

BIBLE STUDIES

'Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so' (Acts 17: 11).

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLES OF JAMES, JOHN AND JUDE

VOLUME 44

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BIBLE STUDIES

'A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11)'

VOLUME 44

JANUARY, 1976

EDITORIAL

It is gratifying that interest in our new area of study has resulted in a good number of contributions, and we encourage all to send monthly papers as regularly as possible.

The Epistle of James strikes a note of reality, impressing us as disciples with the vital need for sincere motives in our service for the Lord. In describing himself as a servant of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ the author reflects this attitude of genuine dedication. We recall the note which echoes through the Lord's ministry, rebuking the hypocrisy of scribe and Pharisee (e. g. Mat. 23: 13-39), while Paul wrote that 'in holiness and sincerity of God... we behaved ourselves in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward' (2 Cor. 1: 12). It was he also who wrote to Timothy that 'the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned' (1 Tim. 1: 5). G. P.

DR. J. D. TERRELL

Dr. Terrell has served as an editor of 'Bible Studies' for several years, but we regret that it has now been found necessary for him to be transferred to the editorate of 'Needed Truth'. We wish to put on record our warm appreciation of all the help he has given us. His reliable, untiring work will be greatly missed by the editorial team, and we acknowledge the grace of God expressed in creative, thought-provoking study articles and eminently fair-minded comment.

Eds.

SINCERITY IN PATIENCE, FAITH AND PRACTICAL GODLINESS

(James 1: 1-27)

From Atherton and Leigh: The Epistle of James appears to have been written about A. D. 50, and, in the opinion of some of the authorities, was the earliest book of the New Testament to be written. We were inclined to the view that it came from the pen of the brother of the Lord Jesus (See Gal 1: 19 and 2: 9, etc).

In the Christian life some introspection is most desirable. It is only too obvious that perfection will not be discovered, so that spiritual experience calls for adjustment time and again. In times of weakness, the greatest of men have failed in what was normally their strongest characteristic. Patience, faith, wisdom and godliness are seen to be some of the chief essentials to spiritual growth and development.

In addition to the inward look, the upward look is vital, for all resources are from God. Hence we learn patience from the God of patience (Rom. 15: 4-5); and, if we ask in faith, a lack of wisdom will be countered by a generous divine supply, as Solomon realised in his appeal 'to the only wise God' (Rom. 16: 27). It is equally important to learn to think soberly, and to live a balanced life in the happy knowledge that 'every good gift and every perfect boon is from above'. The true character of Christian life is seen in 'pure religion and undefiled (genuine) before our God and Father'. Selflessness and self-denial play a most important part in connection with the needy and with the world.

Three suggestions relative to being 'firstfruits' were (1) first in divine choice; (2) referring to Jewish priority; or (3) first dispensationally [Comment 1].

The expression in verse 21, 'which is able to save your souls', seems to fall into the category of the present aspect of salvation, namely, from the power of sin. Only in this way can our lives be saved.

'But if any of you lacketh wisdom...': does this imply that we all lack wisdom? 1 Cor. 1: 26 indicates that 'not many wise after the flesh... are called'. While 1: 5 may refer specifically to spiritual wisdom (which we all lack in degree) there are a few that are gifted with wisdom naturally, that may be sanctified to the Master's service [Comment 2],

G. A. J.. E. B.

From Barrhead: We welcomed the study of such a practical portion of the Scriptures as James's letter and reminded ourselves of the possibility of becoming involved in an academic approach and having an intimate and correct understanding of all the points, yet failing to put into operation in our own lives the burden of James's message. We would do James a great disservice if having studied his letter we are found to be hearers of the word only and still not doers.

The writer of the letter is generally recognised as the Lord's own brother. His book is **one of the earliest letters** and we judge is written to Christian Jews. The Dispersion of Jas. i: i may have been the general dispersion of the twelve tribes or dispersion resulting from the early persecution under such men as Saul of Tarsus. The opening references to the testing of the Christian's faith may indeed have arisen from such persecution [Comment 3].

As James's letter was an early one we saw in it the need to bring out to the early churches the practical aspects of the Christian faith. We spent some time discussing the matter of the Lord testing His children and noted that nowhere in this passage is this concept precluded but we recognise that if we fall into error and commit evil we cannot blame God. The story of Abraham and Isaac, we felt, provided an ideal example of the Lord's testing or proving someone.

In 1: 12 we noted that the enduring of temptation brought certain blessings. This enduring would be a lifetime habit rather than a single instance, however notable. In 1: 13-18 we considered the balanced presentation of not only what God does not do, but what He does. It is easy to forget that good gifts come to us from above.

The engrafted word is the spoken ministry [Comment 4]. Those who received James's letter would have little or no written ministry, hence the force of 'not hearers only'. The final verses of the chapter were a pertinent warning to all of us and a challenge to further service of a more practical nature.

D. J. Kerr

From Birkenhead: James, thought by many to be the Lord's brother, wrote to Jewish disciples who had been scattered telling them that the true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ will experience 'manifold temptations'. These temptations viewed correctly are valuable in the development of character (Jas. 1: 3, 4) and should be accepted gladly. The temptation here in view is that which comes from God, calculated to prove us, and not that which appeals to the lust of the flesh, leading us to sin (v. 15).

It is sometimes difficult to appraise rightly these trials, and therefore wisdom, which is available from God to all asking in faith, will lead us to a correct viewpoint. The man whose faith is weak and to whom trials come, is liable to be blown

off course (v. 8). **James** indicates **that** although **a** brother may **be** lacking in worldly goods **he is** rich through God's provision for **him**, whereas **a** brother possessing earthly **riches will** find **them** fading away in **the** day of reckoning.

All that is good has its origin in God. **He is** unchanging although **we** may vary (v. 17). **It is His** intention **that** our **lives should be as** fruitful **as** possible, although **we** may not **be** perfect and entire (v. 4). To **effect** practical godliness in our **lives it is vital that we** respond to **the perfect law as** outlined in Ps. 1 and Ps. 119: 9, 11. **The writer lists** those things **which are** out of character and also those **expected** of **a true disciple. Our claims to be** religious **will be** nullified or enhanced according to our behaviour. **R. D. Williams**

From Birmingham: Temptation' in Jas. 1: 2 and 12 **we** considered to **be** testing or trial, to prove by testing or testing under **trial, as in the cases of Abraham** in relation to **Isaac**, and Job in relation to **his** possessions. **These** temptations **might well be classified as** external privation **which** God may **call** upon **us** to endure, **that His** name **might be** glorified, and from **which we emerge the** stronger for **Him, the** proof of our **faith** working patience.

In contrast, **the** word 'temptation' (1: 13-15), **bears the** thought of enticement or solicitation to **evil, which is** clearly not of God, **but of the evil** one. **It could be classified as** internal in **that it attacks** from within - 'drawn away by **his** own **lust**, and enticed', **the** end product being sin and **death. Stark** contrast indeed to patience having **its perfect** work, and **the** crown of **life as** promised in v. 12! **D. H. Elson**

From Derby: **Trials will be** experienced in **the** Christian pathway; **see 1 Pet. 1: 6** and Jas. 1: 4. They come from outside ourselves and **have to be** endured. Their object is **'the** proof of your **faith'** (1 Pet. 1: 7). They produce patience, or steadfastness, and so **assist** in our progress to **spiritual** maturity. **We** need wisdom in **this** progress, **but not the** wisdom of **the** world. **If we lack** wisdom, **we ask** of God, and **we** may **ask** often - **He will** not **upbraid** us. **But we must ask** sincerely. **That is, we must** intend to do **what He teaches us** to do. Otherwise, **we shall be** double-minded. Jas. 1: 12 **gives the** promise to **the** man who endures **trials. Inward** temptations

may **arise** by **the** action of Satan, to **tempt us** to **listen** to **the** voice of **self** and to turn away from God's way. **These are** not from God - every **gift of His is good**. **Vv. 13 to 15** show how temptation develops. **It begins in the thought**. **A man is** drawn away by **his** own sinful passions. Sinful actions **result** and **these** when fully developed **lead** to death.

All God's gifts to us are good, and **the greatest gift is that of the new birth**. **It is 'of His own will'** and **'by the word of truth'**. After **the new birth we** need to **make** spiritual growth and **vv. 19-27** show how **this** comes about. **We must be swift** to hear, slow to **speak** (taking **heed to the Word** ourselves before **we attempt to teach** others), and not wrathful, for wrathful thoughts hinder **the** reception of **the Word**. **The Word is to be** received in meekness and **implanted in the ground** to grow. This necessitates **the** clearing of **the** ground by putting away filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, things carried over from our old **life** before **we were** born again. Hearing **must be** translated into doing, unlike **the** man who **makes a casual** glance in **the** mirror, **sees that all is not well, but** goes away and does nothing. **The** man who looks closely into God's **law (the perfect law)**, ready to **take** action **as a result of what he sees there**, and to continue or **persevere in this, is a doer that worketh**. **He** manifests **practical godliness as a result**.

The marks of true Christianity are summarised in **vv. 26, 27: the** control of **the** tongue, **visiting the fatherless** and widows in **their** affliction (**that is, to care for the needy**), and keeping unspotted from **the** world.

L. A. H., A. G. W., S. R. W.

From Edinburgh: This **letter has** been **termed** a general **epistle** because **it is** not **addressed to a particular church** or individual **but** to believing **Jews of the dispersion; it is** plain from **Jas. 2: 1** that those **addressed were** obedient to **the** faith.

We saw a reflection of **the** Lord's teaching in **the** Gospels, particularly in **the** Sermon on **the** Mount, in many of **the** things that James **sets** forth in **this** chapter. **There is a measure** of similarity between **the** Lord's words, **'Blessed** are ye when men... **persecute** you... **for My sake**. Rejoice,... **for great is** your **reward** in heaven' (Mat. 5: 11, 12), and **what James teaches** in 1: 12. **James tells us** that **God is the source of all the good things we enjoy and there is no**

variation in **His** goodness, and **we were** reminded of **Mat. 7: 11**. The need for wisdom **is** underlined in **Mat. 10: 16** and in **Jas. 1: 5**. The conditions **attached** to prayer **dealt with** by the Lord in **His** teaching (**Mark 11: 24**), are **reflected** in **Jas. 1: 6**. The Lord **had a large place** for the poor in **His** ministry, and **He had** many telling points to **make** about the deceitfulness of **riches** and the transitory nature of **wealth** (**Mark 4: 19**). **Rich and poor** co-existed in the **New Testament churches** and James too **had a message** for both **classes**. Christian contentment **is** possible in both **states**. The poor (or **humble**) man **is** to rejoice in being **exalted**, and the rich man in **being** brought low, and both can rejoice in **the true and abiding wealth that faith** in Christ **has** brought to **them**. The importance of **hearing** and **doing was stressed** by the Lord in **the illustration He gave of the wise man and the foolish man** (**Mat. 7: 24-27**). James also **gives** an illustration on **this subject**.

The Greek word *peirasmos* may refer to **trials** from without or temptations from within; both meanings occur in **this chapter**. In v. **2** trials **might be the** more appropriate rendering. **We noted that** James **did not say 'if ye fall' he said**, 'when ye **fall** into manifold temptations (trials), ' clearly indicating **that** trials were to **be expected**. **Such** testing produces patience or endurance, **and** results in **the** formation of mature Christian character.

According to **W. E. Vine** *peirasmos* **has a dual meaning** in v. **12** denoting **1) trials with a beneficial purpose and effect**, and **2) trials** definitely designed to **lead** to wrongdoing. Trials of **the latter** kind are **the work of the Adversary**. God does not **tempt** men **with evil**, nor does **he** permit men to **be subjected** to temptations **that** are greater than they can bear (**1 Cor. 10: 13**). **He** may **put** men to **the test**, or allow **them** to **be put to the test**, in order **that** they may emerge **as** approved men. Those who overcome temptation, whether **it** comes from within or without, receive **the crown of life** (see also **Rev. 2: 10**). **J. K. D. J., T. H.**

From Hamilton, Ontario: Addressing **his remarks** to those **scattered Jewish** brethren, a group **well acquainted with the hardships** of temptation and trial, James **relates the value** of various temptations **which** try our **faith**. **We** are **caused** to remember **the** steadfastness of Christ, **as we realise that**

the trying of our **faith** worketh patience, and **we recall** Rom. 5: 3, 'knowing **that** tribulation worketh **patience**; and patience, probation; and probation, hope'. **Our hope, that we might be perfect** and entire, lacking nothing, depends then on our **willingness to submit to the perfect will** of God. **Often** misunderstood, temptation and tribulation may **cause us to fall** when **we think we are** doing a good work, **but as Paul's example teaches**, God wants **His** men totally reliant, and then our work **will be** perfected. **This** total reliance requires wisdom, not of **the world, but** from above. **Thus we** can look 'unto **Jesus the** author and perfecter of our **faith**, who for **the joy that was set** before **Him** endured **the** cross, despising **shame**, and **hath sat down at the** right hand of **the** throne of God' (Heb. 12: 2). **James** warns also of **the** dangers of double-minded and unstable **lives**, pointing **us to the** reward of endurance in love to **Him**, the crown of life. **This** crown, **suggesting a** nearness to **the** Lord, promotes thoughts of future responsibilities, enjoyments and honours, **but is a** solemn reminder of **the value** of learning obedience through suffering **and** trial.

L. W., D. B.

From Kingston-upon-Thames: External events can **be used** by God to **test a believer's faith** and character. **These act as** a refining process resulting in a more perfect life. Knowledge **will be helpful** in **this** process **but its** application, wisdom, **is** more important and should **be** sought in **faith**. God **is** liberal in **His** giving of wisdom; **thus a lack** of **this vital** commodity indicates **failure** to **ask** or doubt in asking. James **gives a** graphic description of **the** doubter whose **lack of faith** involves instability and **a** need of purposeful direction (v. 6). Enticement to **evil has its** root in man's **lust** and **its** fruit in **a wasted life** (v. 15). However, God desires **us to be the best** (firstfruits) of **His** creation and since **He makes available** spiritual and temporal **gifts** to answer our needs **we** cannot **blame Him** for our own ability and tendency to **succumb** to inward temptation to **evil**. So in **view** of our human weakness **we first** (rightly) pray, 'Bring **us** not into temptation'. Then **if** God allows **such** experiences to **befall us we** know **He will watch** over **us**. Further, **He will** provide **the** way of **escape**. **Thus** looking to **Him** for strength to endure **we** can find joy in **these** experiences **as** they promote **faith**, patience and **spiritual** perfection.

The pattern of **this life** should **be** to hear, to **receive**, and to do, in contrast to **the** sinfulness of **the** old nature **which** finds an outlet both in **a** restless tongue and human anger. **But if we have** heard and received God's word, **which is able** to **save** our **lives** (souls - v. 21), yet **lack** effort to **give it effect** in our **lives**, then **we are deluded if we** think our **service will** gain God's blessing. In contrast, **we shall be urged** into action **if we have a** continuing experience of self-analysis in **the light of the law** of liberty - **that law which expresses the** voluntary obedience of **the** believer in recognition of and in witness to **the grace that set him free.** **G. M. Hydon**

From Lagos: The proof of your **faith**, being more precious than gold **that perisheth**, though **it is** proved by **fire, might be** found unto **praise** and glory and honour **at the** revelation of **Jesus Christ**' (1 Pet. 1: 7). And **again**, in **the** context of day to day experience, **'the** proof of your **faith** worketh patience' (Jas. 1: 3). In **the** experience of manifold **trials** God's **aim is** to bring **the** man in **Christ** to maturity, 'unto a fullgrown man, unto **the measure of the stature of the** fullness of Christ'. **We** observed **the** point **that** divine permission of **trials** in Christian experience **is** primarily to prove **the** whole-heartedness of our love and devotedness to **the blessed** Lord. Temptations can come from our **flesh**, through **a** friend or an enemy. **It** would **appear that the** cares of **the** world and **the** deceitfulness of **riches were** among **the destructive** dangers to **the faith** and fervour **which characterised these disciples of the** Dispersion. James warned **them** about **false** complacency in **the** corruptible **riches (vv. 9-11)**, and also **directed their** vision to God **the** source of **all true riches (v. 17)**.

Self-control **is a** grace inwrought by **the** Holy **Spirit**. Our being **swift** to hear, slow to **speak**, slow to **wrath** are among **the safeguards which** may enhance **with** beauty our **lives** in **practical** godly walk. In **the** exercise of godliness **we** note **the** place **that is** given **first to the** divine revelation (**vv. 21-25**) and then to **areas where we** can develop good works (**v. 27**).

S. Coker, E. Bassey

From Leeds: **We** cannot **be** certain who **is the** James mentioned in **Acts 12: 17, Acts 15: 13, and 1 Cor. 15: 7; but** James was a notable **leader** amongst **his** brethren, and **his** epistle

can be generally described as **'Faith in action'**. He is a bond-servant of **the Lord Jesus Christ**, devoted to **His** service, and addresses **his Epistle to the twelve tribes scattered** abroad, those who **had accepted** Jesus as Saviour and who followed **Him as Lord**, and were in **the Fellowship of God's Son (Acts 2: 41-42)**.

We noted the word 'when' in **v. 2** (not 'if'). **Trials and temptations will come to us all, but the Lord is able to deliver us out of them all (2 Tim. 3: 11)**; again note 'out of' (not 'from'). Our **faith is often tried (1 Peter 1: 6-7)**, but God **ever remains faithful and will not suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear (1 Cor. 10: 13)**. **He will make us a way of escape, not that we may escape from it altogether, but so that we are made sufficiently able to bear it.**

As gold is refined in the hottest of crucibles, the dross rises to the surface and is taken away, while the pure gold remains. 'Count it all joy'. God will bring us through, and we shall be unto Him as pure gold. The distinction is drawn for us in Dan. 3: 17 by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. God is able to deliver us 'from' and will deliver us 'out of'. God could have saved them from going into the fire, nevertheless, He allowed them to be cast into it. Thus, whilst for them it was not to be 'from' - they experienced the 'out of, and what came out was 'pure gold'. We recalled the Lord's own words in Mat. 5: 11-12.

Hearers of the Word are like those beholding their natural face in a glass (v. 23). Doers of the Word look into the perfect law of liberty and continue in it. The laver in the court of the tabernacle of old was provided for the cleansing of the priests before they entered into their service - as doers. Ex. 38: 8 tells us that the laver was made from the (copper) looking-glasses of the women. The priests would see their own reflection whenever they came to it. As we come to the Word, we ever receive a true reflection (Ps. 119: 9-10). Let us remember whose we are and whom we serve.

H. R. Dodge

From Liverpool: Whether the writer in Jas. 1: 1 was the Lord's brother or not is uncertain, but what is important as far as the author is concerned is his relationship with the Father and His Son - 'a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ'.

This chapter **seems** to present **itself** to **us** as an index of the **epistle**, outlining the various points mentioned in the chapters to follow.

The **believer's attitude** to trials should **be** one of joy, knowing **such trials** are necessary to the development of **true** Christian character (Christ-likeness). 'God **dealeth with you as with sons... that we may be** partakers of **His** holiness' (Heb. 12: 7-10). An important requisite to spiritual maturity also **is** wisdom (**vv. 5-8**), 'For a **wise son maketh a glad father**' (Prov. 10: 1). 'For the Lord **giveth wisdom**' (Prov. 2: 6) to **all who will ask in faith** (Jas. 1: 6).

We should ever desire a sense of **true values**, so that we **have** our priorities right (**vv. 9-11**). The **Psalmist was** to learn **this**, but to do so **he had** to come into the sanctuary of God, and there **he** learned to **appreciate just how blest he was** (Ps. 73: 17, 23, 24).

Some thought the temptations (**trials**) of **1: 2 were** from without, **whilst** those of **vv. 13-15** are from within (**c. f. Mark 7: 20-23**), **but** whether from without or from within, **if we are** to know **real victory we must** experience the **effectual** working of God's word in our lives. '**Be ye doers of the word**' (**c. f. 1: 22** and Ps. 119: 9-10).

The **chapter finishes with** two **verses that** become more **acceptable the more we** think of **them**. Religion **is** nullified by selfishness, gossip and slander. **True religion is practical** and very demanding.

D. Home, D. Fillis, L. W. S.

From Macduff: The Epistle of James stresses the **great importance**, to believing Jews **at that time** and to **all** Christians of the day of **grace**, to **be** doers of the Word and not hearers only, keeping ourselves unspotted from **this evil** world. There **is** no definite proof, **but we seem to agree that the writer was** the apostle James, the brother of our Lord, who **was** in **Acts 15** a **chief man in the Church** at Jerusalem. The thought **was** mentioned that the **scattered tribes** of Jas. 1: 1 could **have** been the outcome of **Saul and his accomplices** laying **waste the church** [see Comment 3].

The **epistle**, although one of the **first** written books of the **New Testament**, **refers** clearly to some of the words of our Lord, and **if this was** from the pen of our Lord's brother, **he** would **have** clear memories of One **beside him** whose whole **life was** perfect. **We are** then told to joy in **trials**, for **if we** endure the **ultimate outcome is** blessing.

Wisdom is within our grasp if we ask God without any doubt that He is well able to give abundantly. Even a man with much wisdom must cast himself upon the Lord, for the Lord said to Solomon, 'If thou wilt walk in My ways and keep My statutes...'. So we must ask, we must walk with God, we must keep the statutes of our Lord, and in this life we will be entire and lacking nothing.

James goes on to speak of the inward lusts that entice us away and conceive in our beings sin and finally death. We wondered about this temptation in v. 14, and thought that this must lead from an earlier temptation which has been triumphant in us, for we thought of the holiness of our Lord and the fact that He could never have experienced this temptation [Comment 5].

Looking at the expression 'Father of lights' gave us the thought that God, the giver of every perfect gift, viewed in any aspect is light. There is not one area of shade, however faint, in His being and He will withhold nothing that is good from them that love Him.

J. Mitchell

From Melbourne: Searching for evidence concerning the identity of the writer, we lean towards the possibility that it was James the Lord's brother. We would also suggest that he is the apostle so prominently brought before us in the Acts, and also in the Epistle to the Galatians. We also note that the Lord in resurrection appeared to James (1 Cor. 15: 7). The writer, who appears to have remained in Jerusalem and was devoutly Jewish, had rejoiced in the fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blest. The letter is addressed to 'the twelve tribes that are of the Dispersion'. This term we understand is applied to those who were scattered from the land of Israel by the Assyrians, as referred to in 2 Kings 17, and later by the Babylonians, as recorded in the closing chapters of 2 Kings and 2 Chron. (thus fulfilling the word of the LORD through Moses, as recorded in Deut. 28). We would judge that there would also be many others, who in the pursuit of business migrated to these lands at a later date. Where they were found in sufficient numbers, in order to preserve a degree of separation from pagan people, they naturally sought a means and place of gathering, where they could hear the law read on the Sabbath and other days. For

this purpose **the** synagogue appears to **have** come into existence/possibly appearing first in **the time** of **the** Medo-Persian **Empire**; and when **the** Romans **came** into power, **it was** found widespread throughout **that Empire**. **As we read the book of Acts, we** learn how **the** servants of **the** Lord often sought out **the** synagogue to read from **the** Book of **the law**, then pointing out how **it testified** of **Christ**. In **this** way many people of Israel, **as also of the** Gentiles, **believed**.

James introduces **himself as a** bondservant of God and of **the** Lord **Jesus** Christ. Those to whom **he is** writing, **believers** in Christ, and in **the** Churches of God, **have spiritual** experiences and **trials** identical **with** believing Gentiles; **he** encourages **them** in **the** endurance of **the trials which beset** them.

D. M., T. W. F.

From Methil: **It is** generally understood **that the writer of this epistle was** James, **the** Lord's brother. **With this** in mind, **the** opening words **are beautiful** - James, a servant (bond-servant or **slave**) of God and of **the** Lord **Jesus Christ**.

The epistle is for guidance in Christian living and throughout **is** intensely practical. **It stresses the** need for **the believer** to do **what he** hears. Someone once wrote **that 'life is the workshop for eternity'**. Even **trials**, provings and temptations should **be regarded with joy because** they prove our **faith** and steadfastness and mould our **spiritual** character. **Such** experiences **teach us** patience and **help** our aim to **reach** maturity. **We** should welcome **trials** for they **give us** opportunity to demonstrate and strengthen our **faith** in God. Wisdom may **be** obtained by **first** realising our need, and then asking God, **all the time** trusting and believing God **will** answer.

James **is** not defining religion **here but** showing some of **the practical** results. **If it is pure** and genuine in **the sight** of God **it will be** seen by **such** things **as** visiting orphans and widows in **their distress** and keeping ourselves uncontaminated, untarnished, unstained or unspotted from **the** world. **Was it not Luther** who **called** James's **Epistle** 'an **epistle of straw**'? **Luther** obtained **the** revelation of justification by **faith**, and so to **him** works **were** anathema. **With God there is a perfect balance. We are 'saved through faith' (Eph. 2: 8), and 'we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them' (Eph. 2: 10).** *Neville Coomer*

From Nottingham: The writer describes **himself as a servant but not as an apostle**. This does not prove, however, **that he was not an apostle**, for a similar omission occurs in **the epistles of John and in the epistles of Paul to the Philippians, the Thessalonians and Philemon**.

It is evident that the writer was exercised about correcting errors that had arisen in the assemblies and some of the evils he deals with are: double mindedness (1: 1-8): impatience when enduring trial (v. 12): blaming God for temptation (v. 13): hearing only and not doing (v. 22).

The use of the word 'temptation' in verse 12 is in the sense of trial, not simply that of an allurements to sin. It may be that the dispersion and trials were connected. If faith in God was exercised, then patience would follow and the work of grace would be such as to make them lacking in nothing. From v. 12 to v. 16 the writer deals again with the subject of temptation. 1: 14 is instructive, showing the way in which temptation develops in the experience of an individual. The verse is essentially practical: first comes the drawing away or enticing power of the lust which is in the man; then the lust grows, matures and conceives. Thus it brings forth fruit which is sin and this, in turn, brings spiritual death. How often has the truth of these words been demonstrated! The temptation which seduces and destroys is from within, although often there may be an external agent which aggravates the situation (cf. Rom. 6: 21-23).

In contrast to **that which emanates from man's fallen nature we have the perfection of the giving and the gift of God in v. 17. The use of the word 'gift' in this verse has the force of 'giving' (see R. V. margin), and this causes us to think of the benevolence of our gracious giving God. The word translated 'boon' in the R. V. (Greek - *dorema*) is different from that used earlier in the verse (*dosis*). The definition of 'boon' in the dictionary is 'a favour, blessing and advantage'. These gracious favours come down from the 'Father of lights' and there is not now, nor ever can be, any variation of the intensity of light He sheds on us.**

R. Hickling

From Vancouver, B. C.: The intensely practical book written by James, probably a brother of the Lord, bears greetings from **him in his preferred position as servant of the Lord**. There **was** some discussion on **its** address to **the twelve**

tribes of the Dispersion and it was suggested that James had in mind the same people as Peter had, namely the Christian Jews elsewhere referred to as the Israel of God of the New Testament, who were scattered abroad [Comment 6].

The word 'temptation' in 1: 2 is more correctly rendered a test or trial, as given by the Lord to test our faith, not to lead us into sin as Satan would, and therefore we can rejoice in the midst of our sickness, persecution, bereavement or poverty, for through trials we learn patience and the perfecting of all aspects of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. And if we need wisdom to cope with the trials that are sent, this is one thing we can in faith ask of the Lord, and be absolutely sure that the answer will be yes; all we need do is ask. This asking is something requisite to obtaining any of the Lord's blessings to enrich our lives. But it must not be hope one day, and fear the next, like the changing sea, for lack of trust produces a wholly unstable character. We are again to be thankful for the opportunity of testing our response to the change of status in vv. 9-11, for while we may know how to cope with poverty or riches, we may not be able to take the change which he reminds us must come to all eventually.

James tells us the importance of our manner of life in working out this righteousness in us, with particular emphasis throughout the epistle on our speech. We have one tongue and two ears to listen twice as much as we speak. However, there are also times when we do not well to hold our peace and we need wisdom to guard from both extremes. Being a hearer only and not a doer will not work out the purposes of God in our lives. The example he gives as to the sincerity of the religion we confess, is once again the control of our tongue - a new life of good works to others and separation from the sins of the world. AS.

COMMENTS

1. (*Atherton and Leigh*) The context of 'firstfruits of His creatures' (1: 18) would point, I suggest to the wider concept of the whole creation which 'was subjected to vanity . . . in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God' (Rom. 8: 20, 21). God is working towards that great emancipation. Meantime the redeemed, although sharing in the groaning of creation, nevertheless have the firstfruits of the Spirit (Rom. 8: 23), and they are seen by God as a kind of firstfruits of the coming reclamation of a marred world.

2. (*Atherton and Leigh*) It is true that some have greater natural wisdom than others, but the spiritually minded will realize a need of 'the wisdom that is from above', and all will need to ask of God in faith that they may receive this.

3. (*Barrhead*) I am disposed to the view that 'the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion' referred to those communities of Jewish people living away from the national centre in Israel. James was writing, of course, to believers among those communities who had become disciples in churches of God. There is support for this view in that Peter similarly writes to the 'elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion' in five large Roman provinces. Most of the disciples in at least one of these provinces, Asia, were the product of missionary journeys by Paul and his associates, not victims of dispersal from Jerusalem in his persecuting days. It is clear also from 1 Pet. 5 that the sojourners of the Dispersion to whom Peter wrote were under the care of elders in churches of God.

4. (*Barrhead*) According to W. E. Vine the R. V. translation 'implanted' gives the sense more accurately than the A. V. 'engrafted'. The Greek word is *emphutos*, implanted or rooted, as distinct from *emphuteuton*, engrafted; this is in harmony with the fact that the Word is sown, not engrafted, in the heart. Should the written Old Testament word be precluded from having relevance in addition to the Spirit-directed spoken word?

5. *Macduff*) It would **seem to me that the** temptation of v. 14 need not necessarily **be the** result of yielding to an earlier temptation. Rather **the** inclination towards sin **is** within **us**, always ready to find expression **if we** allow ourselves to **be** drawn away by **it, with the sad** consequences **described** in v. 15.

6. (*Vancouver*) The term 'Israel of God' would **seem to me** to **have a wider** connotation than Christian **Jews** in **churches** of God, although including **them**. Would not **Paul's** expression in **Gal. 6: 16** include **all the New** Covenant people of God, answering to **Israel as His** people in **the** former dispensation?
G. P.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

From Methil: Does Jas. 1: 5 refer to a wisdom **that we** should **request** once for **all at** some **stage** in our Christian experience, or do **we** need to **keep** coming to obtain wisdom from God for **current** problems?

I do not understand **this to be a** once-for-all **request-it seems to me that we** need continually to **feel** our dependence upon God for **the** renewal of **'the** wisdom **that is** from above'. **It is true that** God endowed Solomon **with special** wisdom through **his** asking once (1 Kings 3: 9-12), **and that** some in apostolic **times were** granted **the gift of the** 'word of wisdom' (1 Cor. 12: 8). **But** vv. 5-8 of our study **are related to the broad** process of our **spiritual** development through **trial** and proof of faith. **We** may during **this** life-long process often **be** brought into situations **which cast us** upon God for renewed wisdom.

G. P.

BIBLE STUDIES

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EDITORIAL

The **Epistle of James**, which **deals** with many practical **matters**, is in complete harmony with **the Lord's teaching** in the gospels, and also with **the teaching** given in the other **New Testament epistles**. There **are** principles laid down in the faith (**referred** to in Jas. **2: 1**) that should control every **facet** of our lives including our relationships with others. **The** divine requirements governing **these** relationships will **be** satisfied if **we** observe **what James has called 'the royal law'** (Jas. 2: 8).

The emphasis on practical aspects is maintained while **the** close relationship between faith and works is cogently **debated** by James. Illustrations **are** drawn from **the lives** of persons **as** diverse **as Abraham** and **Rahab** to show **that a** living faith will **be made** manifest through actions.

The reference to **Abraham** provides **a** link with our previous study subject, **and** therefore it **seems** appropriate to include in this issue **a** contribution on **a related theme**.

J. K. D. J.

REMINDER

Will contributors kindly note **that** their **papers** should **reach** **Mr. E. Archibald** two months before publication **date**.

A RAM CAUGHT...

The Ram

Often in Scripture **the** Lord Jesus is **presented** in type **as** an animal. The **best** known and most loved by **all** Bible students is **the** Lamb. **Yet** how **much we** miss when **we** fail to perceive Him **presented** in **other** animal types. **A** fruitful study **lies** in considering Him **as the** Ram.

The ram is **the leader** of **the** flock, its strength residing in its horns. By **these** it retains its **place** in **the** flock. By **them** it retains its liberty and freedom from subservience to other **members** of **the** flock. **The ram** therefore proclaims liberty, strength and might.

The Trespass Offering

Under **the Levitical** order, anyone guilty of certain trespasses needed to bring **a ram as** an offering (**Lev. 5: 15; 6: 2**). **The** significance of **this** can only **be** seen when **we** consider **that due to trespass loss had** occurred, loss to God and loss to man. The loss of an obedient **subject seems to be the** prominent thought. To obey **is** better than sacrifice, and to hearken than **the fat of rams'** (1 Sam. 15: 22). When **the Lord died** upon Gologotha **He was** 'obedient even unto **death, yea, the death of the cross'** (Phil. 2: 8).

Not only **was** loss incurred **but** restoration **was** demanded. **A fifth part must be added** thereto (Lev. 5: 16; 6: 4). In our Lord's trespass offering **He** restored **that which He** took not away (**Ps. 69: 4; Rom. 5: 15**). **Where** sin abounded grace **did** abound more exceedingly. **Such is the** strength and **might of His** offering upon **the** cross. **He was** delivered **up** for our trespasses and in **the** strength and **might of this** work **we have believed**, thereby obtaining **the free gift** of God **which is** eternal life through Christ **Jesus** our Lord.

A Ram caught

In **the** story of Genesis 22 a different **aspect of the** work of **the Lord is** presented. **At the vital** moment **Abraham, the** man of **faith**, turned and behold, 'behind **him ONE RAM (mg) caught in the thicket'** (v. 13). **We** are often inclined to **use this** incident in thanksgiving on Lord's Day morning to illustrate **the place the** Lord took for **us as the** sin offering or trespass offering. **We** overlook **the fact that** Abraham **was** offering **up his** son **Isaac as a** burnt offering. **The 'ram caught in the thicket' was the 'lamb of God's providing'. Here** attention **seems to be** focussed on **the fact that the ram had lived** to maturity and **it was** now offered **as the** lamb of God's providing for **a** burnt offering. **This we suggest is the** key to understanding why **it was caught in the thicket. The life of the Lord was** wholly devoted to **the will of His** Father. In absolute obedience to **His** commands **the Son lived**, and **at the crucial** moment **was caught in the thicket. The thicket** took away **its** liberty, strength and freedom for **it was caught by its horns. How voluntarily the Lord gave up His** liberty and strength to become **weak like** any other man. 'For **He was crucified** through weakness' (2 Cor. 13: 4). 'By weakness and defeat **He won the meed and crown'**.

The passage also **depicts the** resurrection of **the Son of** God, **since by faith Abraham** received back **Isaac** from **the**

dead. **In this we see** how worthy **the Lord was**, having **lived a life of perfect** obedience, to **be declared at His** resurrection 'a priest for ever **after the order of Melchizedek**'. **He was** worthy of **High** Priestly office **as a result of His** earthly experience, **culminating in the** sufferings of Calvary. **He learned** obedience by **the things which He suffered**; and having been **made perfect** was resurrected 'a Son, perfected for evermore' (Heb. 5: 7-10; 7: 28). How **we** should adore **the Ram caught in the thicket** by His horns! **R. A. Parker**

(to be continued)

THE ROYAL LAW' AND FAITH MADE PERFECT BY WORKS

(James 2: 1-26)

From Barrhead: The chapter can be divided into **three** sections:

vv. 1-9 — Concerning **the matter** of partiality

vv. 10-13 — Yielding obedience to **the whole law**

vv. 14-26 — Justification by faith accompanied by **an upright life**.

Regarding **vv. 1-9** it was noted **that respect** of persons **is** often shown to certain individuals **because there is a** strong possibility of gaining something from them. Flattery, however, **is** not to **be** encouraged **but rather the** showing forth of **the person of Christ**. **There was much** injustice in **that age**. **Emphasis** in Scripture **is placed** upon **the greatness in** God's **sight** of those who **are** poor in **material** things **but rich** towards God; for instance **the widow** whose **last mite was** given **as a Temple** offering.

From **vv. 10-13** royal **law** and liberty **law were** considered. **'Christ hath freed us from the law'**. **Nevertheless**, now **there is much** more **besides the** oft-quoted ten commandments; it is **a matter** of mercy glorying against judgement [Comment 1]-

The question as to what are the works mentioned in **vv. 14-26 was discussed** cf. Rev. 3: 2 **'I have** found no works of thine fulfilled'. **The works were summarised as being (a)** to do **the will of God: (b)** to **help** other people **as much as possible**. **These are to be** done both individually and in collective capacity. It would **be difficult** to administer **(b)** in **a collective manner**.

The linking of **faith** to works was seen in **that** God justifies not from man's viewpoint, **which is** always affected by a sinful nature, **but** from commitment towards **Himself** through an **act of faith**. **Abraham's** works **which** followed **his act of faith** have been shown to every generation **since**.

N. S. Macdonald

From Birkenhead: The royal law was given by the One who is above all and this is possibly a reason for the phrase 'the Lord of glory' (v. 1) appearing in the passage. The law was supreme above all others and outlined God's standard. The code of behaviour set out in the ten commandments is all embodied in the teaching of Christ. Although the latter is called a law it should not be irksome; rather it should be a delight in the realisation that all is planned for the blessing of our life together as Christians. Also a consciousness of the debt of love to the Saviour will impel us towards willing obedience.

James is anxious to stress that holding the Faith - the body of teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ - is incompatible with respect of persons. Questions arose on the incident used in his illustration. Were the Christians meeting in the synagogue, or is it a term used for their assembly? [Comment 2]. Whatever conclusions are reached the principle is unchanged. Notice is drawn to the evil things that rich people are known to do, consideration of which might keep us from showing undue favour towards them (vv. 6, 7).

Apposite to the subject of Christian walk are judgement and mercy and the blend of these two will produce a happy outcome to any matter under consideration.

Contrary to Luther's conclusion there is no conflict between James's writing on faith and works and Paul's epistles. James is here anxious to press home that the genuineness of the faith should be questioned in one who does not display works - 'can that faith save him?' (v. 14). The faith is 'dead' (v. 17) and 'barren' (v. 20).

