Son of God. It was no new thing for men of erudition to move about propagating their theories and philosophies; but it was a new thing for sinful men, cleansed and transformed, to travel over the world and proclaim for nearly twenty centuries the same message and see men of every nation transformed by receiving it as they themselves had been. Those men - the apostles of the Lord then and their successors until the present day - did this in obedience to the command, and in fulfilment of the commission of a unique Person, the sinless Son of God. They commenced their witness ten days after He left them and ascended into Heaven. On that same day the Holy Spirit descended and empowered them for their ministry. They were commissioned by the Lord Jesus, prior to His ascension, to preach the Gospel, make disciples of all nations, baptize the disciples in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and teach them to observe all Christ's commands (Matt. 28:18-20). Becoming Christ's witnesses, they proclaimed repentance and forgiveness of sins in His name (Luke 24:46-47).

The Apostolic Gospel (January–February 1972)

From Ministry in Focus, January–February 1972.

Editor's note: This is Mr. Archie Naismith's second article on the Apostolic Message. All who attempt to witness for Christ should peruse these expositions carefully.

II. The Content of the Message

The Apostolic Gospel was based on three historical facts, namely - the incarnation of the Son of God, the crucifixion of the sinless Christ and the resurrection of the triumphant Redeemer.

Peter was the apostle to the Jews, Paul to the Gentiles: yet "to the Jews first and also to the Greek" both proclaimed the same message. In his early sermons Peter, addressing Jewish audiences, said, "Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you" (Acts 3:26) and "the God of our fathers raised up Jesus" (Acts 5:30). "Raised up" in both cases refers to Christ's appointment and incarnation, not to His resurrection. Paul, addressing both Jews and Gentiles, proclaimed to them that God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus (Acts 13:23), using the word "raised" in the same sense as Peter. In his inspired treatise on "the Gospel," the Epistle to the Romans, Paul right at the commencement mentions specifically both the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus, and implies His death. In his letter to the saints in Corinth he affirms that his message to the cultured

citizens there was simply "Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

Peter was one of Christ's trainees during His life on earth. He knew Jesus in His years of public ministry, was an eyewitness of His majesty on the Mount of Transfiguration and of His sufferings, and saw Him in His resurrection body. Paul had a different experience. The Jesus he thought was dead spoke to him from Heaven, and to him the resurrection of Jesus was proof of His Deity. To Paul the death of the Lord of glory on the cross was an outstanding proof of divine love and because of that he claimed, "I live by the faith of the Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Dealing with the apostolic message Professor James Stewart says, "To confront a bewildered and dishevelled age with the fact of Christ, to thrust upon its confusion the creative word of the Cross and smite its disenchantment with the glory of the Resurrection - this was as their urgent, overpowering task."

It was not merely the narrative of the life of the greatest Person Who ever lived, or an outline of His transcendental teaching that the apostles preached. Many have written a life of Christ and given learned dissertations on "The Sermon on the Mount" that have never moved a soul. The apostles showed that the three basic facts of the Gospel message, the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ express the three great truths of Revelation, Redemption and Resurrection, and present a full Christology.

The message that consumed the apostles and evangelists of the first century like a flame, and through them kindled the world, was what John affirmed in his

first letter, introducing it with the words, "That which we have seen declare we unto you." It was the truth he proclaimed at the beginning of his Gospel, "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory." While on earth, the Lord Jesus was "the image of the invisible God" in human form, and also the instrument of divine power. Only He could say, as He did when announcing His mission in the synagogue of Nazareth:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor, He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." When He told His audience, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears," He made a definite claim for His ministry, namely, that it was the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy uttered more than 70 years before. The apostolic preaching likewise made use of the prophetic Scriptures to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah and would return from His seat at the right hand of the throne of God as Judge for all men and as King of all nations of the earth.

The apostles did not preach Christ as a great social reformer, revealing the secret of true brotherhood or peaceful co-existence among men. Nor did they claim Him to be a great philosopher with a message of emancipation from the evils and afflictions of this life: but they did present Him as the true and only revealer of the character of God. They declared, too, that He was the Redeemer of men, that to accomplish that work of redemption, the cross was absolutely necessary, and that

His resurrection and exaltation as Prince and Saviour were proof of the completion of that work. Jesus Himself had said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." There is no magnetism like the cross, and that cross is presented in the context of human suffering and man's sin.

To deal with sin the Jews had a sacrificial system of ceremonial law that had to be incessant in its performance, yet had proved ineffectual: for

"Not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain

Could give the guilty conscience peace or wash away its stain."

The cultured Greeks brought to bear on the problem of sin, and of life and death, "a concentration of human effort along aesthetic and rational lines;" but the dissoluteness of men in their most cultured cities was plain evidence of the future of their system. The Romans acknowledged the existence and misery of sin but endeavoured to restrain it and wipe out its consequences by moral laws and ordered government. That too proved a total failure, as may be gathered from the conditions prevailing within the Empire, that led to its decline and fall.

In contrast to all these, the preacher of the Cross of Christ prescribed a remedy for sin that to the Jews was an offensive doctrine, and to the Greeks versed in this world's wisdom sheer absurdity. The attitude of the ritualist and the rationalist of the present time is a modern counterpart of these powerless systems of the past. The recipient of the grace of God as revealed in the Cross of Christ can affirm,

"A crossless Christ my Saviour cannot be:

A Christless cross no refuge were for me:

But O, Christ crucified, I rest in Thee."

The cross has redemptive significance only because He who died on it was the Creator of the universe, lived among men as the sinless and impeccable Son of man, and will return from His exalted place at the right hand of the Majesty on high to rule the world in perfect righteousness as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The Apostolic Gospel (March–April 1972)

From Ministry in Focus, March–April 1972.

Editor's note: This third article in Archie Naismith's series on the Apostolic Gospel should be perused by all who witness for the Lord, whether privately or publicly.

III. The Proclamation of the Evangel

The apostles preached the Cross as revealing three great truths, namely, the sinfulness of man, the love of God and the triumph of the Crucified. The character of God was displayed in and through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The veil of the temple that had hung at the entrance to the Holiest, the inner shrine, for centuries, shutting God in and shutting man out, was at Christ's death 'rent in twain from the top to the bottom.' It was the hand of God that rent it, and we sing, 'Lo! He is the mighty Conqueror since He rent the veil in two.'

The heart of Christianity is the Bible: the heart of the Bible is the cross: and the heart of the cross is the very heart of God Himself: for

"Inscribed upon the cross we see

In shining letters "GOD IS LOVE":

The Lamb Who died upon the tree

Has brought us mercy from above."

In the cross the love of God is revealed, and there, too, is His righteousness perfectly displayed. It was there that atonement was made: it was there that the debt was fully paid.

The heralds of the apostolic gospel made it clear that behind the cross was the eternal purpose of God: for the Incarnate Son of God 'was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.' Behind the cross, too, were the powers of darkness massed for conflict under Satan, the prince of darkness. "This is your hour and the power of darkness," said the Lord Jesus when He was arrested in the garden. Paul describes the conflict at the cross with the powers of evil as the disarming of principalities and powers by Christ the mighty Victor, Who 'made a show of them openly' and led them captive in His triumphal procession. What a theme for proclamation in the martial atmosphere of the Roman Empire! The sinful hatred of man was also behind the cross; Him "ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."

The apostolic gospel went still further. The apostles and evangelists affirmed that the Man of Calvary was "the resurrection and the life," thus confirming our Lord's words to Martha. They preached 'Jesus and the resurrection.' Without the resurrection the voice of the Christian evangelist would never have been heard, for Christ's triumph over death by rising from the dead is the very core of the Christian message and the corner-stone of Christianity. It was the theme of all the sermons recorded in the 'Acts' and the motive of every act of evangelism. 'By it,' asserts one writer, 'a new era in the world's history had begun.' 'Through the open gates of Christ's empty tomb,' declares Professor James Stewart, 'the heralds of the gospel had entered into life.' Apart from the resurrection of the Redeemer there could be no gospel, for without it the evangelist could not present to lost sinners a living Saviour. There could be no full

atonement for sin and no reconciliation to God apart from it.

A former Indian Bishop of Dornakal, India, was one day asked, 'If you were in a village where they had never heard of Christ, what would you present?' He replied without hesitation - 'The Resurrection!' In sophisticated, speculative Athens Paul preached the resurrection; and, though some mocked and others wanted to know more about it at some other time, there were several who believed. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the strongest evidence of a power in action far mightier than the whole vast alliance of evil forces that put Jesus of Nazareth on the cross. By it:

"He hell in hell laid low: made sin, He sin o'erthrew:

Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so, and death by dying slew.

Hail to the Conqueror slain, slain in His victory,

Who lived, Who died, Who lives again for thee, His Church, for thee."

Christ's resurrection is also a guarantee to us who believe of the "exceeding greatness of His power toward us, that power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power." The exaltation and Lordship of Christ was also part of the apostles' teaching.

Consider how the advocates of the Christian gospel in the early Church related the great historical facts of crucifixion, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ to the benefits that accrue from them to those who believe the message. The Holy Spirit, declaring through those

apostolic messengers the holy law of God and His wonderful provision for lost sinners in sending His Son, convicted men of sin, and emphasized the need for repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the truth had a powerful subjective aspect as well as an objective one. The apostolic ambassadors appealed to men to be reconciled to God by repentance and acceptance of God's terms of peace, and those who believed entered into a covenant with their Redeemer and Lord who said, "This is the new covenant in My blood shed for many for the remission of sins." Baptized in His name, they identified themselves with Him in His death and resurrection; and in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper they held Him in affectionate remembrance and announced His death for them.

The Apostolic Gospel — IV. The Secret of Its Remarkable Results (May–June 1972)

From Ministry in Focus, May–June 1972.

Any enquiry into the success of the gospel message proclaimed by the apostles must take into account both the content of the message and the manner of its presentation in New Testament times. In what we consider the order of their importance, we suggest five reasons for its success, namely:

The message itself, the men who proclaimed it, the moral condition of the world into which it came, the method of worship and witness of those who received it, and the miracles that accompanied its presentation.

I. The Message Itself was Dynamic. Paul claimed it to be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." It came with authority because it did not offer a natural theology of a pantheistic nature nor did it claim to confer some emotional or mystical experience on the initiates. It was not cluttered up with philosophical arguments or with the "Do this" and the "Don't do that" regulations of ethical homilies. It stated historical facts, was universal in its application, and was "made known to the nations for the obedience of faith." Referring to current conditions in the modern world, Professor James Stewart points out the need for a return to the apostolic gospel. He writes, "It cannot be too emphatically stated that, if contemporary evangelism is to make its full potential impact on the secularism of this age, it will have to go back more constantly and

deliberately than it has done, and also more patiently and humbly, to its own fountain-head in the New Testament."