B. M. Turner, R. D. Williams

From Derby: God Himself is no respecter of persons (Acts 10: 34; Rom. 2: 11; Gal. 2: 6). Paul wrote, 'If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ' (Gal. 1: 10).

'Hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ the Lord of glory, with respect of persons'. The faith has reference to the apostles' doctrine which is the commandment of the Lord. When called upon to judge in matters relating to the

faith we must be impartial, whoever **the persons may be, rich or poor, gifted or unlearned. We are to judge** righteous judgement (John 7: 24). God **ever had a kindly regard** for the godly poor. **'Blessed are ye poor', the Lord said to His disciples (Luke 6: 20). The royal law, according to Scripture is, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But respect of persons in this matter is sin. 'So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty'. We all have liberty or freedom to do what is right.**

Vv. 14-16 some may find **difficult**. Justification by works **in no way contradicts the teaching of justification by faith. One has written:**

**'If faith produce no works I see,
That faith is not a living tree,
Thus faith and works together grow,
No separate life they ere can know,
They're soul and body, hand and heart,
What God hath joined, let no one part'**

Jesus said, **'I am the Light of the world.... So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven'**.

G. Conway, S. R. W.

From Hamilton (Ont.): James's **great concern** about respect of persons touches **the root of Christian love and living. Twice he denounces partiality and class-distinction as being very wrong and contrary to the faith. This is confirmed by the royal law of God in Lev. 19: 15, Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty' and Deut. 1: 17, 'Ye shall not respect persons in judgement; ye shall hear the small and the great alike'. The Lord Jesus, the perfect Man, was the only one who completely fulfilled the royal law of God (Deut. 6: 5). James suggests that it is possible for us to do so in measure, 'for in many things we all stumble' (Jas. 3: 2).**

James points out clearly from **v. 24 that he does not condemn or oppose faith, but rather affirms it, and shows that works are needed to justify our faith before men. Good works that are evident should accompany and follow salvation. These, when seen in individuals or collectively, are beautiful to behold, described by Paul as the 'fruit of the Spirit' (Gal. 5: 22-23) and in striking contrast to the works of the flesh. James cites both Abraham and Rahab as shining examples of persons having faith and works blended to-**

gether. **It is** marvellous to contemplate God's **grace** in **that** both Abraham and **Rahab** should **be** reckoned in **the** genealogy of **the** Lord (Mat. 1: 1, 5) and also **be given a** prominent **place** in God's honour roll of **faith** in **Heb. 11**. **This shows that** God **is** no respecter of persons.

T. Ramage, J. D. Anthony

From Hayes: In **the** first of **the** above **subjects** we have love in action and in **the** second **faith** and works.

The royal law is the law found in **Scripture**, the law associated with a King [see Comment 1], **In the Old Testament** Israel was under God as King. **The** particular part of **the law** referred to **here is that which the** Lord **Jinked with the first and greatest** commandment of **that law**. **The first was,** Thou shalt love **the** Lord thy God **with all thy heart,** and **with all thy soul, and with all thy mind',** and **He linked with it,** Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Mat. 22: 37-39). **He** who loves **his** neighbour as himself in deed and in truth is automatically **fulfilling the law**, for 'love worketh no ill to **his** neighbour' (Rom. 13: 10). **He accepts the** Lord's teaching in the story of the good Samaritan that every fellow-man is **his** neighbour. **Respect of persons is to have no place in our lives. Rich and poor are to be treated alike. True riches are not this world's goods or wealth, but are measured in spiritual terms. Love is not something that just exists; it shows itself by actions.**

The faith is not just a matter of theory, nor an **academic matter but** something that is to **be lived out, that involves deeds that are** expressions of obedience to **the** Lord's commands and **kindness** towards neighbours. **These deeds, however, spring from faith. They make faith fruitful and not barren. Faith and works are complementary to each other. The teaching here does not conflict with the teaching in Romans regarding justification by faith. It does not say we are not to have faith or that we have no need of faith. It is, 'I by my works will shew thee my faith' (v. 18); and, 'by works a man is justified, and not only by faith' (v. 24). V. 14 asks, 'What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? Can that faith save him?' Perhaps the key to this is the word 'say'. A man may say he has faith, but true faith in the heart will be evidenced by works. A man's life will change in the sight of his fellows after he puts faith in Christ. God knows the hearts of all men. He does not need to see works as an evidence of faith. By faith in Christ**

a man is justified in His sight. But men cannot see into each other's heart. They can judge only by works. 'By their fruits ye shall know them'. So by works we are justified in the sight of men. Works are the outworking of faith.

J. A. H. Robertson

From Kingston-upon-Thames: Since the royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2: 9) has reference to the witness of the Fellowship to men so the royal law can be considered to be the manward aspect of the faith [see Comment 1]. The first part of the chapter, vv. 1-13, deals with the faith, and vv. 14-26 deal with faith.

Under the law of Moses a Judge was not allowed to show respect of persons (Deut. 16: 19); similarly the disciples in James are being exhorted to be fair in their dealings with other persons.

It is seen from 2: 4 that the standards are higher today, because it is a matter of sin in the mind. The Lord in Mat. 5: 21, 22 connects the sin of the man who is angry with his brother for no cause with that of a murderer, stressing that sin takes place in the mind before the resultant action is seen.

James speaks a good deal about the rich, and condemns them for their oppression of the poor, but does not condemn riches (Mat. 19: 24). It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God; but not for a poor man, as God has chosen such to be rich in faith (Luke 6: 20).

The law of liberty is the perfect law (Jas. 1: 25), and the doer of it is to be blest. Hence it can be none other than the faith, it is the standard by which the disciples are to be judged. The law of Moses convicted the persons of sin, but the observing of the law of liberty leads to blessing.

Jas. 2: 14-26 deals with the life of faith, rather than faith to the saving of the soul. Paul also refers to this matter in Phil. 2: 12 showing clearly there is no contradiction between these scriptures and the truth of justification by faith.

G. J. Ackers

From Lagos: Brethren holding the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ (James 2: 1), are disciples in corporate testimony in churches of God (see Acts 1: 3; 2: 41-42; Eph. 2: 20-22). These disciples to whom James wrote the Epistle, were evidently right as to their position in the divine service but their condition of heart in the ministry and practice of the new Covenant was open to correction (see Jas. 2: 1-13).

The Holy Spirit **draws** attention to **the** royal **law** which commands, Thou **shalt** love thy neighbour **as** thyself. In answer to **the** question 'Who **is** my neighbour?', **the** Lord **has put** it clearly to **us that** mercy and love should **be** shown to anyone **if we must** fulfil **the** royal **law** (see **Luke 10: 25-37**). **We suggest that the law** of liberty gives **us the** right balance with **the** necessary emphasis, in **the** Lord's injunction, '**All** things therefore whatsoever **we** would **that** men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto **them**: for this is **the law** and **the** prophets' (**Mat. 7: 12**). 'God is no **respecter** of persons' and neither is God against **the** person of **the** rich or **the** poor. Material riches or poverty cannot commend **us** to God, who **has** said. To this man **will I** look, even to him **that** is poor (**humble**) and of a contrite spirit, and **that trembleth at My word**' (Is. 66: 2). **The message to the Church of God in Sardis is a divine warning to us against the possible drift to the sad extreme, Thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead**'; of whom **the** Lord said, '**I have** found no works of thine fulfilled before My God' (**Rev. 3: 1-2**).

James cites **Abraham's** faith in its brilliant manifestation in **the** sight of God (**Gen. 15**) and **the** perfection of **that** faith in **the** sight of men through works of faith (**Gen. 22**). **Rahab had also embraced a** divine revelation through **the** tidings which **reached her** concerning **the** God of **the** Hebrews. And having welcomed **the** confirmatory Word through **the** messengers, **she** responded in faith to hide **them at the** risk of **her** life (**Josh. 2**). 'Even so **let** your light shine before men, **that** they may **see** your good works, and glorify your **Father** which is in heaven' (**Mat. 5: 16**).

S. Coker, E. Bassey

From Leeds: All believers must, of necessity, **have** faith (belief) in God (**Heb. 11: 6**), **but all** do not acknowledge **the** 'all authority' of Jesus **as** Lord, **thus** embracing something more than simple faith, namely **the** whole body of doctrine indicated in **the** faith, once for **all** delivered to **the** saints (**Jude 1: 3; 1 Cor. 1: 9**).

In **Heb. 11**, where **the** faith of men and women of God is shown, **we** can **see** (1) **What** faith **is** (vv. 1-3), (2) **Abel's witness** through his offering (v. 4), (3) **Enoch's walk** of faith (v. 5), (4) **Noah's work** of faith (v. 7). This progression in **the** outworking of faith is seen in **James 2**. Faith comes first; witnessing, walking and working follow on. **The** out-

ward appearance of a man gives no indication that he is a man of faith. Faith cannot be seen unless it is expressed through us in the works that we do. We are all children of God through faith. There is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, bond nor free, neither rich nor poor, for we are all *one*; Christ is all and is in all (Gal. 3: 28; Col. 3: 11).

The short-sighted usher, in vv. 2-3, was considering the outward appearance (1 Sam. 16: 7). It is to be regretted that this class-distinction between rich and poor should be drawn within the assembly.

The two men (James 2: 2) are contrasted by their outward appearance, the one having fine clothing, the other having vile (humble) garments. It is the Lord who makes poor and makes rich (1 Sam. 2: 7). The poor have, of necessity, to rely more on God than the rich. A man may wear humble garments, yet when God receives him, he is clothed with the robe of righteousness. In the wardrobe of believers we find (a) garments of salvation (Is. 61: 10), (b) the garment of praise (Is. 61: 3), (c) the whole armour of God (Eph. 6: 14-18), (d) the clothing of humility (1 Pet. 5: 5 AV) and, above all these, put on love (Col. 3: 14).

Faith, without works, is dead (v. 26). Two characters are brought to our notice as examples, one being the friend of God (Abraham) and the other Rahab the harlot. As Gen. 15: 6 comes before Gen. 22, belief comes before action, and faith before works. We would know nothing of the faith of Abraham had not God chosen to reveal it to us. Abraham's faith was a living faith, not barren (dead) or empty, showing itself through its outworking. Rahab also received the message (from the messengers) by faith, and acted upon it.

H. R. Dodge, P. M. Jefferson

From Macduff: We found this chapter to be concerned primarily with the test of brotherly love. It is a heart-searching chapter and one which we would all do well to ponder. The Apostle James exhorts us to be no respecter of persons and our Lord was the best example of this. He was called the friend of publicans and sinners; He healed the lepers, gave sight to the blind, and in general associated Himself with the poor of the land. Our Lord, although rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich (2 Cor. 8: 9). The kingdom in v. 5 we thought referred to the kingdom which is to come in eternity,

'unto an interitance incorruptible, and undefiled, and **that fadeth** not away, reserved in heaven for you' (1 Pet. 1: 4). [Comment 3]. **We felt that** v. 6 referred to men outside of Christ, **The law** of liberty in v. 12 is referred to in relation to those who **have been set free** by salvation to do God's will. **If we** show no mercy then how can **we expect** to receive mercy? In **Micah 6: 8** we read **that the Lord has** showed us **what is** good and **that He** requires us to do justly and to love mercy and **walk** humbly **with** God. Good works should become first nature to those who are saved. 'By **their fruits** ye shall know **them**' (Mat. 7: 20). **Faith** without works is not productive. However, 1 Cor. 3: 15 speaks of being **saved 'as through fire'**. **We see** in the last six verses of **this** chapter an illustration of a man of **faith**, Abraham. Abraham **trusted the life** of **Isaac** his only and well-beloved son to God, clinging to God's promise **that He** would **make his seed 'as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore'** (Gen. 22: 17), and accordingly God **blessed Abraham**, a man rich in **faith** and well-pleasing unto God.

Colin Chinchen

From Melbourne: **Respect** of persons is one of the **traits** of fallen humanity, a tendency of the **Adamic** nature. The old man having being **judged** and having **died** judicially **with** Christ, **his acts** and tendencies, of **which** respect of persons is one, should **be made to die**. The **faith** of our Lord **Jesus Christ is**, we would **judge, the faith which has** once for all been **delivered to the saints**; and those **with** whom the writer **was** reasoning, who **had been** manifesting 'respect of persons', and those who were either lavishly or humbly attired, **had** become obedient to **that faith**. **But** some **had to be** reminded **that the** truly **elite** of **this** world are largely **such as** are described and enumerated in Heb. 11: 35-38. The thoughts and **values** of those individuals **had** become distorted. They **had** become **judges with evil** thoughts. The noble and wealthy **are** not **excluded** from God's **elite**, who **seek** to carry out the revealed **will** of God, whatever the **cost**. **David was** one of the latter. To many human beings, riches are the primary objective in **life**, and when gained, there follows pride of attainment. **David was** not of **such**, but one who **having the wealth which** God **had** given him, **used it to the glory** of God, and **as a** means of laying up a good foundation against **the time** to come; whether in providing

the materials for the Temple of Jehovah, or in caring for the needy. His knowledge of the God of Israel caused him to pen the words of Ps. 138: 6, which strike at the evil of respect of persons - 'For though the Lord be high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly: but the haughty He knoweth from afar'.

The royal law as revealed to Moses on the second table of stone for the instruction and obedience of Israel has not been abrogated, it has been amplified by the faith, for the obedience of God's people.

There is no conflict between the statements that 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness' and 'Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac upon the altar?' God sees, where men cannot see, into the heart; and He saw that Abraham believed Him when he was told, 'My covenant will I establish with Isaac', and, 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called'. But the external evidence of that faith was his obedience when called to offer up Isaac upon the altar. *T. L. F., T. W. F.*

From Methil: James seems to bring before us the three Persons in the Godhead in a very striking manner, as the spring of everything for us if we have faith in them. He insists upon works, but not legalistic works. They are works produced from the knowledge of God in the soul, and faith as the result of that knowledge.

In ch. 1 God is presented as the Father of lights, the source of every good gift and of every perfect boon. Ch. 2 speaks of having the faith of 'our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory'; such a title would represent our Lord as the glorified Man. No doubt the perfect law was seen in our Lord Jesus Christ, as a Man on the earth, wholly directed by the will of God, and responding to it in perfect freedom. Later on James speaks of 'the Spirit which He made to dwell in us' (4: 5) and so we have the three Persons brought before us.

We have not yet seen the public display of the glory of God upon this earth. It is like Rom. 5: 1-5; not yet Rom. 8: 17-21. Although this is true, we have here and now as the objects of our faith, God the Father Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ as the Head and administrator to us of all that is contained in an entirely new realm of glory that can be enjoyed here and now, by the 'Spirit whom God has made to dwell in us'.

The 'royal **law**' mentioned in Jas. 2 is, **we believe**, fully demonstrated by our Lord Himself of whom it **is said that while we** were 'enemies' (Rom. 5: 10; Col. 1: 21) Christ **died for us**. It would **seem that James speaks as he does (ch. 2: 8) because he** is only thinking of **the** practical everyday **aspect** of our behaviour to men in **the** world.

Works, **as** spoken of by James here are not **such as are** seen by men only. **We see that** in **Abraham's** case. There **was** not a soul on **that** mountain-top when **Abraham** performed **that act which was the result of his earlier belief** in God. Only God **was the witness** [Comment 4].

We see the same in **Rahab's** case. **She cast** in her lot with **the** people of God, and **the** God of **that** people, before they **had struck** one blow on **the** other **side** of Jordan. **This** commitment **was the result of her faith in what she had heard** about God and about **the** wonders **He** wrought for **His** people. Man **is not the judge either** of our works or of our **faith**. **We cannot see faith, but we can see the** outworking of it. It should **be** noted that both **Abraham** and **Rahab** **rejected** a whole system of things; **Abraham** the world as it then **was, as is** brought out in Heb. 11, and **Rahab**, Jericho **with its king with all that** they represented **as characteristic** also of **this** world. *A. McIlree (Sr.)*

From Nottingham: An interesting expression **used** in v. 1 is '... our Lord Jesus **Christ, the** Lord of glory...' **The** words '**the** Lord' **are** not in **the** original so **we have** 'our Lord Jesus **Christ** of glory'. There **is a similar** expression in 1 Cor. 2: 8, '**the** Lord of glory' and **elsewhere**. **We suggest this** expression points to **the** nature of **the** Lord, **that is to the** nature of God **Himself**. The glorious nature of **Him** who **is** glory **was** displayed among men, **as He** moved in and out during **His** time down here. The glory shone brightly against **the** **drab** and ugly backcloth of **man's** sin and failure.

In contrast to **the** Lord Jesus **Christ** of glory **we have**, in v. 2, a man **with a** gold ring and fine clothing. **Pale** and paltry **are such** earthly **riches** compared **with the** **beauties** of **the** One who **came** from heaven. **Yet** evidently **there had** been occasions when **rich** men **had** come into **the** assembly and **had** been given preferential treatment over those who **were** poor, and **such** circumstances **gave rise to the** Spirit-given exhortation from vv. 1-9. **Riches** may not **have** been confined to material **valuables**, **but** may **have** included intangible

wealth in ability, learning and **gift**. There **was the danger that** those possessing **such qualities** would **be** given preference over their fellows, and **this was** not to be. **It was the** rich who were **the** oppressors of **the** saints and in showing preference to **the** wealthy they were doing honour to those who **did them** hurt.

There **is** no conflict between **the** teaching of **Paul** (Rom. 4: 5; Gal. 3: 6) and **that** of **James** on **the subject** of **faith** and works. **Paul** is viewing **faith** in **the** Godward aspect. When a man **believes the** word of God, **this at first is** known only to God Himself. This **is** saving **faith as** in Abraham's **case** when **he believed** God and **it was** reckoned unto **him** for righteousness. **Such a** condition of heart **was** known to God alone. James **views the** matter from **the** manward **aspect** and shows **that faith** in **the** heart **is** manifested by works. **Thus the faith Abraham had** in God (Gen. 15: 6) **was** confirmed by **Abraham's act** in going willingly to Mount Moriah to offer **his son** (Gen. 22). **Several years separated the** two events **but both were** of **faith**.

The answer to the first rhetorical question in v. 14 seems to be 'of no profit'. **If we** answer 'No' to **the** second question **we are** saying **that all true faith**, i. e. saving **faith will be** demonstrated by works on **the** lines of **the** principle of 2 Cor. 5: 16-17. **But** (in our experience) not **all** those who **have** professed saving **faith** in **the** Lord Jesus **Christ have** works in confirmation of **their faith** (**except for the** profession itself). Does it follow **then that their stated faith in the** Saviour was spurious? [Comment 5]. **R. Hickling**

From St. Helens: James, in **this** portion, warns **the** saints against partiality to **the rich and lack of respect to the** poor, indicating **that such** behaviour **is** unseemly and inconsistent **with the teaching of 'the faith** of our Lord Jesus Christ'. **It is** incongruous to **the faith** to **assess** and **regard** men according to **their wealth** or position **rather** than to **their spiritual** attainments. **Better it is that we** should **view all as** sinners for whom **Christ died, and all** His saints **as** equally loved, rich and poor **alike, all** equally worthy and **rich** in Him. Citing **the 'royal law'** it was noted **that** love to **Christ begets** love to brethren and neighbours.

The saints are reminded **that their** behaviour **will be judged** by **the law** of liberty, and **are** encouraged themselves to show mercy in order **that** they may **receive** mercy in **'that day'**.

Finally, **the** apostle, before establishing **that faith without works is dead, asks, 'Can faith save him?' [Comment 6]. We are thankful that, by the grace of God, faith alone can save the sinner. Albeit, a lifeless faith which does not cause one to help others or a faith which does not demonstrate righteousness and holiness, is really dead and no better than the belief of demons. Good works are insufficient to earn eternal life, but they are absolutely necessary to prove the reality of our faith as Abraham and Rahab did. J. H. R.**

***From Atherton and Leigh:* Respect of persons is a serious sin both toward God and against man. God Himself is no respecter of persons (Acts 10: 34). All men are on common ground before Him: He has chosen the rich and poor alike, and the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ would help all His disciples to see His personal example and teaching. He Himself became poor that men, rich and poor alike, should know the blessing of eternal riches. James's teaching was His teaching first of all, and in His public ministry He made very clear the dangers of material riches. In the churches God has placed rich and poor with the problems of social standing, and there is only one answer to them working and serving together and this is the royal law of love. How good it is to see the grace of God manifest in churches of God when men of every standing can worship together and serve Him acceptably. Yet we must be aware of the danger. Respect of persons may develop into cliques, schisms and divisions and this is disastrous to the preservation of a church of God. Deep exercise about this issue is all important to the end that we should not violate the word of the Lord.**

There is very clearly no contradiction between Paul's teaching and that of James. Justification by faith and also by works are distinctive truths. Paul's declaration, To him that worketh not, but believeth' (Rom. 4: 5) is one side of the great story of justification, and yet the believer's faith is normally seen in the believer manifesting his expression of faith. Our initial faith in Christ which brings eternal salvation is quite apart from works. Men are for ever concerned to join works to faith to obtain salvation, and the teaching of Scripture would help us to see that works follow faith. In Abraham in the supreme trial of the offering of his son faith and works were seen together, and as a believer already justified by faith alone Abraham obeyed. His obedience was

one of **faith** and so **we** read, Thou **seest that faith** wrought with **his** works, and by works **was faith made** perfect'. The reality of **the** believer's **faith** should **be** proved. **The Lord said**, 'By their fruits ye **shall** know them'. (Mat. 7: 16, 20).

J. C. M., G. A. J.

COMMENTS

1. (*Barrhead*) It seems to me that the expressions 'the perfect law, the law of liberty' (1: 25) and 'law of liberty' (2: 12) would emphasize to Jewish readers the contrast between the Mosaic law from the curse of which they had been redeemed (Gal. 3: 13) and their new responsibility as 'under law to Christ' (1 Cor. 9: 21). The latter was a 'law of liberty' as a result of the Saviour's perfect fulfilment of the Mosaic Law, and His introduction of yet higher ideals and blessings based on the New Covenant ratified by His own blood (Mat. 5: 17; Eph. 1: 3; Heb. 7: 18, 19). It was 'the perfect law', 'the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ', superior to all that preceded it, yet incorporating much that had been enjoined by the Old Covenant law, which was 'holy, and righteous, and good' (Rom. 7: 12). One great precept of Mosaic law, renewed to us in the law of liberty, is described by James as 'the royal law' namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

2. (*Birkenhead*) In the light of such scriptures as John 12: 42, 43; 16: 2; Acts 13: 15; 18: 17; 22: 19, it seems fairly certain that James was describing the Christians' own assembly gathering rather than a Judaistic synagogue. While Paul and others took the gospel message to the synagogues as long as these remained open to them, the typical result is illustrated in Acts 18: 4-7. Division resulted and the believers had to separate from traditional Judaism. The evidence is strong that those to whom James wrote would not likely be in a position to control seating arrangements in Jewish synagogues.

G. P.

3. (*Macduff*) I would agree that a future kingdom is in view in Jas. 2: 5. This viewpoint was also taken by Mr. J. Miller in his notes on this epistle, and he listed the following scriptures for consideration:

Luke 19: 11-27; 22: 28-30.

Dan. 7. 18, 22, 27.

Rev. 2: 26.

Primarily these scriptures have in view the Lord's millennial kingdom, but that is a prelude to the eternal state. The place that saints will have in the millennial kingdom is dependent upon their faithfulness during their lifetime. The inheritance Peter speaks of (1 Pet. 1: 4) will be the portion of all believers.

J. K. D. J.

4. (*Methil*) This is an unusual emphasis, and would tend to weaken the usually accepted teaching that justification by works is before men rather than before God. The contrast between Gen. 15: 6 and 22: 12 is clear. In the former, human observation could not have detected the faith within Abraham's heart but in the latter the drama wrought out on Mount Moriah clearly showed his faith. Isaac was there to witness his father's actions, which live on in God's word as evidence of the genuineness of his faith. So also Rahab's actions in harbouring the spies and displaying the scarlet cord bespoke her faith.

G. P.

5. (*Nottingham*) Atherton and Leigh refer to the principle stated in Mat. 7: 16. The evidence of works testifies to the existence of faith: the lack of *evident* works does not necessarily prove the converse. In some the evidence of an inward change is short-lived (cf. the Parable of the Sower). The man of v. 14 declares that he *has not* works.

6. (*St. Helens*) The A. V. rendering, 'can faith save him?' does not appear to fit the context as well as the R. V. rendering, 'can that faith save him?' The answer to this rhetorical question is clearly, 'No'. The faith that such a man *claims* to have is not a living, saving faith in the heart.

J. K. D. J.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

From Birkenhead: Is the 'honourable name' (v. 7) Jesus Christ or Christian?

It is the 'honourable name' that is blasphemed, therefore it must be the Lord's name.

J. K. D. J.

BIBLE STUDIES

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Paul wrote: 'present yourselves unto God, as **alive** from the **dead**, and your members **as** instruments of righteousness unto God' (Rom. 6: 13), and in **this** passage **James** shows the importance of **that** most unruly of our **members**, the tongue. **This is the member used** for communicating and **it is vital that we** learn to control **it** for **it has** immeasurable potential for good or ill. **The** wisdom from above **is** essential, **but if we ask for it we shall have it** (Jas. 1: 5). **James writes** 'Who **is wise** and understanding among you? **Let him shew** by **his good life his** works in meekness of wisdom', and would **teach that the** wisdom from above is easily recognised **because it marks** our **speech as well** as our actions.

James 3 exposes **a matter much** commented on in **Scripture** and **we are** sure the study has been of **practical value** in identifying how and **where** control in **the** Christian **must** operate.

'**Be** ye transformed by **the** renewing of your mind, **that** ye may prove **what is the** good and **acceptable** and **perfect will** of God' (Rom. 12: 2). **A. B. R.**

A RAM CAUGHT...

(carried over from February issue)

Rams' Skins Dyed Red

Any visitor from **the** nations outside **the** camp of Israel would see in **the** midst **a** **structure** covered in **badger** skins. **There was** nothing **attractive** or smooth about **the** outside covering of **the** Tabernacle. **Yet** underneath was **a** layer of **rams** skins, unseen by men **but** constantly observed by God **as** **He dwelt** amongst Israel. So **it was** when **God was** manifest in **flesh**. **The** outside appearance of **the** Son **was** unattractive, **"He hath** no form nor comeliness; and when **we see Him**, **there is** no beauty **that we** should **desire Him**' (Isa. 53: 2). **But to the Father** **"He grew up** before **Him as** a tender plant and **as a** root out of **a** dry ground. In **the** rams' skins **we** again **see** typified **the** life of obedience. In **this case the** emphasis is on obedience seen by God alone. Only **here** and

there in the gospels is this aspect revealed by the Spirit of God. We have to look into the Old Testament for intimate glimpses of the obedience of the Son to the Father. 'He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as they that are taught'. 'And I was not rebellious, neither turned away backward. I gave... I hid not... I set My face...' (Isa. 50: 4-7). His mother learned 'I must be in the things of My Father' (Luke 2: 49). The meat to eat that the disciples did not know about was seen in the garden when He said 'Not My will, but Thine, be done' (Luke 22: 42). The rams' skins were dyed red. The path of fulfilment led only to Calvary where He cried, 'It is finished' (John 19: 30).

The Ram's Horn

When Israel came into the land instructions were given in respect of the Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25: 9-10). In that year the jubilee trumpets were to be blown proclaiming liberty throughout the whole land. Their sound brought joy to the owner who for reasons best known to him had sold his possessions, because in the year of jubilee the land returned to the original owner. For the purpose of proclamation they fashioned the ram's horn. Its loud, deep note resounded far and wide. It proclaimed liberty and freedom as all 'returned every man unto his possession'. When Israel entered the land, having passed over Jordan, their first task was utterly to destroy Jericho. The victory was achieved by the presence of the ark of the covenant and the sound of the ram's horn. Seven jubilee trumpets proclaimed liberty, freedom and security to Rahab and her household. To the rejectors of peace it meant utter destruction. The Man who lived as a ram and died as a lamb is coming again with the sound of the trumpet to bring liberty and peace for His Church and to speak peace to a restless world.

R. A. Parker

CHRISTIAN CONTROL THROUGH WISDOM FROM ABOVE

(James 3: 1-18)

From Birkenhead: A salutary word is given to teachers that they who teach must expect a greater judgement. Their behaviour should match their teaching but it is a fact of life that we all stumble in many things. A high standard of conduct is displayed by those who control their speech.

Though the tongue is a very small part of the body it is used to great effect. The control the rudder has upon a ship and the small flame which is the start of a large fire are illustrations of the tremendous consequences of a few words for good or ill. James, continuing to use the illustration of the fire, states that misuse of the tongue can result in **the** whole body being defiled, and many persons may eventually suffer. The tongue is capable of blessing the Lord and also cursing men. Peter is a classic example of this (Mat. 26: 35, 74). The incongruity of this is stressed with three examples from nature (vv. 11, 12).

Those who claim to have wisdom need to show it by their life and works. If the heart is harbouring evil then the wisdom is earthly and the person is moved to vile deeds and the production of confusion. The wisdom that is from above, however, will prompt actions which tend to make peace and produce the **fruit** of righteousness. The Lord during His earthly sojourn was faced with many situations in which He demonstrated the wisdom that is from above.

R. D. Williams

From Derby: God has favoured mankind above all other earthly creatures in that we have been created in the image of God (Gen. 1: 27). By the use of his tongue and lips, man can articulate words to speak to his Creator and to his fellows. We can go wrong in the use of our power of speech and bring condemnation upon ourselves and sorrow upon others. We can give God pleasure or we can give Him cause for anger or grief.

James, himself a great teacher, touches upon the subject of teachers. 'Be not many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgement.' Divine judgement in relation to believers in the Lord Jesus Christ we see in 2 Cor. 5: 10: 'We must all be made manifest before the judgement-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad' (see also Rom. 14: 11-12; 1 Cor. 3: 12-15). We in churches of God are greatly blessed in able teachers, gifted in wisdom, knowledge and faith (1 Cor. 12: 8-9). The Apostle **Paul** wrote to Timothy that he was to commit his teaching to faithful men, who would be able to teach others also. In the days of the apostles, however, there were those

who **taught** wrong things. Timothy **was** warned to **take heed** to **his** teaching and **we all** need to **take heed** to **the use we make** of our **gift** of speech. 'By thy words **shalt thou be justified**, and by thy words thou **shalt be condemned**' (Mat. 12: 36-37). **The tongue also is a little member**, and boasteth **great things**'. **A ship's rudder**, though **small** compared with **the large bulk** of **the ship**, can **be used** to turn **the vessel** completely. One **match** may **cause a great** conflagration. **There is** nothing so potent for good or **evil as the** human tongue. Some **passages** from **the Psalms** were referred to, **such as Ps. 12: 2-4**. They **speak** vanity every one **with his** neighbour: **with flattering lip**, and **with double heart**, do they **speak...** Who **have said**, **With our tongue will we prevail**; our **lips are our own**: who **is lord over us?**

James continues - 'Who **is wise** and understanding among you? **let him** show by **his good life his** works in meekness and wisdom. ' **Our Lord Jesus was the** very wisdom of God and **was meek** and lowly in **heart**. **The wisdom that is** from above **is first pure**, then **peaceable**, gentle, easy to **be intreated** (how **blessed!**), **full of mercy and good fruits**, without variance, without hypocrisy. **Such is available** to **all** who seek **it** and **we are** invited to **ask** God for **it** sincerely, in **faith**, nothing **wavering** (1: 5-8). **G. Conway, S. R. W.**

From Edinburgh: **We are taught** to govern our tongue so as to prove ourselves **perfect** and **upright** men, and **such as have** complete control over ourselves: '**if any stumbleth** not in word, **the same is a perfect** man, **able to bridle** the whole body also' (3: 2). **It is implied that he** whose conscience is troubled by tongue-sins, and who **takes care** to avoid **them**, is an **upright** man, and **has** an undoubted sign of **true** grace. **But on the other hand if a man seems to be** religious (**Jas. 1: 26**) and does not **bridle his** tongue, whatsoever profession **he makes**, his religion is vain. **The wisdom and grace that** enable **him** to **rule his** tongue **will enable him** to **rule his** actions.

True wisdom is God's gift. **It is** not gained by conversing **with** men, or **by the** knowledge of **the** world, **but it** comes from above. **It has several qualities**. **It is pure**, or **free** from iniquity and defilements, and produces **a** searching **after** holiness both in **heart** and life. **Peace** follows purity and depends on **it**. **This wisdom is** gentle - not **harsh** or cruel in **temper** or overbearing and **rude** in conversation. **It is easy to be intreated either to what is** good or **from what is** evil.

Heavenly **wisdom is without** partiality - free from suspicion showing **the same** conduct to **each** person. **It is** disposed to **that which is** good and kind. **It has** no disguises or deceits - not being wise **as the world counts wisdom - but is** steady, sincere, and trusting. **Let** others reap **the fruits** of contentions - **but let us** go on to sow **the peace** of God and reap a harvest of joys (3: 18). **M. Reilly**

From Hayes: James **sees the** wisdom from above **expressed** in (i) **speech (vv. 1-12)** and (ii) actions (vv. 13-18). He also **sees** expression through **the same** two channels from a very different source, and condemns it.

(i) Speech - The Tongue

The tongue, though a **small member** of the body, is a most influential one. James **uses** two **examples** of the good **use** of this **small member: the** bridle of a horse, and **the rudder** of a ship. In **each case there** is a force outside **the** horse or ship which is in control, **the rider** and **the helmsman** respectively. The counterpart to **these** in our lives is **the Holy Spirit**, whom **we** should allow to control our speech.

James also gives an **example** of the **bad use** of the **small member - that of a small spark** which can **set** on fire a **large pile** of wood. There is **here** implication of **lack** of control in this illustration.

There **are further** illustrations to show **that the** tongue should not sometimes **speak** ill and sometimes good, **as** it is **quite capable** of doing.

The Book of James **has** been described **as The Christian's Book of Proverbs' because** its teaching is more in **the** form of moral **precepts** than **structured** on a central theme. **It** is interesting to note **that Solomon in the Proverbs** comments equally on **the good** and **bad uses** of the tongue, in **that there are** nine references to **each** in **the** book [Comment 1].

Good

Bad

6: 24 L a w . . . keeps from flattery	6: 17 The Lord hateth a lying tongue
10: 20 Tongue of righteous . . . as silver	10: 31 Froward tongue shall be cut off
12:18 Tongue of wise . . . is health	12:19 Lying tongue is but for a moment
15: 2 Tongue of wise uttereth knowledge	17: 4 Liar . . . mischievous tongue

- 15: 4 **Wholesome tongue is tree of life** 17: 20 **Perverse tongue... faileth into mischief**
 16: 1 **Answer of tongue from the Lord** 18: 21 **Death and life... power of tongue**
 21: 23 **Whoso keepeth... tongue** 21: 6 **Getting of treasures by a lying tongue**
Keepeth... soul
 25: 15 **A soft tongue breaketh the bone** 25: 23 **Backbiting tongue... angry countenance**
 31: 26 **Law of kindness on her tongue** 26: 28 **Lying tongue hateth . •. wounded**

But James truly **sums up the** matter of **the** tongue: human effort alone cannot **keep** it constantly in **the** good **path**. Only **the** Holy Spirit can do this when **He** is allowed to **be** in control.

(ii) **Actions**

James similarly contrasts good and **bad** actions **which are:**

Good

gentle, **pure**
 without partiality
full of mercy
 easy to **be intreated**
full of good **fruits**
peaceable
 without hypocrisy

Bad

sensual
 faction-forming
 causing bitter jealousy
 lying against **the truth**
 every vile **deed**
devilish
 earthly

It is not then surprising **that** James opens **the** third **chapter** with a warning to those who would essay to **teach, that is, to use the little member,** for ministry is only convincing to **the** extent **that the** minister **has** both tongue and actions under **the** control of **the** Holy Spirit. **C. L. Prasher**

From Kingston-upon-Thames: Jas. 3: 1-12 links **back** with previous verses in so **far** as 'words' **are a** form of 'doing' (1: 22) and an outworking of **the** inward man. Only those things **that are** in **the** man will come out. The hypocritical Pharisees **were a** prime **example** of attempting to show, by words **and** works, **the** holiness **that they lacked** inwardly. **Our** Lord Jesus stands out in contrast **as the** only One who could perfectly **practise what He** preached. So in outlining man's tendency to failure (v. 2), James **speaks,** not of **the** reward (1 Cor. 3: 8) **but of the great** responsibility of teaching, resulting in heavier judgement (1 Cor. 3: 15).

In confirming **the truth** of such scriptures as **Eccles. 7: 20** and **1 John 1: 8**, **James** points, **with graphic** illustration, to **that member** of our body most **difficult** to control, and **leaves us** in no doubt **as to its** potential wickedness. **The tongue is the flashpoint in a rapid** and engulfing **fire** of wrong-doing, **but the ignition receives its spark from the** powerful glowing embers of **Hell** (v. 6) [**Comment 2**].

God's wisdom **has been** manifest to men in creation (**Ps. 104: 24** and **Prov. 3: 19-20**), and in **His** dealings **with men ever** since, **but is** most evident **at Calvary when the Son of God** brought salvation to man, and, in resurrection, **became 'the Firstborn from the dead'**. **But the world** looks on Calvary and for wisdom **sees** only foolishness, for victory **sees defeat**, for power **sees** only weakness (**1 Cor. 1: 18-25**). Those who **will receive** God's wisdom **must first** recognise **its greatest** outworking, and by **the help** of the Holy **Spirit** fear God and grow in **the** knowledge of **the** Holy One, and so draw from **an exhaustless** source of wisdom and understanding (**Prov. 9: 10**). No allowance **is made** for man's own wisdom, **which** only **serves** to hinder him. To obtain God's **riches, we must realise** our poverty; to obtain **His** power **we must realise** our weakness; and to obtain **His** wisdom **we must realise** our foolishness. Again James shows **that** inward things **will have their** outworking, so **that** wisdom from above **will be seen in a good life**, and meekness, and wisdom from **earth will be** seen in jealousy and faction.

Verse 17 shows **that the** wisdom of God in operation **is the** antithesis of earthly wisdom. **It is** not surprising to find **that this list of the attributes** of **His gift** are seen in **His greatest gift, His Son**. So **that** when **we enter the Most Holy Place** to **remember the One who made** manifest God's wisdom, **we are** compelled to **praise Him for the One who is** in very **deed 'pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be in-treated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy'** (**see Col. 2: 3**). **It is through such a One that we can experience true** wisdom, and **the fruit** of righteousness (**Phil. 1: 11**). Experiencing **such** wisdom **will result in a** controlled tongue, **thus ensuring peace from that 'restless evil'**.

P. J. Brennan

From Lagos: The arrogance of **man** in **his sins** is exposed in **these** words: **'With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?'** (**Ps. 12: 4**). **Such** grievous

misuse of **speech** portrays for us **the extreme** of **the** depravity of **the** human heart and **its effect** upon man's tongue. **Yet where** sin **has** abounded, **the grace** of God in **Christ Jesus** **has** abounded more exceedingly. 'For **the grace** of God **hath appeared**, bringing salvation to **all men**' (Tit. 2: 11). God **has put** a new song into our mouth, even **praise** unto our God, **that** many may **see** and **fear**, and **trust** in **the** Lord. In **the will** of God '**we all, with unveiled face**' should **reflect** '**as a mirror the glory of the Lord**', and **be** '**transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit**' (2 Cor. 3: 18).

'**Be not many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgement**' (Jas. 3: 1), **is a parallel scripture with 1 Tim. 4: 16 which** enjoins upon **the teacher, Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching**'. **The** all-consuming **desire** in **Paul's heart was that** '**I may know Him**'. And pressing towards **that goal in his life he** underlines **the** governing principle - '**my ways which be in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church**' (1 Cor. 4: 17). '**Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ**' (1 Cor. 11: 1). '**Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which He was received up**' (Acts 1: 1-2).

We considered also self-control in **the Christian life as a vital part of the fruit of the Spirit** (Gal. 5: 22, 23). **We** need **this** heavenly **grace** to **live** in **the** enjoyment of a **fruitful and well balanced life as** envisaged in Jas. 3: 13, 17-18. **The good life is** ordered in meekness of wisdom **which is first pure** (holy and **dedicated** to God), then **peaceable**, gentle, easy to **be** intreated, **full** of mercy and good **fruits**, without doubtfulness, without hypocrisy. '**If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally**' **the wisdom which sows righteousness and peace among men to the glory and praise of God.**

S. Coker, E. Bassey

From Leeds: **Jesus began** both to do and to **teach** (Acts 1: 1), and **we see that doing precedes teaching and is a divine principle.** **Paul also called** upon **the saints to be** imitators of **him, even as he was of Christ** (1 Cor. 11: 1). Those who **are teachers take much upon themselves** and James reminds **them that theirs will be the heavier judgement.** To **whom much is given from them, much will be required at the judgement-seat of Christ** (2 Cor. 5: 10). Thou therefore **that teachest** another, **teachest** thou not thyself?' (Rom. 2: 21).

To attain perfection (completeness) **we need to think before we speak. The spoken word cannot be recalled and all too often we regret what we have said. If we would carefully check (apply the reins to) the tongue we would thus check the whole body and our words would then match our actions.**

On **five** other occasions in his **Epistle, James refers to the use of the tongue (1: 19, 26; 2: 12; 4: 11; 5: 12), and here illustrates it by seven different pictures. The bit (bridle) controls the horse, which is naturally restive, champing and chafing at the restriction, longing to move on. The greatest ship is directed by a small helm over the vast oceans of the world. How the tongue can harm our lives is shown first by comparison with fire. As it needs only a spark to start a vast forest fire, so the tongue, although a little member, can ignite our passions. It fires the course of nature (the whole round of life) - in every part of man, for the whole of life. One hot, burning word can start a great conflagration in an individual, a small community, or a great nation. Man has tamed beasts and it is given to man to have dominion over every living thing that moveth upon the earth (Gen. 1: 28). The tongue, however, can no man tame. There is One who can tame the tongue, and we have witnessed this also. We might ever repeat the prayer of David in Ps. 141: 3: 'Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips'. The poison (v. 8) is deadly; it only needs a drop or two to destroy. The tongue does not need to distil long speeches. It has but to drop one word and mischief is set apace, peace ruined, a reputation blackened, a friendship embittered, a mind poisoned.**

'Who is wise and understanding among you?' (v. 13). We can well imagine the 'teachers' of 3: 1 reacting to this. Many there are who are full of knowledge but lack wisdom, and if we are really wise it will show in our lives.

H. R. Dodge, P. M. Jefferson

From Liverpool: Not all are gifted to teach but those who have this responsibility must have the necessary good works accompanying their teaching, and remember that such teaching bears greater accountability. The teaching and the works must complement each other.

Those who are able to teach are those who have received

the gift through the indwelling Holy Spirit (see Rom. 12: 7, Eph. 4: 11 and 1 Cor. 12: 28), but all need to be careful how they use the tongue. So great is its potential for either good or bad that James deals with the subject at length. The illustrations he uses are very striking and the principles are well established in both the Old and New Testaments. Of the tongue's capacity for evil the Psalmist could say, Thy tongue deviseth very wickedness; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully' (Ps. 52: 2). See also Prov. 10: 18-21 and 26: 20-22. Nevertheless we may use our tongues to God's glory or for good. The Lord Jesus is the supreme example of One who used His tongue to the glory of God. 'And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth' (Luke 4: 22; cf. Is. 50: 4). Following the example of the Lord Jesus, believers are exhorted, 'Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt' (Col. 4: 6). Not only can the tongue be used for good or evil, but the same person has the ability both to curse and bless, and to all James says: 'My brethren, these things ought not so to be' (v. 10).

The second portion of the chapter answers to the first part, so that those who are the wise and understanding of verse 13, are those who are able to be the teachers of verse 1. This wisdom is demonstrated not by words, but by works and meekness. How true are the words of the Lord, '... learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart' (Mat. 11: 29). It is not the conceited wisdom and knowledge of the earlier part of the chapter, but peaceable without hypocrisy.

D. Home, M. S. Elliott

From Macduff: We have not to mistake knowledge for wisdom. A person may know much and yet have no wisdom. Job tells us the meaning of wisdom: 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom' (Job 28: 28). The tongue, a very small member of the body, is likened to the helm of a ship or the bit in the horse's mouth, each being used to control or guide. An unruly tongue is to be dreaded as one of the greatest evils to mankind. It has been the means of poisoning an untold number of lives and will yet be used by 'the wild beast' (Newberry) whose mouth will speak great things and blasphemies against God and heaven (Rev. 13: 5, 6). The words of the mouth show the state of the heart. The good man...

bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil man... that which is evil: for out of the abundance of **the heart his** mouth speaketh' (Luke 6: 45). Solomon says, 'Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin' (Eccles. 5: 6). Out of the same mouth comes blessing to God and cursing to men, yet no fountain sends forth sweet water and bitter, nor can a fig tree yield olives or a vine figs. Such contrary things are not found in nature, and one would not expect to hear both curses and blessings from a believer.

A power greater than is in mankind is required to control the tongue - not earthly wisdom, but 'the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy' (Jas. 3:17). We must be exhorted to 'follow after peace with all men' (Heb. 12: 14), calling to remembrance that the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

A. McL. R.

From Melbourne: A teacher is responsible to live a life in conformity with his teaching. It must be evident to others that the pattern of instruction which the teacher seeks to impart has moulded his own life. If it is otherwise, the Lord will hold the teacher responsible for inconsistency.

'In many things we all stumble', and the tongue is the most difficult member of the human body to control. Controlled by the Word and Spirit of God, it is a fountain of life. Under the control of the flesh it can be as a fire among wood, causing havoc among nations, groups of people and the people of God. Words uttered in public can never be recalled, the consequences are permanent, whether for good or ill. All kinds of creatures have been tamed and brought into subjection to man, but not so the tongue; from this member of the human body can flow thanksgiving to God, or bitterness towards men when the fleshly nature of a redeemed man or woman takes control.

Most of us have to a greater or lesser degree the knowledge which is to be acquired in this world, which, if not sanctified by grace divine, tends to 'puff up', whether it has been gained by instruction or experience. Knowledge in itself is not wisdom, but the application thereof under the guidance of the Word and Spirit of God is wisdom indeed. As a wise man increases in knowledge, it has been very aptly said,

The more **he** knows, **he** knows **he** knows **the less**', and **this** knowledge **humbles him**. True wisdom **has** for **its** foundation **the** knowledge of God and of **Christ** Jesus **the** Lord, **as** revealed through **the** Holy Scriptures; **this**, combined **with** a knowledge of **the** sin and deceitfulness of **the** human **heart**, **the** brevity of **life**, and reality of eternity, **lead** to **the** ordering of **the** **life**, whatever **be** **the** calling or occupation, in **the** meekness of wisdom. **This** wisdom **is** **pure**, **peaceable**, merciful, and without hypocrisy, and **is** apparent to others, whether they agree **with** **the** way in **which** **it** **is** manifested or otherwise. In contrast to **this** there **is** a wisdom **which** **is** earthly **that** many **have** acquired solely or mainly for personal gain or aggrandizement; they **have** acquired an ability to **pursue** a course **which** subtilty **has** taught them, regardless of **the** effect **it** **has** upon others, **whether** people of **the** world or **the** people of God.

W. H. F., T. W. F.

From Methil: The teaching of James **3** **is** relatively easy to understand, **but** very **difficult** in **its** application. Though **the** tongue **is** a **little** member, great care should **be** exercised in **its** use. Unwise **use** of **the** tongue can **cause** **great** damage. **We** **must** not rashly or arrogantly reprove others. To **emphasize** **this** teaching James **uses** illustrations **such** as **the** **bridle** in **the** horse's mouth (**see** also Ps. **39: 1**), **which** shows **quite** clearly **that** **we** should control or **put** a rein on our tongues.

Jas. **3: 6** **speaks** of **the** tongue in a sinful **setting** and demonstrates how **the** tongue can **be** instrumental in **defiling** **the** whole body. **It** can **set** on fire **the** **wheel** of nature or **birth**: **it** can poison **the** whole body.

Do not **be** too keen to **add** yourself to **the** teachers, for they **will** **be** **judged** by a higher standard. **The** Lord **said** **that** **we** would **be** **judged** by our words, and **we** **will** **have** to **give** an account of every **idle** word spoken (**Mat.** 12: 36). Although **we** read '**the** tongue can no man **tame**' [**Comment 3**], nevertheless **we** are **still** responsible for **the** things **that** **we** say. **We** should learn to govern our tongues and **ask** God's **help** for wisdom. There **are** two kinds of wisdom. Earthly wisdom, **which** **is** sensual or **devilish**, **is** evidenced by jealousy, **strife** and every **vile** deed. **The** wisdom **that** **is** from above, **from** God, **is** **first** utterly pure. James then **gives** a **list** of seven **desirable** characteristics by **which** **this** wisdom can **be** recognised.

It **is** possible for **the** **same** tongue to **be** **used** for blessing God and yet cursing men. **These** things do happen, and they

should not. **We** remember there **was a time in the life** of Peter when **he denied the Lord with** cursing and swearing. Praise God, in **Acts 2 we have the** record of **his effective** preaching on **the Day of Pentecost**, resulting in **the saving** of about 3, 000 souls and in glory to God. **Neville Coomer**

From Nottingham: The writer now turns **his** attention to those who would **teach in the** assembly and **it was** thought by some **that his** reference to many **teachers linked with** Jas. 1: 19, '... **let every man be swift** to hear, **slow to speak** ... ' **It was suggested that** there were many seeking to **put forth their own ideas and views with such** resulting confusion **that it was all quite** unprofitable. Consequently **James** exhorts **that there be** not many teachers. **It is desirable that** one should **be quite** sure of being **called to teach** before attempting to do so, **with** an understanding of **the** heavy responsibility on those who **teach the Word**. **If there was this** tendency for some to thrust forward their **views** without a **due** sense of responsibility **it may have** been a reflection of **the** general inclination of some Jews who loved **the chief seats in the** synagogues and to **be called Rabbi (Mat. 23: 6, 7)**. The words of **the Spirit through Paul in Rom. 2: 17-21** are also relevant. **While we** should not **seek the** work of a teacher for self-glory or for **the sake** of being heard, those who are **called to this service have** a solemn responsibility to carry **it out, as it is vital to the building up of the** testimony (Rom. 12: 6-8).

By means of **the bit** a man can control **a** horse and by **the use of the** rudder **he** controls **the ship**, yet how often **he** finds **it** impossible to control one of **his** members, **the tongue**. **It is a little** member **but has** great power. **What damage can be** done by an unwise, hasty and unkind word! **Of the Lord it is said, 'Grace is poured into Thy lips'** (Ps. 45: 2). **A gentle, prayerful Spirit-given word is** a healing **balm** indeed. Sanctified **lips must sound the** praise of God and **the tongue should speak that which is** profitable.

V. 6 was considered. Alford translates **it, The tongue is** a fire - **that** world of iniquity, **the tongue, makes itself** among our members **the** defiler of **the** whole body. ' An alternative understanding **is that the tongue as a fire** finds **its fuel in the** world of iniquity [Comment 4]. **The** reference to **the 'wheel of nature' (R. V.)** or **the 'course of nature' (A. V.)** would **speak to us of the** continuing revolutions in **the** generations

of men when one succeeds **the** other through **the** centuries. So, **as that wheel has** revolved unceasingly, men's **evil** nature **has** been demonstrated by **their** tongues; anger, backbiting, **lies** and threatenings, being some of **the fruits** of **this** unbridled member. **The New International Version has 'sets the** whole course of **his life** on fire' **but we think the writer had a wider aspect** in **view** in demonstration of **the** uncontrolled tongue [Comment 5].

There is a wisdom which comes from below. **The use** of **such** wisdom can produce envyings and **strife** and **we** return to our opening thought of confusion being brought into **the church** by **the** presentation of teaching in earthly wisdom [Comment 6]. **Yet it is** easy to prove **the** teaching **because** that presented in heavenly wisdom **will have the characteristics** listed in **verse** 17.

R. Hickling

From Atherton and Leigh: **James**, in exposition of **practical realities**, presents a **chapter** absolutely **true** to life. **While** of those **that** know more, more **is expected**, the sweeping **statement with** reference to stumbling **leaves** no exception. **Particular emphasis is placed** upon **the** operation of **the** tongue. The bridling, or **the** keeping in **check**, of **the** tongue **is** all-important in **personal life** and in **church-life**, for **the** tongue **is** the most unruly **member** of **the** body. **Its control is illustrated** by **the** physical **bridle** of **the** horse, fixed in **the** mouth so **that the far** stronger animal is **directed** by **the weaker** rider. Contrariwise, a **small fire** may **set alight a great** forest. Prov. 6: 19 shows **the** Lord's **hatred** of a lying tongue and indicates **the** tremendous **damage caused** by **this** unbridled member.

We discussed the application of v. 8. How startling a **statement is this!** **The** point of difficulty **was whether the** reference **was** to one's own tongue (**which could be** controlled in **the** power of **the Holy Spirit**) or **the** tongue of someone **else** [see Comment 3]. **The** potentially deadly **effect** of **this member** may **be as** poison, **but its** Spirit-controlled **use as** balm. **Peter's** denial of **the** Lord **with** cursing **was** contrasted **with his speech** in **the** Holy **Spirit** on **the** day of Pentecost. **Such** eventualities **give cause** for **the deepest** concern in our approach on **the** Lord's day **with** reflection **as** to how **we** have **'kept festival'** during **the** week.

The inevitable outcome of **the bridled** tongue **is** seen in **the** closing **verses** of **the chapter**: wisdom, understanding, a good

life and works of corresponding **virtue** [Comment 7]. We referred to **the** experience of Job, who, by **the** bridling of **his** tongue, rejected **the** temptation of **the** devil to **curse** God, delighting in **that** glorious word of truth, 'I know **that** my Redeemer liveth.' **He** was further seen **as a** type of **the** Saviour in **that** 'when **He** was reviled, **He** reviled not again; when **He** suffered, threatened not; **but** committed **Himself** (**His** cause) to **Him** that judgeth righteously'. **His** works of wisdom and virtue are **emphasized as a** consequence in many parts of Job 31.

The question was submitted, 'Can there **be a** wisdom **not** from God?' In reply **we** were directed to **the** statement of **the** Lord **that** **the** sons of **this** age are for their own generation wiser than **the** sons of **the** light. Also **the** **wise** men who **came** from **the** east to **seek** **the** King went to **the** wrong place. 1 Cor. 2 **speaks** of man's wisdom in contrast to God's and wisdom, **that** **which** is natural **as well as** **that** **which** is spiritual.

H. Sands, E. B.

From Barrhead: James does not **seek** to discourage men from being teachers **but** **gives a** warning **that a** greater judgement **awaits** them. By **the** very nature of **the** office **the** teacher **will** talk more than most, and therefore there **is a** greater likelihood of stumbling in **the** matter of **speech**. **The** man who **has** learned to control **his** tongue **will** also **be** able to control **his** whole body. James **teaches** by **the** parabolic method how powerful **the** tongue is. Horses are **guided** by bridles, **ships** are steered by **small** rudders. **This** **small** member of our body can **be** **the** source of great devastation; a wood can **be** **set ablaze** by a **small** fire. **The** animal world **has** been **tamed** by man; **but** **the** tongue can no man tame.

Paul argues in Rom. 3 **that** **all** men are under sin and their **speech** is corrupt (see Ps. 5: 9). **The** tongue **is a** restless evil, and **with** **it** **we** **bless** God and curse men. **It** is incongruous for **the** born-again to **speak** in ways **which** are opposite to **each** other (3: 9-10). **The** Lord **taught** **that** **what** comes out of man's mouth **defiles** him (Mat. 15: 11), a man's words being indicative of **what** lies within. **The** evil cannot **speak** good things, whereas **the** good man brings out treasures (Mat. 12: 34-35). **The** lesson for **disciples** of Christ **is** to bring every thought into captivity to **the** obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10: 5), **because** before **we** **speak** **we** think.

Those who are **wise** and **perhaps** aspire to **be** teachers

should show by **their speech and** deportment **that they have** wisdom from above. Wordly wisdom **expresses itself** in bitter jealousy and faction. Heavenly wisdom is pure, **peaceable and** gentle. **Those** who possess it **have** an **equable nature** and not one of extremes. *L. de Ville*

COMMENTS

1. *(Hayes)*: In addition to **these** direct references to 'tongue', to which Prov. **28: 23** might **be added**, there **is a** formidable list of associated things - mouth, lips, whisperers, liars, counsels, speak, dissemble, etc.
2. *(Kingston)*: Vine says of **hell** (Gehenna) **here: The** word stands for **the** powers of darkness whose characteristics and destiny **are** those of hell'. I find this suggestion easier to understand than **the** fire of **hell** itself.
3. *(Methil)*: No man can control another man's tongue, is how **I read** this, **but we must** learn to control our own. **The** 'railer' was excommunicated in **1 Cor. 5: 11**.
4. *(Nottingham)*: **The** tongue as **'the world of** iniquity among our **members'** is descriptive of its frightening powers to destroy **all that** is good in living.
5. *(Nottingham)*: Does it not mean **the** lifetime of **a** man? **See Eccles. 12: 6** where among **the** descriptions of **death** is **'the wheel broken'**.
6. *(Nottingham)*: I think this earthly wisdom practised **greed**, selfishness, pride, falsehood for personal gain, **and** would **have** been unlikely to **be taught** openly.
7. *(Atherton and Leigh)*: Wisdom bridles **the** tongue so **that the** blessings follow. *A. B. R.*

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'One only **is the** Lawgiver and **the Judge**, even **He** who **is able** to save **and** to destroy' (4: 12).

This arresting sentence summarises **a central truth** which should condition believers' thoughts regarding **the** world, their brethren and their own service for Christ.

Our study in James illustrates **the** conditions in which many believers **have had** to live out **their** service in this world. They may **be subject** to injustice, oppression or even persecution, **but** their attitudes **are** balanced by confidence **that the Judge of all is aware** of **the** situation. **He** knows perfectly **all the** factors which may now **seem** so adversely to **affect** His people. Vengeance belongs to Him and **He will** recompense, for **He is able** to **save** and to destroy. So even **if** life is threatened, for **the sake** of testimony to Christ believers may defy **the** world (**Mat. 10: 28**). **If** suffering according to **the** will of God, they 'commit their souls **in** well-doing unto a faithful Creator' (**1 Pet. 4: 19**).

In relation to His brethren **the** disciple is reminded **that 'the Judge standeth before the doors'** (Jas. 5: 9). **He** will not **therefore** lightly **speak** against his brother, or **presume** to **judge the** motives **of** others (Mat. 7: 1). 'Judge nothing before **the time**, until **the** Lord come, who will both bring to light **the** hidden things of darkness, and **make** manifest **the** counsels of **the heart'** (**1 Cor. 4: 5**). **Yet where there** is transgression in **matters** about which **the** Lord **has** spoken, **there** is **a** responsibility to **speak** to **the** offender, and if needs **be** **judge** him (**Mat. 18: 15-17, 1 Cor. 6: 1-3**).

As to our own service for Christ, **a** realisation of His **place** **as** our Judge will encourage imitation of Paul's attitude: 'I know nothing against myself; yet **am I** not hereby justified: **but He that judgeth me is the Lord'** (**1 Cor. 4: 4**). **We shall** never **be** self-complacent about our service, **but** humbly await **His perfect** assessment in **that** day of its **value** to Him.

G. P.

KNOWING TO DO GOOD AND DOING IT NOT**(James 4: 1 - 5 : 6)**

From Derby: James presents an alarming **state** of carnality among **the believers** of **the twelve** tribes of **the** Dispersion. To some **he** writes, '**Ye lust, ye kill, and covet.** ' **These** are very strong indictments. '**Ye fight and war**'. **The lusts** of **the flesh** war against **the** soul. **This**, no doubt, **has** reference to **their** own individual souls, **but** they **seemed to be warring** among themselves. **These** could **be battles** of words **if** they **were living** as 'men of **the** world, whose portion **is** in **this** life' (Ps. 17: 14). **We** were reminded **there were** other means of causing **death** than by **the** use of **carnal** weapons. **Twice** the words 'your **pleasures**' occur. Many **were** worldly pleasures. James, **by the Spirit**, **calls** such adulteresses **in the sense** of such scriptures as Jer. 3. '**Friendship** of the world **is** enmity **with** God, Whosoever therefore would **be** a **friend** of the world **maketh** himself an enemy of God' (see also 1 John 2: 15, 16). **There** are many of God's children whose **ideas** of separation from **the** world and **its pleasures** are somewhat loose, **thus** causing **the Spirit** that **dwelleth** in **us** to 'long unto envying'. **The** Holy **Spirit** longs **that** **Christ** may **dwell** in our **hearts**, not **the** idols of **the** world - **its** pleasures. '**But He giveth** more **grace**', grace to **walk** more worthily, more humbly, more **subject** unto God. '**Draw** nigh to God, and **He will draw** nigh to you'.

In ch. 5: 1-6 **he** addresses **the rich** among **these** converted Jews, some of whom **have** not **altered** their ways, **which** **have** helped to **make** the nation of **Israel** an unpopular **race** of people (although **there** are those who are kind-hearted and generous) [Comment 1]. **The** Lord knew exactly **what** was being done, for **He** heard the cries of the defrauded labourers and **was** fully aware of the **distress** that was being caused to **them** and their families. In v. 2 James was inspired to include **the** word 'kill', and in v. 6 the words '**ye have killed**'. It was suggested that deep distress of mind and heart can lead to serious illness and **death**. Mowing and reaping **is** hard work at any **time** and **place**, especially in hot climates. Maybe **the** killing cited in v. 6 **has** other implications. **The** righteous one', possibly one who **was** bold enough to demonstrate against **the** fraudulent employers resulting in

blows being struck and murder being committed (this is of course only a suggestion). **It is stated, 'he doth not resist you' [Comment 2].**

S. Wymer, S. R. W.

From Edinburgh: In the first six verses of ch. 4 we can see the three enemies of the disciple, the flesh within, the world without and the great Adversary. The consequences of succumbing to these were killings and coveting (jealousy), and the chapter depicts 'wars and fightings' which have their origins in the lusts of the flesh. Comparison was made with the saints in Corinth (1 Cor. 3: 1-3) who were carnal and babes in Christ.

James addresses certain disciples of the Dispersion as adulteresses (v. 4). In Rev. 2: 4 we read that the Church of God in Ephesus had left its first love, for the saints had become unfaithful to the Lord and pursued earthly things. Such was the state of some to whom James wrote. They had left their 'first love', and by their affection for the enemies of God were committing spiritual adultery.

The statement in v. 17 brings us face to face with our responsibilities before the Lord. The closer we are to Him the more we become aware of the Spirit's power and guidance, therefore we shall see opportunities for doing good in our service to God and men. To do them not is sin.

L Burgoyne

From Hamilton (Ontario): Whether the 'you' (v. 1) were contentious persons known by the writer, or whether it was 'you' in general, the root cause was the same, failure to walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5: 16, 20). In some cases they lacked because they failed to ask; in other cases their asking had the wrong motivation, therefore they did not receive.

The disciple terminology of 'if the Lord will' is foreign to the world, which confidently plans its appointments, schedules, programmes and timetables, regardless that they may vapour-like vanish away.

Prevailing unjust social and business practices were to be shunned by Christian employers (5: 1-6) [see Comment 3 and Answer to Question 1].

Lack of application of the foregoing knowledge, James asserts, is sin (v. 17). The righteous God tries the hearts and reins' (Ps. 7: 9). **B. Archibald**

From Kingston-upon-Thames: The forthright guidance on practical matters, characterising **this epistle**, continues in **this section which deals with the disciples'** allegiance. Accordingly strong metaphors **are used** in vv. 1-2 to **illustrate the real problem of spiritual poverty that may result** from allowing **selfish desires** to override **a disciple spirit**. Such passions bring strife not blessing, and neither **is the latter to be obtained** by asking **the Lord** when **the intention** in so doing **is really to gain worldly comfort**. **The Lord's words in Mat. 6: 33 give clear direction**. So serious **is the matter that the term 'adulteresses' is used to describe** those who **defect to the world from lives of subjection to God**. **Scriptures such as Hos. 2: 19-20 and 2 Cor. 11: 2 may be applied here**. The envy and jealousy **which seem to be a cause of misplaced allegiance are not a work of the Holy Spirit**, for **He dwells within believers** (v. 5 and **1 Cor. 6: 19**) to **guide them** in ways of humility (**John 14: 26** and **Mat. 18: 4**).

The believer is entrusted with his measure of wealth as a 'stewardship' from God (1 Tim. 6: 17-19) and its misuse brings condemnation from James (5: 1-6). This passage is thus considered to have reference to the saved rather than the unsaved [Comment 3]. V. 6 presents a difficulty as to whether it speaks of the rich being in a bad spiritual condition or if it means in more general terms that the enjoyment of the rich was at the expense of the innocent poor so that the rich by their action effectively condemned to death those in want [see Answer to Question 1]. The latter explanation would seem to be in keeping with the teaching of the epistle as a whole that the believer has a responsibility to do good as an expression of his faith in God and allegiance to Him.

G. M. Hydon

From Lagos: **Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vineyards; for our vineyards are in blossom'** (Song of Songs 2: 15). The **'little foxes' in the life of the disciple in Churches of God are exposed in James 4: 1 - 5: 6. These are the enemies which may make fruitless the knowledge of the truth in the disciple and also make barren God's tilled land [Comment 4].**

The foremost of these foxes is Self (vv. 1-3). **Its deadly poisons are manifest in fightings and wars among brethren for whose sake Christ died. A physical fight is not necessarily**

intended. From **the heart will** come forth undisciplined thoughts, **anxieties, lack of peace and joy in the Lord**, murmurings, dissatisfaction and **lack** of assurance. Among God's **people this attitude of heart** can readily **lead** to lust for power and coveting of position.

Another of **these** foxes is **the world (vv. 4-5)**. By **the world** we mean **the order of things** resulting from satanic principles **and the spirit which** lures into disobedience **the hearts of** men and women.

One of **the more subtle of the foxes** mentioned in **the passage is the heart** unsundered to **Jesus Christ**. **This creates a barrier** to abundant Christian living. By abundant **life we refer to a life that** shines more and more unto **the perfect day** (Prov. 4: 18). One of **the ways it chokes the disciple's life is** by stirring **up pride** and thereby stopping **the supply of divine grace**. In vv. **13-17, is** pointed out **what** may go on in day-to-day life. **We may take vital decisions** without reference to God; **this expresses** independence.

The **path** to victory over **these foxes is** through humility before **the Lord**, subjection to **Him in all matters, that** God may **exalt** us in blessings (vv. 7-10).

S. Coker, E. Bassey

From Leeds: How **sad that such a** sorrowful condition should exist 'amongst you' (within **the** Assembly) and 'in your **members'** (within individuals), **as** to bring about **wars and fightings**. Personal squabbles and disputes leading to outbreaks of fighting amongst **the saints of God, are traced back to their** lusts (carnal **pleasures**) and **that they lusted** (longed, or yearned) **after** those lusts. **We need to be of that** lowly mind, **which was** also in **Christ Jesus** (Phil. 2: 1-5). May **it ever be** 'God working in **us**, both to **will** and to do, for **His good pleasure**': **that we** may do **all** things without murmurings and disputings (Phil. 2: 13-14).

We thought that Spirit (v. 5) refers to **the Holy Spirit** and not to **the human spirit**. **The Holy Spirit indwells all believers** (1 Cor. 6: 19) and **He** desires to **have us** completely for Himself. '**Our God is a jealous God**' (Ex. 20: 5; 34: 14). God's jealous love for **us** cannot brook our fraternisation **with the** world; God jealously yearns for **the** entire devotion of our **hearts**.

Garments **that are** in **regular use** do not become moth-eaten, and **likewise** gold and **silver** in **regular use** do not

become cankered or rusty. **Rust** is a symbol of disuse and destruction. The demon of greed **eats** into **the** very soul through **the** love of money. **We** may find gain of riches **here** in **this** present **time** **but** a sadness of loss in **the** future

H. R. Dodge, P. M. Jefferson

From Liverpool: James likens **the** conflict that exists between **the** old and new natures of **the** believer to **that** of a war involving fighting and killing. **It** seems hardly possible that **such** words can **be** true of one who **has** the Holy Spirit living within **him** and yet **the** Epistle is addressed to those who are not only **saved** **but** who **have** been committed as **disciples** of **the** Lord Jesus Christ. **Such** people **have** compromised **themselves**, no longer demonstrating **the** fruit of **the** Spirit **but** the works of **the** flesh (see Gal. 5: 17-24). To illustrate further **what** he is saying he **uses** the analogy of **the** unfaithful wife and **accuses** **them** of being adulteresses, and **thus** enemies of God. **This** illustration **was** used by God when speaking of **His** people Israel who frequently **failed** and disappointed **Him**. **These** were **the** ones who were not seeing positive results to their prayers because, **as** James reminds **them**, **their** requests were **selfish** and for **their** own **pleasures**. How **true** are the words of **the** Psalmist 'If I regard iniquity in my **heart**, **the** Lord **will** not **hear**' (Ps. 66: 18).

Some thought that **the** rich referred to in 5: 1 were those who **were** **the** employers of some in **the** assembly; not **members** of **the** church for it hardly **seemed** possible that **murderers** and **cheats** could **be** numbered among God's people. **Indeed** **such** action would **merit** a **severe** condemnation from James and a **call** to repent. **This** is not **the** case and most felt that vv. 1-6 represent a general statement of **fact** about **the** rich in **the** world. **There** were some however who **did** not **accept** **this** point of **view** and **were** of **the** opinion that **the** entire chapter was applicable to **saved** persons and demonstrates **the** evil potential of **the** human **heart** [see Answer to Question 1].

A Jones, M. S. Elliott

From Macduff: James is very **direct** and plain in **his** writing to those who do **what** they know to **be** wrong, or refrain from doing **what** they know to **be** right. Their waywardness **had** taken **them** through selfishness and friendship **with** **the** world to **such** extreme manifestations of **the** flesh as 'wars',

'fightings', 'killing', 'coveting'. James's readers **were** boastful and proud in their fleshly ways and **did not see that this** separated **them** from God's blessings and care. They **had** to learn to **be humble**, for God **gives** grace to **the humble**, and **if they resisted the Devil** they **were** promised **he** would **flee** from them. John says, 'Greater **is He** that is in you, than **he** that is in the world' (1 John 4: 4), and **this** shows **there is great** strength for **the Christian**. Having **resisted** and shown **their** humility and sincerity they could then **draw** near to God who would **draw** near to them. **It was their practices that** took **them** from God and they **must** cleanse **their** hands and **their heart**. **It is the** word of God **that** cleanses, and **Ps. 24** shows **that** God's worshippers **must have** clean hands and a **pure** heart. They **had** handled things **that defiled them**, and **the hearts** of **these** doubleminded Christians **had** not been **true** to God. **Shame at their state** and **grief at the offence** they **had caused** God should **have humbled them to tears** and mourning. **David said, 'A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise' (Ps. 51: 17).**

Some thought **ch. 5: 1-6** applied to **rich** brethren in **the church**, but others **felt this was** rhetorical and spoke of **rich** unbelievers who **had** oppressed poor saints, **as in ch. 2: 6-7** [see Answer to Question 1].

From Melbourne: **Strife** and contention among **the** people of God **are** produced by **the flesh, which is** always warring **with the Spirit**, and **is** ever seeking to gratify **itself** in one form or another. **The** carnal mind **is** enmity against God, and **peace** among brethren cannot **exist where it is** prominent. **The picture** presented to **us** appears to **be** one of disunity and **strife** brought about by an envy **which was** causing **each** to try **and** outdo **the other** in **the pursuit** and attainment of carnal pleasures. **The** asking of v. **3** appears to **have** been **the** asking from God in prayer **for** self-gratification. **The** condition of **these** saints to whom James **was** writing **was** one of **spiritual** adultery. They **had** been unfaithful to **the** One to whom they **had** been joined, who **had** bought **them** with **His** blood and brought **them** out of **the** world **where He** had been **rejected** and slain; they **had** been bought to serve **Him**; but they **had** broken **that which** in some **degree** corresponds to **the marriage** vow - their confession at **baptism** of their identification **with Christ**; **their death** and **burial**, and resurrection **with Him**, followed by addition to **a** people commit-

ted to allegiance to His **will**. The Holy Spirit who **dwelt** in **them** to **teach** of **the** things of Christ and by whom they **were sealed** unto **the** day of redemption, **had** been grieved **at the** spiritual condition manifest. This **was** enmity with God, for **He** 'yearneth for **us** even unto jealous envy' (RVM). **But** if **the** yearning of **the** Spirit leads to contrition of **heart** and repentance, resulting in humility **because** of **the deep** consciousness of sin committed, God will **then** give abundant **grace** to enable **a** return to **serve** Him from whom they **had** departed. Return to Him means subjection to Him and to His **revealed** will. **The grace** given will also enable **them** in humility to 'resist **the Devil**', and when **he** realises **that there** is now such resistance **he** will **flee** from them. *T. W. F.*

From Methil: All knowledge of **what** is good, **and** ability to do **what** is good **result** from allowing **the** Holy Spirit to **have** His way with us. **Lust** is **the** inordinate desire for any thing or person. **It** has to do with our affections, 'doing **the desires** of **the flesh** and of **the mind**' (Eph. 2: 3). This may **lead** to **that** of **which Israel** throughout their history **as a nation have** been guilty, namely spiritual adultery (cf. **Is. 1: 2-6, 15-17**). The natural man is governed by **lusts** and **pleasures**, even in his **best** desires, for even when **he** prays **it** is with **a** view to **what** will satisfy **himself**.

With **reference** to **vv. 11** and **12** **we** would **take** our stand with **James** and say, 'One only is Lawgiver and **Judge**'. **The Father... hath** given **all** judgement unto **the Son**' (John 5: 22). **Paul** too gives **us** warnings **as** to judging one another (Rom. 14: 10). Rather **we** should **be** exercised about saving our **brother**, if **he has erred**, and bringing him **back** from **the** error of **his** way.

The last paragraph of **ch. 4** reminds **us** of **the** scripture, 'Boast not thyself of tomorrow' (Prov. 27: 1). **We** often say **'If the Lord will'**, **but we** can say it very lightly. **It** involves really submitting to His **will**. **'He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever'** (1 John 2: 17). **What a contrast to the** 'vapour, **that appeareth for a little time**'. To bring **the Lord** and His will into our lives will give **a** permanence to **what we** do (1 Cor. 15: 58). Just **as the Lord has** carried **through the results** of His life into eternity and heaven, so **it will be** with us.

The expression 'Lord of Sabaoth' (Lord of Hosts) in v. 4 seems very significant in this context (cf. 2 Chron. 16: 9).

The righteous one' in v. 6 is not **the** Lord Jesus specifically (as in Acts 3: 14), **but** James is **here** referring to those who **had** laboured for **the** rich (v. 1) and for their labours **deserved** due wages.

A. McIlree (Senr.)

From Nottingham: The words **wars** and **fightings** might be translated 'factions' and 'quarrels'. The factions would arise from **the quarrels** between individuals and **have a** destroying effect upon an assembly. The apostle **draws** attention to **the** root **cause** of these conditions. **It is the pleasures that war** in our **members**. This word (Gk. *hedone*) is found in **three** other **places** in **the New Testament (Luke 8: 14; Titus 3: 3; 2 Pet. 2: 13)**. Vine expresses **the** meaning as '**the** gratification of **the** natural or sinful desire'. By nature men **serve** 'divers **lusts** and pleasures' (Titus 3: 3). **If we are** not on our **guard these take** over our whole being, crushing any desire to do **the** will of God or bring glory to God. These strivings and factions ought not to **be, but** it is important for us to distinguish between these and **the** necessary and legitimate striving in which **we** may **have** to engage for defence of **the** truth of God.

According to some authorities **the** R. V. of v. 11 is a more correct translation, **but** some **state the Greek verb** has the additional significance of speaking against one another in a derogatory manner [Comment 5]. This **seems to be the** sense in which one **was** judging another. Again, **we** need to **keep clear** in our understanding this type of judgement in which **we** should not engage, and **that** legitimate and necessary judgement which should **be** characteristic of **the** House of God (1 Pet. 4: 17). This **latter** is **the** discipline which must **be** seen in **the** Churches of God.