When Henry Ward Beecher commenced his ministry, disappointed at the absence of results, he said, "There was a reason why, when the apostles preached, they succeeded, and I will find it out if it is to be found out." It is the bounden duty and privilege of all who preach the Word today to pursue the same quest.

II. The men who preached the gospel in New Testament times were chosen men who had themselves experienced the power of their message. They were not outstanding personalities and had not been trained in the theological colleges of their day. Nor had they studied in the schools of philosophy. They had no official backing, no impressive credentials and no illustrious patronage among men. They preached without remuneration, trusting in their Lord to supply their temporal needs, and persisted in knowing nothing among men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. They continued in their work of propagating the gospel in spite of poverty, persecution and prison [?]. Many of them suffered martyrdom for Christ's sake. How then did they become the nucleus of a movement that turned the world upside down? The answer is that it was not they [?] who accomplished this but Christ that lived in them. It was the power of Christ's resurrection in their lives that made the multitudes give heed to their words. Those early preachers became sharers in the life of a risen Christ, partners in the fellowship of holiness which [?] separated them from the dead formality of Judaism and the dreadful idolatry of heathenism. They realized their vital relationship with a holy, living Saviour. Peter

had denied his Lord before the cross, but the Spirit of God transformed him into a bold witness for Him in His absence. Paul the persecutor who could call himself a blasphemer and injurious and the chief of sinners, could claim for his life and service, "Not I but Christ that liveth in me." They were filled with the Holy Spirit: their hearts were filled with the love of Christ, their minds with the knowledge of His will, and their lives with the fruits of righteousness. In them the controlling Spirit produced the mind of Christ, so that they were content to fill a little place if He were glorified.

They were not apologetic about their message, nor did they try to explain away what might seem to their audience to be opposed to human reason. Again and again, in the Book of the Acts, the Spirit makes mention of the boldness and confidence of those men as they preached to the people. When Paul went to Thessalonica his words were "in power and in the Holy Ghost and with much assurance." They carried the battle into the enemy's camp and made their assualt on Satan's citadel, presenting their challenge in intelligible terms and not in the equivocal phraseology of mystic philosophy.

They were "of one accord, of one mind." Their's was a united testimony, for they all preached the same message. The lack of a united witness and the many varying voices and uncertain sounds are among the chief reasons for our lack of results today. Above all, as a result of a combination of all these factors, they lived only for the preaching of Christ. That was not only their predominant object in life: it was their sole interest: and they were themselves part of their message.

III. The characteristic of the days in which the apostles lived were very similar to those of the "space age" in which we live. The materialistic attitude of men had led to a deplorable immorality that knew no shame, as it has today, and to a fatalism that produced a careless apathy to all matters of spiritual and eternal import. As races and religions intermingled there was an inevitable loss of faith in the pagan cults of that day. The schools of philosophy awakened interest but gave no satisfaction to man's spiritual cravings. The Stoics adopted a "grin and bear" attitude to life; while the Epicureans regulated their lives by the slogan, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." The Fatalists argued, "What must be will be, and we cannot do anything about it." In our own time, with slight variations, each of these has its adherents.

Into such a world had come the Messiah promised in the Hebrew Scriptures which had been translated into Greek, the lingua franca of that day known as Septuagint (LXX). His advent, the implications of His death and resurrection, His exaltation as Lord and Christ, and His promised return as King of kings, fulfilled the promise of God through the prophet Isaiah, "Behold I will do a new thing." Those who believed the good news concerning Him became new creatures in Christ Jesus, a people God has formed for Himself to show forth His praise.

IV. Their method of worship and witness was in their day "a new thing." In its simplicity it differed from the dead formalism of the religions of its time, from the esoteric mysteries of paganism and from the complicated logic of the various philosophic schools. The simplicity and sincerity of the Christians in their meetings for worship

and the clarity and yjj&t [?] of their witness both commended the message they proclaimed and convinced the seekers of the truth that these men possessed something entirely lacking in their own priests and philosophers.

V. Added to these were the miracles wrought by the apostles in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. God bore witness to their message "both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to His own will" (Heb. 2:4). The signs and wonders were manifest at the pouring out of the Holy Spirit: the miracles were seen in healing and supernatural happenings, and the gifts in the Spirit's enduements. The phrase "according to His own will" is very important because it indicates that those supernatural events were, in the divine purpose, specially for that transitional period in His dealings with men [?] and were part of the divine testimony to the power of the gospel in those early days. Nowhere is it stated or even suggested that miracles were part of the message or essential concomitants to its proclamation.

Revivals under the Good Kings of Judah - Jehoshaphat (September–October 1972)

From Ministry in Focus, September–October 1972.

Editor's note: Mr. Archie Naismith, Maddiston, Scotland, has given us another interesting series. This time he writes on revivals, a very much needed subject today. These articles are spiritual and should reach the conscience of readers.

THE immediate successor of King Asa was his son, Jehoshaphat, whose name means "Jehovah is judge," a principle which the king recognized throughout his reign of twenty-five years. Upright in his personal conduct, Jehoshaphat was exemplary in many respects, prudent, capable and energetic. As a ruler he endeavoured incessantly to promote a renaissance of the knowledge of the Lord and His Word and a revival of spiritual devotion among his people. Yet, one important weakness proved a serious deterrent to complete and permanent revival, the lack of separation from the ungodly. For this Jehu, the son of Hanani the seer, rebuked Jehoshaphat after his return from a battle fought in alliance with Ahab, the wicked king of Israel: "Shouldest thou help the ungodly and love them that hate the Lord? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord."

If there is to be revival in the Church of God in our time, our sympathies must be large enough to embrace all the children of God. Enlarged hearts and wider, clearer vision are essential to revival. But separation from

everything unclean, unspiritual and unholy is necessary if this enlargement is to be attained. The Apostle Paul says, "I speak as unto my children, be ye also enlarged. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing" (II Cor. 6:13-17). Separation to God implies a severance from every association that is contrary to His intrinsic holiness and truth.

In the case of King Jehoshaphat the unequal yoke included marriage relationships, political confederations and partnership in business. In these three spheres, domestic, political and commercial, this otherwise upright and godly monarch linked himself with the ungodly. On account of this he forfeited the approval, fellowship and blessing of the Lord his God in the ventures into which these associations led him. To that extent, too, his actions hindered the fulness of revival blessing that Jehovah can bestow through one wholly seperated to Himself.

At the age of 35, Jehoshaphat, a contemporary of Ahab, the wicked king of Israel, began to reign well (I Kings 22:41-43). His heart was right with God, Who prospered and blessed him. But it takes a steady hand to hold a full cup, and it would seem that the very opulence and renown with which God recompensed his uprightness and piety lured him into those forbidden and unholy associations that led to his failures. He had riches and honour in abundance: and it was then that "he joined affinity with Ahab." The word translated "joined affinity" is translated in Deuteronomy 7:3 "makes marriages"

that are forbidden, and rendered "son-in-law" in a bad sense in Genesis 19:14, Judges 10-6 and II Kings 8:27. Young unmarried Christian, beware of the unequal yoke in marriage! An old Puritan once said, "If you marry a child of the devil, you'll be sure to have trouble with your father-in-law."

This family relationship led to a political confederation, and Jehoshaphat said to Ahab, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people" (II Chronicles 18:1). The third partnership into which Jehoshaphat entered with the ungodly was a commercial enterprise with Ahaziah, King of Israel, that resulted in shipwreck and financial loss (II Chron. 20:35-37). Thus each of those ungodly alliances had distastrous results, and the good king of Judah sustained personal and spiritual injury, grave moral harm to his family and posterity, and financial and material losses. His weakness in this respect interrupted, retarded and limited what might have proved a powerful, far-reaching revival in the Kingdom of Judah that would have extended into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and even to the nations beyond.

In spite of Jehoshaphat's weakness in forging those forbidden alliances, his uprightness and sincerity in serving the Lord God of his fathers was rewarded with the favour of Jehovah who established the kingdom in his hand. He also won the affection and esteem of his subjects who lavished gifts upon their new ruler (II Chron. 17:5).

While removing the idolatrous groves and high place that still remained and fortifying the land against invasion, the king seemed to realize, doubtless through the witness of God's Spirit in his conscience, that the

first essential to true and lasting revival among the people of God whom he had to govern was instruction in the laws and ways of God. This led to

The Appointment of Teachers

to expound God's holy law (II Chron. 17:7-9).

The prophet Ezekiel at a later date, transported by the Spirit to a valley full of dry bones, very many and very dry, had to learn the same great truth. "Can these bones live?" he was asked. "Is revival possible?" Uninformed and possibly dubious, Ezekiel replied, "O Lord God, Thou knowest." Then Jehovah revealed to him the only way, the way of instruction: "Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them . . . " Soon when the revival seemed to have begun and there was a real stir in the valley, the command was reiterated, "Prophesy again." And what was the outcome? "So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath (or Spirit) came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceeding great army."

Jehoshaphat had not reigned three years before he realized the need of bringing the teaching of God's law to bear on his subjects. Teachers possessed of a knowledge of God and His Word were selected from three classes of the community and sent through the cities of Judah to instruct the people. From among the princes, related doubtless to the royal family, the Levites and the priests, chosen men travelled "through all the cities" bearing the Divine message. They had the book of the law of the Lord with them, so human ideologies, national planning and reformation programmes had no place in their ministry. That Book contained all that was essential for the spiritual, moral, social and material welfare and happiness of the people. The Lord

prospered His servants and blessed their ministry in a twofold way, first in the edification of all Judah and then, as a result, in the reverential fear that fell on the peoples of all the neighbouring countries.

The gracious movement of revival that had such a promising commencement was interrupted by the king's ill-considered alliance with the wicked king of Israel, one of the sad results of which was the outbreak of disunity, dissension and controversy within the kingdom of Judah. To deal with this it was necessary to have men of great wisdom and the highest integrity, who would resolve, faithfully and in the fear of God, grievances and quarrels that had broken out in every part of the realm.

Dr. Candlish, emphasizing the fact that "the single fault charged against this godly prince is his frequent alliance with his ungodly neighbours," enlarges on the perils of conformity to the world's ways:

"If therefore there are any in the Church of Christ who are sometimes tempted - and who shall say that he is not? - to advance too far in the line of concession and conciliation and these overtures of friendly conformity to the world, and to plead that they are not contaminated themselves but that they rather season the world's corruption in the circles in which they move by the admixture of their own purer principles and practices; - we bid them look to Jehoshaphat and his unholy alliance with the idolatrous king of Israel. Let them consider what the real effect of such conduct was in his case, and what must be the effect of similar conduct in theirs."