R. Hickling

From St. Helens: James's reference to, and condemnation of, **wars** and **fightings among you** was found difficult to understand. The Epistle, it would seem, **was** written **as a** circular **letter to the twelve** tribes scattered abroad, **as the** result of **war** in various kingdoms - Syria, Babylon, Egypt and others. Those to whom James wrote primarily, **were such as had embraced the** Faith [Comment 6]. **He** saw **the** need both of reproving **them** for their backsliding - knowing to do good and doing it not - and encouraging **them** to **humble** themselves in **the** sight of **the** Lord, **that He** might lift **them**

up. Also he addressed himself to the Jewish nation at large warning them and awakening them to a sense of the greatness and nearness of the judgements which were coming upon them (5: 1-6). History reveals the Jews to have been engaged in frequent wars with the Romans and also to have been a very quarrelsome, divided people, often fighting among themselves [see Comment 1 and Answer to Question 1]. Some thought that Christians, even failing Christians, would not have been involved in physical wars and fightings; and that the words spoken described a condition of heart, itself a sad enough state [Comment 7]. Howsoever it be, reminding them of 'fleshly lusts which war against the soul' James concludes, 'Ye have not because ye ask not'; then, 'Ye receive not, because ye ask amiss'. Our prevailing lusts - pleasure, riches, power, preeminence, often cause us to exclude prayer. We ask not, but follow our own views and inclinations, and are disappointed. At other times we ask, but only to please ourselves, and court refusal. Requests for anything whereby we may serve God, we may expect to be granted, or if denied, we will be given hearts to be content without it.

Covetousness, here called adultery [Comment 8], elsewhere idolatry (Col. 3: 5) is the giving of our best affections to the world and its offerings. It is enmity against God. 'But He giveth more grace'. The grace of God will correct and cure the spirit that naturally dwells in us. **J. H. R.**

From Swindon: The passage deals with four banes of the Christian-internal strife, malicious speech, self-ambition and wealth. It commences by exposing the root of much evil, self. We seek self-fulfilment not only by our own efforts but also in prayer. This self-centredness in both our secular and church life is unfaithful to God. As members of the Church the Body, or Bride we should not be unfaithful to our spouse [Comment 9]. The judgement expressed by God on Israel for her unfaithfulness during Hosea's day can also be known by us, although forgiveness is always possible. However, James follows this warning with his encouragement about how can we fight our internal war. His recipe for victory is wholly in character with his emphasis on active Christian behaviour: subjection, resisting, drawing near, cleansing, purifying and humility are all ingredients of Christian daily life.

The Lord's teaching about judging others (**Mat. 7: 2**) is also James's burden. James shows **judging to be a** three-fold sin. Firstly, it is malicious towards another person; it necessarily involves judgement of the law and, even worse, elevates a person to the position of God. God Himself is the one Lawgiver and none other.

James perceives ambition as not only self-oriented but as postponing until tomorrow the good works for today. The ambitious person lacks respect for God's power and influence in creation and His intervention in everyday life [Comment 10]. Our plans should be God-centred, not self-centred. The rich of ch. 5 will be those with the attitude described in 4: 13 and they may have gained their wealth by the unscrupulous business practices condemned by James in 5: 4.

P. Merchant

From Vancouver, British Columbia: James **appeals to the spiritual** knowledge of the intended **reader** by asking questions, some of **which he** answers **himself**, and some **he leaves to the reader**, the answer being very plain. Behind **the pen we see the heart of a true shepherd** guiding towards **better words and deeds**. James, under **the Great Shepherd**, refers to **the ways of God and His** reaction to **the ways and words of the believer**. **Whereas** James **3** finishes **with peace** from heaven, James **4** **reveals a** turmoil of **the flesh** and **its ways**. **This**, however, **is** not readily apparent **as a 'joy' of self gratification and 'laughter'** from jesting and vaunting tend to **hide the** condition. Envy, **pride**, scrambling for position, and covetousness **are all** abhorrent to God under whose **all-seeing eye we walk** (v. **10**, also Heb. **4: 13**).

Obedience to **the beautiful** words **'Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you'** results in **the light and warmth** of His presence radiating from **us as we keep** close to **Him** and under **His loving sight**.
H. McLeman

From Atherton and Leigh: The introductory **verses** of James **4** provide **a striking contrast with the** closing **verses** of **ch. 3**, from **the work of peacemakers to the strifes** and fightings taking **place in the churches** of God. **The** accusations **seem incredible**, and **the** outcome of **such** conduct **was** only to **be expected**. **Either** complete absence of prayer or asking **with evil intent prevailed**.

A further defection comes to light in the adulterous friendship with the world, whereas Paul's longing was that the church in Corinth should be an outstanding example to the rest as espoused to one husband, as a pure virgin to Christ (2 Cor. 11: 2). Their dual love for Christ and for the world is viewed as an adulterous association, even as Israel's defection is strongly condemned in Jer. 3 and Hos. 2. There was obviously a very deep yearning on the part of the Holy Spirit for the entire and sole possession of their heart's allegiance to Christ.

The personality of the Devil is clearly indicated in v. 7, and as 'the prince of this world' he is revealed as the instigator of the temptations that arise therefrom. No amount of resistance against such a powerful adversary can be achieved apart from subjection and communion with God. Paul emphasizes that 'holy hands' are among the conditions of acceptance with God (1 Tim. 2: 8); David also speaks of 'clean hands, and a pure heart' (Ps. 24: 3-4). Because their condition was so different from this, James demands that God's people should be 'afflicted', literally 'be wretched'; a similar state is revealed in the church in Laodicea (see Rev. 3: 17). The outcome of Israel's fleshly desires in the matter of Baal-peor was seen in the weeping 'of all the congregation ... at the door of the tent of meeting' (Num. 25: 5-6).

An abrupt change is noticeable at v. 11 with a reintroduction of the restless evil, the tongue. Its misuse is seen in the breach of the 'royal law' by the presumptuous judgement of a brother in the church. In v. 13 we are directed to presumptuous confidence in one's own future; and again the words of the wise man are very apt 'A fool also multiplieth words: yet man knoweth not what shall be; and that which shall be after him, who can tell him?' (Eccles. 10: 14). *E. B.*

From Barrhead: Vv. 1-4 warn against wars and the friendship of the world, and seem to be a continuation from the previous chapter. While we understood the unbridled nature of the will, of the mind and of the flesh to be personal and individual, nevertheless such evil principles and practices intrude and affect the assembly. The nature of man is full of envy in regard to others. There is a wonderful counteracting power if disciples are content to be humble, as nothing in this world.

Vv. 6-10 warn against **pride and impurity**. **Pride is sponsored by the Devil**; hence **the exhortation to resist the Devil**, and **he will flee** from you. Then **James unfolds the action of a soul directed by the Spirit of God in a wicked and ruthless world of unbelievers**. Vv. 11-12 **give simple direction for our behaviour**. **There seems to be a dual effect**, if guilty of this action: not only judging our brother by speaking **evil of him**, but also breaking **the law**, and thus offending **the Lawgiver** who is able to **save** and to **destroy**.
Wm. Fullarton

From Birkenhead: James, here writing to **believers**, uses strong language to **emphasize the tremendous spiritual harm that can be wrought by giving way to our old nature which can work mightily in our members**. Asking from **the wrong motives causes the Lord to withhold our requests**. According to Ps. 66: 18 **prayer will go unanswered if there is iniquity in the heart**. Those who **seek things as of right will be frustrated**, but to the **humble grace is given as we are subject to God and His will**. It is **vital in spiritual conflict to resist the Devil who is ever active**, seeking to devour (see 1 Pet. 5: 8; Eph. 6: 11, 16). Sustained resistance **leads him to retire defeated as in his meeting with Job and with the Lord Himself**. We will know **the Lord near us in times of trial in the measure in which we draw near to Him**. To **sum up, James in vv. 8-10 stresses the necessity of humility if we are to know the exaltation by the Lord**.

Riches and possessions can be a great hazard in the Christian's life and the fact that these will pass away is stressed. That they may **have been amassed at the expense of those who labour does not escape the eye of the Lord of Sabaoth (Lord of Hosts)**. **He is able to correct the injustices of the present and His almighty hand will work in His own time**.
B. M. Turner, R. D. Williams

COMMENTS

1. (*Derby*): I have difficulty in restricting 'the rich' of this passage to Jewish people. James was writing to Jewish **believers of the Dispersion** (i. e. belonging to Jewish communities in various **parts of the Roman Empire, dispersed from their national centre in Israel**). It was perhaps more

likely that they would **be subject to exploitation** by the rich of the Gentile countries in **which they were a minority group**, than by **the rich** of their own fraternity.

2. (*Derby*): This would **be a feasible result** of the effects of economic exploitation. 'One' is in **italics** in our **Bible**, suggesting **the possibility that many died through this oppression - it was 'a day of slaughter'** (v. 5). 'He doth not **resist you'** (v. 6) may **be regarded as personifying the general attitude of the victims who died.**

3. (*Kingston*): 1 Tim. 6: 17-19 seems to **me** an inadequate **basis for the deduction that Jas. 5: 1-6 refers to believers.** It is one thing for a **believer to fail to apply his riches as God would wish, but quite a different matter** positively to exploit others in **the evil way** described. Would not any guilty of **such a degree of evil have been put away from among the Lord's people?**

4. (*Lagos*): **We have retained the interesting presentation from the metaphor of Song of Songs 2: 15, but would point out that the sins denounced by James hardly answer to 'little foxes'. Our friends' paper shows that they clearly appreciate the enormity of the sins denounced in our chapter. The 'little foxes' are usually thought of as relatively small matters that nevertheless mar the fruitfulness of personal and assembly experience.**

5. (*Nottingham*): This is a **useful observation.** The verb **katalaleo** is formed from **kata**, against, and **laleo**, to speak. It is consistently translated **'speak against'** in the R. V. The words translated **'backbiter' (katalalos)** and **'backbiting' (katatalia)** are derived from **katalaleo.**

6. (*St. Helens*): **See Comment 3 of January Issue and Comment 1 above regarding the Dispersion. It should be clear that the Epistle was addressed to disciples together in fulfilment of the Faith in churches of God.**

7. (*St. Helens*): Most contributors **regard the 'wars and fightings' of 4: 1 as non-physical. This would be supported by the expression, 'Ye kill' in v. 2, for any guilty of literal**

murder would **have** been excommunicated, **and such** scriptures as **1 Cor. 8: 11** confirm **that it can be figuratively** understood. Some physical expression of **evil temper** may not be entirely **precluded** (cf. 'no striker' - **1 Tim. 3: 3**), **but the 'strife of tongues'** (Ps. 31: 20) **seems to be** mainly in view.

8. (*St. Helens*): **Is it not friendship with the world that is here described as adulterous?**

9. (*Swindon*): When worldly-minded **disciples are described as adulterous it is not their relationship with Christ as members of the Church the Body which is in view, for that relationship is unaffected by present failure. It is in our relationship to Him as disciples pledged to His will that the metaphor is used - spiritual adultery results from unfaithfulness to divine principle and wrong association with the world from which the disciple is required to be separate. See Melbourne paper, and also reference to 2 Cor. 11: 2 in Atherton and Leigh paper.**

10. (*Swindon*): **Ambition is of course commendable if God-directed (2 Cor. 5: 9 RVM). G.P.**

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. *From Liverpool*: **Who are the rich of 5: 1 ?**

Contributors **have** proposed widely differing explanations of **the first paragraph** of ch. 5. **The salient point is whether 'the rich' (5: 1) refers to disciples among the Lord's people, or is a general term referring to men of the world who were at that time oppressing the poor. Would men of the world be addressed in this way in a letter written to believers in churches of God? I think this may well be, because the Epistle has a Jewish emphasis and this pattern of rhetorical address would be familiar to the Jewish mind, as illustrated by frequent examples in the Old Testament (e. g. Is. 47: 1-15; Jer. 48: 18-19). Moreover James 2: 6, 7 refers to the rich as oppressors and blasphemers, and shows that believers were widely victimised by the ungodly rich**

at that time. I suggest also that the 'brethren' of vv. 7, 9, 10 are in contra-distinction to the rich of the previous paragraph. Against a background of injustice the disciples are exhorted to patience in the light of the Lord's coming and its associated compensations.

2. From Liverpool: What is the 'day of slaughter'? (5: 5).

The time in which James was writing was a 'day of slaughter' because oppression was causing the death of many of the exploited poor. The privileged rich were living delicately, taking their pleasure and nourishing their hearts, insensible to the plight of those who suffered.

3. From Barrhead: Does 'the Spirit' of 4: 5 refer to the Holy Spirit or to the human spirit?

I share the view of most contributors that the Holy Spirit is referred to in this verse. It seems to me also that the question calls for an affirmative answer, i. e. the Holy Spirit does long unto envying, longing so intensely for our spiritual dedication that He feels a 'jealous envy' if our affections are attracted by the world and its things.

G. P.

BIBLE STUDIES

'A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11)'

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EDITORIAL

The recurring themes of endurance and prayer are again dealt with in this month's study portion and illustrations are drawn from the lives of Job and Elijah.

Job's endurance or patience has become proverbial and his experience sheds light on one facet of the great mystery of human suffering. Sickness and suffering are not always the result of wrongdoing; God may have various purposes to fulfil when He permits one of His own to be afflicted, but He always has the ultimate blessing of that person in view and the good of others also. Job emerged from his trial a better man with a deeper knowledge of God and of His ways (see Job 23: 10; 42: 1-6), and countless others have been comforted and helped by the inspired record of Job's experience.

Elijah's fervent prayer in the circumstances cited was effectual because it was according to the will of God and Elijah knew he had the mind of God on the matter. There were other occasions when Elijah prayed and his request was not granted because it was not in alignment with God's will (1 Kin. 19: 4).

We trust that contributors have been helped by the study of the Epistle of James, and will continue together to study John's Epistles.

J. K. D. J.

FEATURES OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER AND TESTIMONY

(James 5: 7-20)

From Hamilton (Ontario): In this chapter James presents to us four major features of Christian character that should be evident in all of us. These are patience until the coming of the Lord, control over our tongues, faith-filled prayers and finally, but not of less importance, love one for the other.

We are exhorted to be long suffering, whether it be in expectation or in endurance. It is necessary to tolerate the sin of this world with patience while, at the same time, quietly looking forward to that moment when we shall sin no more. Without murmuring we must brace ourselves to endure all that comes between the present and the time

when **we shall be with the** Lord. When wronged, **as** Christians, **we** should not complain **but** rather turn **the** other cheek. The good husbandman, after planting **the seed**, **waited** patiently and without complaint for **the** early and **latter** rain-fall before **he was able** to rejoice in **the** fruits of a good harvest.

James returns, in **this the** conclusion of **his letter**, to **what he perhaps** considered **the** Christian's greatest problem, **the sinful tongue**. **The** tongue of **the** suffering Christian should **be** directed in prayer unto **the** Father and **that** of **the** cheerful Christian to **the** singing of praise unto God (**v. 13**).

Prayer **is the** remedy for **the** Christian who may **be** low of heart or in **a** sorrowful **state** of mind. **The** prayer **is** not necessarily for **the** removal of **a trial** **but** for **the** increasing of **faith** and **the** lifting **up** of **a** down-trodden **spirit**. **V. 13** could apply to **a** person who **came** in prayer before God **with this** burden and having **had his request** answered **was glad** and **able** to sing **praises** unto **the** Lord. [**This is** possible, **but** primarily **it is** an exhortation to **the** suffering and to **the cheerful** as you note in **the** previous **para.** — **Eds.**].

Regardless of **whether the** anointing of oil upon one who **was ill** **was** simply in reference to **the accepted** medicinal remedy of **the** day [**see** Comment 7] or **whether it had a spiritual** significance, one characteristic of **the** Christian stands out and **that is the** healing power in **the** prayers of a righteous or God-fearing man. **If we** are to **be healed** physically, then **we must first** examine ourselves and confess our sin **that** through Christ **we** may **first be healed** spiritually [**Comment 1**].

Ron E. Thomas

From Kingston-upon-Thames: **The** coming of **the** Lord was 'at hand' when **James** wrote and **is still** 'at hand'. **This is because the time-scale** inferred by **this** expression **is** not **that** of days or years **as** men count time. **It is the time-scale calibrated** by **the** occurrence of prophetic events **revealed** in **the Scriptures**, and in **that time-scale the** coming of **the** Lord **is the** next event. **James** **applies the** illustration of **the** husbandman to disciples. **The** blessings associated **with the** early and **latter** rains **are** pointedly seasonal (**Deut. 11**) and depend on obedience to **the** commandments of **the** Lord. Therefore **the** continuous obedience to **the Faith** (**the** commandments of **the** Lord Jesus Christ) brings periodic

rather than instantaneous or continuous blessing. **But the** periodicity is associated with **the** coming of **the** Lord **as well as the** present and, in a dispensational sense, **the** fruit of early and latter rains may **be** seen in **the** construction, by obedience to **the** Faith, of **churches** of God in **the** early and **(we think)** latter periods of this dispensation [Comment 13].

The final **paragraph** of **the** book **appears** to **relate** to **the** earlier sections by drawing together **the** principal **themes** and presenting **them** not in **abstract** form **but** in a manner absolutely typical of James, **as a** series of case histories narrated in plain blunt terms. **The** **themes** **are** **the** role of works done by faith in obedience to **the** Faith and their seasonal productivity demonstrated by **the** correct **use** of **the** tongue. **The** case-histories **appear** to **be** arranged in declining order of strength of faith.

Thus suffering is to produce prayer **but** requires **greater** strength to endure than does **cheerfulness** which is to produce praise. **Here** is seen **the** proper **use** of **the** tongue in bringing forth good works **after** a period of silence and barrenness. The sick, however, is so **weak**, **that he** cannot pray for himself [Comment 14]. Instead **he** **uses** his tongue to **call** **the** shepherds. So **the** sickness produces **the** good works **as the** shepherds **keep the** royal law in a manner very reminiscent of **the** Good Samaritan. **He** who **has erred** from **the** truth **is** in **the** worst **case** of **all**. In going astray from **the** Faith **he** **has** forsaken **the** plan of his daily salvation. Not only is **he** incapable of producing good works **but he** may even **be** promoting wrong things. **But** even such sterility may bring forth good works **as the** restorer may show in his skilful **use** of his tongue in restoring **the** sinning saint. **These** **examples** show **the** various **themes** developed by James to **be** interwoven complexly in everyday life and contrariwise show **us** **that the** complexities of daily life **have** been analysed for **us** by God and presented to **us** singly so **that we** may easily understand them. In this Faith **we** **have** a skilfully constructed 'blue-print' for our daily living.

[This thought-provoking presentation is **left** undisturbed, although some may **feel that the** proposed relationship between two principal themes and various '**case** histories' may not necessarily **have** been in James' mind. — *Eds.*]

Ian E. Penn

From Lagos: We believe that **James 5: 12** is a reiteration of the principle which the Lord laid down in commandment (Mat. 5: 34) and it embraces matters of oath, legal or otherwise. Our character as Christians should be distinguished in this matter [Comment 2],

We suggest that the key to understanding **James 5: 14-15, 17-18** is given in **James 5: 15**, 'And the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick'. Praying and anointing with oil in the name of the Lord envisages a miraculous manifestation. The elders of a church of God who are engaged in this work must be able to discern the will of the Lord in the matter. **Elijah is set forth as an example** of a man of God who in his day prayed prayers of faith. [Knowing previously the will of God — see Editorial].

Taking the **Epistle** of James as a whole we are left with the impression that there was sadly missing among them the spirit of unfeigned love of the brethren (**2: 1-26**); there was a lack of self-control which gave room to strife and faction (**3: 1-18**); they provoked the Spirit of God who abode among them by compromising with worldly standards (**4: 1-10**) and their masters in business life robbed their brethren to satisfy their cravings for riches and position in this life (**5: 1-6**) [see last month's study for discussion as to whether these masters were in fact disciples]. Because of these things many of the saints must have suffered the judgement of God as revealed in **1 Cor. 11: 27-32**.

In the light of the sins and subsequent suffering of divine judgement, may we not view **James 5: 14-15** as a special case where God was extending mercy to the suffering saint and in the presence of the elders of the church of God to which he belonged, testifying to His mercy and grace in a miraculous way with the intention of reviving His testimony among them? [Comment 3]. It should be borne in mind that no scripture exists to support the fact that elders of a church of God are vested with miraculous power of healing. Attention was drawn to **James 5: 19-20** where the Holy Spirit enlisted spiritually minded brethren other than the elders of the Churches to seek the conversion of their erring brethren [Comment 4], God was working to revive His work in that day.

S. Coker, E. Bassey

From Leeds: Six times in this brief passage reference is

made to patience (long suffering) and endurance. [Students **will be** interested to consider **the** significance of two different Greek words **used** in **the** passage - *makrothumeo* (to **be** long-tempered) **vv. 7, 8, 10**; and *hupomeno* (to **abide** under) **twice** in v. 11. — *Eds. J.* These believers, brought together in **the** early churches of God, **lived** in **difficult** days. **Beset with** many problems and persecutions they would **have** to **seek** their solutions amongst **themselves** and so often **the** outlook would **be** dark and gloomy. **James** directed their thoughts to **the** coming (presence) of **the** Lord, **that** **blessed** hope **which** illumines **all** patient hearts.

James concludes **his** **Epistle** by reminding **the** saints about prayer. **Alas**, sin **is** often a **cause** of sickness (1 Cor. 11: 26-30) **but** the prayer of **faith** can **save** both from sickness and from sin. 'Whatsoever **we** **ask**, **we** **receive** of **Him** **because** **we** **keep** **His** commandments, and do **the** things that are pleasing in **His** sight' (1 John 3: 22), **but** 'if **we** **ask** **amiss**, **we** **receive** not' (James 4: 3).

We **did** not consider **the** **sick** (one) in v. 14 to **be** a **special** isolated **case**, **but** **rather** **that** **this** **is** a generalisation as in v. 13 'any (one) among you' (many), and **that** **James** **was** recalling **his** own sending forth **with** the power (*exousia* - authority, **privilege**) given to **the** apostles by **the** Lord (Mark 6: 7, 12, 13) to anoint **with** oil many **that** **were** **sick** [Comment 5]. **This** apostolic power **is** not evidenced today. **It** **was** not **their** own power (*dunamis* - ability, power - Acts 3: 12) **but** **that** given through **them** by **the** Lord according to **His** own will (Heb. 2: 4).

Elijah, the example of a man praying **the** prayer of **faith**, **himself** **had** **faith** in prayer. **He** **was** a man who stood before **the** Lord (1 Kings 17: 1) and who stood for **the** Lord. God spoke to **him**, revealing **His** divine will, and **Elijah** **acted** upon it in faith. **His** prayers **were** offered effectually in **the** knowledge of God's will.

H. R. Dodge

From Liverpool: God **has** a purpose in allowing **His** own to **suffer**, for **these** experiences **build** **up** **character** and **teach** **the** individual **the** greatness of God, and so **draw** **out** **the** **qualities** of patience and endurance. **Job** **is** **cited** as one who endured and acknowledged God's **right** not only to **give** **but** to **take** away: **The** Lord **gave**, and **the** Lord **hath** taken away; **blessed** **be** **the** name of **the** Lord. In **all** **this** **Job** **sinned** not, nor **charged** God **with** foolishness' (Job 1: 21, 22). Not even

the advice of his wife to 'renounce God, and die' (Job 2: 9) caused him to deviate from or deny the implicit faith he had placed in God. His patience was well rewarded for 'the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before' (Job 42: 10).

Those that recognise the over-ruling of God in their lives will not murmur. Truly 'godliness with contentment is great gain' (1 Tim. 6: 6). The Lord could say 'By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another' (John 13: 35). Whatever trial or suffering we may be experiencing, we not only have a faithful High Priest who has been tempted in all points like as we (see Heb. 4: 15), but as James reminds them (5: 11) 'the Lord is full of pity, and merciful.'

For the Christian it should be especially true that a man's word is his bond. The taking of an oath is specifically forbidden for the Christian even though it was permitted under the law of Moses. Jephthah learnt the seriousness of making a vow before the Lord and the irrevocable consequences of such an oath (Judges 11: 29-40). [Jephthah vowed a vow, which is different from taking an oath — Eds.]. Those who would be obedient to the word of God must affirm and not take the oath when giving evidence in a court of law. [Comment 2].

Prevailing prayer should be an important feature of the Christian life. Elijah prayed and his requests were answered, and so we should look to God to work mightily on our behalf. Difficulty arises over the interpretation of the words, 'the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick* (5: 15). The majority view was that the elders were also apostles and therefore able to know God's mind on the matter prior to the anointing being completed. [Comment 6]. If this is so we wondered why it was also necessary to anoint with oil as it was already known that healing was to take place [Comment 7].

The alternative view is that the scripture is still applicable today, and that if the elders both pray and anoint the sick person, healing will occur. The scripture is quite definite in stating that the Lord shall raise him up. As this has not proved to be the case today, it was suggested that this was one of the miraculous manifestations appropriate to the start of the new dispensation. The only other reference to anointing with oil is Mark 6: 13 where the disciples were given specific power by the Lord to perform such miracles. It seems

that not even the elders of the early churches were able to exercise the gift, for Epaphroditus and Timothy were both sick men who would have benefited from the use of the gift and yet this was not done [Comment 15]. We concluded that this scripture has no direct application for today. [Comment 8].

G. Seddon, M. S. Elliott

From Macduff: The coming of the Lord certainly is at hand in these last and closing days of this age and James exhorts the saints to be patient until the coming of the Lord. The early and latter rain referred to in this chapter is also referred to in Joel 2: 23, 24 [see Comment 13]. Murmuring one against the other is a serious matter in the Lord's eyes because judgement awaits murmurers. The Lord Himself spoke of this judgement when he said, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged for with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged (Mat. 7: 1-2) and Rom. 14: 13 says 'Let us not therefore judge one another'.

In Mat. 5: 10-12 the Lord Himself calls them blessed who are persecuted for His Name's sake and assures them of a great reward in heaven.

Job was a man of great faith. He lost all that he possessed yet in his affliction he could say, 'Though he slay me, yet will I wait for Him' (Job 13: 15). In Job 42: 12 we read that the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning and he became a very rich man.

The anointing of a sick person with oil was a custom used in hot countries to soothe the patient and is not symbolic. The prayer of faith would be the (healing) power if the man had sinned as we see in v. 16 of this chapter. V. 19, we felt referred not to the actual salvation of a man but to a brother being able to set a wayward brother back to the correct path.

Colin Chichen

From Melbourne: Patience is a grace which should be characteristic of those who claim to be followers of the Lord. If they have learned of Him in whom during His earthly days patience was so manifest, there will be the desire to acquire it while awaiting His return. The patience of the husbandman is used as an illustration. After he has sown the precious seed in prepared soil he watches expectantly the apparently barren earth where the grain lies buried. To

the untrained eye **it** may appear to **be** precious grain lost for ever, **but the** husbandman, knowing **the** natural process of growth, **has** learned to wait in patience for **the** early and latter rains, and then **the** ripening harvest.

In v. 12 there is **the** injunction to 'swear not'. **The** untruthfulness of **the** human tongue **has** brought about **the** necessity for human oaths. Instead of truthfulness simply manifested in affirmative or negative statements, human oaths **have** been considered necessary in an **attempt** to compel man, through **the fear** of **future** retribution for falsehood, to **speak** truthfully. With **a disciple** of **the** Lord, **such** an **additive** should not **be** necessary, yea and nay **must be** sufficient.

In v. 13 **we have the** antidote for suffering. **It** is prayer which lays before **the** all-sufficient One **the** sorrows of **the** human heart. **If there** is cheerfulness, **the** outlet is found in **psalms**, hymns, and spiritual songs. In vv. 14, 15, **we judge that there** is **a** special application to apostolic days. **We** would **have a** difficulty in carrying out this injunction today. The prayers of **the elders** of **a church** of God should **at** any time **be** earnest and sincere for those who **are sick**; **but the** issue is governed by **the** condition, '**If we ask** anything according to His will, **He heareth us**'. **We** know **that there are** times when it may not **be** His will to **heal** and raise **up**. Unless **we are** certain, then our prayers for recovery of **the sick must be subject** to His will.

Confession is enjoined in v. 16. **It** is **a** humbling thing for saints to confess their **faults** one to another. **It** may not **be** possible to do **this** to every saint of God, **but** for those who **walk** together in **the** light **as He** is in **the** light, it can **be a** profitable exercise, and **begets mutual** prayer for one another.

In vv. 19, 20 **there** is **a** reference to **a** saint who **errs** from **the** ways of **the** Lord. **If he** continues in **the** ways of error, **he has** developed into **a** condition of spiritual **death**. Those who discern **such a** condition in **a** saint, should **through** prayer **and the** correcting application of **the** Word of **the** Lord **seek** to restore **such a** one to spiritual **health** and interest in **the** things of **the** Lord. **If there** is **a** response, it will **be to the** glory of God, resulting in **the** repentant saint having **the** experience of an out-resurrection from among **dead** ones. **Thus such a** saint will **be saved** from **death**, and **a** multitude of sins, both those which **he had** committed in **the** days of his **departure** from **the** Lord, and those which **he**

would yet commit **while** continuing in **that state of death, will be covered.**
D. M., T. W. F.

From Methil: James gives instruction on many subjects, all important for Christian living. In ch. 5 he emphasises the necessity for patience and for prayer. He uses the illustration of the farmer, who having sown his crop in the earth, then patiently waits until it receives all the necessary treatments to grow and bear fruit. The farmer sows and then waits. God gives the rain and God gives the increase. The farmer patiently waits in faith. So also we should wait for the coming again of the Lord Jesus for us. His coming is at hand; it is near, and it will be soon. We wait for Him, believing that at any moment His promise of John 14 will be fulfilled.

James takes up the teaching of the Lord (Mat. 5: 34), 'Swear not at all'. Our word should be our bond and that should be sufficient. Nothing happens by chance. If any are in trouble (suffering) they should pray, and if they are flourishing they should sing praises to God. Both conditions lead to communion with God. Suffering can come as a result of faithful testimony (2 Tim. 2: 9, 2 Tim. 4: 5, 1 Pet. 2: 18, Acts 16: 25, 1 Thess. 1: 6).

In our discussion a view was expressed that the sick one in v. 15 is different from the sick one in v. 14. V. 14 is related to normal disease while v. 15 refers to mental troubles with extreme fatigue and depression (Heb. 12: 3, Rev. 2: 3) [Comment 9].

The sick person is prayed over and anointed with oil and if the illness is of the second kind they will be healed, by the prayer of faith. If this is the case, should this be done today? [Comment 10, see also Comment 8]. Some thought that the passage refers to early days of miracles, while others are not satisfied by the above views and are still seeking a correct understanding. Elijah was a man like us, but his earnest prayer brought definite results, clearly showing the tremendous power that is made available through the prayers of righteous ones.
Neville Coomer

From Swindon: Our patience should be like that of the husbandman. As he waits for nature to take its course, the early rain germinates the seed and the latter rain helps it to maturity. We need to 'stand firm to the end' despite times of famine. The outcome of patience will be a spirit of cheer-

fulness and overcoming of **the** sin of murmuring.

The end for us in this life will be the coming of the Lord. While encouraging us James seems to have in mind the judgement-seat of Christ. The association of the return with judgement bears out the same thought as Rev. 22: 12 that when He comes His reward will be with Him. The Judge must be the Son for John 5: 22 says, The Father... hath given all judgement unto the Son'. The prophets endured despite suffering and often having to stand alone. Job's patience is seen in the light of the purpose of the Lord. His faith endured patiently despite all problems. Job could say, 'He knoweth the way that I take; when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold'. We saw that the trial, gold and fire were linked in 1 Pet. 1: 7 with the coming of the Lord.

Healing **is** dependent on **the** prayer of faith. Discernment should **be** shown **as to the will of the Lord** and whether there **might be** unconfessed sin. **The latter seems to be that of Mat. 5: 23, 24.** [Problems between **disciples** may **be** included, **but** may not other sins also **call** for confession? — *Eds. J.*]

V. 20 of the passage was seen by some to refer to the salvation of unbelievers in view of 'sinners' and 'saving a soul from death'. Others saw the death as spiritual and by believers [Comment 11].
Adrian Gray

From Barrhead: Patience **is** a sense of affliction without murmuring, of injustice without revenge. **It is the** duty of disciples of Christ to **be** patient under sufferings, though **these be** long and sharp. **It is easier** in a **calm** condition to **have** patience, than to exercise **it** in **time** of trial. By contrast **the** ungodly **are** not patient, **but will** drown their sorrows in **the** pleasures of **the** world. Patience **is the** submission of **the** whole soul to **the will** of God.

The prophets who spake in the name of the Lord were God's ministers and authorised to speak to the people in His stead, and specially gifted by His Spirit. Though they spake by divine inspiration and were God's mouthpiece, yet they could not escape but were molested in the world, even to cruel death for the faithful discharge of their message. In Heb. 12: 1 the 'cloud of witnesses' **is** an allusion to **the** pillar of cloud **that guided the** Israelites [Comment 16]. Having **such a** cloud of witnesses **as an example** of patient suffering, **we** may travel to heaven more cheerfully.

Regarding v. 12 **we** noted **that** God **is** jealous of **His** Name.

God's **Name ought to be held** sacred, and every thought or mention of **it should be with** reverence. **The Jews held** God's name in reverence and would not pronounce Jehovah when reading **the law but** read Adonai. **Oaths** are not always wrong. Paul says in Rom. 1: 9 'For God **is** my witness', and in Rom. 9: 1, 'I say **the** truth, in Christ, I **lie** not'. **See** also 2 Cor. 1: 23, '**But I call** God for a witness upon my soul'. Our conversation should **be constant at all** times; our word should **be** equivalent to an oath. When **we** say yes, **it is** yes, when no, **it is** no.

We judge that the illness in v. 13 is probably not a physical illness, **but** rather mental [Comments 12 and 17]. Vv. 13-16 may **be** taken together. Owing to certain circumstances, real or imaginary, one could **be** out of fellowship **with** God. Under such a strain, a saint may unwittingly sin [Comment 18]. **Such** illness required **the** prayer of **faith** and **the** anointing oil (only a symbol) [A symbol of **what?** — *Eds. J.* Oil has no saving or healing power: only **the** prayer of **faith** can **heal**. **Faults** and grievances should **be** brought out into **the** open (**see** v. 16 and cf. Mat. 5: 24). God **will accept** no **service** or worship **at** our **hands** until **we** have confessed **the** wrong done to others.

J. McPherson

From Birkenhead: For those experiencing oppression James has written words of encouragement to **wait** for **the** Lord to work, whose coming **is** drawing near. **The** imminence of **that time is** not conveyed **here**. [It seems difficult to **accept** that 'at hand' in **this** context does not imply imminence - cf. suggestion in Kingston Paper — *Eds. J.* In **times** of trial the inclination to murmur may increase, **but** the warning comes **that the** Lord **hears** all. The **example** of **the** experience of Job **acts** as a **spur**, as the outcome of **his** trials was **that he received** double **that which he** lost (Job 42: 10), as well as being spiritually strengthened.

In dealing **with the matter** of sickness and healing, certain points may **be** noted, although variations may **exist** on **the finer detail**. 'Sick' may **be here** rendered 'weak' and reference was made to Rev. 2: 3, John 5, and 1 Cor. 11: 30 to confirm this view. **There are** many illnesses **which** may **disappear** or **be** greatly **relieved** through a changed mental outlook. It is possible **that the** confession of sin (v. 16) and **the relief** it brings **will help** in **this** way. **We** proposed **that to use the** passage to support **the** healing of organic sickness **was** not

reasonable [Comments 12 and 17] and yet questionings arose **as** to whether **the** fervent prayers of **Elijah** influenced **the** events of 1 Kings 17. **If this is** so, then does **it suggest that we** should pray **likewise**, nothing doubting? **The** need to **be** in tune **with** God's **will** in our prayers **is** another important consideration [Comment 10]. **It was** also noted **that the sick person was the** initiator in **the** matter. Mark 6: 13 **was used** to confirm **the use** of **the** oil on **these** occasions.

Finally **James** indicated **the** good work done by one converting an erring brother. **That** brother **will be saved** from spiritual **death** and prevented from many **further** sins **which** would otherwise **have been** committed

B. M. Turner, R. D. Williams

From Derby: **The Epistle** of **James** may **be the earliest** of **the** inspired writings touching upon **the** important **subject** of **the** Second Advent. **The** Lord promised, 'If I go . . . , I come again' (John 14: 3). **His** apparent delay may **be** likened to **the** husbandman who **waiteth** for **the** precious **fruit** of **the** **earth**, being patient over it. **The** Lord **is** not **slack** concerning **His** promise **but is** longsuffering' (2 Pet. 3: 9). **The** coming of **the** Lord **is at hand**' (v. 8). **The** Judge standeth before **the** doors' (v. 9). '**We must all be made** manifest before **the** judgement-seat of **Christ**' (2 Cor. 5: 10).

Murmuring **is** not becoming in **disciples** of **the** Lord. **We** **have a sure** hope. **Israel** in **the** wilderness **were** often murmuring, **but this gave** God no pleasure. **The** prophets **were** a good **example** of patience under suffering. Jeremiah, for instance, **suffered** for speaking in **the** **Name** of **the** Lord. Job **is** also **cited**, not only **because** of **his great** physical sufferings, **but** also through **the** provocations of **his three** 'friends', who **were** not **as** kind **as** they should **have** been, **but aggravated** **his** mental sufferings by **false** accusations. **The** greatest **example** of endurance of **this** treatment **was that** endured by our **blessed** Redeemer.

In **the** matter of swearing, or supporting a statement by some oath or other, **whether it be** positive or negative, one should **give a clear** yea or nay. **The** Lord **taught the same** in Mat. 5: 34, and also **said** in v. 37, 'Whatsoever **is** more than **these** (yea or nay) **is** of **the** evil one'. James **uses similar** words to those of **his** Lord, **as guided** by **the** Holy Spirit. **Let** suffering ones pray, **let** cheerful ones sing, **but let it be** praise unto God. **We** should not allow ourselves to sing **the** world's

songs. **We have far more to sing about than they**, by God's grace. **Sick** ones may **seek the help of the elders of the church** whose shepherd **care** would urge **them to visit the sick and pray with them** and for them. **The prayer of faith shall save the sick**. **These** verses appear to belong to the Apostolic and early post-Apostolic period. Today God **has** provided other means of healing, **which** however **are** greatly **helped** by prayer.

Elijah is cited as an example of what prayer can achieve. **Faith** presupposes **that** some word of God **has** been heard and **acted** upon, whether **it be** written or by a revelation, **such as a prophet** may receive, or an apostle, when prayer **made** can **be** according to God's will. **We suggest that Elijah was acquainted with the mind of the Lord in the matter of withholding the rain for 3½ years, and at the end of this period sending rain upon the earth.** In connection with vv. **19, 20 see 1 John 5: 16** (first part), **17.**

G. Conway, S. R. W.

COMMENTS

1. **(Hamilton):** Not **all** sickness **is due to the sins of the sufferer, but in some cases it is** (cf. **1 Cor. 11: 30**). Note **that** forgiveness and healing are linked in **such cases** in v. 15.
2. **(Lagos and Liverpool):** Some **will not accept that we are directed** by **Mat. 5: 33-37** and **Jas. 5: 12** to abstain from taking **the oath in a court of law**. Whether or not **these** verses are relevant to **the judicial** oath our friends' recommendation is **right** and proper. **The Lord and James are dealing with what was current practice in everyday Jewish life.** **The Christian should not require an oath to authenticate his statements; he is under obligation to speak the truth at all times.**
3. **(Lagos):** **The phrase 'any among you' suggests a general rather than a special application. This is the view of Leeds.**
4. **(Lagos):** **The brother who performs this work of restoration need not be an elder, but in many instances it probably would be an elder who would do it.**

5. **(Leeds):** We do not know with certainty the identity of the James who wrote the Epistle. The expressed view-point would only be valid if James the son of Alphaeus is the writer. Many consider the writer to be the Lord's brother.
6. **(Liverpool):** I do not think that there is sufficient evidence for asserting that these elders were also apostles. The body of men who act in James 5: 14, 15 were the elders of the church to which the sick man belonged. I would think it unlikely that they were all apostles. I would agree, however, that they must have been able to discern God's will in the matter to pray the 'prayer of faith'.
7. **(Liverpool):** Oil was much used among the Jews for medicinal purposes as our Macduff friends point out, but we are sure that it was not the therapeutic value of the oil that wrought the cure. The Lord sometimes incorporated material aids in the miracles He performed (see John 9: 11). The person being healed was no doubt helped by these in some way.
8. **(Liverpool):** There are acknowledged difficulties in the interpretation of Jas. 5: 14, 15. Most contributors agree that the healing is miraculous and would also agree with the conclusion that this scripture has no direct application today.
9. **(Methil):** This view is probably based on the two different words used, concerning which W. E. Vine says:
 sick (*Astheneo*) v. 14 - to be weak, feeble.
 sick (*Kamno*) v. 15 - weariness of mind, which not infrequently hinders physical recovery.
 I do not think that there is supporting evidence for this view-point. To accept that the same person is in view in both verses is more in keeping with the context, and this appears to be the general mind of contributors.
10. **(Methil):** Knowledge of the will of God in the matter is a pre-requisite of the 'prayer of faith'. There was no doubt about the outcome on the part of those who carried out this procedure.
11. **(Swindon):** There is general agreement among contributors that vv. 19 and 20 refer to an erring brother, and this is, I think, the correct view.

12. **(Barrhead):** This is an interesting viewpoint which also has the support of Birkenhead. The words used in vv. 14 and 15 are supportive (see Comment 9). The similarity of Jas. 5: 14, 15 and Mark 6: 13 should, however, be seriously considered (see Comment 7).
J. K. D. J.

13. **(Kingston):** The early and latter rains were a vital climatic feature in Israel, and are referred to in such scriptures as Hosea 6: 3 and Joel 2: 23 in regard to divine blessings both temporal and spiritual. Our Kingston friends suggest a possible application spiritually to our age in the latter-day revival of churches of God. Others have applied it to the wide development of gospel witness in modern times. There is a popular view in some circles that today's charismatic movements answer to the latter rain! So the need for caution in spiritualising the expression is evident; to some Jas. 5: 7 appeals simply as an encouragement to be patient until the Lord comes.

14. **(Kingston):** Many in extreme weakness have still prayed without ceasing, and it may be questioned whether those calling for the prayers of the elders were unable at all to pray for themselves.

15. **(Liverpool):** Is this really conclusive? Phil. 2: 26-30 shows that Epaphroditus recovered from a critical illness. Can we be sure that the elders were not called? 1 Tim. 5: 23 records Timothy's 'often infirmities' but does this necessarily imply that he could never have asked for this, the James procedure, to be applied? It is perhaps more directly relevant to enquire why Paul had to leave Trophimus sick at Miletus (2 Tim. 4: 20). It seems that on this occasion neither his own gifts of healing nor the possible attendance of elders from Ephesus (cf. Acts 20: 17) were used to help Trophimus. Certainly at the time James wrote his Epistle there was the possibility of the healing procedure being applied by local elders; otherwise the exhortation of v. 14 would be pointless. It is arguable that such healing power through the prayer of faith was not still being granted to elders by the time the later epistles were written. Or that it was particularly appropriate to Jewish elders of the early phase of the dispensation, and not generally extended. We depend of course upon deductions from other scriptures to confirm the general

principle **that such** miraculous powers **were** appropriate only to **the** beginning of **this age** in confirmation of **the New** Covenant revelation (Heb. 2: 4).

16. *(Barrhead):* The Greek word *nepfos* in Heb. 12: 1 is a unique occurrence, and contrasts **with the** word **used** in 1 Cor. 10: 1, 2 for **the** pillar of cloud (*nephele*). **It seems to me unlikely that the suggested** comparison can **be** sustained.

17. *(Barrhead):* There **is** difficulty in accepting **this emphasis** on nervous rather than general illness (see Comment 9). **We must also be careful** to avoid any implication **that** nervous illnesses are merely imaginary. **It seems** wiser simply to **accept that** certain **were ill** from **a** variety of **causes**, and **that this** procedure **was** enjoined to obtain **healing**.

18. *(Barrhead):* The suggestion **that** through physical weakness **a disciple had** sinned, **perhaps** unwittingly, **is** unusual. **The usual** exposition is **that** in some **cases there had** been sin **which had** resulted in chastisement in **the** form of illness, and confession would bring forgiveness and **relief as** an accompaniment to physical healing. **G. P.**

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. *(From Liverpool):* **What is the judgement referred to in v. 12?**

I suggest that this judgement is the result of making and not keeping a solemn oath or vow. (cf. Eccles. 5: 1-6, Num. 30: 2, Deut. 23: 21).

2. *(From Liverpool):* **What is the 'prayer of faith', and to whom does it apply?**

I judge that it applies to a person who knows the will of God on **a particular matter** and prays accordingly **as Elijah** did. **Faith must have a word from God** to lay hold upon. **J. K. D. J.**

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EDITORIAL

It is agreed by contributors to this beginning of our study of John's Epistles that the writer is the same as wrote the Gospel, one of the 'Sons of Thunder', the disciple whom Jesus loved. Certainly the first chapter was written by someone who was very close indeed to our Lord during His earthly ministry. The memory of those three years in His company is vivid to him, and he still carries the impression of the Man he heard, saw and touched. He wanted to bring his readers to a better appreciation of Christian living and fellowship, and was anxious to correct wrong thoughts about the Lord Himself. The letter, if it can be called that, is very relevant today, for the same errors are on offer. Knowledge of our Lord and obedience to His ministry, notably that given in the upper room (John 13 to 17), are still the great correctives, and our study of this short book must be of practical blessing.

A. B. R.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

Towards the end of the preface to the Revised Version of the New Testament we find the following statement: —

'We may in the last place notice one particular in which we were not expressly directed to extend our revision, namely, the titles of the Books of the New Testament. *These titles are no part of the original text;* and the titles found in the most ancient manuscripts are of too short a form to be convenient for use. Under these circumstances, we have deemed it best to leave unchanged the titles which are given in the Authorised Version as printed in 1611.'

We must not, therefore, regard the titles as inspired.

The title in the Authorised Version and Revised Version is 'The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews'. The American Committee deleted the words 'of Paul the Apostle' in the Revised Version. The earlier manuscripts bore the title 'To the Hebrews'.

Authorship of this **letter has** been a matter of controversy from **as early as the** second century. **It has been attributed** to Barnabas, **Luke**, Apollos and Paul. **There has** never been any doubt about **the place** of **this letter** in **the** canon of scripture. **Luther** assigned it to Apollos **whereas** Calvin attributed it to a disciple of **the** Apostles. Jerome's **view was** as follows:

The Epistle addressed to **the Hebrews** is not believed, on account of **the** difference of style and language, to **be Paul's** work, **but a** work either of Barnabas, according to Tertullian, or of **the** Evangelist **Luke**, according to some'.

The letter was apparently written before **the** destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. **70 as the Temple service seems** in operation (**see Hebrews 13: 10-14**). **The writer was** close to Timothy and **was aware that he had** been **set at** liberty, and **the** writer hoped to accompany Timothy to **see** those to whom **the letter was** addressed (**Hebrews 13: 23**). **The 'thirteen letters** from **the** Apostle **Paul** begin **with his name**, and he specifies those to whom **the letter** is addressed.

In **the preface** to **the Letter to the Hebrews** in **The Twentieth Century New Testament'** **the** bold statement **appears**, **'It is certain that the** Apostle **Paul was** not **the** author'. No good reasons **are** advanced for this view.

The numerous quotations from **the Old Testament** which **appear in the Hebrews** are from **the** Septuagint version, and link **the** book with Alexandria (Conybeare and Howson, **Life and Letters** of St. **Paul**, p. 785).

The reference in **chapter 13: 23** to **the fact 'that** our brother Timothy **hath** been **set at** liberty' is significant. **There** is no account during **the** life of **the** Apostle **Paul** that Timothy **was** imprisoned. This may **have** taken **place** subsequent to **the** **death** of **the** Apostle.

In **2 Peter 3: 15, 16**, we find **the** words 'even **as** our beloved brother **Paul** also, according to **the** wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; **as** also in **all** his epistles'. **The view has** been advanced by some **that** this statement supports **the** view **that Paul** wrote **the letter** to **the** Hebrews. On **the** other hand, **we** do not know **where** those who received **the letter** to **the** Hebrews **were** located, **but** no doubt **has** been **expressed** **that** they resided in any **part** of **the** five Provinces mentioned in **1 Peter 1: 1**.

The Apostle **Paul** describes himself **as** 'an apostle of **the** Gentiles' (Rom. **11: 13**), and again 'a minister of Christ Jesus unto **the** Gentiles' (Romans **15: 16**). His life work lay mainly

in **that** field. The **letter** to the Hebrews **was** specially directed to Hebrews. Those who **read** it in **the** first instance **were assumed** to **have** an intimate knowledge of **the** Levitical **law**, and to **be** conversant with **the** service of **the** Temple. It is open to question **whether** the Apostle **Paul** turned from his appointed **task** to write **a letter** or treatise to Hebrews. **Verse 3** of **chapter 2** suggests **that** the writer was **a** second generation believer.

There is **a** significant salutation **at** the close of **the letter** - 'They of Italy **salute** you' (Hebrews 13: 24). It **seems** a reasonable assumption **that** **at** the time of writing **the letter** the writer **was** resident in Italy. **There** is also **the request** of the writer to his readers, 'Pray for **us**... And **I** exhort you **the** more exceedingly to do this, **that I** may **be** restored to you **the** sooner (Hebrews 13: 18, 19).

Dr. C. M. Luxmoore **held** the view **that** the Apostle **Paul** wrote **the letter** to the Hebrews. **He** pointed out **that** the salutation towards **the** end of **all** thirteen epistles written by **Paul** included **such** words as **The grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ **be** with you all'. **There** are some variations in form. In support of this view **Dr.** Luxmoore **drew** special attention to **the** closing words of second Thessalonians, '**The** salutation of **me Paul** with mine own hand, which is **the** token in every epistle: so **I** write. **The grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ **be** with you all". **There** is, of course, **a** variation in **the** form of **the** salutation **at** the end of **the letter** to the Hebrews, '**Grace** be with you all. **Amen**' (Hebrews 13: 25). **As** stated earlier **all** thirteen epistles from **the** Apostle **Paul** bear his name **at** the outset, and designate those to whom **the letters** are addressed. **There** is no **such** intimation in **the letter** to the Hebrews.

To **sum up** - **there** is no **clear** evidence **as** to **the** authorship of this letter. Many reliable commentators hold **that** it **was** not written by **the** Apostle **Paul**. On **the** other hand, who will say **that** it **came** from **Barnabas**, or **Luke**, or **Apollos**? This **would be** speculation and carry no authority. The writer is known **to** the Lord alone, **but** **that** it is an important **part** of **the** inspired scriptures **we** have no doubt.

Take but one verse, "For **the** word of God is living, and active, and **sharper** than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to **the** dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern **the** thoughts and intents of **the** heart" (Hebrews 4: 12). **What** searching expressions **are**

found in **this verse!** Not only is God's word living, **but it is** possessed **of** untiring vitality. **What** human instrument can **divide** between **soul** and spirit? **The** word of God **makes a** distinction between **these** two although man may regard **them as** one. **It has** also **the** incisive capacity to **divide** between **the** joints and marrow. Most wonderful of **all - it is able** to **judge the** very thoughts and imaginations of **the heart.**

Ayr

W. Banting

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND WITH ONE ANOTHER

(1 John 1: 1-2: 26)

From Kingston-upon-Thames: Fellowship means sharing of material possessions (**Acts 2: 44-45**), and of **spiritual** knowledge. **Thus** John restates **his** own knowledge of God and **His** provision of eternal life (**vv. 1 & 2**) so **'that ye also may have fellowship with us'** (**v. 3**). Fellowship in **this** context does not refer to **'the Fellowship'** of 1 Cor. **1: 9** **but** rather to **the way in which we** should increasingly **act** within it.

John **writes 'that our joy may be fulfilled** (complete)' (**1: 4**). John **15: 7-14** shows **that our joy is fulfilled** (completed) by keeping **the** Lord's commandments, so abiding **in Him** (fellowship **with** God), and especially **the** command 'to love one another' resulting in fellowship **with each** other. **'He that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God'** (John 3: 21). **'By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another'** (John 13: 35). **Thus** by practising **His** commandments (walking **in the light**) **we** show others **that we are** Christians (Eph. **5: 8**), and **share** love and fellowship **with each** other. God's commandments **lead to a greater** knowledge of **Him and** to fellowship **with Him** (John **14: 21, 23**). **But** when **we fall short of this Christ is** our Advocate to defend **us (2: 1)** and forgiveness follows confession of our shortcomings (**1: 9**). **G. Riley**

From Lagos: **The** word fellowship **as used** in 1 John **1** **we suggest carries the** meaning of communion, partnership, or a sharing together. **That which we have** seen and **heard declare we** unto you also, **that ye also may have** fellowship **with us:** yea, and our fellowship **is with the Father, and with**

His Son Jesus Christ' (1: 3). Zechariah 13: 7 sheds some light when it refers to 'My Shepherd... the Man that is My fellow' (partner). In that vision we have a profound revelation of the origin of fellowship with God and its perfect expression as seen in the eternal Father with His own eternal Son. In the incarnate Son we see the depth of the riches of divine grace in the extension of a life in fellowship with God to fallen, sinful man. These things we write' says John, 'that your joy may be full' (1: 4 AV).

In the will of God for all men, the life of fellowship with God begins at the moment of reconciliation to God in the body of His flesh through death (Col. 1: 20-22). As members of the Body of Christ, both Jews and Greeks are united and enriched by the love of Christ to enjoy communion one with another (see Eph. 2). For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in Him ye are made full' (Col. 2: 9-10).

Communion with God for every believer in his day to day experience is conditional. The conditions embrace obedience (John 14: 21-24), holiness of life (Heb. 12: 14) and abiding in Christ (John 15: 1-11; 1 John 2: 3-6). The apostle John highlights for us the importance of humility before the Lord to confess and forsake every sin if we are to enjoy communion with God. We cite the experience of David in the matter of Uriah the Hittite, and his subsequent repentance, confession and restoration to fellowship with God (Ps. 51 and 32). In Christ Jesus our Lord, God has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1: 3). A state of sinless perfection is nowhere envisaged in Scripture but rather the Lord speaks authoritatively in saying that 'he that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit' (John 13: 10). S. Coker, E. Bassey

From Leeds: Basically fellowship is a sharing (partaking) together of things in common, but it develops further as expressed by the words common, communion, and community. Those who have life can know the preciousness of fellowship with the Father and with His Son, generated by the motivation of the Holy Spirit (Phil. 2: 1). By continuing to walk in the light, we can also experience the joy of fellowship together (v. 7). Although Christians generally can find fellowship with one another and with God, we felt that the fullness of this fellowship can only be appreciated by those called out and called together according to God's purpose

(1 Cor. 1: 9). Those who **are** in **the** community (**the** Fellowship, 1 Cor. 1: 9) **are** those who can know communion and share **the** 'all things common' (**Acts 2: 44**). **'What** fellowship **have** righteousness and iniquity? or **what** communion (fellowship) **hath** light with darkness?' (**2 Cor. 6: 14**). **The** answer can only **be** 'None'. Light is **the** natural symbol of **the** purity of righteousness, darkness **the** natural symbol of **the** blackness of sin (death). **Full** fellowship with God can only **be** experienced by our walking daily with Him, confessing our sins (continuous), obtaining forgiveness and being cleansed (v. 7).

We have an Advocate with **the** Father, Jesus Christ **the** Righteous, and **He** is **the** propitiation for our sins (2: 2). **As** an Advocate, **He** is with **the** Father on **behalf** of **the** Father's children; **as** **the** propitiation **He** is in **the** office of High Priest, acting for **the** sins of God's together people, those within His house (**Heb. 2: 17** with **3: 1, 6**). [**See** Answers to Question 2].

H. R. Dodge, P. M. Jefferson

From Liverpool: **The** opening verses of **the** Epistle **are** similar in **theme** to **the** opening verses of John's gospel and **deal** with **the** Deity and eternal nature of **the** Lord Jesus Christ. John **tells** of **the** One **he** **has** both seen and handled and therefore knows intimately. **That** which they **had** **heard** presumably **refers** to **the** Old Testament Scriptures [Comment 3], whilst **that** which they **had** seen **refers** not merely to an outward manifestation seen by **the** natural eye, **but** to **the** Lord's glory and Deity. Thus John **states** in **the** Gospel (**1: 14**) '**we** **beheld** His glory, glory **as** of **the** only begotten from **the** Father, full of **grace** and **truth**'. **Such** an appreciation of **the** Lord's person and divine nature will **lead** to a sharing of fellowship with Christ conditional only upon obedience to His **revealed** will. This intimate relationship gives a joy which increases **as** **the** knowledge of Christ and His will is more fully known and experienced by **the** believer.

'If a man love **Me**, **he** will **keep** My word: and My **Father** will love him, and **We** will come unto him, and **make** **Our** abode with him' (John 14: 23). This **same** point is emphasized again 'And hereby know **we** **that** **we** know Him, if **we** **keep** His commandments' (**1** John 2: 3). Obedience **will** mean **that** **we** **are** walking in **the** light of God Himself and in **the** light of His Word. Thus **as** individuals experience individual fellowship with God, they **share** fellowship with

each other, and so **walk** together as **directed** by the word of God. Constant **vigilance** is required if **this** position is to be maintained and sin **will** form a barrier between **the disciple** and **his** Lord. The psalmist could say 'If I regard iniquity in my **heart**, **the** Lord **will** not hear' (Ps. 66: 18). Yet how wonderfully God **has made** provision for **the** believer to come and confess **his** sin! **We have** an Advocate or Comforter in God's presence who **has** fully **paid** the penalty of sin, and **if we but** confess that sin **He is faithful** and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse **us** from **all** unrighteousness. Not only do **we have** an Advocate at God's **right** hand, **but** indwelling every **believer** is **the Holy Spirit** who **is** also **an** Advocate who **helps** our infirmity and makes intercession on our **behalf** (see Rom. 8: 26, 27). God **has made** every provision for **the** continuance of fellowship and communion **that each** one should seek to enjoy to **the full**.

G. Seddon, M. S. Elliott

From Macduff: Much of the writing of this **Epistle** is similar to **the** Gospel according to John. **Thus we** would say it came from **the same** author. Most of us thought that **the** 'beginning' in **verse 1** was before **the** worlds **were**, when **the** Lord was with **the** Father. John seems to **be** marvelling that they **had** personal fellowship with **Him**, **being able** to hear, look upon and handle **the** Lord.

It is remarkable that if **we walk** in **the light** we can have fellowship not only with God's **children**, **but also** with God **Himself** and with Jesus Christ so that our joy **might be full**. **But it is** important to note **the** 'If which' means that **this** wonderful communion and nearness to **the** Lord and **His** things is conditional on our **walk**. Sin breaks fellowship though it cannot **break the** relationship of children of God to **their** Father. It is not good for **us** to **deceive** ourselves, **but we should be** continually examining ourselves and confessing our sins, **because He** who knows **all the** frailty of our frame is **faithful** and **just** to forgive and cleanse us. **We** thought that **there must be** two **parts** to restoring **the** fellowship that is often broken by sin and they **are** done for **us** by our Lord. Once confession is **made**, **He** blots out our **sin** or offence, and cleanses our uncleanness so that **we might again** offer unto our God. In **the** opening **verses** of **ch. 2** we see that in **the** day of **grace** **the** Lord Jesus Christ is at **the** Throne of God ready as our Advocate to **plead** for **us** as **believers**.

J. Mitchell

From Melbourne: The limitations of **the** human mind **cause** it to **search for a** starting point when things commenced to **be**. **The** eternal Word **had** no such beginning **but** co-existed with **Father** and Spirit **as the great** Jehovah; **He that always was, that is, and is to come, the** ever-existing One. In **the** Gospel John presents **a** Person, **but** in his **Epistle** he writes of **that** which pertained to **that** Person. That which **had** been **true** of Him in eternity past **had** gradually been **revealed** to man, **but** in incarnation **He had** been brought so nigh **that** men **have heard, have** seen with their natural eyes, viewed attentively and wonderingly, and their hands **have** handled in resurrection **the** Word of Life. In Him eternal life **was** manifested. **It had** been **imparted** to **them** and also to **all** who **had heard** and believed their word concerning Him. **The** revelation of **the** eternal Word **had** brought **them** into fellowship with **the Father and the** Son, and their joy **was** such **that the** experience of **what** they **had** seen, **heard** and handled must **be** shared with others. John **further** conveys to **the readers** of **the** Epistle **that** God is light, and in Him is no darkness. In Eden man **had walked** in **the** light of God's presence without **fear** until sin entered, **but** sin brought darkness **and** man hid himself from **the** glory of God, and his descendants do likewise. The fellowship which **had** existed between **the** Creator and **the creature** whom His hands **had** formed was broken.

The presence on **earth** of Him who was God manifest in **flesh** and His **death at** Calvary **which** superseded sacrifice and offering according to **the law revealed** the longing of **the** Creator to **have** closer fellowship with man. In v. **7** **we have** **the** position of **a** disciple who **walks** according to **the revealed** will of God, **but** nevertheless because of sin within requires **the** cleansing efficacy of **the** blood of Jesus, **apart** from which **there** could neither **be** fellowship with God or with others, nor **acceptable** service. In v. **9** **we have** sins committed, **a** yielding to temptation, **whether** it **be** to sin against others or against God alone. **The** sinner is not cleansed by pleading '**The** blood of Jesus cleanses from **all** sin', **but** this cleansing of **the believer** requires confession (**cf.** Ps. **51: 17**). **On** this basis **He** is faithful and righteous to forgive and cleanse from **all** unrighteousness.

While **the** disciple is encouraged to '**walk in the** light', and **guard** against sin, **he** is not to **be** discouraged if **he** does sin. **We have** an Advocate with **the Father**, Jesus Christ **the** Righteous One, who on **earth** was **tempted** and tried. While

on earth He knew the failures of His disciples, and by His death made propitiation for sin, by reason of which God can righteously and willingly pardon the failing saint.

D. M., T. W. F.

From Methil: Just as there have always been those who question and irreverently deny the Godhood of the Lord Jesus, so there have always been those who have not been slow to cast doubt on His manhood. The characteristic truth in John's writings is God manifesting Himself in His Son as man here on earth in a manner that could be seen and heard and handled. Children of God have to realise that this is our very life. He who is the life, the Word of Life, the very expression of all that God is, in love, grace, mercy, truth, holiness and righteousness, has lived these things out as man here on earth, and they are presented to us as our very life. It is only in the measure that we practically live in the light of all that God is, that we can truthfully be said to be walking in the light. Having fellowship with God depends upon our having fellowship with His Son, and will be as divine as the source from which it springs. Having fellowship with the Father and with the Son and with one another, we will experience true joy. Our joy will also spring from the same source as our fellowship.

We think it should be noted that v. 7 has to do with the efficacy of the blood of the Lord Jesus which is eternal. John is not supposing that the believer should go on in sin. If we do we are not being true to the new nature which God has placed within us. Having this nature we have the desires and exercises associated with it, which would cause us to confess our sins, that our communion or fellowship with God and the Lord Jesus be not hindered but maintained.

A McIlree

From Nottingham: Of all the apostles John is probably the one who was best qualified to write about fellowship. He had been very close to the Lord during the days of His flesh; their association had been very sweet (see John 13: 23, 25). So he writes of that which 'we have seen... beheld (AV looked upon)... handled' (1 John 1: 1, 2). The experience of those days when his Lord was here in the flesh made a deep and lasting impression on John and now he longs that others should share the joy (vv. 3, 4). Joy is closely asso-

ciated with fellowship provided that fellowship is with the right One. The apostle advocated **fellowship with the Father and the Son (v. 3)** for those to whom **he wrote** then, and **if we today engage in this fellowship our joy will be fulfilled**, or full.

It is impossible for us to **gauge the full measure of the havoc** wrought when man **first sinned** against God. It was then **that fellowship with Him** was broken, a **fact** brought home to **Adam and Eve** by a searching question (Gen. 3: 14-21). **Life had to be** given before fellowship could **be** restored and our Saviour **gave His life** for **that purpose on the cross**. **If we will, we** may now enjoy fellowship with God.

In the second part of ch. 1 **we are taught the truth that God is light**. It is not that God merely **reflects light or is like a light**. **He is light**. **Light has** its source in **Him** and darkness is foreign to **Him** (v. 5).

It follows, therefore, **that if we profess to walk in fellowship with God but dabble in dubious practices, or fail to keep His commandments, we are lying, because the two states are incompatible**. It is our responsibility to obey **the will** of God, and those who know **His will but fail to do it are** in a serious position (1 John 2: 4). **If we are in fellowship with Him we shall not want to sin, but we shall do so** (cf. 1 John 1: 8). In God's mercy **we have an Advocate, that is One who pleads before the face of God for us**. It is our responsibility to confess our sin and ask for forgiveness. **It is suggested that this confession shall be as specific and detailed as practicable**. **We suggest it is not a 'blanket' confession, but a naming of our sins and failures before God that is required**.

1 John 3: 9 declares: 'Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin... and **he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God**'. **We considered how to equate this verse with 1 John 1: 8**. It is thought that **1 John 3: 9 has in view our relationship with God in Christ**. When **we accepted the Saviour our sins, past, present and future were forgiven and cast behind God's back**. In **Christ we stand forgiven, and, being begotten of God as children of God we do no sin**. **At the same time, as servants we sin and fail and it is necessary for us to make confession so that we, as vessels, may be cleansed for the Master's use**. [1: 8 refers to the **believer's old sinful nature which remains with him; 3: 9 refers to the new nature which being begotten of God cannot sin**. - Eds.]. **R. Hickling**

From Swindon: At the time of the writing of the Epistle

many false prophets tried to introduce false doctrine into the church so dissension set in. It was for this reason that John wrote to 'my little children'. In this statement he was showing his love for them in the gentle but stern rebuke this Epistle gives. The style of writing used is similar to that in John's Gospel but the Gospel was used for the bringing of men to the knowledge of Christ, whereas the Epistle is for keeping believers from wandering and keeping them in the knowledge of God's love for them.

The emphasis in the first chapter is in the Lord Jesus being the Light and the Life and that if we sin we walk in darkness and lose the fellowship we have with God [and with one another - *Eds.*]. From Acts 2: 42 we can see how the fellowship between the Father and the Son was passed to Apostles whose writings, being inspired by God, were a help to others and made their joy full (1 John 1: 4) [Comment 1].

Ch. 1: 9 says 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins'. We thought that when we were saved our sins, past, present and future were all forgiven, but it appears from this that they are not forgiven until they have been confessed. One suggestion that was made was that when we are saved we are saved from the judgement of our sins but they are not forgiven us until we confess them [Comment 2].

D. J. Gray

From St. Helens: Fellowship is a close working, participative relationship. The optimum manifestation of this relationship between God and man existed in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 1 and 2) 'God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good'. Unfortunately the ideal relationship was terminated due to the sins of Adam and Eve. God could not condone their sins and in Gen. 3 we see God's displeasure and the resulting break in fellowship. This gulf could only be bridged by the Lord Jesus Christ shedding his own blood. He became the Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2: 5) and a new form of fellowship was possible. However we are not immune from sin (1 John 1: 8) although all our unrighteousness can be cleansed (1 John 1: 9) through the blood of Jesus His Son.

John's Epistle states many home-truths. We cannot state we are walking in the light if our everyday way of life contradicts this statement (1 John 1: 6). If our relationship with God is not healthy it is impossible for us to have true fellow-

ship one **with the** other. **This** true fellowship can **exist** through **the** prayers (**Acts 2: 42**) or through voluntary financial **help** of brothers and sisters, particularly in **the** support of ministering brethren (**2 Cor. 9: 5**).

Fellowship **is** manifested when brethren are of **the same** mind (**Phil. 2: 2**) and **this** brings joy to God, **the Lord Jesus Christ** and one another. **This** unity **is** essential for **spiritual** blessing.

K. J. Gutteridge

From Barrhead: John **is** writing as a **'father'** figure to his children, a term of endearment embracing young and old. The condition of those to whom **he** wrote **was** not so **much** a people in persecution, **but** a people in disunion. They needed fellowship and **this** fellowship could **be** broken by sin. **The disciples were** not to **be wilful** in disobedience **but** if they **fell** into sin **there was** pardon. Thus **we** note **that it was** possible to **be** in **'the Fellowship'** and yet not **have** fellowship.

John's object in writing **was that the** Christian's joy may **be full**. **That which was** from **the beginning'** **we** consider to **be** a statement embracing, not only **the** person of **Christ**, **but the** being of Christ and **all that relates** to Him. **We believe the 'we'** of v. 1 to **be the** apostolic band of disciples. John was remembering **what it was like** to **live with** Christ during **His life** on **earth** and **he** wanted others to **have** an appreciation of **this** experience.

Satan **is the accuser** of **the** brethren and in **the** heavenly court **where this 'Hearing' is** taking **place we** also **have** an Advocate. One says 'guilty', **the** other says **'Yes, but My blood covers that guilt'**. Christ **is** an advocate in **the** sense of One appearing for a defaulter. **We** concluded by considering **the walk** of **the Saviour** and noting **that to abide** in Christ **is** to **keep His** words.

D. J. Kerr

From Brantford: The purpose of **this** book of John **is** to exemplify disciple-living, **rather** than to explain Christian doctrine. **A great part** of disciple-living **is** having fellowship **with the Father** and **the Son Jesus Christ**. By doing **this**, Christians **will be** one in purpose, and **true** fellowship between **them will** exist.

God **is** light. **He is** completely **without** sin or 'darkness'. **If a disciple claims** to **have** fellowship **with** God and **walks** in 'darkness' (**lives** in sin) **he lies**. **'What communion hath light with darkness?'** (**2 Cor. 6: 14**). **These people are there-**

fore not keeping **the truth** of **His** commandments because they are not walking in newness of **life** and forsaking **the** old way of **life** (Rom. 6: 4, 19). **This** challenges **us** to consider our ways to **see if we have** any sin in our lives. **We must** find our inlets of sin and eliminate **the** sources so **that we can walk** more in **the light**.
N. McCall

From Birkenhead: John, acknowledging **the fact that the** Lord Jesus Christ **was with the Father** in eternity **past**, here brings us to **the time of the** incarnation when **He was revealed** in **flesh** to mankind. **Life is bound up with the** Son and possession of **this life makes** possible fellowship **with the Father** and **the** Son and **with** one another. **The Son was the** Word of **life** (come to **earth**) **with a message which was heard**; and **He was** handled - **there** is no doubt about His existence. **The message** was to bring **us** into fellowship **with the Father** (1 John 2: 24).

God is **Light**, indicating absolute purity, and **as we** come to **the light**, sin is exposed. When sin **is** confessed then **true** fellowship is possible and **this will** show in our manner of **life**. **The shed** blood of our Lord Jesus **Christ is that which makes** cleansing from **all** unrighteousness possible. **The offering up of the** Son makes **it** possible for God to **be** propitiated. The anger of **a** righteous God against sin **came** upon **the** Son and so **the** offering is sufficient to **meet the** needs of **the** whole world.
R. D. Williams

From Derby: The **chapter** opens **with the** words '**that which**', said to **be a** neuter **relative** pronoun. **We judge this** does not suggest **that the** Person **referred to is** not masculine (see Mat. 1: 20 and **Luke** 1: 35). This wonderful Person **the** apostles knew in **a very special** way, especially **Peter**, James and John, who **were permitted** to behold **His** glory on **the** holy mount, and **His deep** humiliation in **the** garden in **the** night of His betrayal. **That which we have** seen and **heard declare we** unto you also, **that** ye also may **have** fellowship **with us**: yea, and our fellowship **is with the Father**, and **with His** Son Jesus Christ. '**Our** communion together **is** within churches of God, **which are** in **the** Fellowship (community) of **the** Son of God, Jesus **Christ** our Lord (**1 Cor. 1: 9**) in **which the** saints in **the church** at Jerusalem continued steadfastly. [**Of course we would accept that all believers can know something of this fellowship. See Leeds paper in which a similar point is made**-Eds.].

We have been brought 'out of darkness into His marvellous light' (1 Pet. 2: 9). 'And this is **the** message **which we have heard** from Him, and announce unto you, **that God** is light, and in Him is no darkness **at all**'. Darkness is ignorance and light is understanding. **The** entrance of Thy words **giveth** light; it giveth understanding unto **the** simple' (Ps. 119: 130 AV). To **walk** in **the** light is to **be** guided by **the** word of God: Thy word is **a lamp** unto my **feet**, and light unto my **path**' (a way to **walk** in) (Ps. 119: 105). '**If we walk** in **the** light, **as He** is in **the** light, **we have** fellowship one with another, and **the** blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth **us** from **all** sin'. The word 'cleanseth' is in **the** present tense, implying continuous cleansing, so **that where there** is no known sin committed **the** saint may enjoy continuous communion. **But** known sin **must be** confessed, **and He** is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins **and** to cleanse us from **all** unrighteousness. **A** wonderful and gracious provision **that** for Christ's sake **the Father has made** for us is 'if any man sin, **we have** an Advocate with **the Father**, Jesus Christ **the** righteous' (2: 1). **The** propitiatory work of Christ at Golgotha enables our Advocate successfully to intercede on **behalf** of God's erring children.

S. R. W.

From Edinburgh: John writes:

(1: 4) to **add** to their joy

(2: 1) to warn against **the** effects of debilitating sin

(2: 26) to confirm **them** in their faith against seducers

(5: 13) to give **the** reassurance of eternal life

The word 'know' (used in **the** context of spiritual knowledge) **features** more than **30** times in **the** Epistle.

Fellowship with God is essential before **we** can experience **true** loving fellowship with others of like mind living in **the** light. This stands in contrast to **the** friendly relationships of **earth** which **are** sometimes misconstrued as fellowship. The conditions of divine fellowship outlined in **the** portion **are**:

a) 1: 5-7 **We** must **walk** in **the** light even as **He** is in **the** light

b) 1: 8-10 **We** must **be** alert to **the** existence of sin and **ever** ready to confess it

c) 2: 1-2 **We** must recognise **the** propitiatory work of **the** divine Sacrifice and acknowledge His role **as** Advocate

d) 2: 3 **We** must **keep** His commandments.

In **the** light of 1: 3 **we** wondered if it is possible to differen-

tiate in our experience of fellowship with **the Father** and with **the Son**, and concluded **that such** discernment **must call** for a very high **degree** of spiritual perception.

John **excels** in his descriptions of **God** (God is Light 1: 5 - is **Love 4: 8** - is a Spirit John 4: 24), and **just as the** very essence of God is light, so those who truly know **their God** and **walk** in fellowship with Him in **the light take** on His likeness (John 12: 35-36). **Such** an experience highlights our sins and frailties and those who **walk** in **the light are** conscious of their failings and shortcomings **as they are** of **the** unique medium of cleansing for their sins in **the** precious blood of Christ.

In **parallel** with His **great** propitiatory work for **the** sins of **the** whole world and for **the** sins of **the** children of God in **the matter** of fellowship **there** is **the** precious realisation of **the** work of **the** divine Advocate (**a** word used only by John in **the** NT.) standing alongside and interceding on **behalf** of children of God before **the** throne of Almighty God.

J. Lindsay

COMMENTS

1. (**Swindon**): The Fellowship of Acts 2: 42 is **the same** as 1 Cor. 1: 9, and certainly different from **the** fellowship or communion **between Father and Son**. It involves **all that** is in Acts 2: 41, 42.

2. (**Swindon**): **Our** sins **are** forgiven when **we take** Christ **as** our Saviour, and nothing can henceforth **affect the fact that we are** God's children. **If** our sins **had to be** confessed for our eternal salvation, how would **we** know **what had to be** confessed? **But** if **we are** to maintain fellowship and **be acceptable** servants **we** must confess known sins. **See** answers to Question 2. A. B. R

3. (**Liverpool**): This seems **a** valid viewpoint in relation to 1 John 1: 1, **but** v. 3 is possibly **a clear** reference to **the** words of Christ spoken during His earthly ministry, **see Acts** 4: 20. This is **the** view of **several** contributors. *J. K. D. J.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

From Leeds (1): Can **we** justify our use, **as a** title, of **The Fellowship** **as** applying to Churches of God, when fellowship, as in 1 John seems more of **a general term**, more personal and individual with God and with one another?

Fellowship in 1 John 1 means communion, partnership, **but** 1 Cor. 1: 9 is **the** origin of **the** expression **as** applied to **the** Churches of God. **The** Fellowship (with **the** definite article) is short for **'the** fellowship of His Son

Jesus Christ our Lord'. Those who are in churches of God are together in obedience to the Lord and His commands, and can say they are 'in the Fellowship' of 1 Cor. 1: 9. As some papers point out it is possible for some to be in a Church of God, or in the Fellowship, and not be enjoying fellowship or communion with the Lord or each other because of sin. Sin breaks fellowship, and if persisted in will lead to being put out of 'the Fellowship'.

From Leeds (2): What is the full meaning of the word 'propitiation'? Does Christ in His role as High Priest, make propitiation for all believers or only for those called into the Churches of God?

I would recommend Mr. J. Miller's Notes on Rom. 3: 25, 26 and Heb. 2: 17 where he gives what is near to a 'full meaning of the word propitiation'. To quote from Mr. Miller: (1) Christ the Mediator and propitiation meets the sinner's needs that he may be saved. (2) Christ the Advocate and propitiation meets the need of the child of God so that he may live in fellowship with God and the children of God. (3) Christ is the High Priest who meets the need of the people of God so that they may serve Him in the House of God.