To deal with the troubles that had broken out in Judah

was necessary. The details of the working of this system are outlined in II Chronicles 19:5-11, and present three aspects of its operation.

(1) The Basis of its Administration. "Ye judge not for man but for the Lord Who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you" (II Chron. 19:6, 7). All decisions were to be based on loyalty to a holy and righteous God, and this ruled out all iniquitous dealing, acceptance of bribes and respect of persons, and ensured the impartial administration of justice.

(2) The Branches of its Operation. To deal with differences in religious matters Amariah, the high priest, was appointed to preside over a court of judges that met for that purpose. In criminal and civil cases, affecting the relationship of man to man, "the ruler of the house of Judah," Zebadiah by name, was the fitting presiding judge. Amariah means "Jehovah has said" and Zebadiah "Jehovah has endowed." Thus the responsibility for pronouncing the verdict devolved upon men of standing whose fellowship with Jehovah was so close that they could declare what He had spoken or award what He had granted.

(3) The Benefits of its Organization. All the people could thus depend on their interests having impartial consideration. As each city had a judge or judges to try causes of every kind, irksome delays would thus be avoided, and only the dissatisfied would appeal to the higher court in Jerusalem. The wisdom of this arrangement must have appealed to all, and the benefits

it conferred seem to have given great satisfaction to the people.

The analogy of this to the Divine order prescribed in the Church of God must be apparent to all. God has set in each local church His elders or overseers who, with the knowledge of His Word and His endowment of spiritual gifts, are His appointed "judges" in ecclesiastical, civil, and moral matters pertaining to His assembly. "The saints shall judge the world; and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" (I Cor. 6:2). In every matter we have a Great High Priest Who presides as Lord in the congregation of His saints. His guidance is to be sought in all difficulties and His ruling in all disputations.

The Cross of Christ (Oct 1963)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 9 No. 10, Oct 1963.

A. Naismith

The Meaning Of The Cross — Part I

The cross of Christ was the glorious Climax of the Eternal plan, the greatest Crime of sin-benighted man, the gravest Crisis of a sinless life, the grandest Crown of Christ's triumphant strife.

In 1 Corinthians Paul lays emphasis on "the word of the cross." In the 18th verse the attitude of two classes of people to the cross is indicated, those who perish consider it sheer absurdity, but to those who are saved it is the manifestation of divine power and heavenly wisdom. In the same chapter (verses 23-24) he contemplates three classes in their reaction to the message of the cross. To the Jews it gives offence and proves a stumbling block, for in their Scriptures the curse of God rested on anyone hanged on a tree. The philosophic Greeks thought the cross the height of folly and unworthy of credence. "You ask us," they argued, "to repose our confidence in a man who died as a criminal, who was crucified; that is an insult to our intelligence." The third class, a minority group called by the Apostle "the elect," chosen from among both Jews and Gentiles, saw in the cross of Christ the revelation of divine wisdom and power. The message of the apostles, for which they made no apology, was therefore "Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

Jew and Greek have their modern counterpart in the ritualist and the rationalist, but those who are saved can confidently assert:

“A Christless cross no refuge were for me:

A crossless Christ my Saviour could not be:

But oh, Christ crucified! I rest on Thee.”

What then is the significance of the cross? In the first recorded apostolic sermon on the day of Pentecost, Peter proclaimed that Jesus of Nazareth was “delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” to be crucified. Behind the cross, therefore, was the eternal purpose of God. From the word translated “determinate” our English word “horizon” is derived: so the cross was from the beginning on the horizon of God.

The Apostle continued: “ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” Behind the cross, too, was the sinful hatred of men.

As the Lord Jesus contemplated the cross, He said in prayer to His Father, “For this cause came I unto this hour,” and again, when prostrate in the Garden of Gethsemane, “Not My will but Thine be done.” A third factor in the cross was the submissive will of the Son of God who “gave Himself for our sins.” Further, Hebrews 2:14 tells us, the Son of God became incarnate that “through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Revised Version). So behind the cross stood the powers of darkness, led by Satan.

God’s eternal plan centred in the cross. When by one man sin entered into the world and death — physical, spiritual and eternal — by sin, the promise of God

concerning the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15) was the first intimation of His purpose to 'bring life and immortality to light' through one born of a woman. This was the first prophecy concerning the cross in which divine wisdom and power were to be demonstrated, the wisdom of God in its conception and the power of God in its completion. God did not say 'the seed of the man,' but 'the seed of the woman.' Centuries later Isaiah prophesied, 'A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel,' (Isa. 7:14) and when, after the lapse of more than 700 years, Jesus came into the world, the Spirit of God through Matthew recorded the fulfilment of that prediction at His birth.

Through the prophet Isaiah God had declared, "Behold I will do a new thing" (Isa. 43:19). It was no new thing for a child to be born into the world. But it was a new thing for a child to be formed in the womb of a virgin and to be born at the very time and in the very place predicted centuries before. It was no new thing for children to be born in the likeness of their parents and after the image of the first man, Adam, but it was a new thing for a holy child to come to earth from Heaven as 'the image of the invisible God.' It was no new thing for erudite teachers to meet within the precincts of the temple in Jerusalem and discuss the Law and the Hebrew Scriptures; but it was a new thing for a child of twelve to sit among them and to astound those learned men by his understanding and answers. It was no new thing for men to travel throughout Judea and Galilee teaching the Law of Moses; but it was a new thing for a teacher to claim equality with God, and to teach the people in such a way that officers sent to arrest Him had to return empty-handed saying, 'Never man spake like this Man.'

It was no new thing for men to be crucified under the Roman regime; but it was a new thing for a man, by dying in anguish and ignominy on a cross, to make full atonement for sin, rending the veil of the Temple and the rocks on the mountainside at the time of His death, and the hard hearts of sinners down through the centuries ever since. It was no new thing for men to die and be buried; but it was a new thing for one who died and was buried to move the stone rolled over his grave on the third day after his burial, to come out of his grave alive, and to appear in human form to many who knew him.

It has been said that the heart of Christianity is the Bible: the heart of the Bible is the cross: and the heart of the cross is the very heart of God Himself. Inscribed upon the cross we see in shining letters, ‘God is Love.’ The attributes of the Almighty, the heart of the Eternal, the love and righteousness, and the wisdom and power, of God are all revealed in the cross.

Man’s sinful hatred, culminating in the greatest crime ever committed, demanded the crucifixion of the Lord of glory. ‘This is the heir: come let us kill him,’ they said. In Genesis 3 is recorded the first prophecy uttered to fallen man, which contained both the revelation of God’s purpose for man’s redemption and His promise of man’s triumph through the woman’s seed. Genesis 4 contains the account of the first outburst of human hatred and its culmination in the first murder. But the blood of Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, of which the murder of Abel is a figure, speaks better things than that of Abel which cried out to God for vengeance from the very ground on which it was spilt.

The Lord Jesus, alluding to the words of the Messianic Psalm — 35:19 — said to His disciples, 'They hated Me without a cause.' Dr. G. Campbell Morgan has called the cross of Christ "the most daring act of men in revolt against the government of God." Pointing out that the languages — Hebrew, Latin and Greek — in which the inscription over the cross was written represent the religion, power and culture of the world of that day, he says, "Sinful religion rejected Him, sinful power murdered Him, and sinful culture neglected Him."

The Jews, vociferating their hatred of the Son of Man, cried, "Away with Him, crucify Him." The Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, passed sentence on One whom he found guiltless and should in justice have acquitted, and delivered Him to be crucified. The elders and scribes of the Jews, at the instigation of their high priest, spat on His face, buffeted Him and struck Him with the palms of their hands. The Roman soldiers crowned Him with thorns, beat Him with scourges and bound Him with ropes. So "they killed the Prince of Life and desired a murderer," Barabbas.

In one of his tracts John Weston depicts divine grace prevailing over man's sinful hatred. He writes:

The world is like a ship whose crew has mutinied and murdered the captain (the owner's son) and thrown his body overboard. Now the question arises as to who can guide the ship. Attempts are made by one and another, but all ends in failure and disaster, for the ship strikes a rock and is heading for destruction. The owner hears what has happened and orders a lifeboat to be sent out immediately to save the crew. "But they have murdered your son!" the life-boat men exclaim. "I will pardon their

awful crime," replied the owner, "and save every man who will jump into the lifeboat."

Thus God has transmuted man's greatest crime, the crucifixion of His Son, for the salvation of all who repent, accept Christ as Saviour and confess Him as Lord.

The Cross of Christ (Nov 1963)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 9 No. 11, Nov 1963.

A. Naismith

The Triumph of the Cross

Our Lord, in His discourse to the Jews recorded in the tenth chapter of John's Gospel, told them, "No man taketh My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father,."

Three great facts which should never be forgotten mark out Jesus, the Son of God, as a unique Person. He was the only person who lived in this world who chose the time, place, and manner of His birth. He was the only person who lived in this world without sin: and He was the only person who came into this world with the express purpose of dying, of laying down His life. In His unswerving obedience to the Father's will, that led Him to the death of the cross, divine love triumphed over man's hatred, light gained the victory over darkness, and patient endurance overcame the agony of crucifixion. (3). Right from the beginning of our Lord's public appearances there are incontrovertible evidences that He knew that He would be crucified. "I have a baptism to be baptized with," He said, "and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" (Luke 12:50).

"His path, uncheered by earthly smiles,

Led only to the cross."

In the account of His life given by John in his Gospel, the Lord Jesus refers again and again to “His hour.”

At the marriage in Cana of Galilee He said, “My hour is not yet come.” When urged by His brethren to go up to the Feast of Tabernacles, do His miracles there, and be hailed as King, He said, “My time is not yet come.” His enemies could not arrest Him as He taught in the temple because “His hour was not yet come.” As the Passover drew near when He, the Lamb of God, would become the sacrifice for sin to accomplish man’s redemption, He knew and said that His hour had come. In the Garden of Gethsemane He knew all things that should come upon Him. The same evangelist, John, records three occasions on which He spoke of being “lifted up”, signifying that He would die on a cross.

The seven sayings on the cross make an illuminating study; but the central utterance of our Lord on the cross is the only one we have space to consider here. In it He did not address men, as He did in two of the other sayings: nor did He speak to His Father, as He did in the other two: nor did He make a general announcement, as in the remaining two. This is the only saying of our Lord on the cross in which He addressed God, and it is the only one in which He quoted verbatim from the prophetic Scriptures. This was indeed the gravest crisis of His sinless life, when that cry was wrung from His agonized soul, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

The last word “Me” reveals His aloneness, not just solitude, or loneliness, but aloneness. He stood alone, the sacrificial Victim, the sin-bearer, the Saviour. Never had another who trusted in God been thus forsaken.

“Alone upon the cross He hung that others He might save;

Forsaken then by God and man, alone His life He gave.”