His work in propitiation has in view (1) Salvation; (2) Fellowship; (3) Service; having in view (1) All men (2) God's children (3) God's people. 'Notes on Heb. 2: 17. A. B. R.

Propitiation signifies the removal of wrath by the offering of a gift. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men' (Rom. 1: 18), and Christ was 'set forth to be a propitiation' (Rom. 3: 25) by taking that wrath upon Himself on the cross. I take it that 1 John 2: 2 is a reference to the universal efficacy of that sacrifice; it makes provision for all, and all may benefit from it, although not all will. The propitiation is therefore the ground on which the work of Mediator, Advocate, or High-Priest may proceed, and the same act is presented by Christ with different purposes in view. P. L. H.

BIBLE STUDIES

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EDITORIAL

The inclusion of vv. 9-11 of 1 John 2 in our study portion this month is a reminder of the care needed when considering such expressions as 'in the darkness' and 'walketh in the darkness'. For it is important that they should be understood in the context of the passages where they occur.

On the first day of God's creative work He said, 'Let there be light: and there was light'. The apostle Paul takes up this thought in 2 Cor. 4: 6 in relation to the believer's experience: 'Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ'. So that each believer has divine light shed in his soul when he receives Jesus Christ as Saviour. In this sense Paul could write to the Ephesians, 'Ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord'; and to the Colossians, 'Who delivered us out of the power of darkness'.

Yet in the matter of communion and fellowship the apostle John uses the illustration of light and darkness in a different sense. To walk in fellowship with the Lord and with others in communion with Him is to walk in the light (1: 6, 7). 'He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in Him' (2: 10). Contrariwise, 'he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes' (2: 11). So our relationships with one another may affect our communion with the Father and with the Son, and lead to misguided conduct. The degree to which such hatred may blind and pervert the judgement finds vivid illustration in King Saul's attitude to David; Saul's confession in 1 Samuel 26: 21 epitomises this.

We need then to heed the Lord's exhortation in Luke 11: 35, 36 'Look therefore whether the light that is in thee be not darkness. If therefore thy whole body be full of light, having no part dark, it shall be wholly full of light, as when the lamp with its bright shining doth give thee light'. So shall we walk as children of light, 'for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth' (Eph. 5: 8). *G. P.*

ANTICHRISTS

The prefix 'anti' **appears** many times in the Greek text of the New Testament, expressing resistance, contradiction and adversity. The contrary force of the word is best borne out when **as** an independent constituent it appears in **such** portions as:

Mat. 2: 22 **Archelaus** was reigning... in the room (anti) of his **father**.

Mat. 5: 38 An eye for (anti) an eye.

Luke 11: 11 And **he** for (anti) a fish give him a **serpent**.

Although this prefix **appears** in one form or another in practically every book of the New Testament, it is only in John's Epistles **that we find the** exclusive terms Antichrist and antichrists (1 John 2. 18, 2: 22, 4: 3, 2 John 7). In **these** four brief references **he** introduces us to a **subject** of present and universal importance **that may well be** considered profitably from **three** aspects.

HIS COMING. Spirit-taught saints of the last dispensation may well have known from the writings of **such** prophets as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel, **that a** mighty genius would yet arise on the earth, opposing with intense vehemence **all that** exists for God, and endeavouring to **erase** from the earth the rule of heaven. The main objective of his **unreserved** animosity will be God's ancient people **Israel**, 'the saints of the Most High', and those faithful to the 'faith of Jesus'. Despite **all that Israel** has suffered from the oppression of the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and much from tyrants **such as** Antiochus Epiphanes (who may well accurately foreshadow the coming Antichrist), the events of Daniel 7: 23-27, 9: 25-27, 11: 36-12: 4 and Jeremiah 30: 7-8, have not yet found fulfilment. **These** prophecies are undoubtedly brought into **sharper** focus by the teaching of the apostles, who foresaw clearly the advent of a distinct personality dedicated to the enforcement of his own unrivalled will throughout the whole earth. Peculiar to this prophecy is the fact that **Paul** spoke so precisely concerning the man of sin, 'the son of perdition', 'the lawless one', and John confirmed, 'Ye heard that Antichrist cometh'. Only once did the Lord Jesus in His comprehensive ministry refer to the Antichrist, and that indirectly when **He** said, 'I am come in My **Father's** name, and ye receive **Me** not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive' (John 5: 43). **Nevertheless He** clearly warned: 'Beware of false prophets', 'Many false prophets shall arise', 'For there

shall arise false Christs'. In each instance the Greek word translated false is *pseudēs* (erroneous, deceitful, spurious, an impostor, clearly resembling the true). The visible emergence of spurious deceivers was evident to John in 90 AD because 'many antichrists' 'many false prophets' and 'many deceivers' could be recognised as having gone 'out from us' into the world.

HIS CHARACTER. John's discernment of the imposters prevalent in his day was precise and explicit: 'we know', 'hereby know ye'. The character, quality and capacity of such deceivers was recognised by the relationship of their teaching and conduct to the Person of the Son of God: 'Who is the liar (Greek *pseustes*) but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?' 'Every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the Antichrist'. 'Many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the Antichrist'.

The spirit of the great opposing potentate of the last days was at that early stage of the present dispensation asserting its influence through men who went as far astray as to deny the Son (Greek *arneomai* - reject, abnegate, translated 'refused' in Hebrews 11: 24. 'By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter'). As Moses refused to accept the false relationship of being called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, so the deceiver and impostor refused to accept the veritable relationship of the eternal Father to the eternal Son, Who in the fulness of time came in the flesh as witnessed by the Spirit of God (4: 2). To the present day it remains a common feature in the basic teaching of false cults and religious aberrants to reject the eternal being and divine nature of the Son of God, and all who subscribe to this teaching in any form or go along with those who hold it, embrace a lie of the most serious kind and assent to the spirit of the coming antagonist.

It is not without significance that the same word should be used in Acts 7: 35 in regard to 'this Moses whom they refused, saying, 'Who made thee a ruler and a judge?' in order to foreshadow the rejection of the Christ. For all the age-long resentment to the rule and righteous judgement of God's anointed will find full and final expression in the virulent challenge of the Antichrist when he marshals the kings of the earth and their armies to make war against the Lamb, Who shall overcome them 'for He is Lord of lords,

and King of kings' (Rev. 17: 14). As Son He has all authority given Him of the Father, and His right to exercise that authority no man can thwart, not even the 'lawless one' with the power of Satan assigned to him.

APPROACHING CLIMAX. Although prophecy concerning this remarkable person and the spirit of power and pretence that would facilitate his rise has developed over the centuries, the time of his appearance was never in doubt. Jeremiah linked him with the 'time of Jacob's trouble' (30: 7-8). Daniel spoke of the 'time of the end'. Now John computes it most accurately and says, 'It is the last hour', 'we know that it is the last hour'. The hour is the shortest division of time given us in the Scriptures (except 'moment' which is undefined).

Throughout the era since John wrote there have been many of the same kind and substance from among whom the one arch-opponent will ultimately emerge. The spirit of the Antichrist has been evident. The last hour continues to the present time. Although no one can say with certainty that the actual Antichrist has yet appeared on the scene of world affairs, it is nevertheless obvious that the denial of the Son of God, the refusal of His claims and the impregnation of the pseudo and deceiving pave the way for the soon-coming imposter whose emergence will be the dominating feature for this world at the climax of 'the last hour'. But for the believer of this dispensation an earlier climax is ordained at the coming of the Christ of God to the air for His Church. Significant reference is made to this in 2: 28: 'Abide in Him; that, if He shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming'.

Lerwick

D. Smith

ATTITUDES TO THE BRETHREN, THE WORLD AND 'MANY ANTICHRISTS'

(1 John 2: 7-23)

From Lagos: The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein' (Ps. 24: 1). Is the world of Ps. 24: 1 different from the world of 1 John 2: 15? We believe that they are not the same because the Scriptures cannot be broken. The world of Ps. 24: 1 refers to this earth and the created things in it. The invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity' (Rom. 1: 20). 1 John 2: 15 has reference to a world which is best described as a system

highly organised and ruled by Satan (see Eph. 2: 2-3). This world or system is characterized by so much that readily appeals to the fallen nature within us, the flesh, with the aim to lure into wrong desire and the vainglory of life, which are temporal. The rulers of this world are held responsible for the crucifixion of the Lord of Glory (1 Cor. 2: 8). Through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, the world is crucified to the believer and the believer to the world (Gal. 6:14). Were we carefully to keep ourselves in the love of God we should never compromise with a system which is satanic.

'Brethren... mark them which so walk even as ye have us for an ensample. For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is perdition, whose God is the belly and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things' (Phil. 3: 17-19). 'And every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the Antichrist' (1 John 4: 3). John points out that from among the brethren antichrists were arising and they were known by their fruit. The apostle Paul had also warned concerning this in Acts 20: 30-31: 'From among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Wherefore watch ye'. Our attitude will condemn the antichrists insofar as we live out the principle that 'to me to live is Christ' (Phil 1: 21).

S. Coker, E. Bassey

From Leeds: John brings before us a direct contrast, the old commandment and the new commandment. The old commandment (the Law) is briefly summarised in the saying Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Rom. 13: 9). John's following references to love in his Epistle are, in the old commandment, summed up by Paul when he says 'He that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law' (Rom. 13: 8). The new commandment takes us back directly to that precious scene in the upper room and to the last words of our blessed Lord to His disciples (John 13-17). After Judas had received the sop and gone out into the darkness to betray the Lord, the Lord then referred to the new commandment (John 13: 34-35). 'Love one another;... By this shall *all* men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another'. Although the Lord referred here to a new commandment, the disciples accepted it apparently without question. When we consider the love whereby we are loved by the Lord Jesus (Rom. 5: 8, 1 John 4: 7), and that we are

disciples together **by virtue** of His love for **us**, should **we** not reasonably **be expected** to **have** love towards one another?

Difficulty comes **when the** practicality of continuing in His **love** and fulfilling **the** divine will means a putting away of those who **are** 'not of us' (v. **19**). Whilst 'antichrists' are implied here - 'from among your own **selves** (overseers) **shall** men arise, speaking **perverse** things, to draw away **the** disciples after **them**' (**Acts 20: 30**) - **the** disciples **who** go away may even include **members** of our own family. **Does** this mean **that we** should **cease** to love **them**? Surely not **As** disciples **we** continue to love **them** and continue in prayer for **them that** they may **be** restored to **the** Lord (**James 5: 19, 20**). One of **the saddest** occasions in Scripture is seen in John 6: 66-69. 'Many of His disciples went **back**, and **walked** no more with Him. ' Did **the** Lord not love **them** still, and did **He** not yearn **after them**? They **turned** away not only from **what the** Lord was teaching **but** from **the** blessed person of **the** Lord. **True** disciples **are** those who abide (reside) in **the** Lord, and **He** in **them** (**John 15: 4, 5**), since only then can **we** fulfil His purpose in us.

The expressions 'Little children, children, young men, **fathers**,' would **appear** to **be** references to disciples generally in different **stages** of spiritual growth (**John 13: 33, 1 Pet. 2: 2, 2 Pet. 3: 17, 18**). Little children (those new in **the** Faith), growing into young men, need to **be** '**men of the Book**'. Young **men** can only **be** strong and overcomers of evil **as the** word of God abides in **them**. As in natural **warfare**, so in **the** spiritual, it is **the** young men who **are** called upon to **bear the brunt of the battle**.

Another contrast is drawn in vv. **15, 16** between '**the** things **that are** in **the** world', **and the** things of **the** Father. Even **at the age** of **twelve the** Lord Jesus **was** mindful to **be** in **the** things of His Father (**Luke 2: 49**). The world **has** nothing to offer or sustain **the** life of **the true** disciple who abides in and is sustained by Christ. The Lord calls His disciples 'friends' (**John 15: 15**) **and** those who **are** His friends cannot **have** friendship with **the** world, **as the** friend of **the** world is **the** enemy of God (**James 4: 4; John 15: 18, 19**).

Just as Christ (Messiah) was **revealed** to **the** world and **was rejected** of men so **the** Antichrist (**the Man** of Sin) will **be revealed** in **the** closing days. The Lord said 'Another **shall** come in his own name, him ye will receive' (**John 5: 43**). To **aged** John **was the** revelation given of those terminal years,

when the Beast (the Antichrist) will be made manifest (Rev. 13: 1, 2, Rev. 17: 8-13). Before those final days, however, many who are antichrists (false teachers) will show themselves (2 Thess 2: 3, 2 Pet. 2: 1). In the latter days some will depart from the Faith (1 Tim. 4: 1), evil men, deceivers, (impostors) 'shall wax worse and worse' (2 Tim. 3: 13). May we all be given grace to continue in the things which we have learned and have been assured of (2 Tim. 3: 14)!

H. R. Dodge

From Liverpool: John's expressions are very forceful and in vv. 9-11 he deals with love and light, contrasting these with hate and darkness. He emphasizes the importance of loving one another (see also 1 Cor. 13: 4-8).

Within the church there will always be degrees of spiritual maturity. So John writes to little children, fathers and young men. We wondered if there was any significance in the order, as young men would logically be placed second and not last. There appears to be a break half way through v. 13 where the tense changes from the present to the past indicating, perhaps, a previous letter. In v. 15 we are told, 'love not the world'. This refers to the evil system organised and controlled by Satan who is called both the prince and god of this world (see John 12: 31 and 2 Cor. 4: 4). All that this world stands for is described in v. 16, and is transitory. In contrast, that which is of God is eternal (2 Cor. 4: 18). Yet 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son'; this is not the world the evil system, but the men and women for whom Christ died at Calvary (see also Rom. 5: 6-8).

A solemn warning is given concerning the last hour and the arising of many antichrists. In view of a similar warning given by Paul in Acts 20: 30 and other references in the New Testament epistles, we can see that we need to guard carefully those truths which have been committed to us, so that the testimony of God may be faithfully preserved until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

M. S. E.. J. W.

From Macduff: 'He that followeth Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life' (John 8: 12), said the Lord Jesus, and John shows that love for our brother is evidence of this light. An attitude of hate to our brother indicates a darkness in which we shall stumble, and we need to be reminded of the Lord's own commandment for brethren - love one another; even as I have loved you,...

By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another' (John 13: 34, 35). This evidence of the new life among us is bright testimony in a dark, hating world. 'For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light... proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord; and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness' (Eph. 5: 8-11). We noted the force of the Lord's words, 'even as I have loved you', and felt this was the additional factor in the new commandment.

We noticed the affectionate modes of address used by John, but some of us felt the expressions 'children, fathers, young men' in vv. 12-14 refer to different age groups, and record their varied experiences. Each must stand on what he knows, to resist the world and keep his heart set on the Father. Doing God's will is what matters - this brings eternal blessing.

Even when John was writing there was a falling away from the truth, and men were having wrong thoughts about the Lord Jesus. Although Antichrist is yet to come, men who leave the Truth and teach wrong doctrine concerning our Lord are antichrists. We must hold to what we know of the Lord from the first, when we were saved. We have the true word of the Lord, and the Holy Spirit indwells us to teach us. The Holy Spirit... shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you' (John 14: 26). Our anointing is the Holy Spirit who is given to us all at the new birth, and we should be strengthened by our awareness of Him who is our Teacher - 'greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world' (1 John 4: 4).

From Melbourne: The old commandment which John emphasizes is found in the law of Moses, and was summarised by the words Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. In the law written by the finger of God were living oracles which were not made ineffective by the New Covenant, but amplified by the One who came into the world to reveal the love of God to man - a love which not only was manifest to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but which overflowed to all men. During the few years He spent with His disciples, they became very conscious of His love towards them. Having received Him as the Messiah of Israel they marvelled at His humility when He girded Himself with a towel and washed their feet. Having impressed upon them the lesson He said, 'A new commandment I give unto you,

that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another'. These words still lingered in John's memory as he writes, 'Again, a new commandment write I unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you; because the darkness is passing away, and the true light already shineth.' We are not clear regarding the meaning of the latter sentence, but have fallen back upon J. M. 's comments on the portion: The darkness of unbelief, of jealousy, hatred, and every evil work, passes away where the true light of the light and love of Christ sheds its health-giving, purifying rays'. An alternative suggested meaning of the portion is There was a darkness and an element of uncertainty pertaining to the Old Covenant, because of man's inability to rise to its standards, and the ineffectiveness of the provided sacrifices to purge the conscience from complete sense of guilt; but as the knowledge of the perfection of the New Covenant spread among the nations, and men availed themselves through faith, of the perfect cleansing provided by the one sacrifice for sins for ever; together with the fact that Christ had risen from the dead; they rejoiced in the revelation of 'the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus Who abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the Gospel.' Thus the true light was already shining, which was destined to increase in brightness toward the millennial and eternal day. [Comment 4].

John now addresses little children, young men and fathers in the Faith; the former were those who had but newly come to a knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and were rejoicing therein. He rejoices that the young men are strong, because the word of God is abiding in them, enabling them to overcome the evil one. The fathers are those who have reached a degree of maturity; they had heard from the beginning of that fundamental truth, and had held it fast: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'. In vv. 15-17 he deals with three factors which control men and all their doings. They had their origin in Eden and proceeded from the one who thereby became 'the god of this world'. Love of the world and entanglement therein by becoming ensnared in any of these lusts is contrary to knowing and rejoicing in the love of the Father. The word translated 'lust' means 'strong desire'. 'It is sometimes used in a good sense, as in Luke 22: 15; Phil. 1: 23, and 1 Thess. 2: 17' (Vine); but generally it is used of uncontrolled desire.

Many things presented to **the** disciple **of the** Lord can inflame **the** desire **of the** Adamic nature or 'man' within, and **must** be 'made to die'. **There are** natural desires implanted by **the** Creator in His creatures which **are** lawful and right when **exercised** in their God-given **place** and way, **but** when inflamed and uncontrolled become evil. When **used** 'according to knowledge' within **the** divinely ordered limit they are for man's good: **but** outside this limit they become sin. **The lust** of **the** eye is to **be guarded** against, as **the** eye is **the** window to **the** mind. **What** **the** eye rests **and feeds** upon **must be** controlled, otherwise it can poison **the** mind. **The** vainglory of life governs men and nations, and can destroy **the** service of **the** disciple of **the** Lord. **It** is ambitious and **regards** outward appearances **rather** than an inward condition **acceptable** to God. **It** desires commendation from men **rather** than from God.

The many antichrists **referred** to appear to **have** arisen from among **the** churches of God, and **because** their teachings **were** not compatible with **the** Faith they went out to spread their teachings **elsewhere**. **The** anointing of v. **20** is evidently **that** of **the** Holy Spirit who **leads** into **all the** truth, and **the** disciple who is **careful** to **have** an ungrieved Holy Spirit dwelling within **has a** discernment of **truth** and error which **he** is responsible to exercise. **The** **truth** is **the** complete body of divinely **revealed** doctrine found in **the** Holy Scriptures. Anything which does not **measure up** to **the** Scriptures must **be** disregarded as false doctrine. **W. S., T. W. F.**

From Methil: John says, 'I write unto you... **because** your sins **are** forgiven.' Now **he** is guiding **them** in **the** new life **that** is theirs. **The** past **has** been **dealt** with: their sins **are** forgiven. **He** exhorts **them** to love one another, **but** plainly **tells them** not to love **the** world, for if they did love **the** world then love for **the** Father would not **be** in **them** (Col. 3: 1, 2). How would they recognise **the** things of **the** world? These can **be put** under any of **three** headings, **as** things which **appeal** to our natural senses: **the** flesh, **the** eyes, and **the** vainglory of life (pride or **status** symbols). **These** things of **the** world and **the** unseemly desire for **them** will **pass** away (1 Cor. 7: 31) - **just** passing fancies, compared with things of eternal value, for in **that** glorious **future** those who **are** in Christ will not **lust** after **the** world, for then they will **be** with Christ, which is very **far** better. '**He** that doeth **the** will of God abideth for ever.' This is **what** brings lasting satis-

faction: this is permanent.

The Lord Jesus spoke of 'last days' in Mat. 24. John speaks of 'the last hour' - how very near is the end - a time when antichrists arise, and falling away from the Truth increases (1 Tim. 4: 1). Even in John's day and the apostle Paul's time (see Phil. 3:18), there were those who were the 'enemies of the cross of Christ', false teachers both outwith and among the people of God. These are the antichrists - even from the Elderhood! (Acts 20: 30).

It is good to have a full range of ages in a church of God. In fathers, young men and children, increasing age and maturity in spiritual things are reflected in increasing knowledge of and responsibility to the will of God.

Neville Coomer

From St. Helens: We considered the old commandment to be as in Rom. 13: 8-10 and Mat. 7: 12, and the new as in John 13: 34, 35, the darkness passing away, because they learned to love one another and walk in the light. [See Answer to Question from Liverpool]. Because of the flesh it is possible to hate a brother, but love casteth out fear. The apostle must have had joy in writing to little children - maybe those newly saved and rejoicing in the knowledge of sins forgiven - to fathers who by their spiritual experience know the Father, and to young men who must have been in the battle, that they might overcome the evil one (Jas. 4: 7). 1 John 2. 14 is a word to each one of us that the Word of God may abide in us and help us to overcome. If we love the world we will lose much of the eternal blessing our God is longing to grant to us. The last hour seems to have stretched out across many years from John's time to today and will go on until that sinister one comes, the Antichrist.

J. A. L.

From Barrhead: The word of God preached to the disciples contained an old commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself (Lev. 19: 18). The new commandment given was that light and darkness are opposites [Comment 1]. Those who claim to be in the light and hate their brethren belie their position and are in fact blind and in the darkness.

The little children in v. 12 may refer to those who, although young in the faith, know their sins forgiven and God as their Father. Young men have overcome the evil one (Satan) because the Word of God abides in them (cf. John 15: 5, 7). Fathers are mature and experienced in the faith, having

known **the Father** from **the** beginning. **Whilst** Christians **are** in **the world** (John 17: 11) they **are** not of **the** world (John 17: 16), so **we are** exhorted not to love **the** things of **the** world. To love **the** world is to love things which **have** not originated **with** God. **The** lust of flesh and eyes and **the** vain-glory of life originate in **the** world; to love **these** indicates **that the** love of **the Father** is not in us. **The** things of **the** world which **are** seen **are** transient and will **pass** away (v. 17); only **the** unseen is eternal (2 Cor. 4: 18).

L De Ville

From Birkenhead: John points out **the** old (Lev. 19: 18) and new (John 13: 34) commandments which **have** been given, and **stresses that the** new is seen truly **expressed** only in **the** Lord and His disciples. **Vv. 9-11** show **that** profession needs to **be matched** by conduct.

John **uses the term** 'little children' frequently in his writings **as a term** of endearment. **It was** wondered **whether the** 'little children' of v. 12 is one of these, or one of **a pair** of triplets, **where** references **are made** to those **at** various stages of spiritual experience - 'little children', 'young men' and '**fathers**' [Comment 2].

It is not possible to divide one's affections between **the Father** and **the** world. The evil one has sought to **use the** world and **the** lust thereof in his attacks against God's people in every **age**. **The fact that the** world passes away along with its lust should **be** an encouragement for **the true** disciple to go in for those things **which** abide.

The last hour sees **the** arising of many antichrists. They deny **the Father** and **the** Son. Christians **are** indwelt by **the** Spirit, and it is **He** who enables disciples to identify those who **are** not of **the truth**, by testing **them with the truth** - '**I have given them** Thy word... Thy word is **truth**' (John 17: 14, 17).

R. D. Williams

From Derby: 'No new commandment write **I** unto you, **but** an old commandment.' This **we** thought to **be 'the royal law** - thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, which goes **back** in Scripture to Lev. 19: 18, cited seven times in **the New** Testament. God is light and God is love. The word for love throughout this Epistle is **agapao**, the word **used** for divine love. **We** cannot **be** walking in **the** light if **we are** guilty of hating our brother. Love and light **are related** as also **are** **hate** and darkness. The apostle then addresses his spiritual children (as **the** word **teknion** suggests), young men and

fathers, which could have reference to various stages of **spiritual** development. The Lord also **speaks of** His disciples as **'little children'** in John 13: 33, using the word *teknion* [see Comment 2].

The world (*kosmos*) conveys the thought of orderly arrangement as opposed to *chaos* (also a Greek word). God's interest is centred chiefly in the inhabitants of the world He said He loved (John 3: 16). But 'the whole world lieth in the evil one', who is said to be the prince of this world, and the apostle Paul writes of it in Gal. 1: 4 as 'this present evil world'. 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him'. We are not to have for the world or its things the kind or measure of love by which only God Himself should be loved. In seeking to demonstrate the love of God to sinners, however, we need the wisdom of God: 'He that is wise winneth souls' (Prov. 11: 30). The Holy Spirit (our anointing) will show us what to avoid if we seek His guidance, but worldly-minded believers are not careful in these matters.

Antichrists are all those that are against Christ. There are many millions of such, whose understanding the Adversary has blinded, in the world today, even after nineteen centuries of Christian witness. The divine explanation of the meaning of the word 'antichrist' is found in v. 22. 'Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, even he that denieth the Father and the Son'. The Jews, sad to say, are among these, yet at this present season there is a remnant according to the election of grace. Then there are the vast numbers of idolaters, and many modern cults, all paving the way for the 'wicked one' who is yet to come. Many will acclaim the great Antichrist, who is called the Beast in the book of the Revelation. The Lord Jesus said, 'He that is not with Me is against Me' (Mat. 12: 30).

A Smith, S. R. W.

From Kingston-upon-Thames: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Lev. 19: 18) was part of the law of Moses which those to whom John wrote had had from the beginning - an old commandment. The new one was the commandment of Christ (John 15: 12) which was qualified by the words, 'even as I have loved you'. For this to have its outworking in believers' lives they must have a right condition of heart. Furthermore, Christ was the fulfilment of the command He gave, so if disciples walk as He walked they

will also reflect an outworking of **the** heart of God (v. 5). Conversely where actions between brethren **are based on hate such a** condition of heart indicates **spiritual** blindness - 'darkness' (v. 9).

John's **term of** endearment in **v. 12** encompasses **all** who **have** known forgiveness of sins [See Comment 2]. **He** then **writes to believers** of varying **spiritual** maturity **because saved hearts** need instruction and encouragement. In **matters of grace** the order begins **with the** lowest (cf. 1 Cor. 1: 26-29) and **in matters of responsibility** the order starts **with the** most responsible (cf. Luke 19: 15-20). So John **writes first to fathers**, then young men **and** then spiritual **babes (v. 13)** that simply know **the Father** as **a result** of receiving **the Son** (John 14: 6, 7). The **latter can** grow spiritually to become young men. They learn to overcome **the evil** one in **his** daily temptations. **If** they continue to overcome **the** adversary **then** they can enjoy **that peace** of an increasing knowledge of **the** Lord, filling **their lives with Him**, and so eventually become 'fathers'. John's word to those **fathers is a** reminder, **thus** encouraging **them** to continue in **their** knowledge of Christ.

Young men need encouragement in **their** spiritual **warfare**. **The** attacks of **the evil** one **are a** challenge to **the believer's** loyalty, and **there can be** no compromise. Inasmuch **as there is a** love of **the** world and its things **there is a failure to love** God. **This has** been **the case** since man's early days in Eden. **The** forbidden fruit was seen as good for food, **a delight** to **the** eyes and **to be desired** to **make** one **wise**. In **his** love for such things man **succumbed**. In contrast, **Christ** without **lust** of **the flesh** (which John warns against) overcame **the tempter** and **the** stone remained stone (Luke 4: 1-12). **Like-wise**, without **lust** of **the** eyes or vainglory of **life (pride)** **He was able, armed with the** Word of God, to stand against **further** enticements of **the evil** one. **Such is the example** for young men (v. 14), whose eyes **are** on eternal things (v. 17).

To **the spiritual** babes (v. 18) [Comment 3] was given **the immediate** and thorough instruction concerning **the** opposition by antichrists **who** deny **the Father** and **the Son**. Although Deity is **thus attacked such basic** understanding **is given to the** spiritually young by **virtue** of **the Teacher** **within**. Believers, having **the Holy Spirit's** guidance, **are** in possession of **the** key to **all spiritual** knowledge (v. 20).

G. Ackers, G. M. H.

COMMENTS

1. (*Barrhead*): Comparison with John 13: 34 would strongly suggest that the new commandment is to love one another as Christ loved us. The illustrative contrast between darkness and light in 2: 9-11 further emphasizes this new commandment.

2. (*Birkenhead*): Whereas in other contexts the term 'little children' is used more generally, it does seem that in 2: 12-14 there is a twice-repeated use of 'little children, young men and fathers' to indicate different phases of spiritual development.

3. (*Kingston-upon-Thames*): I suggest that in 2: 18, as in 2: 1 and 3: 7 the apostle is including all the disciples to whom he is writing, not just the spiritual babes among them. John uses the term 'little children' in his affectionate regard for them.

4. (*Melbourne*): See Answer to Question from Liverpool.
G. P.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. (*From Liverpool*): What is the darkness referred to in 2: 8?

The interpretation of the latter clause of 2: 8 touches an interesting area of discussion, and the quotations in Melbourne's paper offer possible lines of exposition.

I have been interested to note that the same verbal form occurs in 2: 8 and 2: 17, i. e. *paragetai* (pres. indie, passive) is translated 'is passing away' in v. 8 and 'passeth away' in v. 17. This gives a useful lead, for we understand that v. 17 refers to the ultimate removal of the present world order when the will of God is imposed at the second advent of Christ. It would therefore seem to me that the dispensational aspect is in view in v. 8 also - the darkness is passing away in a similar sense, through the inevitability of divine purpose in Christ having fulfilment at His coming as Son of Man to earth (Is. 60: 1-3; Mai. 4: 2). I therefore consider that the

passing away of the darkness has that future time in view, with a wider connotation than Israel's national enlightenment. For He is also to be a 'light of the Gentiles' (Is. 42: 6), and John referred to the true Light which lighteth every man. At His first coming He was unrecognised by the world in general or by His own people in particular (John 1: 9-11). So the whole world is envisaged as in darkness at His first advent; conversely the whole world will be flood-lit with glory at His second advent.

But meantime there is a sense in which the 'true light already shineth'. Christ is the 'true Light' (cf. John 1: 9). His life and light are within each believer (Col. 1: 27; Gal. 2: 20). So 'ye may be blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, (Phil. 2: 15). Compare also John 8: 12 with Mat. 5: 14.

2. (*From St. Helens*): Does 1 John 2: 18, 19 suggest that some were in the Churches of God who were not believers and went out? Does the name 'antichrists' characterise them?

It is clear from such expressions as 'from among your own selves' (Acts 20: 30) and 'among you also' (2 Pet. 2: 1) that subversive elements within churches of God were effectively used by Satan in New Testament times. Some of these may have been believers who became perverted in doctrine about the Person of Christ. Others may have been false professors without any real experience of the new birth. But they are described as 'antichrists' because their teaching was against the Lord Jesus Christ. In some degree they expressed the spirit of opposition to God's anointed One which will be supremely demonstrated in the Antichrist. G. P.

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EDITORIAL

The similarities between the Epistle we are studying and the fourth Gospel are apparent even in a cursory reading of both. Westcott found in them the 'same monotonous simplicity of construction'. It is true that both are characterized by simplicity of language, but we cannot fail to be impressed by the profound truths that the Holy Spirit unfolds to us through the medium of the simple style of the human penman. The similarities in the subject matter dealt with in these writings are also apparent. The themes that featured in the Lord's ministry in the upper room, and which were recorded by John in the Gospel, are prominent in the study portion this month. There is no doubt that the teaching given in the upper room had made a deep and lasting impression on the apostle.

Numerous references are made in the papers to the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the believer. This is an important and intensely practical subject and we need to be careful to distinguish between the various distinct aspects of the Spirit's work even although some may be effected simultaneously in the present ordering of things in this dispensation.

J. K. D. J.

ABIDING IN THE FATHER AND IN THE SON

(1 John 2: 24-3: 24)

From Leeds: Abiding (remaining and continuing). in Christ and Christ abiding in us should be our main purpose whilst we are in the body. The Lord took time to emphasize this during His last remaining hours prior to Calvary, when, to those whom He loved, His own, He used the illustration of the vine - 'Abide in Me, and I in you' (John 15: 4); we cannot survive, let alone bear fruit, unless this be so (15: 6). These words remained impressed on the heart and mind of John, and continually in his epistles he refers to that which abides.

At the outset they had responded to the call of the Stranger

of Galilee; they **had** committed their way to **Him** and received from **Him** the life everlasting (John 10: 28). Even when **we** were **dead** through our trespasses **He** 'quickeneth **us**' (caused **us** to become **alive**- Eph. 2: 5). The Lord *is* Truth (John 14: 6) as is the Holy Spirit (John 14: 17). Though some may **fail** and **depart** from the Truth, the Truth **abides** (remains). The Holy Spirit (Truth) **abides** in **us** and in **all** those who belong to Christ; **whether we abide** continually in **Him** appears to be conditional. **If we lived** daily with the thought that today **He** would return and **we** would **see Him face to face**, **we** would more surely **live** abiding in Him.

God *is* Love, **but the** manner of that love was made known 'in our case' (1 John 4: 9 RVM), so that **we** are 'called children of God', and **such we are**. **NOW** we are children of God (3: 2) and **we** need to **live** out our lives as **such**, purifying ourselves at the laver of the Word, to **be**, even as **He is**, pure (3: 3).

Until **He** comes and 'fashions anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of His glory' (Phil. 3: 21) the Holy Spirit is to **take full control as we live**, 'Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. 2: 20 AV). Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the word of God (1 Pet. 1: 23) as a new creation (man), **we** cannot sin (v. 9). However, our old nature (man) continues **with us**. **We wage** a continual warfare, the carnal against the spiritual. **We have** to mortify (make dead) that which is of the flesh (Col. 3: 5) and yield ourselves to the motivations of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 6: 13). The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that **we** are children of God' (Rom. 8: 16). *H. R. Dodge*

From Liverpool: It is clear from the passage that false doctrine was being taught in the church. We suggest that this took three forms:

1. It would appear there were those who were teaching that Christ became flesh not through the virgin birth, but by taking possession of a good person, and that He returned to heaven before the crucifixion (1 John 2: 23, 24, 27).
2. Extreme emphasis was placed upon the spiritual life of a person, and the deeds of the body were considered unimportant (see 1 John 3: 6).

3. **There were** those who **seemed to teach that** by disciplining **the spiritual aspect** only of a man's life it was possible to **get close to God** (see 1 John 3: 9).

[It is difficult to see support for these suggestions in 1 John 2 and 3. —Eds.]

1 John 3: 9 would appear to contradict completely 1 John 1: 10 [Comment 1].

Then, as now, it is sadly possible for those who are indwelt by **the Holy Spirit, the One who is to teach us all things, to teach false doctrine. All are not given to teach, but those who have this responsibility must ensure that their doctrine is of God, and we all have a responsibility to learn from the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 John 2: 27).** Those who **thus learn from the Spirit will know fellowship with the Father and the Son in a practical way and so demonstrate in their lives love in deed and truth (see 1 John 3: 18).** This is not a once-for-all experience but a daily exercise requiring a daily confession of sin and failure and a commitment to serve God. Thus is highlighted the continual conflict that exists between the old and new natures, each bearing its own fruit (see 1 John 3: 8-10). The person who is truly abiding in the Father will not sin (see 1 John 3: 9) because sin will have no power over him. Similarly the person out of fellowship with God will be spiritually dead and capable of demonstrating that hate which caused Cain to murder his brother. 1 John 3: 15 makes it clear that the act of hatred is as serious as the act of murder itself and is the outworking of the principle laid down by the Lord in Mat. 5: 27, 28 when dealing with adultery. So we judge that 1 John 3: 15 is not saying that no murderer can be saved, but that the person who exhibits the hatred of a murderer, at that moment does not have true fellowship with God. True fellowship with the Father and the Son will result in a practical demonstration of the fruit of the Spirit so that we will love not in word or tongue, but in deed and truth (1 John 3: 18). *D. H., M. S. E.*

From Macduff & Whitehills: God has bestowed on us a great honour in that we are called His children. We have the great hope that some day we shall be with Him and we shall be like Him. Everyone who has this hope set on Christ is purified by this hope. In 5: 17 we are again reminded of un-

righteousness being sin. **Our Lord was** manifested to **take** away sin and in our Lord **there** is no sin. **If we abide** in the Lord **we** sin not. In **2: 26** we read of those who would **lead us** astray **but** if **we** want to abide in the Lord, **we** should not become involved with **the** unrighteous. **We** should **rather cleave** to our brethren and indeed **be prepared** to love **them** so **much that we** would lay down our lives for them. Christ is our **great example** in this. To abide means to **dwell** or rest. Every believer is anointed by **the** Holy Spirit **which** can **be** seen in a new life now abiding in Christ. **As long as** our roots **are** in Christ **we** will grow and **bear** fruit. **It is** possible and **sad** to know **we** can quench and grieve **the** Holy Spirit causing not **the** fruit of **the** Spirit **but the** works of **the** flesh to **be** manifest by getting our eyes on **the** attractions of **the** world and forgetting **the** love of Christ. John **14: 23** says '**If** a man love **Me**, **he** will **keep** my word: and my Father **will** love him, and **we** will come unto him, and **make** our abode with him'. **The Father** and **the** Son abiding in **us** is conditional on our obedience to His word. **Paul** writes '**I** have been crucified with Christ; yet **I** live; and yet no longer **I**, **but** Christ liveth in **me**' (Gal. 2: 20). **Saul of Tarsus, the Chief of Sinners, now Paul the Apostle, was** not only in Christ, **but** Christ and **the Father** **dwelt** in him. **He was** now nearing his goal **The** prize of **the** high calling of God in **Christ Jesus**' (Phil. 3: 14). **C. C., A. McLR.**

From Melbourne: **It has** always been **the** objective of **the** **great** adversary of God and man to **detract** from **the** glory of **the** eternal Son. Therefore **false** teaching regarding **the** person of Christ **has** always been prominent. **We** would **judge that** in **the** case of those to whom **the** apostle **was** writing, '**that** which they **had** **heard** from **the** beginning', while doubtless including '**the** whole counsel of God', **had** primary reference to **the** vital **truths** enunciated in John **1: 1-14** Concerning **the** deity, eternal nature, Creatorship and manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ. 'Abiding in **the** Son and in **the** Father' **appears** to involve **the** conscious certainty of **these** **truths**, for **apart** from this **there** can **be** no **assurance** of eternal salvation for any human being. Eternal salvation is promised solely and only to those who believe on **the** Son **as** **revealed** in **the** Word of **the** Gospel. Should **these** **truths** **be** jettisoned by anyone **the** assurance of salvation is lost, **and** **we** **judge that**, although still **saved** with an eternal

salvation, **such a person is** not abiding in **the Son** and in **the Father**. John **writes** to remind **them** of **what** they **had** been **taught** in **the** beginning of their spiritual history, and also to remind **them** that **'the** anointing' they **had** then received (**which we judge** to be **the** indwelling Holy Spirit), would bring to **their** remembrance **all** that they **had** heard from **the** apostles who **had** imparted to **them** that which they **had** received from **the** Lord Himself.

We should often consider carefully and critically, **'the** manner of love **the Father hath** bestowed upon **us**, that **we** should **be called** children of God'. By nature **we were** under condemnation and **separated** from God by sin and wicked works, yet **the** love of God towards man in sending His Son to die **that** sinful man might live **has** induced in **the** hearts of men who **are reached** by **that** love, a readiness to become strangers and sojourners in **the** earth. **The place** of **the** Son of God in **a** world His hands **had made** was **that** of a stranger, and those who become children of God **are** like unto Him. In outward appearance they may **be** like those around **them**, **but** they should **be** distinguished therefrom by characteristics of Christ and another country. **The** day of complete manifestation of who and **what** they **are** lies **ahead**, **at the** moment of **the** coming of their Lord and **Redeemer**, when they will **be** completely conformed to His image and likeness. To **have a** continual consciousness of this hope will cause **them** to long for and **reach after** purity of life.

The world is sharply divided into two classes, children of God and children of **the** devil; **the** former following **after** righteousness (albeit often hindered by **the** flesh which is not **subject** to **the** will of God) and **the** latter who do only **the** desires of **the** flesh and of **the** mind. The love of God, **shed** abroad in **the** hearts of **the** former is not a nebulous thing, **but a** reality displayed in practical action towards **the** brethren and towards **all** men.

There are conditions to asking and receiving. The Lord delights to give **that** which is needful for our highest good, and **He** desires to **hear us** asking in order **that He** may give **us** **that** which is according to His **will**. **Our** asking should **be** accompanied by **the** knowledge **that we have** a delight in doing **the revealed** will of God. **The** external evidence of **the fact** that His children **are** 'abiding in Christ' is **the** consistent keeping of His commandments. **W. H. F., T. W. F.**

From Methil: The faith, especially of those who were babes in Christ, was very apt to be shaken by the false teaching of seducers and apostasiers from the truth. John seeks to strengthen the faith of those to whom he writes.

The subject here is really the communion and life of the believer with God, and not, as in John 15, fruit-bearing, but the same conditions are requisite; abiding in the Father and in the Son. If we know Him we know the Father. In John 17: 1-3 the words are reversed by the Lord: 'eternal life' - 'life eternal'. One expression seems to have to do with the duration of the life, the other with the kind of life it is - divine, spiritual life, and this is what is in the mind of the apostle (2: 25) [Comment 2].

How precious it is to know that even a babe in Christ has the anointing mentioned above, the Holy Spirit dwelling within, as teacher, comforter, guide (John 14: 16-17, 26, 15: 26, 16: 7-15). One is reminded too of the words of the Lord: 'And they shall all be taught of God' (John 6: 45 where He is quoting from Is. 54: 13 and Jer. 31: 33-34 which is cited again in Heb. 10: 16).

Being born then of God by His Spirit through the living word, we are in ch. 3 called by God His children, and we are pointed forward to the day when the Lord shall come to receive us to Himself, when we shall see Him and be like Him. The hope in 3: 3 is not hope in the believer's own self, but hope which has Christ as its object. We know we shall be like Him when He appears but it is for us to be like Him in our lives, practically, here below.

There are three very practical principles mentioned in this third chapter, and the Lord Jesus is set before us as the measure of them. They are purity, righteousness and love. We should be pure even as He is pure, v. 3; righteous as He is righteous, v. 7, love one another as He loved us, v. 16. These things will never be seen in perfection in us while here in the body, and on the earth, but we can have our blessed Lord as our example, and seek to be like Him in these things.

Peter (2 Pet. 1: 7) seems to distinguish between 'love of the brethren' and 'love'. [Two different Greek words are used. Mr. Miller has a helpful note on 2 Peter 1: 7]. Divine love acts according to the nature, character, and will of God, and ought to direct and characterize our walk on earth as Christians. It is not our natural love: it is God who is love

working in us. **If this love is** an essential proof of being renewed, **it is quite natural that it should not be found in men of the world. The Lord said (John 15: 18) The world hateth you . . . It hath hated me before it hated you'. It would not be true of us that we love our brother nor even show love to men in their sinner need, if we had not seen that love first in God and in His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.**

A McIlree (Snr.)

From Nottingham: The portion under consideration opens with an exhortation to **let that abide in us which we have heard from the beginning.** To which beginning does this refer? **It seems to relate to the start of the spiritual experience of those saints to whom John was writing when the acceptance of certain fundamental truths was essential. Such a doctrine was that which taught Jesus was the Christ and the deity of the Son. It was the work of the Antichrist to deny these basic principles. Had John been relating the 'beginning' to himself alone he would have thought, no doubt, of his early days with the Master and those revelations which were granted to him and his fellow disciples (for example, Mat. 16: 16, 17). These truths were to abide in those to whom he wrote as living principles and, only as they allowed them to do so, would they abide in the Son. Keeping the word of the Lord is an essential feature of abiding in Him (cf. John 14: 23, 24).**

We may ask whether any specific promise of the Lord is referred to in 2: 25. There are several promises which have the underlying thought of abiding in Him (e. g. John 6: 54, 56 and John 17: 3) 'and this is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him Whom thou didst send . . . ' The thought of 'abiding' is that of 'taking up permanent residence' and we do well to give these truths a lasting place in our hearts.

As a loving father John addresses those to whom he writes as 'little children' and reminds them (2: 28 RVM) that if they abide in the Lord 'we may have boldness and not be ashamed before Him at his presence'. The use of the pronoun 'we' is interesting. It is suggested that John was including himself with other living believers and referring to living believers generally, but on the other hand, it might be that by 'we' he was thinking of the elders who had the care for the flock. If they were able to exhort the saints to abide in the Lord then the shepherds would have no cause

for **shame** in the flock when the **Master** returned. **The thought may be** analagous to **'What is** our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? **Are** not even ye, before our Lord Jesus **at his** presence?' (1 Thess. 2: 19 RVM) [Comment 3].

It is to the apostle John **that we owe much** for the teaching of **the truth** of regeneration. **The** R. V. translation 'children' seems more correct than **the** A. V. 'sons' and **the Greek** word **used is** one **which** gives prominence to **the fact of birth (3: 1)**. **It was a** source of wonder to John **that** those who **were** by nature alienated from God **had** now become **His** children and **this** through **His** wondrous love in **the gift** of **His** Son. John calls upon **his readers**, and us, to 'behold', to contemplate, this expression of Divine **grace**.

With reference to **the** expressions 'sons of God' and 'children of God', **it is** of more than passing interest to note **that the use** of the word 'son' would denote likeness in addition to relationship, and in certain **verses where** 'sons' **are** mentioned **we have attached** conditions, (for **example**, in 2 Cor. 6: 17, 18; Rom. 8: 14 and **Mat. 5: 9, 45**). **There is** an exception in **Gal. 3: 26**. **R. Hickling**

From Vancouver: In 1 John 3 we see an exhortation to **the believer** to enter into **the** outstanding appreciation of God's **gift**, represented by God's love in sending **His** Son. **The term Father is used** most appropriately when **we view** ourselves as children of God, bringing out **the** nearness of God's children to **their** heavenly **Father**. The world understands **us** not **because we are** controlled and governed by God, a concept alien to **their** minds. **We seem** ignorant and ridiculous to **the** worldly-wise **because their delight is** in vile language, lies, selfishness, pleasure and a complete separation from **the beauties** of God. As Christians together **it must be** our endeavour to show brotherly love for one another, and a concern for **the** needs of others.

As redeemed children **we have the privilege** of a daily **walk with** God, **but this is** not comparable to **the** glories **that lie ahead**. **We** thought of a **similar** illustration in **the 3** years in **which the** disciples **shared** fellowship **with** Christ and **the redeemed gathered** together during **the** countless years of eternity. **We** thought of Phil. 3: 21 and how though mankind **has** been so **marred** by **the fall**, **we shall be** renewed **at** His appearing in glory. In **this life** men become **like the** objects of **their** devotion, **but** believers should now, and **will in the**

future, mirror **the** glory of **the** Lord.

As we think of **the** believer's life in relation to Christ we naturally first think of purity. **The** life of Christ was blameless, **He** was continually overcoming evil and temptation, **whether** during **the** thirty hidden years in **Nazareth**, or during His **three** years of ministry when His life was seen by all. How **much the** believer needs to purify himself, recognising **the perfect** life of Christ as **the mark** to which **he** should strive to attain. As members of **the** heavenly family, **we are** united to Him Who is sinless and Who bore our sins, through believing in His accomplished work [Comment 4]. **We** can become **part of the** overcoming life, can **abide** in His love, **and**, one day soon, **we will be** linked with Him throughout **the** countless ages of eternity. **AS.**

From Barrhead: Distinction was **made** in **regard** to life eternal and eternal life, **the** former bringing out **the character and** quality of this kind of life, **the latter** having to do with duration - **an** endless life [see Comment 2]. Verse 27 touches upon **the** divine Spirit being **the** Anointing and divine teaching and **truth** being imparted to **us** in fulfilment of **the** Lord Jesus' promise (John 14: 16, 17, 25, 26; 16: 13, 14).

1 John 2: 29 in principle **has** direct bearing on the first **twelve** verses of **ch. 3**. It could **speak** of **God** or Christ as righteousness and love being expressive of **perfect** Deity. **The** Father's boundless love in **all** its mighty activity is brought out in **the** endearment of our being **called** 'children of God' [Comment 5].

The word 'begotten' is perhaps **better** understood as being born again (John 1: 12, 13). It was pointed out **that the** expression '**the** only begotten Son' referring to our Lord Jesus **has** special significance in relation to Christ's eternal Sonship. Distinction was also **made** between 'sons of God' and 'children of God', **the** former having to **do** with Divine purpose and foreordination: **the good** pleasure of God's will and **the** dignity of our heavenly calling. **The latter** has to do **with** our position on **earth**, manifesting **the** holy fruit of Divine life and love [Comment 6]. Love in action predominates in 3: 13-18 which seems to **be** intensely practical and self explanatory. Abiding is **the** key-word throughout this section. **Our** inestimable blessings by abiding in **the** Son, by **the** Spirit, in His blest commandments, His Word, Truth **and** doctrine, will not only **be** our chief pleasures, **but**

by abiding in **Him we** may enjoy **the** great assurance of Christ **the Son** abiding in **us**.
Wm. Fullarton

From Birkenhead: If Christ's teaching (**the subject** of John's ministry **in the beginning**) **abides** in **the** believer then **he will abide** in **the** Son and in **the** Father. In **this** position **the** believer **is** secure from **the false** teachers who would **lead him** astray **with their** teaching. **The Spirit was** given after **the Lord's** ascension and **is** referred to in John **16** and **2 Cor. 1: 21, 22**. **We** are **set** apart. **The Spirit is** our guarantee; **He helps us** to **test** Christ's teaching against **that of false** teachers and by **His** anointing John says **that the** teaching concerning **all things is available** amongst believers.

Abiding in **Him** our Saviour, standing firm in our position, our connection to **the** Source of **life will** show out in our lives. **We shall** do righteousness and **shall have** boldness before **Him at His** coming.

John **calls** for a consideration of **the** love of God **which** brings **us** into an inviolable relationship **with Him**. In **this** position **we** enjoy privileges of **which the** world **has** no knowledge. Although our present appreciation may **be limited there is** a future **time** when **all will be** manifested. **We shall be like Him** in character and **as we have this** hope in prospect **we shall be** careful to purify ourselves.

John moves on to **stress the** gravity of sin and **tell** again **that the** Lord **is the** Sinbearer, **the** Scapegoat (**Is. 53**). **As we abide in** Christ so **we shall** not sin. Within **the** believer there are two natures. **If he is** possessed of **the** divine nature **he will** not sin, **but** responding to **the** old nature results in sin. Where **there is evil it** shows **up in hatred** of one another, an **example of this** being Cain and Abel. Every **child of God has** a consciousness of sin. **If we are like our Lord** then **we will** experience persecution **like He** did. Premeditation is necessary to **the** conviction of **murder** [Comment 7] and **thus it seems** reasonable to infer **that a deliberate attitude of hatred is here in view** (3: 15). **Rather our lives should be laid down for the blessing of the brethren. Phil. 2: 17** tells of **Paul's** experience. Sometimes feelings may **mislead, and** John in conclusion outlines **the verities which we** can hold within **the heart to reassure us in times of doubt.** **R. D. Williams**

From Derby: Looking up the word 'Abide' we found that

the word 'continue' has a similar meaning, as also the words 'Hold fast'. These occur often in the context of the Lord's return (e. g. 2: 28, Rev. 2: 25; 3: 11). In Heb. 2: 1 the contrast to holding fast is the thought of sliding or slipping away (AV) and drift away (RV): letting go one's hold, such that the current of worldliness or false teaching or coldness of heart causes spiritual shipwreck. Thus the oft repeated exhortation to abide, continue, and hold fast, for the dangers are great and many. The apostle Paul wrote (Col. 1: 23) 'If so be ye continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel'. We were reminded of such that did not continue in the faith (left the Fellowship) yet have not moved away from the hope of the gospel. The Psalmist wrote 'Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe, and shall have respect unto Thy statutes continually' (Psa. 119: 117).

We stressed the need of obedience to the Lord's commandments in the practical aspect of abiding in the Son and in the Father. Love also was seen to be an important thing; love to God, His Son, and to one another, which was the Lord's command from the beginning. The Lord's own perfect love was to be the pattern, 'Even as I have loved you' (John 13: 34). 'He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself to walk even as He walked' (1 John 2: 6). The Lord has only one standard; the highest. The above passage would suggest a consecrated life in close communion for we could be abiding in the teaching (correct as to doctrine) without the personal devotion toward the Lord. We are all conscious of falling short of the ideal, but we are not to despair but to endeavour to grow in grace (2 Pet. 3: 18). Phil. 3: 17-21 touches upon the thought of the Coming One and has in view the many who were not walking in step with the beloved apostle. We have already experienced the change of the inner man, and we await the change of the bodily frame (2 Cor. 5: 1; 1 John 3: 2, 1 Cor. 15: 51). We know that if He shall be manifested (in our life-time) 'we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him even as He is', in contrast to the experience of John on the Isle of Patmos, when the much loved apostle fell at His feet as one dead (Rev. 1: 17, 18). There is the holding fast our confession (practising what we confess) (Heb. 4: 14); and holding fast the confession of our hope could speak of testimony, as the apostle Paul exhorted Timothy, 'Be not ashamed of the testimony of the

Lord nor of me His prisoner' (2 Tim. 1: 8).

We have been begotten of God - of incorruptible **seed**. Our natural **fathers** could only **beget us** in their own sinful likeness, **but** God **begat us** in **His** own holy nature **which** cannot sin (1 John 3: 9 and 5: 18). Our new God-given nature is **imparted** to **us at the time** of our heavenly **birth**, when **we are** 'born of God' (John 1: 13 and John 3: 5 RVM) 'born from above'. **This is** supported by Eph. 4: 24 **The** new man, **which after** (or according to) God **hath** been **created** in righteousness and holiness of truth'. **This** new creation in **Christ is the part** of our being **that** cannot sin and **which** has eternal **life**, and **which**, as mentioned above, one day **will be** clothed upon **with** our habitation (bodily **frame**) **which is** from heaven. **It is** written (Jer. 13: 23) 'Can the Ethiopian change **his** skin, or **the** leopard **his** spots?' No! **but** God can change **the** nature of both. **We see the** Ethiopian **saved** in Acts 8 and in Is. 11: 6, a future state when, 'The leopard **shall lie down with the kid**' (instead of killing and devouring it), is depicted. **G. W. Conway, S. R. W.**

From Hayes: This portion is closely linked with John 15.

1. *How can we abide in the Father and the Son?*

It will be by abiding in **the** Word - 'My words **abide** in you' (John 15: 7). **The** Word **must** not only **be** known **but** **the** commandments in **the** Word **must** also **be** kept (2: 24). **It is clear that** abiding **is** a continuous process and not a once-for-all event **like** conversion.

2. *What are the results of abiding?*

(a) **We shall be free** from sin (3: 6). **This** positive statement **raises difficulties** and **we must take it** in relation to other **scriptures**, for **example**, 1 John 1: 8. **The** statement of 3: 9 **is** even more **emphatic because it refers** to every born-again person and not only to those who **are** 'abiding'. In addition, **we** know from experience **that we are** not **free** from sin. The explanation of **these verses** may **be that they refer** to **the** new nature **received at the new birth**, whereas 1 John 1: 8 **refers** to **the** sin of **the** old nature **which is still** within **the believer** [This is correct. — *Eds.*]. **These verses** may also **be** showing **that the child** of God **is** different from **the** unbeliever in **his attitude** to sin and, **if he sins will realise his** wrong and **seek** forgiveness.

(b) **the Holy Spirit will assure us that we are** abiding (3: 24).

(c) **We shall receive the things for which we pray. We shall be so guided by the Spirit that what we ask will be the will of God (3: 22; John 15: 7).**

(d) **We shall not be ashamed when the Lord comes (2: 28).**

Another **theme** which runs through **this passage, as well as** in so **much** of John's writings, is **that** of love. Firstly **(3: 1), we are called** upon to consider **the** Father's love, its extent and quality and **what** it **has** done for **us** already and will do for **us** in **the** future **(3: 2)** Secondly, **we** are reminded of Christ's love (3: 16). Thirdly, our proper response **is** to love **the** brethren and show it in **a** practical manner **(3: 17).**

From Kingston-upon-Thames: Vv. 24-27 continue the words of warning to **babes** in Christ - 'little children' (**Gk. Paidion**) v. 18. John's advice to **such** is to **let the** Lord's commandments **live** within **them**, implying more than **a** head knowledge of them. **The basic** commandment, to love **each** other **as the** Lord loved **them (3: 11, 23)**, they would **have heard** from **the start** of their disciple days (John 15: 12, Mat. 28: 20). They would increase in **their** knowledge of **Father** and Son, finding **the truth** of life eternal (John 17: 3) by being obedient to their Lord's commands (John 14: 21, 23). In adopting **such a** pattern of **life** they would **be able** to discern and avoid **the false** teaching of antichrists; being **assisted** by **the Teacher of Truth, the** Spirit within. Through **His help** they **had the** key to **all** needful knowledge and would learn to **abide** in Christ. **All** believers, **addressed** endearingly **as** 'children' (Gk. *teknion* - v. 28) by John, need to continue in **that** Spirit-taught abiding. Then, **if teachers** and **taught** alike **have** centred their thoughts and lives on Christ, theirs will **be** confidence, not **shame**, at His coming.

The Spirit and **the** commandment within, and **the sure** knowledge of **a** soon return of **the** Lord, **all** prompt the believer to **see that** his actions **reflect** his new nature. This **matter** is **dealt with** by John from v. 29 to **chapter 4** v. 6, **after** which **he** explains how **the** divine **life** within **was** obtained for **the** believer. Firstly, **believers are** enjoined to purify **themselves** so **as to be** like Christ now, even **as they shall be** like Him when **He** comes. **That** coming, for **the** ones who by **the** unsearchable love of **the** **Father** **have** been brought into **the** relationship of children to God, is certain

- the 'if of ch. 3 v. 2 relating to timing alone. Being **like Him will** mean ceasing to **scheme** and **practise** sin. Sin could not **be** found in **the** believer's Lord (v. 5): **it is** not present in **his** new-born nature (v. 9) and should not **be** seen in **the** believer's life. Furthermore, **he that is** 'of God' (v. 9) in terms of obedience (compare 1 Cor. 3: 4 - 'of Paul') does no unrighteousness, although **it is** regrettably true **that a** disobedient believer can so bow to **his** old nature **as** to reveal **the** control of Satan in **his** life (v. 8). Righteousness **should be** seen and **blended with** love of brethren. **Such** action **is** bound to show **the** disciple's position (John 13: 35) and may **draw a** hostile response from unrighteous ones (3: 12-14, John 15: 17-21).

John continues by showing how **regard** for brethren is **practical**, not merely theoretical. **Neither is it** a secondary matter. To **be** guilty of withholding love means **the** love of God **is** not shown in **the** believer's life, nor **is there** evidence of eternal life. In loving **the** brethren, **believers** prove to **themselves** (v. 14), and to others, **that they are** born anew. Again **this is** in fulfilment of the principle: '**we shall be like Him**' - **be like Him** now (v. 16). Being **like their** Lord in **deed** and **truth gives** **believers** assurance and confidence in prayer. How can a **believer** boldly **ask** God for something **he feels** is wrong? **Rather, led by the Spirit** to **ask** according to **His will, he will receive his request** - so long **as** disobedience does not prevent blessing (v. 22). **The Spirit is the believer's guide** in prayer and in **matters** of obedience. So **he is** also **the** one who **assures the disciple** of his abiding in **Christ and the** Lord's abiding in **him**.
G. M. Hydon

From Lagos: Two **gifts will abide** always with the believer in Christ. Firstly, '**the word of faith**' (Rom. 10: 8), which John calls '**his seed**' [Comment 8] (1 John 3: 9). Secondly, '**the Anointing which ye received of Him abideth in you**' (1 John 2: 27). **The Spirit of truth... He abideth with you, and shall be in you**' (John 14: 17). **He is** begotten of God who **has these gifts** [Of course it is the new birth that makes a person a child of God — *Eds.*]. '**What manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God: and such we are**' (1 John 3: 1).

John points out **the** new nature which the believer has received cannot sin (3: 9), because 'through one act of righteousness **the free gift came** unto... justification of **life**'

(Rom. 5: 18). Attention is also drawn to the teaching by His anointing (the Holy Spirit) to abide in Him because of the evil propensity, the old nature within the believer, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit (Eph. 4: 22).

The two things go together: (i) abiding in 'the things which we have learned and have been assured of (1 Tim. 3: 14) and (ii) abiding also in the Son, and in the Father (1 John 2: 24). These two things are vital to us as believers to renew 'unto knowledge after the image of Him (God) that created him' (the believer) (Col. 3: 10) and because 'apart from Me ye can do nothing' (John 15: 5). The foundation of fruit-bearing: the following conditions are binding if we would abide in the Son, and in the Father: (i) heart obedience in keeping all the holy commandments (3: 24); (ii) purity of life in hope of His appearing (2: 27-28; 3: 3); (iii) living righteously even as He is righteous (2: 29; 3: 7, 10) and (iv) unfeigned love of the brethren both in words and deeds (3: 14-23).

S. Coker, E. Bassey

COMMENTS

1. (*Liverpool*): There is no conflict between 1 John 3: 9 and 1 John 1: 10. The believer has two natures, a new nature that cannot sin and the old nature that is ever prone to sin. The first scripture relates to the former, the second to the latter.

2. (*Methil*): There is no real evidence for making a distinction between 'eternal life' and 'life eternal'. In the Greek text the order of the words in John 3: 16; 17: 2 and 1 John 3: 15 is 'life eternal' and in John 17: 3 and 1 Tim. 6: 12 is 'eternal life' (see Bible Studies 1959 page 170 comments 2 and 5).

3. (*Nottingham*): I think that John had in view all believers who were alive at the time he was writing. He was exhorting them to conduct themselves in such a manner that they would not be ashamed in the presence of the Lord if He should come in their lifetime. To apply John's words to elders in particular would, I judge, be straining the interpretation of the passage.

4. (*Vancouver*): There appears to be a fusion of two concepts here:

1. We are children of God as a result of the new birth (John 1: 12, 13).

2. We are members of the church which is His body having been **baptized** in the one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. 12: 12, 13).
5. (**Barrhead**): 'Children of God' is an explicit term defining the relationship into which **we have** been brought by the new birth. **God** is our Father and **we are** His children.
6. (**Barrhead**): While the term 'children of God' indicates relationship the term 'son of God' denotes, in addition to relationship, a likeness to God. This **general** distinction is illustrated by **such** scriptures as Rom. 8: 14, and Mat. 5: 44, 45 (RV). There is, however, a special use of the term 'son' in Gal. 3: 26 where those under the law are viewed as children (minors) and in contrast the believers in Christ of the present dispensation are viewed as sons. The latter will one day be given their place as sons (Eph. 5: 1). It is this purpose of God that appears to be in the minds of our friends.
7. (**Birkenhead**): Our friends appear to be arguing their case from the requirements of British law. The law of the land has no divine authority except in so far as it is based on God-given law such as the Law of Moses. It may be that the requirements of Num. 35:15-27 are in the mind of our contributor.

It is worth while noting that 1 John 3: 15 does not say that no murderer has eternal life; it says 'no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him'. It can be inferred from Rev. 9: 21 that it is possible for a murderer to repent. J. K. D. J.

8. (**Lagos**): Is this not the new nature? See Leeds paper re 1 Pet. 1: 22 P. L. H.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

From Leeds: If the Holy Spirit indwells all believers, and He guides into all the Truth (John 16: 13) why do not all believers come to the full knowledge of the truth?

Every believer, because he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, has the competence to acquire a knowledge of the truth. A proper spiritual condition and a willingness to be taught are of course necessary if this desirable objective is to be realised. If these conditions are not fulfilled there will be a lack of progress (see 1 Cor. 3: 18 Heb. 5: 11-14 and 1 John 7: 17). J. K. D. J.

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BIBLE STUDIES

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EDITORIAL

In our portion for this month, John returns yet again to what one contributor has described as 'the dominant theme' in the Epistle - the subject of love and its outworking in our lives. Emphasis is laid on the fact that God is love and all love springs from Him. John examines the wonder of divine love as expressed in God's gift of Christ and His work on Calvary. Who could ever tire of this contemplation?

We are reminded, however, that God's love for us must be reflected in the love we have for each other. Clearly, the teaching of the Saviour had made a profound impression on John. 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another' (John 13: 34). John takes up this theme in reminding us that 'this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also' (v. 21). In 1 Cor. 13: 4-7 the apostle Paul puts love into perspective. It is not simply an emotional reaction. Rather is it expressed in qualities and attitudes which have a fundamental bearing on all personal relationships. Our study reminds us that this is an aspect of our lives which will come under review at the Judgement Seat of Christ.

R. L.

PROVING THE SPIRITS AND ABIDING IN LOVE

(1 John 4: 1-21)

From Liverpool: John indicates that there are two spirits: the one which confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, and the one which denies the deity of Christ. The first is of God and the second of the Antichrist. V. 24 of the previous chapter reminds us that the Holy Spirit indwells all believers and in John 14: 16, 17 John records the words of the Lord Jesus, 'And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive... ye know Him for He abideth with you, and shall be in you' (see also 2 Cor. 1: 21, 22 and Eph 1: 13, 14).

From v. 3 we wondered in what way the spirit of the Antichrist manifested itself within the church and assumed that

it was in the form of **false** doctrines [Comment 1]. **Paul's** words to **the** elders at **Ephesus** **emphasize** very strongly **the** power and influence of **the false** spirits (**Acts 20: 28-30**) and **the** continued need to 'prove **the spirits**, whether they are of God'. **A** similar warning is given by **Paul** in **1 Tim. 4: 1, 2** where **he** refers to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. **Of** course, **it must be** remembered **that the** canon of scripture **was** not complete **at this time** and Satan sought to counterfeit **that which was** of God. Today **we have the** Scriptures in their entirety and **have a** responsibility to **test all** doctrines against **the** revealed and written word of God.

Love **is a** continuing **theme** throughout **this Epistle** and once again John returns to **the** subject. Love **is** of God. **All that we have** and are **stems** from **this** profound **truth**. **Because** God **has revealed His** love in **such a** practical and intense way, John exhorts **us** to love **each** other and **states quite** bluntly **that a** man who says **he** loves God whom **he** has not seen and **hates his** brother **is a** liar. Indeed, God's love **is** not fully perfected until **it is** manifest through **the** believer in **all its** glory (**see** Rom. 5: 4-8).

If such love **is** demonstrated in **the life** of a believer, **the** fellowship **which will** result between **that** person and **his** Lord and Master **will cause him** to **abide** in God and so love **will be** perfected (**see** vv. 16, 17). **These** verses link wonderfully **with** Col. 3: 12-14 **which** concludes **with the** words 'above **all these** things **put** on love, **which is the** bond of perfectness'. **The** outworking of **all this** means **that the** individual may **have** boldness in **the** day of judgement.

D. J. Webster, M. S. Elliott

From Macduff: **We have** been strongly reminded in our study of **this Epistle** of things **the** Lord Jesus **said** to **His** disciples, for **it was the** Lord **Himself** who first warned **them** **Take heed that** no man **lead** you astray' (**Mat. 24: 4**). Men were **having** wrong thoughts about **the** Lord, whether from Jewish or other sources, and John **gave his** readers **a test of the** soundness of **the** spirits **activating these** so-called prophets. **If they** **said the** Lord **had** not yet come in **the flesh** they could know **this was a lie** typical of **the** coming Antichrist, and **the evil** work associated **with his** appearance **had** already begun. **We** noted **that in a** coming day **the** Antichrist, **with** Satan and **the Beast** **will** send forth out of their mouths 'spirits of demons working signs: **which** go forth unto **the**

kings of **the** whole world' (Rev. 16: 13, 14). **There is great support and encouragement in the assurance 'greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world'. They are of the world' (v. 5) speaks of the false prophets led by evil spirits and is contrasted with 'ye are of God' (v. 4) and 'we are of God' (v. 6), reminding us of the Lord's words 'I have given them Thy word; and the world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world' (John 17: 14).**

John **appeals** to his **readers** to show and **practise** love among themselves reminding **them that** God's **love** is a giving love, bringing life and forgiveness to **men** who did not first love Him. **We** must learn this love for **each** other, and it will bring new experiences of God abiding in **us** - 'if **we** love one another, God abideth in **us**, and **His** love is **perfected** in us' (v. 12). John shows how interlocked is our profession Godward and our attitude to **each** other - '**We** love, **because He** first loved **us**' (v. 19) and this includes our brother. **We must** learn to **love each** other **as He** would **have us**, for love **has** a restraining and refining **effect** on **all we** do, so giving **greater** confidence **at the judgement** when our motives **are** examined. 'Love vaunteth not itself, is not **puffed** up, doth not **behave** itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, thinketh no evil (**AV**), rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, **but** rejoiceth with **the truth'** (1 Cor. 13: 4-6).

From Melbourne: The word 'Beloved' with which **the** writer commences this portion was no formal mode of address to **the** saints to whom **he was** writing. John **had** experienced **a** fellowship of love with His **Master** upon whose breast **he had** leaned, and **that** love **had** permeated his being. **It was** not merely natural affection **but** divine love which **had** captivated his **heart**, and manifested itself to those who **had** obtained by **grace** a like precious faith **with** him in **the** One who **had** loved **them** and given Himself for **them**. This **love** did not cause him to condone either **the** presence of false prophets among **them** or **the** propagation of their teaching. His loving **care** for **the** saints of God **caused** him to write in no uncertain way concerning **the** origin of their evil doctrines which would **lead far** astray from **the** Faith. Those whom John addresses **were** themselves responsible to **prove** every spirit by **the** Word of **the** Lord, which **had** been **imparted** by **the** apostles who **had** heard and been **taught** by **the** Lord Himself.

The false prophets to whom he refers we would judge to be Judaising teachers, who were propagating the error that Jesus was not the anointed Messiah of prophetic promise. His parentage and family were known; and the teaching was evidently prevalent among the Jews that when Messiah came little would be known of His origin (John 7: 27) [Comment 2]. This was the spirit of Antichrist already in the world. The influence of these teachers was apparently strong, but those to whom John is writing had overcome them, because of the Spirit of God dwelling in them, to whose teaching they had hearkened and been subject.

The only future judgement which the child of God will know, will be the Judgement Seat of Christ, where there will be no fear of condemnation. The exercised believer is very conscious of the imperfections of his earthly service, which will then be fully revealed; but the perfect love then existing between the believer when in a body of immortality and the Lord will cast out all fear. *W. H. F., T. W. F.*

***From Methil:* The Holy Spirit abides with the believer continually as Teacher, Friend, Guide, Comforter, and that is the proof that God dwells in us. He dwells in us by His Spirit.**

From the believer's side, the first proof of the Spirit's indwelling is the confession that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, with all that this really means. This knowledge does not come through the flesh but is a revelation from God (see Mat. 16: 16-17). Many false prophets and false teachers who did not acknowledge this truth had crept in and were undermining the faith of the saints who were told to prove the spirits with which these men were imbued. Every spirit which does not acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the Son of God come in the flesh is indeed the spirit of the Antichrist. It was already in the world, active in John's day, and it is all around us in the world today. It will be concentrated in the Man of Sin, the personal Antichrist, in a day not far distant (2 Thes. 2: 1-12).

The second proof that the believer has the Spirit of God dwelling in him, and that he is subject to His leading, guiding and instruction is that he will listen to those who are his teachers. The Lord Himself was the great Teacher. We have His words. We have the Holy Spirit's guiding (John 14: 26, 15: 26, 16: 13-15), and we have the words of the apostles.

We thought that this is at least part of the meaning of v. 6. While it is true that we will listen to anyone who is manifestly of God yet, when we remember that the apostles had direct revelation and authority from God and their words are on record in the inspired sentences, how necessary it is that we should listen to them in the light of Eph. 2: 19-22!

Throughout the rest of this chapter the words 'know' and 'love' are repeatedly used. The word for 'love' is *agape* the word which indicates divine, spiritual love. While it is true that in the natural sense the more we know of a person the more we will love him, sometimes the opposite is the case. It is also true that there is a knowledge that comes only through love.

God is only known as He is revealed and He has revealed Himself first by the inestimable Gift which He has given. We should thank God for the measure in which it can truly be said of us that His love has been 'shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us' (Rom. 5: 5). We enjoy His love by dwelling in it. This is by communion, a most important thing for the believer. God dwells in every believer but our dwelling in Him has to do with our state of soul before Him.

We thought that the last clause of v. 17 might be looked at in two ways. Firstly the believer is viewed by God as perfect in Christ, although he will never be perfect until he is delivered from this body of sin. He is accepted in the Beloved One. Secondly he is in the world and hated by the world, as the Lord was hated and rejected by the world (see John 15: 16-25, especially v. 18 and many other scriptures).

A McIlree Sr.

From St. Helens: The apostle had a threefold purpose in this chapter of his Epistle. Vv. 1-6: to caution and advise on how to recognise true and false claimants to Holy Spirit indwelling. Vv. 7-16: to confirm that brotherly love should be evident as the dominant characteristic of Christians, remembering the love of God and of Jesus Christ to us. Vv. 17-21: describing our love to God in its cause or source, its nature and effects on our relationship to Him and to our brethren.

In every age there are those who would set themselves up as Spirit-led to seduce true Christians. Referring to the spirit of the Antichrist (Mat. 24: 23, 24) John says 'Ye have

heard that it cometh', and goes on to say, 'And now it is already in **the world**'. Counselling **them** to '**believe** not every spirit', **he** indicates **that the** infallible **test** to separate true and **false** spirits **is** whether confession **is made** '**that Jesus Christ is** come in **the flesh**'. Together **with this**, in our day, in discerning true spirits, ought **we** to examine by comparison **with the** word of God teaching **relative** to the resurrection, **eternal** salvation, and Church of God? [Comment 3]. Also v. 5 **suggests that they that** are of **the world make this** very evident by their manner of life. **The** apostle encourages **the** saints by asserting **that**, by **faith** and obedience motivated by **His** Spirit, who **is** wiser and more powerful, **we can be** overcomers.

John then returns to **the dominant theme** in **this Epistle**, 'Beloved, **let us** love one another: for love **is** of God, and every one **that** loveth **is** begotten of God'. For **emphasis he uses the** negative and **further** underlines **this** important relationship when **he** says, in v. 20, '**If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar**'. **Such love is expected of us because** God **first** loved **us** and demonstrated **His** love by giving **His** only begotten Son to **die** for **us** at Calvary. Since God **is** not seen by **us**, and saints bearing **His** image and born of **His Spirit** are **visible**, showing love to fellow saints **is a prime** evidence of our love to God. **Thus** '**His love is perfected in us**'. Should **we** not **view** our brethren and **sisters** only 'in Christ'? [Comment 4]. **There is** reassurance in **vv. 16, 17 that**, convinced by **the** Word and God's love for **us**, and **with** love for **Him** and our brethren, **we** may know **sweet** communion now, together **with** reverence and holy **fear** and confidence in judgement, **but** no **distrustful despair** or terror. Concluding, **he repeats This** commandment **have we** from **Him**, **that he** who loveth God love **his** brother also'.

J. H. R.

From Birkenhead: The true believer is indwelt by **the Holy Spirit** and will confess **that Jesus is the Christ**. Contrasting **with this are** those who do not so acknowledge **the Christ** (see 1 Cor. 12: 3). **The** teaching of those energised by Anti-christ **must be rejected as false**. **False teachers will be heard and accepted** by **the** world - those who **are** under **the** control of '**the god of this age**'. **The** sound doctrine of those who **speak** from God **will not be acceptable** to those who **are** of **this** world. **This is** another **test which** can **be applied** to

identify **the Spirit of truth** and **the spirit of error**.

It is the responsibility of the child of God to show the character of the Father. Love **has its** origin in God. **There are no degrees in the love of God.** There **are three** statements concerning our love: **'let us love one another' (v. 7); 'we also ought to love one another' (v. 11) 'this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also' (v. 21).** Similarly **there are three** statements concerning **the** manifestation of God's love in sending **His Son (vv. 9, 10, 14).**

John 1: 18 **assures us that** although God **is** unseen, His Son **has declared Him.** God's children should **be like** His Son and show **forth the** love of God (v. 12). To endorse **the** requirements concerning our love **we referred** to Rom. 13: 8-10 and John 13: 34. **If there is that perfect** love existing between **disciples there will be** no fear as to adverse reactions in our dealings **with** one another (v. 18). **As** our love **is made perfect,** so **we** can look to **the** day of judgement **with** boldness.

John concludes by clearly stating **that if we say 'I love God'** then certain other things **must** follow (vv. 20, 21).

R. D. Williams

From Camberwell: This **Epistle** is said to **have** been written by **the** apostle John about 90 A. D.