“Thou,” the word He used in addressing His God, expresses his Alienation. Sin is alienation from God; and there He who knew no sin was made sin for us. The answer to the question of the spotless Victim was, “Because Thou art holy.” He who knew no sin, and who did no sin, was bearing sin’s penalty, alienation from God, not for Himself but for others. “He saved others: Himself He could not save.” He took the guilty sinner’s place and suffered in his stead.

“Forsaken” on the cross by His God: that spells out the deep sorrow of abandonment. His own race, the Jews, had abandoned Him by the negation of His claims (John 1:11). In the Garden He has been abandoned by His disciples who “all forsook Him and fled” (Mark 14:50). On the cross He was forsaken by His God. God who had from the Heaven of heavens declared, “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased,” who had daily found His delight in Him, forsook Him when He was made sin for us. Never before had the Lord Jesus asked, and never again would He ask, such a question. The triumphant shout “It is finished,” announced both the consummation and the completion of the work of redemption, that work that had necessitated the death on the cross.

“Why” is the language of the sob that expressed His deep agony. Never had anyone endured such agony. The anguish of His holy soul far exceeds human comprehension. How the silence of His friends must have wounded Him as His enemies cried, “Let Him be

crucified!" But who can fathom the depth of His agony at the silence of His God when, while He was enduring excruciating physical pain and torture Jehovah bade His sword awake and smite the Man who was His Fellow? The "Why" of His question has its answer in His own emphatic assertions on the road to Golgotha: "I come to do Thy will, O God:" "not My will, but Thine be done:" and "I came not to do My own will but the will of Him that sent Me."

(4) The conflict with Satan culminated at the cross, for behind the cross were arrayed all the powers of darkness. As was foretold in the first prophecy (Gen. 3:15), Satan bruised the Lord's heel by bringing His walk and life on earth to an untimely end, but in dying Jesus defeated Satan and bruised his head. When the priests and elders came to lay hands on the Lord Jesus, He said, "This is your hour and the power of darkness." His hour had come and their hour had come, and so the cross became the scene of a great conflict whose issue was never in doubt. It was an outstanding victory for the Son of God, the proof of which was His triumphant resurrection.

"He hell in hell laid low:

Made sin, He sin o'erthrew;

Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,

And death by dying slew."

On the cross Christ bore the penalty of sin: in His resurrection He bruised the head of the prince of this world and annulled his power: and in His exaltation He breaks the power of cancelled sin and sets the prisoner free. Almost two millenniums before the cross, Job had

asked the question, “How can a man be just with God?” Justification is possible only because the sins of the person who accepts Jesus as Saviour were borne by the sinless Son of God when He died on the cross, and the believer becomes “the righteousness of God in Him.”

The Jewish sacrificial system of ceremonial law, incessant in its performance, had proved ineffectual, for

“Not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain

Could give the guilty conscience peace or wash away its stain.”

The aesthetic and rational principles of conduct embodied in the philosophies of the cultured Greeks also failed, as is evidenced by the dissoluteness of their most enlightened cities. The Romans, recognizing the misery caused by sin and crime tried to suppress it by ethical laws and wipe out its consequences by ordered government, but the violence and vice that led to the decline and fall of their empire are ample proofs of the breakdown of their system.

To the believer who receives Jesus Christ, acknowledges Him as Lord, and is accepted by a holy and righteous God on the ground of the atoning sacrifice on the cross, the risen, living Lord imparts His victorious power, the power of His resurrection.

“His victory is ours:

For us in might come forth the mighty One;

For us He fought the fight, the triumph won:

His victory is ours.”

The Cross of Christ (Part 3) (Dec 1963)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 9 No. 12, Dec 1963.

A. Naismith

The Implications of the Cross

The historical accounts of the cross have been communicated to the world by all four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Three of the five writers of the 21 Epistles of the New Testament do not mention the cross. Paul makes frequent reference to it, usually employing the word “stauros,” translated “corns,” but Peter in his letters uses only the word “xulon,” a tree. In the language of the early church the two terms were synonymous. “Stauros” connotes an upright pole or a dead tree to which a criminal was nailed.

In the Old Testament the cross is foretold in Psalm 22, written about a thousand years before the Incarnation. Its remarkable fulfilment in the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ marks the Psalm as Messianic. The sixteenth verse, “They pierced My hands and My feet,” records prophetically the words of Christ concerning His cross. This prediction is remarkable, as it anticipates death by crucifixion, involving the transfixing of the victim to a cross by piercing the hands and feet through with nails, a mode of capital punishment introduced by the Romans centuries later.

The Old Testament presents in several places a prophetical view of the cross, the four Gospels its historical details, the Acts of the Apostles its evangelical

proclamation, and the Epistles its doctrinal significance. The Apostle Paul emphasizes the importance of the cross of Christ in three of his earlier epistles, namely, 1 Corinthians, Romans, and Galatians, and in three of his prison letters — Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians: but he makes no reference to it in his pastoral letters to Timothy and Titus. In the Epistles, as in the Gospels, the Holy Spirit shows how, by enduring the cross and despising the shame, the Lord Jesus transmuted the cross from the symbol of horror and death into an emblem of hope and triumph.

In his letter to the churches in Galatia Paul indicates that for the believer there are four crucifixions on that one cross, each replete with practical significance. Thus, viewing the cross, the Christian might say:

“I see my Saviour on the cross, redemption’s work completing (Gal. 3:13):

Myself I see on that same tree, my present need Christ meeting (Gal. 2:20):

There, too, I nailed and left impaled the flesh, its lusts and passions (Gal. 5:24),

And by His cross I count as dross the world, its ways and fashions” (Gal. 6:14).

(1) The particular aspect of redemption that the cross presents in the letter to the Galatians is “from the curse of the law.” Throughout the Epistle the centrality of the cross is emphasized. If it is accorded the central place in the Christian’s faith and conduct, then, the Apostle shows, circumcision and the rites and ceremonies enjoined under law will find no place of acceptance there. The claim of the cross of Christ to this central

position is mentioned in all six chapters: In Chapter 1:1-4, as the centre of God's purpose for us, delivering us from the present evil age. In Chapter 2:19-20, as the Centre of God's power in us, emancipating us from legal bondage. In Chapter 3:10-14, as the Centre of God's promise to us, saving us from the curse of a broken law and bestowing the Spirit in response to the exercise of faith. In Chapter 5:11-21, as the Centre of God's patrimony for us, redeeming those under the law from servitude and conferring the dignity of sonship. In Chapter 5:11-21, as the Centre of God's provision for us in producing the fruit of the Spirit and eliminating the works of the flesh. In Chapter 6:12-15, the cross is viewed as the believer's banner and boast, enabling him to bear the stigma and reproach attached to it by the world.

Paul argues that those who, misled by Judaizing teachers, were determined to place themselves under law, were under the curse. Being unable to keep the law in its entirety, they brought down upon their heads all the curses that fulminated from Mount Ebal. Christ by His death on the cross, when He sustained the penalty of the lawbreaker by becoming a curse, changed the curse for those who accepted His redemption into a blessing, the blessing promised to Abraham. In this way Christ has brought the believer out from under the curse of the law and given him, apart from the works of the law, a righteous standing before God.

The cross is thus the refuge of the penitent sinner who, realizing the impossibility of salvation by keeping the law, rests on the work of the Redeemer. This truth is thus presented by the poet, William Cowper:

“If the wanderer his mistake discern,

Judge his own ways and sigh for a return,

Bewildered once, must he bewail his loss

For ever and for ever? No! the cross!

There and there only, though the deist rave,

And atheist, if earth bear so base a slave,

There and there only is the power to save.”

(2) Disciples of Christ who have taken up their cross to follow Him see themselves “crucified with Christ” when He died (Gal. 2:20) Thus the believer was “born crucified.” In Paul’s reckoning the cross of Christ terminated Judaism and the legalism that it embodied. He recognized that by it he had died to the law, while still maintaining that the law itself was holy, just and good, and revealed the righteous requirements of God. He showed that the law was diametrically opposed to the grace of God as expressed in the cross of Christ, and maintained that he was dead to the law, having been crucified with Christ.

In Galatians 2:20, the verb is in the perfect tense in the Greek, indicating a present state resulting from a past action. Thus it might be read, “I have been, and still am, crucified with Christ.” That crucifixion took place, not at Paul’s conversion or at his baptism, but at the cross, for the preposition “with” determines the time the action took place as well as the person named. Thus, like Paul, every believer is united to Christ both in death and in resurrection life, for “Christ lives” in him to produce a new outlook on life and a new manner of living,.

The other aspect of crucifixion with Christ, prominent in the letter to the Romans, should not be forgotten, He "died unto sin once" on the cross, and now "lives unto God" in resurrection glory. This is stated as a matter of fact, but its appropriation and application by the individual believer is a matter of faith. "Likewise reckon yourselves dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rorn. 6:11).

(3) The flesh, with its passions and lusts, is seen on the cross in Galatians 5:24. Here the aorist, not the perfect, tense, and the active, not the passive, voice are used. This is an act that has to be done once for all by the believer, and each for himself. The statement here is the logical sequel to what precedes it. When they that are Christ's reckoning themselves dead with Christ, crucify the flesh with its passions and lusts, thus mortifying the deeds of the body, the life of the risen Christ is lived out in them; so "the golden chain of the Spirit's fruit" encircles their life and the black catalogue of the "works of the flesh" does not find a place. Thus what God produces in the be-believer supersedes what, as an unbeliever, he naturally produced, for he is "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God has prepared beforehand that he should walk in them." Self-expression, as seen in the will, wisdom, and welfare of the flesh, leads to one or many of those types of depravity enumerated in Galatians 5:19-21, and of these Paul affirms that those who indulge in them "shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

"Then hasten to give it the deathblow by nailing the flesh to the cross,

And thou shalt find infinite treasure in what had seemed nothing but loss."

(4) The Apostle's sole ground of exultation was in the cross of Christ Jesus his Lord, not only because he saw himself there, associated with Him in death, the death of the "old man," but also because, on that same cross, he saw the world crucified. In Galatians 6:14, Paul uses again the passive voice and the perfect tense, as in 2:20, signifying that the world "has been and still is" crucified to him. In His priestly intercession the Lord Jesus said. "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world." The world gave to the sinless Lord of glory a cross, not a crown. It was the world that led Him forth and saw Him crucified. Standing, as it does, between the Christian and the world, the cross is the great divide, and the language of the Christian must be:

"Can I take part with those who nailed Him to the tree,

And where His name is never praised, is that the place for me?"

To see the world crucified is to see it in the place of shame and dishonour that is assigned to our blessed Saviour whom God the Father has made "both Lord and Christ." A crucified world appears stripped of its allurements, fascination, and all the meretricious array that attracts its devotees. The disciple of Christ glories in the fact that for him the hands of the world have been transfixed so that it can no longer control his actions, and the feet of the world deprived of all the power to guide his steps.

He who makes his boast in the cross as the instrument by which the world is crucified to him and he to the world will neither "love the world" (1 John 2:15-16), nor

walk “according to the course of this world” (Eph. 2:2), but will “keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27), and “escape the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:4). The disciple of Christ can have no parley with a world at open war with his Saviour and Lord, for his business in the world is that of his rejected Lord, the salvation of sinners; and he constantly bears in mind his Master’s words to His Father, “As Thou hast sent Me, even so have I sent them into the world” (John 17:18).

The Cross of Christ (Jan 1964)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 10 No. 1, Jan 1964.

A. Naismith

The Preaching of the Cross

In the Epistles in which the fundamental facts of the Gospel are prominent Paul displays a variety of facets of the cross. He refers in 1 Corinthians to the preaching (or 'word') of the cross which he claims and proves to be the revelation of divine power and wisdom, directing our attention to the mystery it unfolds (1 Cor. 2:7-8). Writing to the churches in Galatia, he indicates the persecution and calumny he had to bear as a preacher of the Gospel from the enemies of the cross of Christ. This meant for him 'the offence of the cross.' In the letter to the Ephesians the Apostle extols the power of the cross by which the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile had been demolished, and the consequent unity that the cross has effected (Eph. 2:15-16). The church at Philippi is reminded of the humility of the cross of Christ when He who is 'in the very form of God with heavenly glory crowned,' humbling Himself, assumed a servant's form and submitted to the 'death of the cross' with all its shame and anguish. The triumph of the cross is the special aspect dealt with in Colossians, for by 'the blood of His cross' reconciliation to God has been made possible (Col. 1:20; 2:14-15). In this concluding study we are concerned with four expressions relating to the cross which occur in these letters.

i. 'The death of the cross' was the final step in Christ's self-humiliation: (Phil. 2:8)

ii. ‘The blood of His cross’ brings the sinner to God in full reconciliation: (Col. 1:20-21)

iii. ‘The word of the cross’ is the central theme of all true Gospel preachers: (1 Cor. 1:18)

iv. “The offence of the cross’ the reproach they receive from legalistic teachers. (Gal. 5:11).

(1) ‘The death of the cross was the final step in that tremendous stoop of the Son of God from Heaven’s highest glory to the utmost depths of shame and poverty. The writer of the Epistle uses this to counsel the Christians in Philippi to possess and display the humility of mind that characterized their Lord and Master. Kenneth S. Wuest, commenting on the statement in this passage (Phil. 2:5-8) that Christ Jesus ‘became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,’ writes, ‘This does not mean that He became obedient unto death. He was always the Master of death. Our Lord was obedient to the Father up to the point of dying.’ The death of the cross was the punishment of notorious criminals who had not the privilege of Roman citizenship; and it is beyond human comprehension that He who ‘held the highest place above, adored by all the sons of flame,’ should stoop to such degradation as that. If He who is Creator and Lord of all submitted to such a death and displayed such humility in order to fulfil His Father’s will, surely all who are Christ’s and proclaim such a Saviour should be constantly imbued with the same spirit.

(2) The expression in Colossians 1:20 — ‘the blood of His cross’ —occurs here only. We are to understand by it, of course, ‘the blood He shed when He died on the cross.’ The blood of Christ outpoured in death on the cross

made possible the reconciliation to God of all whose association with sin created a barrier that excluded them from His holy presence. The purpose of the cross — to reconcile all things to Himself — was thus completely fulfilled when at the cross “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them” (2 Cor. 5:19). For those saints in Colosse and faithful brethren in Christ Jesus to whom the letter was addressed, that reconciliation had already become effectual; for the Apostle tells them, ‘You that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled.’ The ambassador for Christ, therefore proclaims the cross as the proof and plea of the reconciling love of God, beseeching men in Christ’s stead to be reconciled to God through the mediation of Him who knew no sin but was ‘made sin for us.’ Every believer, therefore, though once an enemy, has been reconciled to God through the death of His Son (Rom. 5:10).

(3) In writing to the Corinthian saints Paul deprecates the spirit of disunity and the divisions that had blighted their spiritual life and testimony. Instead of keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, the Christians there had formed themselves into factions, rallying round their popular leaders and taking denominational names. Some claimed to be Paul’s followers, other Peter’s; while others associated themselves with Apollos. Paul disavows leadership of any party and, in proof of this, protests that his mission was not to baptize or to canvass for support like candidates for office who made a display of their oratory; but to preach the Gospel. His message was therefore ‘the word of the cross’ which everyone ‘being saved’ acknowledged to be God’s

powerful instrument in their salvation. The expression, ‘the word of the cross,’—in direct contrast, in the context in which it appears, to ‘the wisdom of words,’ emphasizes the simplicity of the Apostle’s preaching. At the same time he acknowledged the transcendent profundity of his theme since it was beyond the comprehension of the princes of this world. Simplicity, sincerity and lucidity should characterize the preaching of every true evangelist. In this Paul is our example, for, in the highly cultured, yet grossly immoral, city of Corinth he determined to know and to preach nothing other than Jesus Christ and His cross. Yet what a wealth of divine wisdom that message comprised, for in Christ ‘are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.’

(4) The Greek word, translated ‘offence’ in the last of the four expressions we are considering, is the word from which we derive our English word ‘scandal.’ It is elsewhere translated “stumblingblock” (Rom. 14:13; 1 Cor. 1:23). In Romans 10:4 Paul affirms that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes. Judaizing teachers had visited the churches in Galatia in the Apostle’s absence and insisted that these Christians, converts from the Gentiles, must be circumcised and keep the law in order to be justified. In Galatians 2:21 and 3:13 Paul shows them that the cross would have been unnecessary if a righteous standing before God could be attained by the works of the law, false doctrine that was promulgated then by those legalistic teachers is in our day being propagated by sects that pinpoint the fourth commandment of the law as being essential for salvation.

Speaking in Tongues (Dec 1964)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 10 No. 12, Dec 1964.

A. Naismith

What do the Scriptures teach about the BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT? In each case where reference is made to this it is “in the Spirit,” indicating that the Holy Spirit is the element. ‘In one Spirit were we all baptized into one body’ (Cor. 12:13). Those addressed, of whom this is predicted, were the Christians in the church at Corinth who had not been present at Pentecost in Acts 2, and were then certainly not believers. The baptism of the Spirit took place once for all at Pentecost and has never been repeated. The expression occurs in the New Testament 7 times, — once in each of the four Gospels (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33, twice in the Acts — 1:5; 11:16; and once in the Epistles of Paul — 1 Cor. 12:13).

“Be Filled With The Spirit” — In Ephesians 5:18—is to be a continuous experience of the believer. There are many fillings, as in Acts 2:4; 4:8; 4:31; 6:5, etc. The context of Ephesians 5:18, makes no mention of speaking with tongues, but of ‘speaking to yourselves, i.e. to one another,’ in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.’ Whether we read it with the comma after ‘yourselves’ or after ‘songs’ does not affect the consideration before us here. The filling of the Spirit produces a joyful life (Eph. 5:19), a thankful life (Eph. 5:20), a graceful life (Eph. 5:21-25), a peaceful life (Eph. 6:4), a hopeful life (Eph. 6:8), a powerful life (Eph. 6:10) and a prayerful life (Eph. 6:18).

Speaking With Tongues is mentioned once in the Gospels (Mark 16:17), 3 times in Acts — 2:3; 10:46; 19:6 —and in three consecutive chapters in 1 Corinthians, viz. chapters 12, 13 and 14.

Observe that the word ‘unknown’ in the King James version in 1 Corinthians 14:2, 4, 13, 14, 19, 27, is in italics in each case, and this indicates that in the original there is no word for ‘unknown.’ The same word is used for ‘tongues’ in the verse in Mark 16, in the occurrences in Acts and in those in 1 Corinthians. We infer from this that the ‘TONGUES’ referred to are of the same kind in every case, namely, tongues spoken and understood by men in some land or other.

In 1 Corinthians 12:10, 30, tongues and their interpretation are mentioned last. They are the last of the spiritual gifts and come after the gift of miracles. How many who claim to have the gift of tongues have the gift of miracles which is listed before tongues?

Tongues Shall Cease (1 Cor. 13:8). Here the word is different from that used for prophecies and knowledge.

Prophecies were superseded when the revelation was complete, and teaching took the place of the prophetic gift.

Knowledge of things not yet revealed was superseded, when the Scriptures were completed by the knowledge of what has been revealed in the Word of God by the Spirit of God.

“BUT AS FOR TONGUES, THEY SHALL CEASE.”

In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul does not forbid the Corinthian saints to speak with tongues but he definitely discourages their use.

Consider some Reasons Why Speaking With Tongues Is Discouraged:

· They are not understood (1 Cor. 14:2):

· They are not for edification (1 Cor. 14:3,4):

· They do not give a clear or certain sound (1 Cor. 14:7, 8):

· They are not becoming, have a barbarous sound (1 Cor. 14:11).

· Therefore 'Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church.' (verse 12).

(2) Personal

· I cannot understand my own prayer (1 Cor. 14:14).

· The unlearned cannot understand my prayer or my message.

· I would rather say 5 words with my understanding than 10,000 in a tongue (1 Cor. 14:19):

· I prattle like a child and am like a child in understanding when I speak in a tongue (1 Cor. 14:20)

· Therefore "Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe but to them that believe not,' (1 Cor. 14:22).

(3) Effects And Use Of Tongues

The unbelieving visitor to the church gathering will say 'ye are mad' if you speak with tongues: but if you prophesy, they will say that 'God is with you of a truth' (1 Cor. 14:23-25):

· Tongues must always be used sparingly (1 Cor. 14:27):

· Tongues are only to be used when an interpreter is present (1 Cor. 14:28):

· Tongues cannot be judged by the hearers (1 Cor. 14:29).

Therefore “Let all things be done unto edifying” (1 Cor. 14:26): “Let the others judge” (1 Cor. 14:29), and “Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40).

A. Naismith

Thrones of Scripture (Jan 1967)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 13 No. 1, Jan 1967.

A. Naismith

These outline notes have been prepared for the student. A chart designed by Mr. Naismith will be found in the January number. It will be a visual aid in the understanding of these “deep things” of God.

Satan’s Throne

A Throne Of Pride

Scripture references: Isaiah 14:12-19. Ezekiel 28:11-19. Satan speaks of “My throne” (Isa. 14:13). He is called the Anointed Cherub (Ezek. 28:14). He is Lucifer, the Serpent of Genesis 3 (Hebrew, Nachash, a shining one).

In Isaiah 14:3-11, the Prophet takes up a proverb, or a speech, against the king of Babylon, and these verses no doubt have reference to an earthly ruler over the Babylonian kingdom. From verse 12 to verse 20 another person is addressed by the name Lucifer, Son of the Morning; and there can be no doubt that Lucifer is Satan, the rebellious prince. As in Daniel 10:13, Michael, the archangel, is described as “One of the chief princes,” and in Daniel 10:21, as “your prince,” (that is, Israel’s prince). Again in Daniel 12:1, as “the great prince that standeth for the children of thy people,” so Lucifer was doubtless the prince among those invisible principalities (Col. 1:16) that stood for the Babylonian nation. Likewise, we read of “the prince of Persia” (Dan. 1:13) who withstood the angelic messenger sent to Daniel, and he could not be the earthly prince of Persia,

but the invisible prince (an evil prince) who stood for the Persian nation.

Similarly, in Ezekiel 28 the person addressed as “Prince of Tyrus” in verse 2-10 would doubtless be the earthly ruler, but the person addressed as “King of Tyrus” from verse 12-19 again must refer to Satan, viewed as standing for the people of Tyrus after the overthrow of Babylon.

(Through invisible principalities and powers in heavenly places, good and evil, the conflict of the ages is carried on.)

In the Word of God Satan is revealed as anointed ruler, a rebel prince, and a defeated foe.

An Anointed Ruler: He is prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2), prince of demons (Matt. 12:24), prince of this world (Eph. 6:12. John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). He was called this three times by the Lord Jesus.

When Satan was tempting our Lord (Luke 4:6), he said, “All this power will I give Thee for that is delivered unto me and to whomsoever I will give it.” This was partly untrue, false, but our Lord Jesus did not challenge Satan on that point. He knew that “he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44). Satan is also called the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4). Snake worship in Eastern countries, and Satan worship in certain European countries bear this out.

A Rebel Prince: Pride is “the condemnation of the devil” (1 Tim. 3:6). He was rebellious; five times over he said, “I will,” and thus exerted his own will against God’s (Isa. 14:12-19). Iniquity was found in him (Ezek.

28:15), but against Satan's will God asserts five times, "I will" (Ezek. 28:16-18).

Milton wrote:

"The infernal serpent: he it is whose guile

Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived

The mother of mankind what time his pride

Had cast him out of Heaven, with all his host

Of rebel angels, by whose aid aspiring

To set himself in glory above his peers,

He trusted to have equalled the Most High."

We read about Satan's devices (2 Cor. 2:10-11), subtlety (2 Cor. 11:3), wiles (Eph. 6:11), snare (1 Tim 3:7. 2 Tim. 2:26), works (energy, 2 Thess. 2:9).

A Defeated Foe: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20), predicted the Apostle Paul. This victory for us is brought about through the Son of God (1 John 3:8), the Word of God (1 John 2:14), and the panoply of God (Eph. 6:10).

Thrones of Scripture (Part 2) (Feb 1967)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 13 No. 2, Feb 1967.

A. Naismith

Jehovah's Throne

A Throne of Holiness

There were several men chosen to whom Jehovah's thone was revealed: Moses and his elders, King David, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and John the Apostle. In that throne they saw perfect beauty, absolute equity, and supreme authority.

Its place was in Heaven (Psa. 11:4); its duration, eternal (Psa. 45:6); and its character, holiness (Psa. 47:8).

Two kings were seen by Isaiah the prophet, one upon an earthly throne, the Other upon a heavenly throne: the Lord of Hosts (Isa. 6:5), and Uzziah (Isa. 1:1. 2 Chron. 26:16).

What a contrast there was between Isaiah the prophet and Uzziah the king! Isaiah entered the presence of the Lord in humility; Uzziah, in pride. Isaiah confessed himself as a man of unclean lips who dwelt in the midst of a people of unclean lips. Uzziah left the presence of the Lord crying, "unclean." Isaiah went forth to serve the Lord; Uzziah was thrust forth to perish.

"Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with Thee?" (Psa. 94:20). Notice Isaiah's experience before the Throne of Jehovah.

His confession: “Woe is me,” he cried. This was a confession of sin and unfitness in the presence of God’s holiness. God’s holiness was attested by the seraphim’s action, by the angelic proclamation, by the sinner’s confession, and by the witness of the altar.

His cleansing: the interjection “Lo,” calls upon Isaiah to behold, to see, that he had been cleansed by sacrifice. An altar of sacrifice was before the throne and the fire was seen burning on it.

Isaiah had confessed himself a man of unclean lips. His lips were now cleansed by the touch of a live coal from off the altar. His lips were cleansed and ready to deliver God’s message.

His consecration: “Here am I!” the prophet exclaimed. His response to the call of Jehovah was that of a consecrated servant. The voice from the throne called, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” In humble dedication, Isaiah replied, “Here am I; send me.”

His commission: “Go” was the command from the Divine Sovereign. Isaiah went forth from the august presence fully commissioned to go to a rebellious nation with a message of judgment, judgment because of human sin and divine holiness.

We can measure our likeness to Christ by the range of our sensitiveness to the sorrow and pain of others.

Too often we become subordinant to the transient. — William MacDonald.

The Thrones of Scripture (Part 3) (Mar 1967)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 13 No. 3, Mar 1967.

A. Naismith

God’s Throne: the Throne of Grace.

The cross is the centre of all God’s purposes. It is the mercy-seat of Romans 3:25, in which passage it is rendered “propitiation” in the King James Version.

According to Exodus 25:17-22, the mercy-seat was the place of atonement, there cleansing was effected (Cf. Lev. 16:14 and 15). It was also the place of approach, there communion was enjoyed (Cf. Exod. 25: 22).

Notice in this connection certain salient points about Christ, Jesus the Son of God:

What He is: Our Great High Priest: the ground of our confession. Here we have His ordination (Heb. 5:5), His obedience (Heb. 5:8), and His occupation (Heb. 4:14).

Where He is: In Heaven itself, “within the veil:” the grandeur of our confessional. This is not a little box here on earth but a spacious sanctuary in Heaven. He, the Lord Jesus, opened it (Heb. 10:20); cleansed it (Heb. 9:23); entered it (Heb. 9:24); occupies it (Heb. 10:12-13); and invites us into it (Heb. 4:16; 10:22).

Who He is: Jesus the Son of God. Here are combined His Deity and His humanity; the glory of our confessor. His priestly robes are beauty and glory, as were Aaron’s. (In the Septuagint, Aaron’s are of honour and glory).

How He feels: “Touched with the feeling of our infirmities:” the gentleness of His compassion. The Greek word actually means to sympathize.

Why He is there: to dispense mercy and grace for seasonable help: the graciousness of His counsel.

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

Christ bears the names of all His saints,

For them death’s night He braved,

He holds them on His shoulders strong,

And on His heart engraved.

In all His holiness complete,

They stand without a flaw;

Where wisdom, grace and glory meet

In love divine, not law.

The blood, which as a Priest He bore

For sinners, was His own.

The incense of His prayers and tears

Now perfumes Heaven’s throne.

’Tis here my weary soul finds rest,

Though I am frail the while.

I read my name upon His breast,

Enjoy my Father’s smile.

The Thrones of Scripture (Part 4) (Apr 1967)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 13 No. 4, Apr 1967.

A. Naismith

The Creator’s Throne: a Throne of Worship.

“The first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the Spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in Heaven, and one sat on the throne” (Rev. 4:1-11).

Worship actually means worth-ship and is an acknowledgement of worthiness. In the Old Testament this was shown by the prostration before another to indicate honour and reverence. The word worship in the Holy Scriptures occurs for the first time in Genesis 18:2, Abraham “bowed himself toward the ground.” In the

New Testament the Greek word “proskuneo” indicates worship; it implies the kissing of the hand, such as a slave might do to his master in order to demonstrate his reverence and affection.

Wonder and worship go together; as soon as we cease to wonder, we cease to worship.

The heavenly temple (Rev. 4:2-3): The Shechinah glory fills all that holy place. He that sat upon the throne was like unto a jasper which is a clear transparent gem suggesting that God is light. He also was like unto a sardius, a crimson gem, suggesting that God is love.

In this heavenly temple there is no altar for sacrifice and no laver for washing, only a sea of glass to reflect the beauty of redemption. Furthermore, there is no holy place: no lampstand, no table of shew bread, no golden altar.

The Throne in Heaven: Notice the prepositions used in this passage: “on the throne” One is seated; no doubt the Lord Jesus (Rev. 3:21). “In the midst of the throne” appear four living creatures, all near the Lamb. “Round about the throne” the rainbow of the divine covenant shines. The four and twenty elders “cast their crowns before the throne.”

The throngs of worshippers: There are five great throngs mentioned within two chapters. I. In Revelation 4:8, the four living creatures (Not beasts, this is a different word to that used in Revelation 13). It is well to notice the form of these living creatures in Ezekiel 1:10, and in Revelation 4:7, and to notice that they worship God as the Eternal, Self-existent One. They are living creatures because the primary essential to worship is life in Christ.

II. The twenty-four elders (Rev. 4:10-11) worship God as Creator, saying, “For Thy pleasure they are, and were created” (Col. 1:16). III. The living creatures and the twenty-four elders (Rev. 5:8-10) worshipped God as Redeemer. They speak of the price of redemption, the blood of the Lamb; the privilege of redemption, a kingdom of priests; and the prospect of redemption, they shall reign.

The Lamb is the central person in Revelation 5:6; He has offered a sacrifice for sin, occupies the seat of power, and opens the seals of the closed book.

IV. The living creatures, the elders, and the angelic hosts all worship God as the Great Conqueror (Rev. 5:11-12). Moreover, they engage in a sevenfold ascription of praise, a doxology of power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory, and blessing.

V. According to the scene described in Revelation 5:13-14, every created intelligent being worships God as the Universal Ruler.

The Thrones Of Scripture (Part 5) (May 1967)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 13 No. 5, May 1967.

A. Naismith

The King’s Throne: A Throne of Righteousness.

Scripture Readings: Isaiah 32:1-2. Matthew 25:31-34. Revelation 20:1-8. The day approaches when the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God will be in manifestation, and the Son of God shall sit on the Throne of His Glory: “Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom” (Heb. 1:8).

There are five reasons for believing in a future millennium, a thousand years of peace and righteousness when Christ Himself will reign over the earth: First, the literal interpretation of Scripture, including the Old Testament, requires this in order to be properly understood. Second, a larger body of Scripture is devoted to this than to any other biblical theme. Third, there is a clear distinction throughout the Bible between Israel and the Church, and this makes the millennium as taught in the Word of God a possibility. Fourth, six times in Revelation 20 the reign of one thousands years, the millennium, is mentioned. Fifth, the prophecy in Ezekiel 40-48 is concerning Israel, her land, her temple, and her priests and sacrifices. This prophecy has not been fulfilled. Hosea 3 and 4 describe Israel’s condition today.

The one thousand years of Christ’s reign on earth will result in mighty and varied changes. First, conditions

are imposed: the destruction of the rebel hosts (Rev. 19:16-21), the dealing of God with the nations (Matt. 25:31-46), the deliverance of the nation of Israel from Gentile domination (Zech. 14:1-15).

Second, characteristics are displayed: “When the prophets paint the millennial earth, they dip their pens in the rainbow.” First, righteousness will be established (Jer. 23:6, Jehovah Tsidkenu Isa. 32:1). Second, peace will be enjoyed (Isa. 2:4. Micah 4:3). Third, Creation will be emancipated (Rom. 8:21. Isa. 65:20, etc.). Fourth, Israel the nation will be enlarged (Ezek. 47:13-48:35). Fifth, death will be eliminated (Isa. 65:1922).

Third, the capital and centre of government will be appointed: Jerusalem, called the City of God (Psa. 48:1; 87:3), the City of the Great King (Psa. 48:2. Matt. 5:35), the Throne of Jehovah (Jer. 3:17), Jehovah-Shammah (Ezek. 48:35), and the Source of Living Waters (Zech. 14:8).

Fourth, the covenants fulfilled: The Law given by Moses was a conditional covenant; the following are unconditional: the Abramic Covenant, promising blessing to Israel and the nations through Israel (Micah 7:19-20); the Davidic Covenant, promising a ruler in the line of David (Jer. 23:5); the Palestinian Covenant, promising the land forever and its fertility (Isa. 65:9. Ezek. 36:28); the New Covenant, promising national cleansing, salvation and spiritual blessing (Jer. 31:31-34. This Scripture is quoted in Hebrews 8:8-12).

Fifth, the constitution indicated: the Ruler, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Isa. 9:6), the Son of Man (Matt. 25:30), the Branch of Jehovah (Isa. 4:2), Jehovah Tsidkenu (Jer. 23:6), the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:13), the

Rod of Jesse (Isa. 11:1), the King (Psa. 2:6. Matt. 25: 34), the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2), the Shepherd (Ezek. 37:24), and the Judge (Acts 17:31).

The Regent will be of David (Jer. 30:9. Ezek. 34:24. Hos. 3:5). The judges will be appointed (Isa. 32:1. Matt. 19:28. 1 Cor. 6:2-3), and also administrators (Luke 19:17-19. Matt. 25:21-23).

The Thrones of Scripture (Part 6) (June-July 1967)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 13 No. 6, June-July 1967.

A. Naismith

Scripture reading: Revelation 20: 11-16.

The Judge’s Throne:

The Great White Throne.

Here we have the picture of the last assize. Several very salient points should be considered:

The imperial throne: “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ.” This throne is a solitary throne suspended in space. Heaven and earth have fled away. It is a great throne because of the greatness of the Judge, its immensity in space, the innumerable company judged, and the tremendous issues involved. It is a white throne because of its absolute purity and its inflexible parity.

The impartial Judge: Of this Judge we read, “God … hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). “For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man” (John 5:26-27). He will judge in righteousness, a fair and impartial judgment and as the Son of Man, He will judge the sons of men. “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the House of God;

and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Pet. 4:17-18).

The incriminating records: the words of Solomon are full of meaning, "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: … that God might manifest (prove) them" (Eccl. 3:1718). God requireth that which is past so books will be opened. What books?

1. The Book of God, The Bible (John 12:47-48).

2. The Book of Works (1 Tim. 5:24).

3. The Book of Life (Rev. 20:18). This is the register of all who have received divine life in and through the Lord Jesus.

The irrevocable sentence: "Who soever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15). This is the second death. "The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).

The Thrones of Scripture (Part 7) (Aug-Sept 1967)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 13 No. 7, Aug-Sept 1967.

A. Naismith

Scripture Reading: Revelation 21:1-6; 22:1-6.

The Throne of God and of the Lamb: The Throne of Life.

In these passages we have symbolically described some of the glorious scenes of the Eternal State.

The work of the Transformer (chap. 21:5): “Behold, I make all things new.” This involves a new birth, a new creation, a new life, a new man, a new song, etc.

The new creation has a spiritual (2 Cor. 5:17) as well as a material aspect (chap. 21:1-6): the new earth, a new city, a new covenant, and a new constitution.

The wonders of the transformation (chap. 22:1-6):

1. Perfect Rest (chap. 21:1). No more sea. The sea suggests change, trouble and separation.

2. Perfect Provision (chap. 22:1-2): Food, fruit and leaves. The food and fruit will be for nutrition and the leaves for healing, preventative medicine.

3. Perfect Blessing (chap. 22:3): No more curse. No longer will there be the evidences of the curse in the garden and on the field.

4. Perfect Government (chap. 22:3): There will be no more lawlessness for the Eternal State will be governed in righteousness.

5. Perfect Service (chap. 22:3): His servants shall serve Him. This service will be public consisting of worship and ministry. It will be a perfect illustration of Romans 12:1.

6. Perfect Vision (chap. 22:4): They shall see His face. There will be no veil or curtains to hide the Lord from view.

7. Perfect Reflection (chap. 22:4): His name shall be on their foreheads. The beauty of the Lord Jesus will then be impressed upon all His own (2 Cor. 3:18).

8. Perfect Illumination (chap. 22:5): There will be no night there, no need for any created lights, no sun, no moon; nor will there be any need for artificial lights, not even a candle, for the Lamb shall be the light of all that glorious scene.

Missionary Service (Apr 1968)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 14 No. 4, Apr 1968.

Why Go?

Why go? The closing words of Matthew's Gospel give the answer (Matt. 28:18-20).

First, because it is the LORD'S PRECEPT — "Go ye!" Immediately before His ascension into Heaven He came to His disciples to give them that message. "Jesus came and spake unto them, saying" —Earlier He had said to them, using the illustration of the plentiful harvest, "Pray ye!" (Matt. 9:38). About the same time He had commissioned them to "go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." They had prayed, they had gone, they had healed, they had cast our demons, they had preached. Before His departure to the Father the Lord extended their sphere of service to "all nations," and their activity to making, baptizing and fully instructing disciples in the doctrine He had imparted to them. This expansion would necessitate an increase in the numbers of those who received the precepts of the Lord. Even while the apostles were alive, others who are not called apostles obeyed the precept and "went everywhere preaching the Word." Paul, before his departure commissioned Timothy to commit to faithful men the things he had learned, in order that they in turn might be able to teach others also (2 Tim. 2:2). So the Lord's command to "go" is still binding upon His disciples today.

Second, those who obey the precept are assured of the LORD'S POWER. "All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth." The word translated "power" means

“authority.” Here are the credentials of the Lord’s servant in all ages: he has the authority of his omnipotent Lord, and that extends to every department of activity and every sphere of action in Heaven and on earth. His gospel, of which His servants are the ‘trustees,’ is His “power unto salvation” to all who believe (Rom. 1:16). Here the power is dynamic and inherent in the gospel, effecting the salvation and transformation of the believer. There is no limit to the authority and power of the Lord Jesus, for “the Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hands”; and there is no limit to the power of the gospel His servants proclaim provided it is received simply by faith.

Third, with the precept and the power to obey it comes the Lord’s Promise, which is unbreakable and unshakable. It is emphatic, too, for He says, “I will never, no never, leave thee; I will never, no never, forsake thee.” All who truly go forth for Him can with assurance count on Him. This is one of the most precious and encouraging of the “exceeding great and precious promises” given to the servants of Christ. “Lo I am with you alway.”

The promise from the Lord’s own lips is a message of inestimable comfort, and the assurance of the Lord’s Presence which is the substance of that promise becomes by faith a blessed reality to all who obey His precept. His presence may be realized always, in all circumstances, conditions and climes, each and every day of our lives, and as long as His servants are engaged in service for Him, right to the very end of the age. It is enjoyed by faith now. When He comes to reward His servants, we shall see Him “face to face;” we shall be with Him where He is; and we shall be like Him.

But can we claim His “LO!” if we ignore His “GO!”?

A poem written by Dan Crawford, missionary to Luanza, Garanganze, and the author of Thinking Black, would seem to be a fitting conclusion to the above brief study of the great Commission of our Lord.

Came a vision of St. Paul—

Scene, within a Roman Hall.

Face lit up with holy gladness,

Festus twitted him with madness.

“Noble Festus, nay! not mad!

But a heart supremely glad.

All my soul is now aglow,

For I’ve heard my Master’s ‘GO!’

And His LO!’ I’m ever with you,

Prove I daily this is true.

Caesar could not order so;

Christ said ‘GO!’ and also ‘LO!’

Came the echo down the ages,

Record true of saintly sages;

Came the witness all sublime,

Of those conquerors of time,

Whether living they or dying,

This their shout, all time defying;

“Men of God, the order’s so:

Ours that ‘GO!’ and His that ‘LO!’ “

Came the vision of the years
Of the lonely pioneers;
Came their sob of hope forlorn
For the breaking of the morn;
Came the rugged tug of doubt,
Then anon — the victor’s shout
And the routing of the foe
To Christ’s tune of ‘GO!’ and ‘LO!’
Comes the warning of the Lord
To all readers of His Word,
His appeal of love and yearning
That we hasten His returning;
Warning us lest we forget
That the Christ must tarry yet
While His servants are so slow
Forth to ‘GO!’ and prove His ‘LO!’
Comes a message from the Throne
Answering the heathen groan,
Comes a voice from God’s right hand
Word of hope for every land;
“Go ye into all the world”—
Let My banner be unfurled:
Widen out your ranks and ‘GO’
And I’ll flood them with my ‘LO.’

Missionary Service --Who Should Go? (May 1968)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 14 No. 5, May 1968.

Missionary Service

Who Should Go?

Archie Naismith

Here is a question which faces each devoted young Christian willing and eager to do the Lord's will and obey His commands. It is a question that merits also the consideration of every local church desirous of seeing the great parting commission of the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled through them in accordance with the principles enunciated in the New Testament. For almost a century and a half, men and women sent by God have ventured forth into 'the regions beyond' in entire dependence on our immutable Lord and His infallible Word to be Christ's witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth. Their character and experience—sometimes prominent themes of missionary biography — have provided ample evidence that what has been appropriately termed 'a modern experiment in apostolic missions' is as practicable today as it was in the days of the apostles.

It cannot be denied, however, that scientific advance has brought within the missionary's reach many amenities and facilities, particularly in the spheres of travel and equipment, that were unknown in the days of the early Christian Church. The 'Jet' plane, for instance, now available for travel everywhere, takes the servant of Christ to his chosen sphere of service anywhere on earth

in an incredibly short time with the maximum amount of comfort. Not so many years ago, missionaries guided by the Spirit of God to serve in lands overseas had to sail the ‘Seven Seas’ to reach the lands of their adoption. Spiritually now, as always, the missionary that God can use must be a “C-farer,” for there are ‘Seven Cs’ in the spiritual realm on which they must progress to fields of useful service. These are mapped out in the chart of Scripture to give guidance to the prospective missionary, but also to the assemblies of the saints. What are they?

1. Those should go who have been converted by the grace of God. A vital experience of life in Christ is the primary essential — an experience without which it is not only futile but even presumptuous to endeavour to serve the Lord Christ. The Thessalonian saints to whom Paul wrote two letters had turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and from them the Word of God was heralded over the areas in the vicinity of Thessalonica. The word ‘turned’ is the same in the original as ‘were converted.’

2. They must also be called by the Spirit of God, that Spirit that opens the mind to listen to His still small voice and the eyes of the heart to see the fields white unto harvest, especially in that part to which He is leading, with its peoples and their needs. That same Holy Spirit will then, as in Antioch, instruct the local church leaders whose ears are attentive to hear His whisper to set the missionaries apart for the work to which He has called them (Acts 13:2).

3. Another prerequisite to service abroad is consecration to the Service of God. This involves a whole-hearted response to the challenging exhortation of God’s

servant, Paul, in Romans 12:1, 2: “I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” “Yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead”: “yield your members servants to righteousness and holiness”: these are other variants of the same injunction (Rom. 6:13, 19).

4. The aspirant to service for the Master Who has loved so much, suffered so much and accomplished so much for him, must also be constrained by the Love of Christ. In view of the judgment seat of Christ the Apostle Paul, ambitious to be well-pleasing to the Lord, outlines some of the factors urging him to service; and the first he mentions is ‘the terror of the Lord.’ On the other hand, there was just as powerful an urge in ‘the love of Christ’ (2 Cor. 5:9-15), that compelled him to live, not to himself but ‘unto Him Who died’ for him and rose again. The same powerful presentation of the gospel that he preached to others motivated the Apostle-evangelist in his own life and service.

5. It would scarcely seem necessary to insist that one eager to obey the Lord’s commission to go and “make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you,” should be Conversant with the Word of God. Obedience to the Word presupposes acquaintance with what the Word teaches as well as intensive knowledge of the Word. These are essential for one who is to be “apt to teach.” In plain language, those who aspire to go on missionary service should be keen Bible students, preparing themselves by diligent reading and study of the

Scripture of truth for a life-long vocation in which the impartation of the truth of Scripture is predominant.

6. They who go should also be commended by a Church of God, as were Barnabas and Saul when they went from Antioch. They were the greatest gifts in the Antioch assembly, and consequently their departure meant a considerable sacrifice to the church which set them apart for that special outreach. This was done in three ways: by prayer, commending them to the protection and power of God, by the imposition of hands, identifying themselves with them in their service, and by commending them to the grace of God for the Lord's work. It is generally recognized that such commendation is not only necessary but valuable in maintaining the bond of fellowship, both in prayer and financial support.

7. Of great importance, too, is the outgoing worker's progress mentally, morally and spiritually. Those who go should be found capable in the School of God.

Physical fitness for severe climatic conditions, for exhausting demands on mind and body, and for strenuous spiritual duties is highly desirable, but a physical handicap need not be a deterrent where there is the will to yield all to the Lord in service. A conspicuous modern example of the truth of this is found in the devoted competence despite great disabilities of the author of 'Take my hands.' But for the acquisition of a foreign language, for the faculty of understanding, though not necessarily favouring, the viewpoint of the inhabitants of the land of their adoption, and, above all, for the lucid presentation of their message, those who go forth should possess more than normal mental capability. Moral fibre and ability to work harmoniously

with others are qualities that can be acquired only in the school of God. With spiritual strength manifest in the life that displays the beauties and virtues of Christ, added to physical, mental and moral capabilities, the outgoing missionary becomes a mature man of God, fully equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:17).

God is continually asking, “Whom shall I send and who will go for us?” Am I ready to respond, “Send me!”? And am I fit to go? Have I sailed the seven Cs?

Revivals (Dec 1968)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 14 No. 10, Dec 1968.

The Psalmist prayed in Psalm 119:154, “Revive me according to Thy word,” and in Psalm 85:6, “Wilt Thou not revive us again?” The revival of the individual is the first important prerequisite to the experience of revival in the community of God’s people. The concern of the Prophet, Habakkuk, was with the work of the Lord when he prayed, “Revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.” For all who are yearning for the showers on the thirsty land, and crying out, “Oh for a mighty revival!” the sacred history of God’s special working in the restoration and blessing of His earthly people by His Spirit through some of the kings of Judah contains many salutary lessons.

From the tragic division, into two kingdoms, of the nation of Israel in the reign of Solomon’s son and successor, Rehoboam, until the captivity of the people of the Southern Kingdom of Judah by the Babylonian monarch, Nebuchadnezzar, in the reign of Zedekiah, there were five periods of divine visitation. These were during the reigns of five great and good kings of Judah. The period from the death of Solomon to the end of the Hebrew monarchy was about 389 years; namely, from 975 B.C. to 386 B.C. The nineteen kings of Judah who ruled during that period were all of the line of David and represented one dynasty. To this dynasty belongs also our Lord Jesus Christ who is shortly to govern the whole universe. Five spiritual movements bringing reformation and temporary revival took place in the Kingdom of

Judah in the reigns of Asa, Jehosaphat, Joash, Hezekiah and Josiah.

The temporary nature of those revivals, accompanied as they were by the restoration of godliness and economic prosperity, can be attributed in measure to the mistakes of the kings whom Jehovah used for the blessing of His people and the furtherance of His purposes. Asa did wrong in uniting with Syria against his own people of the Northern kingdom, Jehoshaphat in his alliance with the godless house of Ahab, Joash in his persecution and murder of the prophet of God in his own land, Hezekiah in revealing his national and personal wealth to the Babylonian messengers, and Josiah in his declaration of war on Egypt.

The first great awakening — under Asa — was a reformation by compulsion like many others in subsequent history. While there was much in it pleasing to God, it was short-lived because of this. Like his successors, Asa came to the throne when his people were spiritually diseased and morally unhealthy; and God gave him wisdom to diagnose the condition of the people, and the spiritual enlightenment to act aright. The nation of Judah was then spiritually ill.

A Sick People

The diagnosis is summed up in three phrases in 2 Chronicles 15:3: for a long time — without the true God and without a teaching priest, and without law; they were godless, helpless and lawless.

The people that had been Jehovah’s chosen representatives to bear witness to His power and glory, who had received His promises and revelation and

should have been His holy possession, had sunk to the level of the Gentiles, “without God — having no hope” (Eph. 2:12). They had become like the nations around them. The indictment that God made against Israel through Hosea was true of Judah also: they had forgotten their Maker. They had multiplied fenced cities (Hos. 8:14) instead of trusting in the God of deliverances.

Twenty years before, Asa, when Jeroboam set up his opposition State, had rejected God’s priests and Levites and created an idolatrous hierarchy of his own. The priests of Jehovah had remained in Judah to worship the Lord God of their fathers, to minister to Him, and to sound a warning against the wickedness of idolatry (2 Chronicles 11:13-16; 13:10-12). In less than a quarter of a century God’s true priests had either all died or backslidden and become dumb. No longer were they “the messengers of the Lord of hosts,” and the people of Judah were like sheep without a shepherd, pilgrims without a guide.

Having set aside God and lacking godly leaders, Judah had no spiritual or moral resistance to wrong and became lawless. Sin is lawlessnes; therefore for the nation of Judah in its diseased state cleansing from sin was a prime necessity. God raised up a means of healing.

A Royal Physician

Asa, and a Prophet, Azariah, the son of Oded, endued with God’s spirit were to stem the tide of evil. Asa received the promise of the Lord’s presence and help, and the exhortation, “Be strong, therefore, and let not your hands be weak; for your work shall be rewarded” (2 Chronicles 15:7).

Asa was a grandson of Rehoboam in whose reign the nation had been divided into two kingdoms, and great-grandson of the wise and prosperous King Solomon. He found the nation, over which he was destined by heredity and in divine purpose to rule, a very sick people indeed. There is no doubt that he was God's emergency man for his people under such conditions. His name means physician or healer, and the chapters in the Bible that recount his home and foreign policy prove that he was admirably qualified for his task. Blessed with good health, for he reigned forty years, endowed with knowledge and skill to govern wayward people, enthused with a strong zeal to promote godliness and righteous living, and encouraged in his service by the living Word of God through a Spirit-filled messenger, Azariah the son of Oded (2 Chronicles 15:1-7), who delivered his message and retired. When Asa heard his words, he took courage. The leaders in the Church of God today need, as Asa did, the stimulating encouragement, "Be strong, therefore, and let not your hands be weak; for your work shall be rewarded."

"Be strong!

We are not here to play, to dream, to drift:

We have hard work to do and loads to lift:

Shun not the struggle: face it, 'tis God's gift."

The qualities Asa possessed to make him a successful spiritual doctor and get his sick patient well on the way to recovery are indicated in 2 Chronicles 14. The first essential was, of course, personal righteousness. "Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God" (2 Chronicles 14:2). Knowledge of the ailment (14:3) is also necessary if the proper course of

action is to be taken. Asa made a correct diagnosis and attacked the seat of the disease, the altars of strange gods and the high places and groves. He was prompt in dealing with the evil, and in fighting the germs that had produced the unhealthy national and spiritual condition; and he displayed remarkable foresight in fortifying the nation against inroads of disease from without. It is a recognized principle of medical science that powers of resistance must be strengthened if relapses in the future are to be avoided. Recognizing this, Asa built fenced cities and battlements to prevent idolatrous, immoral and iniquitous systems from invading the nation's life, opposed the alien armies that came against him, and robbed the enemy of much of its power by gaining a decisive victory over it (2 Chronicles 14:12-13).

Like a truly good and devout physician, Asa recognized that the power of the Lord must be present to heal, and placed his reliance not on his armies, but on the power of God (14:11). His words, "We rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go," have inspired a poet to write one of our beautiful hymns:

"We rest on Thee, our Shield and our Defender!

We go not forth alone against the foe;

Strong in Thy strength, and in Thy keeping tender,

We rest on Thee, and in Thy name e go.

"We go in faith, our own great weakness feeling,

And needing more each day Thy grace to know;

Yet from our hearts a song of triumph pealing,

We rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go."