From evidence given in **the** opening **chapters of the Epistle,** and indeed from **the** nature of **the text** and style of writing, **it can be seen that** doctrinal error **had crept** in. From v. 3, **we** can conclude **that** rumours about **'the spirit** of Anti-christ' **had puzzled** Christians **at that time.** This produced heresy and **the** main anxiety in John's mind, as seen from **this chapter, is the** imminent danger of apostasy **which had** been engendered not **as a result** of persecution (**as** in **Hebrews**), **but** by false doctrine. Two main **heretical sects were active at this time,** although not established as organisations - **the** Gnostics, who **claimed to have a** superior knowledge of **spiritual** things, and **the** Docetists, who **believed that Christ's** body was a phantom. **The** controversial **beliefs held** by **these** sects and other minority groups **had caused** divisions in defining **the** personality of Jesus Christ. Some respected **His** deity **but** denied His humanity [Comment 8]. The apostle **was** concerned to **emphasize** and **establish the** personal identity of Jesus Christ (**cf. 1 John 2: 22; 2 Pet. 2: 1; 1 John 4: 2).**

There is no explanation for **the** sudden change in **thought** in v. 7. His **theme is** 'abiding in love' and **he draws a** distinction between those who 'know God' and (therefore) '**love** one another' and those who claim to do one **but** not **the** other. The **latter** might **be** described **as** hypocrites. God's love to **us** was manifested in **the death** of His Son. John defines love, in its **real** sense, not **as the** love **we have** for God, **but as the** love God **has** for us. God's love is unselfish, provoked by no advances and expecting no response from us [Comment 9], **We** should follow **the** example of this type of love. **If** 'God is love' (v. 16), **we have** (according to v. 15) **a love based** on our faith (cf. 5: 1-13, faith based on love).

The perfection or maturity of our love consists in believing in '**the** love which God **hath** in **us**' (v. 16) and if **we** allow this love to develop then **we** can **face the** judgement day 'with boldness'. **We** should not **be** afraid of someone who loves **us** 'perfectly' or **what He** might do to us. **Our** love for Him therefore comes as **a** result of His first loving us. In conclusion, John says **that** anyone who loves God **must** love his brother also.

Derek Fullarton

From Derby: 'For who among men knoweth **the** things of **a** man, **save the** spirit of **the** man which is in him?' (1 Cor. 2: 11). Thus it can **be** said **that the** words 'Believe not every spirit' mean not to believe **all that** religious men and women say or write [Comment 12]. **It** is wise to compare **what** they say with **the** Scriptures of **truth**. **There are** antichrists and **false** prophets, **as the** apostle **Paul** wrote in 1 Tim. 4: 1, 2 'seducing spirits and doctrines of demons', men who **speak** lies. By God's **grace**, **we are** able to overcome **such false teachers because** '**greater is He** that is in you than **he** that is in **the** world'. One soon discerns who **are** of God and who **are** not.

We should seek prayerfully to **be** followers of God **as** beloved children, imitators of God, like Him who **begat us**. Though '**created** in righteousness and holiness of **truth**' (Eph. 4: 24) and so manifesting **the** new man (**see ch.** 3. 9) yet to our **shame we are** often unlike **the** One who **begat** us. 'Who-soever shall confess **that** Jesus is **the** Son of God, God abideth in him, and **he** in God' (v. 15). This word is **a great** blessing to **the** believer and 'who-soever believeth **that** Jesus is **the** Christ is begotten of God' is another **gem** for our

hearts' comfort. The Lord said to Peter on his confession of faith in Mat. 16, 17: 'flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but My Father which is in heaven'. Thus Peter and the rest of the disciples of the Lord were born from above because of their faith in the divine Sonship of the lovely Man they followed.

In most of the verses in John's Epistles where the word love appears the Greek word is *agapao* which occurs nine times in ch. 4 alone. 'Herein is love made perfect in our case, that we may have boldness (free utterance) in the day of judgement'. Being made conscious of the love of the perfectly righteous Judge, perfect love casteth out fear. We believe this judgement to have reference to the Judgement Seat of Christ. If there we have free utterance, we feel our words will be few. If any, they may be words of humble confession [Comment 10]. It has been said that the apostle Paul had but two days in his calendar, 'today' and 'that day'. It was the Holy Spirit who first put into our cold hearts any love for God and His Son. In Ezek. 11: 19, 20 God promised His people, 'I will take away the stony heart... and give them a heart of flesh' (soft and warm instead of hard and cold). 'We love because He first loved us'. We manifest our love for God by doing His commandments and loving our brethren whom we can see. G. Conway, S. R. W.

From Edinburgh: There are many spirits in the world but only one true Spirit. John writes 'Believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God' (v. 1). V. 2 gives us the criterion by which we prove them, 'Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God'. How do we know that to be true? Firstly it is revealed in the Scripture and then in the heart of each one who believes. 'No man speaking in the Spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema; and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor. 12: 3). Therefore those who are of God discern the spirits of truth and error by reference to His word.

The apostle contrasted the Spirit of God and the spirit of Antichrist. The true Spirit confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, whereas the false spirit denies that fundamental truth. It is of the world and the world listens to it. The Spirit of God is true and abideth in us. He is not of the world and

therefore **the** world does not listen. Hence **we** discern **the** spirits. **It was suggested that believers** who **had** fallen away could **be** imbued with **the** spirit of Antichrist, **Heb. 6: 4-6**, and **10: 26-31** being **quoted** [Comment 11]. In **vv. 7-21** John returns to **the subject** of love. **The basic truth is** simply '**God is love**' (v. **8** and **16**) and **the apostle** shows how **that love** is **expressed** to **us**. '**Herein is love not that we loved God, but that He loved us**' (v. **10**). **We** did not love Him. **The** extent of **that** love is shown in His sending His only begotten Son '**to be the propitiation for our sins**'. **We** love Him '**because He first loved us**' (v. **19**) and because of **that we love** one another. Even more, God abides in **us** and **we** in **Him**.

'Love is of God; and every one **that** loveth is begotten of God' (v. **7**). Thus **we are** brought **back** to **our** salvation. **We are** begotten of God and as His children **we have received** God's love manifested in His Son. **But** v. **7** continues, 'and knoweth God', which is conditional. This is **a** knowledge **that has to be** acquired, to **be worked at**. However **there is** a negative side. **If we** do not love then **we do** not know God. **If we hate** our brother, **we cannot love** God (v. **20**).

L Burgoyne

From Hayes: The apostle John is warning his **readers** in **vv. 1-6** **that there are** two types of spirits influencing people. Believers should **be** under **the** influence and guidance of **the** Holy Spirit and should **beware** **that** they come not under **the** influence of **a** spirit **which** is contrary to God. **The** test whereby **we** can recognise **such** is **that** every person (spirit) **that** acknowledges **that** Jesus Christ **was made** man - **that He has appeared** in **the flesh** - does so through **the** Holy Spirit. **There are** many **false** prophets and those who do not acknowledge **that** Jesus Christ is come in **the flesh are** of **the** Antichrist. God's **truth** will prevail **because He that** is in **them** is more powerful than **he that** is in **the world** (v. **4**). The **false** prophets or **teachers were** of **the** world, spoke of **the** world, and **were** listened to by **the** world (v. **5**). In contrast, John says **that we are** of God and those who know God will listen to Him and others who **are** like Him. Those who do not listen **are** not of God and this is how, John says, **we** can discern between **the** spirit of **truth** and **the** spirit of error.

The key question however is **that** of love. God **revealed** His **great** love to **us** by sending **His** one and only Son into **the** world **that we** might live **through** Him (v. **9**). **We** did

not love God yet **such** was His love **that He** sent His Son to **die** an atoning **death** for us (v. 10). In **view** of **such love**, **we should** love one another (v. 11). Humans cannot **see** God **but** if **we** love, then God will live in **us** and His **love** will **be made complete** in us (v. 12). Verses **13-15** are referring **back** to earlier statements: compare v. 13 with **ch. 3 v. 24**; v. 14 with **ch. 1: v. 2** and v. 15 with **ch. 3 vv. 23, 24**.

We know **we** live in Him and **He** in **us** **because we have** the indwelling Holy Spirit (v. 13). **We** know **the truth that the Father** sent **the** Son to **be the** Saviour of **the** world (v. 14) and if **the** believer acknowledges **that** Jesus is **the** Son of God, then God lives in him and **he** lives in God (v. 15). In an experimental sense **we have** come to know and believe God's love to **us** (v. 16). **As we** continue in God's love **He** continues to live or remain in **us** (v. 16) [Comment 5]. Because this love is **made** complete in us **we do not** **fear the** coming judgement day because **we are** like Him. **If** love is **the** ruling force in our lives then **fear has** no **place** in **us** nor **the** punishment associated with **that fear** (v. 18). **A** test then is **that** if **we have** **fear**, then **we are** not complete in His love (v. 18). **We** only love because first of **all He** loved **us**. Another test is given, **that** if **we hate** our brother then **we** really cannot love God whom **we have** not seen (v. 20). It is **a** command **that** if **we** love God then **we** will love our brother (v. 21).

R. F. Robertson

From Kingston-upon-Thames: This chapter may **be** conveniently divided into two sections; **the** first, to **verse 6**, continuing **the** discussion on how **the** Spirit-born life should **have** its **effect** in daily living [Comment 6]; **the** remainder dealing with how **that** life **was** obtained and its nature. **A** link between these two thoughts is **the** working of **the** Spirit.

True prophecy is **the** work of **the** Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1: 21). So also **false** prophecy is **a** working of **a** spirit - **the** spirit of **the** Antichrist. Scriptures **such as** 1 Cor. 12: 3-11 and Eph. 2: 2, 3 indicate **a** many-sided working of one spirit [Comment 7] thus explaining **the** need to prove an apparent multiplicity of spirits (v. 1), **all** of whose teachings would emanate from only two sources - **the** Spirit of **Truth** or **the** spirit of error. Men who **had** sought to **lead** believers astray (2: 26) **would** **have** claimed spiritual guidance. Therefore **the** saints needed **an** acid test as to whose teaching was correct. The **clear**

answer was that any denial of the incarnation of the Son is the hallmark of the Antichrist. Furthermore, it was to be expected that false teachers would have their disciples (v. 5). However, believers having God the Spirit indwelling them (v. 4) and leading them would hear and discern the truth in Spirit-taught preachers' words. Thus they would confirm that those who are born of God have the ability and duty to divide truth from error. John gives guidance in this matter in view of the possibility of failure to exercise such an ability.

John had already (1: 5) introduced the fact that God is Light. Now he tells also that God is Love. The greatest expression of God's love was the sending of His Son. The Eternal Son came that men might live, but this hinged upon the work of atonement being completed. That offering was made through the Eternal Spirit. The nature of the new life so obtained is demonstrated as children of God, having experienced God's love to them, show love one to another. The perfection of God's work of redeeming love is attested by the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer, and He works to cause the believer to witness that fact (v. 14).

The nature of the believer's new life is such that he is identified with Christ while he remains in the world (v. 17). If that identification has its proper out-working, then the believer's life-work should result in confidence at Christ's Judgement Seat, as distinct from shame (2: 28). Since perfect love casts out fear (terror rather than reverence) the believer's attitude (terror or confidence) to the coming judgement is a true indicator of his measure of perfecting love - the result of keeping God's word in his life (2 v. 5).

G. M. H.

From Lagos: 'Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God being moved by the Holy Spirit' (2 Pet. 1: 20-21). The attitude of believers in Berea was most significant: they received the word with all readiness of mind and examined the Scriptures to discern the truth of what they heard and received (Acts 17:10-15).

The sacred revelation of Jesus Christ in the flesh, that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man, is the fundamental test whereby we discern every spirit. He who receives this vision embraces the knowledge of the Son of God which gives eternal life to the soul and fills the heart

with the warmth of God's love, revealed at the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a revelation which the world cannot receive and neither is it offered by the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience. 'Every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the Antichrist' (1 John 4: 3).

The hallmark of the work of the Holy Spirit is contained in the Lord's word 'He shall glorify Me' (John 16: 14). In stark contrast to this, the Scripture speaks of seducing spirits in the later times who will seek to enforce doctrines of demons through the hypocrisy of men who speak lies (1 Tim. 4: 1-5).

'All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee' (1 Chron. 29: 14). The principle set forth in this word of Scripture answers to what John is saying: 'We love, because He first loved us' (1 John 4: 19). The measure by which we are taken up with the vision of 'His Son... the propitiation for our sins' (v. 10) is also the measure by which we are enriched with His love to give to God and His own. An explanation, suggestively given, of the word 'propitiation' has it that 'it is the turning away of great wrath by reason of the blood that covereth' (see Gen. 32: 20; Ex. 12: 13; 1 John 2: 2). S. Coker, E. Bassey

From Leeds: The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth and Jesus Himself said that when He comes, 'He shall guide you into all the truth' (John 16: 13). In the last days, evil men and imposters (deceivers, seducers) shall wax worse and worse (2 Tim. 3: 13) and in these later times, the Spirit speaketh expressly that some shall fall away from the Faith, 'giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies' (1 Tim. 4: 1-2). John speaks of spirits (v. 1) *many* false prophets (v. 1) *many* antichrists (2: 18). As heresies and false teachings spread, men are led away from the Truth. 'Anti' being 'opposite': as the Spirit of God draws men *unto* the Truth, the opposite is evidenced when anti-spirits and antichrists are active.

The Spirit of God and evil spirits (spirit of anti-Christ) are in the world (vv. 2, 3) and motivate and speak through men here on earth. Children of God are indwelt by God by His Spirit (vv. 13, 14). He is greater than the Devil who is in the world (v. 4).

To **delude** men, Satan **has** introduced into **the world** **facsimiles** of **the truth**, but **his** voice **is** of **the world** and not of God. Those who **are** truly 'of God'; those who know (*ginosko* = **have the assured** knowledge of) God, can know and discern **the Spirit** of **Truth** and **the spirit** of error (v. 6).

Love **is** of God and **we** need to show **this** love to one another. Man **has** within **him** a natural love and affection. In **these latter** days, Satan works on **this** natural love so **that** by **the** very evidence of **the** daily activities of men around **us**, **we see that** men **are** given over to unnatural affections in **the** outworkings of Satan in **them** (Rom. 1: 18, 24, 27-32).

In our **case** (v. 9 RVM), **the** love of God **was** shown amongst **us** for **He** sent **His** only begotten Son into **the** world. **His** love **has** been 'shed abroad in our **hearts** through **the Holy Spirit**' (Rom. 5: 5). **As** God **has** so loved **us**, **we** should **have** love towards one another (v. 11). Love **is** not **activated** in **us** unless **we are** motivated in having love towards one another, **thus** perfecting God's love in **us**. **The** outward manifestation of God's love through **us** shows **that we are** 'of God'. **We** cannot only **say we have** love and **hate** our brother, **else we are liars** (v. 20).

To **have** boldness in **the** day of judgement (v. 17) **appears** to indicate one who can stand freely and unencumbered before **the** eternal Judge of all. **The** position **is** indicated for **us** by John in 2: 28. In **the light** of **the** imminent return of our Lord, **what** manner of persons ought **we** to **be** in **all** holy living and godliness (2 Pet. 3: 11). **We must all be** manifested before **the** Judgement **Seat** of **Christ** (2 Cor. 5: 10) and **each** one's work **will be** (a) manifested (b) declared (c) revealed (d) tried (1 Cor. 3: 13 AV). *H. R. Dodge*

COMMENTS

1. (*Liverpool*) **This seems to me to be** a correct interpretation. **The false teaching was**, in **effect**, a denial of **the** incarnation of **the** Lord Jesus. Those advancing **it** were 'confessing not **that** Jesus Christ **is** come in **the flesh**'. Christ **is** **the** touchstone of **all** truth. Every teaching may **be judged as** to **its truth** or falsity **as it affects Him**.

2. (*Melbourne*) **I suggest that the** false teaching **was** specifically a denial of **the** incarnation (**see v. 2**). **I** understand **that there was** an early **sect**, a branch of **the** Gnostics, who **taught that** Christ **was** only a man in appearance, **but**

not in reality. By **this view, He had** no real humanity, **His** appearance **was** only an **assumed** form for **the** purpose of a manifestation to men. To **all** students **the** implications of **this** heresy **will be** immediately **clear**.

3. (*St. Helens*) **All teaching must be tested** according to **the** written word of God. The Bereans **are** commended for 'examining **the Scriptures** daily, **whether these things were** so' (Acts 17: 11). This is of **particular** importance in **these** later days, of **which we are** warned **that** in **them** 'some **shall** fall away from **the faith**, giving heed to seducing **spirits** and doctrines of demons' (1 Tim. 4: 1). **The** counterbalance is found in **the** teaching of good ministers of **Christ Jesus**, 'nourished in **the** words of **the faith** and of **the** good doctrine' (1 Tim. 4: 6). **Our** Liverpool contributors **have** drawn attention to **Paul's** warning to **the elders** of **the** Ephesian **church**, from **which we** note **that** false teaching may **be** given even by **elders** of **Churches** of God.

4. (*St. Helens*) **The** words 'brother' and 'sister' imply a **familiar** relationship. **Ali** who **are** 'in **Christ**' **are** children of God, within **His** family, and **we** therefore love **each** one.

5. (*Hayes*) **There** is, of course, no suggestion **here** **that** by failing to **abide** in love a **believer** may lose **his** divine **life**. **What is at stake** is the measure of our fellowship **with** God.

6. (*Kingston-upon-Thames*) In **particular**, of course, **vv. 1-6** present **the criteria** by **which we** may determine **whether** teaching **is** of God - i. e. proving **the** spirits.

7. (*Kingston-upon-Thames*) **Of** course 1 Cor. 12: 3-11 and Eph. 2: 2-3 refer to quite different spirits. 1 Cor. 12 deals with the Holy Spirit and **His** gifts. In Eph. 2: 2-3 **Paul** is reminding **the** saints **that**, prior to **their** salvation, **their** lives had been under **the** control of **the Devil**, 'the spirit that now worketh in **the** sons of disobedience'. **Our** friends **are** no doubt making **the** point **that** in **each** case **there** **are** **diverse** manifestations.

R. L.

8. (*Camberwell*) John was certainly anxious to combat **the** heresies **that** were being propounded regarding **the** Lord's person. **The Scriptures** plainly **teach** **that** **the** Lord Jesus **is** **one** glorious person in whom two natures, **the** divine nature and human nature co-exist. **He** was Son of God from **all** eternity and by **the** incarnation **He** became also Son of Man.

9. (*Camberwell*) I would **judge that** one reason for God's love being shown is to **beget** love in **the** hearts of those on whom **it is** bestowed. **We** love, **because He** first loved us (1 John 4: 19).

10. (*Derby*) I think Rom. 14: 12 indicates **that each** one of **us** will render an account (in words) **at the** Judgement **Seat** of Christ. The word translated 'account' is **logos** of which W. E. Vine **says**: 'a word or saying, also means an account which one gives by word **of** mouth'. **J. K. D. J.**

11. (*Edinburgh*) The spirit of Antichrist **has to do** with wrong thoughts about **the** personality **of** Christ. **The Hebrews** scriptures **deal** with wilful sin, **which** shows small **regard** for **the** work of Christ in His **death**, **but** may not **attack** His essential personality. **A. B. R.**

12. (*Derby*) **The** activity of **the** Holy Spirit is contrasted in vv. 1-6 with **that** of demons, who **are** under **the** control **of** Satan. These spirits **use** men **as** their instruments, influencing **the** human spirit; **but** it is not **the human** spirit **that** is referred to **here**. **P. L. H.**

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

From Liverpool: What is **the** meaning of **the** expression '... **that we** may **have** boldness in **the** day of judgement' (1 John 4: 17)?

John **here has** in view **the** Judgement **Seat** of Christ. **The** Lord Jesus commanded His disciples to 'love one another; even **as I have** loved you' (John 13: 34). In 1 John 4: 21, **the** apostle John reiterated this commandment. My own view is **that** those who **have fulfilled** this command will **have** confidence, **as** they stand before **the** Judgement **Seat**, **that** in this **matter** they will receive **the** Lord's '**Well done!**'.

An interesting alternative viewpoint is **expressed** in some papers. For **example** our Melbourne contributors suggest **that the perfect** love which will exist between **the** believer, then in his body of immortality, and **the** Lord will **cast out all fear**, and **we** will then **be able** to stand before Him in **perfect** boldness. **R. L.**

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EDITORIAL

In the final chapter of 1 John, the apostle reminds his readers of the things they should hold as certainties. Some they know because of their own experience of the power of the indwelling Spirit, some because of the evidence of historical fact, and some through revelation from God. John points also to the practical results that this knowledge should have, in love for others, obedience to God, prayer and sanctification. Good practice stems from sound doctrine; error in one will lead to error in the other.

Some difficulty was experienced by contributors over the meaning of the 'water' and the 'blood' (vv. 6, 8). The explanation which links them to the actual blood and water shed from the Lord's side does not seem satisfactory. The Lord did not come 'by' or 'through' this blood and water, and the phrase 'not with the water only, but with the water and the blood' would be meaningless. It seems clear that the 'blood' refers to the Lord's death on the cross, the factual evidence that He gave His life for us. The case for the 'water' referring to the Scriptures is well argued in the Kingston paper, and this is certainly a feasible explanation. However, one must ask if this is likely to be the straightforward, intended use of the words, grasped by the original readers. What would be meant by 'not with the water only'? It is suggested that the most likely explanation refers the 'water' to the Lord's baptism. This was the symbol of His obedience to the will of God. He submitted to taking the form of a servant, and His Father expressed His pleasure by witnessing to Him from heaven. But obedient service was not enough, the atoning blood had also to be shed in death. So the events of the Lord's baptism, those of His cross, and the Holy Spirit in His present work, all testify that Jesus is the Son of God.

P. L. H.

CORRESPONDENCE

From Melbourne: Polygamy and Adultery. (See Dec. 1975 BS issue, p. 179).

We are not aware **that** anywhere in **the Old Testament** has **there** been any suggestion **that the** polygamy practised by **the** patriarchs and many of **the** people of Israel **was** an adulterous association.

We believe that it was in **the** permissive **will** of God **that Leah, Rachel** and their handmaidens should **build the** house of Israel. No charge of adultery **has ever** been **laid at** Jacob's door. **Neither** can it be.

Editors **agree with this** comment from Melbourne (**See** editorial comment and answers **BS 43 p. 177 et seq**) and **this** and other points **raised in the article were left** for discussion. **The article said 'the** Creator intended **that there should be a** one-to-one relationship lasting **"till death do them part" ' and referred to Mat. 19: 6 as** confirmation and restatement of **the** ideal. **But so far as the O. T. is** concerned others than Abraham who **had** concubines and **wives were** not reprov'd as adulterers, and **the Law of Moses (Deut. 21)** provided protection for **these wives** and **their** children. **The New Testament makes** no **explicit** reference to polygamy **but it is** evident **that teaching on marriage is based on the** one-to-one relationship. **Eds.**

From Melbourne: The Unjust Steward. (Luke 16: 1-13)
[**See pp. 161, 180 of 1975 Vol. .**]

In connection **with the** discussion on **the** meaning of **the** parable of **the** unjust steward, **the** following **has** been **received** from TWF (Melbourne).

The interpretations generally given imply **that the** steward plans to **defraud his master** more unashamedly than before. **Is it not rather that the** steward is seeking to **make** friends by means of **his** own resources, by reducing **the** indebtedness of **the** debtors to **their** creditor? For **the** oil debtor of v. 6 **he** personally pays **50%** of **the** debt; for **the** wheat debtor **he** pays 20%. **This leaves them with a** substantially **reduced** debt and **puts them** under an enduring obligation to **himself**. **Their gratitude** would **be** expressed in **their** receiving **him** into **their** houses. **The** sons of **this** world, **as exemplified by the unjust steward,** can and do often plan for **the** future by sacrificing some of **their** possessions. **But** many children of **the** light **fail** to seize **the** opportunity **which lies to their hand** - **that** by means of **the** 'unrighteous mammon' of **this** world, they may by using **it aright** procure and lay **up 'treasure** in heaven'. (**This is the** interpretation of **Sir Robt. Anderson**).

Comment: **1** The **fact that the** steward was going to **have** to work **at** manual labour, for **which he** says **he** was unfitted, or **beg** (v. **3**) indicates **he had** no resources to **meet** others' indebtedness.

2. The steward's falsifying **the** accounts **was a greater** wrong than 'wasting his master's goods' **and is the** reason for **the** Lord's comment **'he that** is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in **much'** (v. **10**).

3. **'Make** to yourselves friends by means of **the** mammon... **that...** they may receive you into **the** eternal tabernacles' (v. **9**). **Are the** 'friends' **the** 'they' who will receive us, or is **the** sense **'that** you will **be** received... ' which is Sir Robt Anderson's understanding?
Eds.

ASSURANCE, FRUIT AND VICTORY THROUGH BEING 'BEGOTTEN OF GOD'

(1 John 5: 1-21)

From Macduff: Keeping God's commandments and loving God's children **are** sure signs **that** one is begotten of God. This new creation, this new inner man, overcomes **the** world and cannot sin (v. 18). Alas, **as we all** know, **the** old man remains in us and must continually **be kept** under control.

We were all of one mind concerning **the** Spirit, **the** water and **the** blood. The Spirit bore witness **at** Jordan by descending in **the** form of a dove upon **the** Lord, eye-witnessed by John. For John says **'I have** seen, and **have** borne witness **that** this is **the** Son of God'. The God **that** sent John said unto him 'Upon whomsoever thou **shalt see** **the** Spirit descending... **the** same is **He**' and this dove-like, gentle, kindly, loving spirit was always characteristically seen in Him. **The** water-witness would again **take** us to Jordan **where** many of **the** people saw **the** Lamb of God **baptized** by John to fulfil **all** righteousness, and **perhaps heard** God **the** Father witness **that** This is My beloved Son'. **The** blood can only **take** us to Calvary, **where** **the** multitudes witnessed **the** spotless **Lamb**, slain in obedience to His **Father's** will. **What** an **effect** it **had** on **them** for they smote their breasts and one **said** Truly this was **the** Son of God'. This is **what** **we must** confess as John emphasizes again and again **the** eternal Sonship of Jesus.

We felt that in vv. 14, 15 and 16 the greater emphasis is on prayer and how **we must** pray for **each** other acceptably to God. **It is** our **Christian** duty to pray to God for **a** brother who **falls** into sin, **but this** alone could not **give him** life. **There must be in the** brother **himself** a broken and contrite **heart** before God forgives. Some thought **the** sin unto **death** referred to **a particular** sin, namely **the** sin against **the Holy Spirit** (Mark 3: 29). Blasphemy against **the Holy Spirit is**, as in **the case of Ananias and Sapphira**, lying to **the Holy Spirit** (Acts 5). **With this** thought **it was stated that death here is spiritual death** [Comment 1]. Another interpretation was **that this death** was also **spiritual death but that the** sin was not **a particular** sin, **but** continuing wilfully to **repeat** a sin. **It** consists of being told, and knowing oneself of **the** wrongness, until one **gets** proud and rebellious and ultimately brethren can no longer pray for one and forgiveness cannot **be** granted by God. **A similar** thought **was put** forward saying **that this** meant physical **death where** one **had** sinned and **there would be** no forgiveness **till death.** **J. Mitchell**

From Melbourne: **The** inner conviction **that Jesus of Nazareth was the** promised Messiah, **was** evidence of **a** new birth. **This** conviction, begotten of **the Spirit** of God, produced confession from **the lips** of those who **like** Nathanael could say, **Thou art the** Son of God; **Thou art** King of Israel'. **The Jews**, notwithstanding **the** evidence and credentials presented by **Him**, **expressed their** unbelief by saying **Thou being a** man, **makest** thyself God'. To **appreciate that** one **is** born of God, **begets** love for **Him**, **which had** not previously **existed**; **likewise** for others who **are** similarly born from above. **While the** new birth **is** an act of divine **grace**, the One who **begets** does so **with a view** to **the** obedience of **His** children **as** they come to **a** knowledge of **His will**. **There are** commandments to **be kept**, **which** not only **reveal a** newly found love for **Him** who **gave them**, **but mark** out those who **keep them as** distinct and **separate** from others who **have** no knowledge of God. These commandments **are** not grievous; **each** one **has a deep** significance to **the child** of God, although meaning nothing to those who **have not experienced the** new birth. The whole world **lies in the** Evil One, **but once in Christ the** newly born one **is delivered** from the judgement awaiting **a** corrupt world.

We suggest that coming **with the water** and **with the**

blood, indicates **Christ's perfect** submission to the will of **God**. **Water (baptism)** was a figure of the death which He was to die, but His obedience took Him not only through the figure, but through the awful reality of the death of the cross. The witness of the Spirit also confirms the confidence of the believer in the Messiahship of **Jesus of Nazareth**. **God** has borne witness by His Word and by His Spirit concerning His Son, and the result of that witness is perfect assurance that **God has given eternal life** to those who believe.

Wilful sin is something to be feared. Children of God can sin against **light** given by refusing to obey it. **That which** descends upon **such** an one is **the atmosphere and** condition of **spiritual death**, when God speaks no more. **It was so in the case of Saul**, King of Israel. Some sin is not in this category, **there is** provision for confession and forgiveness, whereupon fellowship **with God is** restored.

M. McF., T. W. F.

From Methil: God by His Holy Spirit enlightens us to the difference between **the natural man and the spiritual man**. The difference is fundamental. **It is not a question of good, bad, or better, of degree or extent, but of a different nature, a different life, and Christ is that life**. Having **this life** by being begotten of God, and only because **we have it, we love all those who are begotten of Him**. **It is the new nature that loves, for the old nature is incapable of this, just as, when we sin, it is the new nature that grieves, not the old nature, because sin is ingrained and inbred in the old nature**. Obedience too comes into it, for it is only as **we love Him and keep His commandments that we can have the knowledge and assurance that we love all who likewise love Him**. Therefore **if we love God we cannot go on in company with those who do not love Him**. Victory over **the world in its different forms of disobedience to the will of God, and its enmity to those who seek to carry out His will, is possible for us through obedience and faith (see Heb. 11; also 1 John 2: 17)**.

In vv. **6, 7 and 8** it is perhaps significant **that here** in John's Epistle **the water is** mentioned first, whereas in John's Gospel (**19: 34**) **blood is** mentioned before **the water** [Comment 2]. The blood, no doubt, would **speak to us** of atonement, reconciliation, and of **the price paid** for our redemption (**1 Pet. 1: 18, 19**). **We can see that in the word of God, two means of cleansing are brought before us, namely, blood and**

water (see Lev. 16: 15, 16, 30, also Heb. 9: 22). A great deal can **be** learned about moral cleansing, also from a consideration of **the sacrifice of the red heifer (Num. 19)** [Comment 3]. Moral purification, however, **is** not enough, important as **it is, as** having to do more **with** our outward **lives** before men, **but** atonement for sins goes **deeper** than this. **We have** both, by **faith**, through **the death** of **the** Lord Jesus **Christ**.

A. McUree, Snr.

From St. Helens: **The chapter** opens **with** reference to children of God. **The** establishment of a 'family' relationship **results** from our acceptance of **the** Lord Jesus **Christ** as our Saviour. **There is** a two-way relationship inasmuch **as** God loves **us**, and **we** love God **which is** equally **applicable** to earthly parents and children. **It is** also important to note **that** those who love **the Father** who **begat them** love also those begotten by **Him**. This must **be** an outward manifestation.

We love **the** children of God by loving God and doing **His** commandments. **The** disobedience of children to parents **is** becoming more and more obvious (**2 Tim. 3: 1-2**) and **families** are continually being ruined. Keeping **His** commandments **as** in **If** ye love **Me**, ye **will keep** My commandments' (**John 14: 15**) **is** not a definition of **the** love of God, **but is** **the effect** of **the** love of God upon us and how **it is** shown by us. **Our** love **must be** sincere, not by word or tongue **but** in **deed** and **truth** (**1 John 3: 18**).

The 'whatsoever' in **v. 4** was considered to **be** **the** elements of **the believer's** life in society **because** **the** **believer** is eternally **secure** from **the** penalty of sin [see Comment 7].

The assurance of eternal life **is** again **emphasized** in **5: 11-13** **which** should encourage **us** to **ask** God for things according to **His** will. **'Ye** **ask**, and **receive** not, because ye ask **amiss**, **that** ye may spend **it** in your **pleasures'** (**James 4: 2**). **A** close relationship **with** God **will prevent** us asking amiss.

We are living individuals saved by **grace**, and not inanimate objects. **As** such **we** should **ever remember**, **be aware**, and praise God for **the** **gift** of **His** Son and **the** resulting assurance, **fruit** and victory through being 'begotten of God'.

K. J. Gutteridge

From Barrhead: John continues **the** thoughts of love and of **faith**, **which** are **the** things **which** **give** us **the** victory. The outworking of love (**5: 3**) **is** seen in keeping **His** command-

ments. **Where such a love exists doing the things that please the loved one is no burden at all. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light' (Mat. 11: 29# 30). If we love God we should love those begotten of God, just as children who love their earthly father love also his children.**

We have the victory by doing the Lord's will for He was the great Overcomer. Men in the world would look at 'power' and 'money' as being the overcomers, but John tells us it is faith in the Son of God. 'He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not' yet we can experience in our Christian life this overcoming by trusting and following Him.

In **5: 6 the water could speak of the Lord's baptism in Jordan, precious shadow of Calvary, when the Spirit of God bore witness of Him. The blood could speak of the death on the Cross, but there was also a view that the water and blood were those mentioned by John (19: 34) [see Editorial].**
Ross Green

From Birkenhead: John begins by stating how **we** may **have** assurance of being 'begotten of God'. **Mat. 16: 16** and **John 20: 31** show **the key place that** acknowledgement of Jesus as **the Christ** occupies. **It is a commandment to those who love God to love others who are begotten of God. To those who love God the commandments of God are not grievous for love produces glad obedience (John 14: 15). The Lord Jesus said 'My yoke is easy, and My burden is light' (Mat. 11: 30).**

Faith in God and in His Son gives victory over **all** things, and John details points to establish it. The Lord Jesus Christ **was** identified by John **the Baptist as the Lamb of God at Jordan; the One who was baptized in water and the sacrifice whose blood was to be shed. The Spirit was manifested and God spoke from heaven concerning His Son. These things made sure to John the Baptist the truth concerning this One. We** in turn can rely upon **the Spirit** enlightening us through God's word. John frequently uses **'we know'** or **'we may know'** and in **5: 13** is anxious to give assurance concerning possession of eternal life. As **we are** confident of this **fact** so **we** will come confidently using **the** name of God's Son

bringing our petitions **to God**, knowing **He will** hear us. The Spirit **is** here **also able** to **help us to be in** accord **with** God's purposes in our prayers (Rom. 8: 26, 27). In Heb. 6 reference **is made to those** who **have** turned away from God, and **such** may **be** in John's mind as **he** writes of some for whom prayer **will not avail**.

Those who **place faith** in Christ as Saviour **are assured** of final victory because of **His** work on Calvary. **We are** thankful **that we have** 'an understanding' of these things. *R. D. W.*

From Derby: The first verse of 1 John 5 takes our minds back to the Holy Spirit's enabling of Peter (as spokesman for the other ten) to say 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God' (Mat. 16: 13-20), thus establishing that the eleven had received their heavenly birth. What follows is also very important, 'Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and do His commandments.' It is suggested that this doing is primarily collective *doing* as distinct from *keeping* His commandments [Comment 4]. Compare with Psalm 119, where the writer is speaking of himself throughout; it is 'me', 'my', 'I', Thy servant', etc.

The Son of God 'came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood'. If the Lord had only been baptized in water that would not have atoned for our sins. Not only did the Lord submit to water-baptism by John in the river Jordan (a figure of death, burial and resurrection) but also to the dreadful ordeal of Golgotha, and, in anticipation of this, His words were 'I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished' (Luke 12: 50) [Comment 5]. God bore witness with audible voice from heaven on the occasion of His baptism in Jordan This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'. It is the Spirit that bears witness. He is one of the three witness-bearers of verse eight, the other two being the water and the blood. Thus the three agree in one.

A fair amount of discussion centred on what constituted a sin unto death (5: 16). A number of Old Testament examples were cited, such as the Israelites sentenced to die in the wilderness, and king Saul, who met his death on mount Gilboa. In the New Testament examples might be Ananias and Sapphira; the wilful sinner (Heb. 10: 26-31);

and perhaps such as the Lord had chastened and caused to die who had been guilty of the body and blood of the Lord (1 Cor. 11: 27-30) [Comment 6].

S. Wymer, G. Conway, S. R. W.

From Hayes: Assurance is given to those who are begotten of God:

a) *by experience:*

1. We learn that we do love other children of God when we love God that begat us (v. 2).
2. We do His commandments because of the love of God (v. 3. cf. John 14: 15).
3. We overcome the world, because only those who are begotten of God can do so (v. 5).
4. We see the effect of eternal life in us (vv. 11, 12).
5. We have evidence of requests according to God's will granted (v. 14).
6. We are not now still darkened in our understanding and knowledge of God (v. 20).

b) *by revelation:*

1. Knowing that there are three conclusive witnesses all in agreement (v. 8).
2. What man says cannot override what God says (v. 9).
3. A believer has eternal life in him, which life is in the Son of God (vv. 11-13).
4. The born-again soul cannot sin (v. 18) [Comment 13].
5. The Lord keeps us so that even the Evil One cannot touch us (v. 18).

It is the exercise of faith by the believer that gains victory over the world. The world is taken to be the present order of things which deviates from and opposes God. Hence, 'the world lieth in the Evil One' (v. 19). There is not one small part of it which is not permeated by him. The sole fact that someone is begotten of God is not sufficient to overcome the world, though no one will overcome the world if he is not begotten of God (5: 1, 4, 5). He is required to exercise faith produced by the word of God and the Spirit of God in him (i. e. faith begotten of God), which will, in turn, give him victory over anything of the world [Comment 7]. Two thoughts linked in considering being begotten of God:

1. believing that **Jesus is the Sent One from God (the Christ) (v. 1)**;
2. believing that **Jesus is God the Son (v. 5)**.

The Holy Spirit is continually bearing witness to the fact that it was **Jesus Christ who came, who was not only baptized** in water by John, as a figure of, and commitment to **His death** and resurrection, **but** who also went through the shedding of **His blood in death (cf. Luke 12: 50)**.

The Holy Spirit's true witness (v. 7) in **itself** should be sufficient: **but God has also made the historical events of the baptism and death of Christ to be a witness to the same truth (John 1: 34; Mat. 27: 54)**.

From Kingston-upon-Thames: 1 John 5: 13 corresponds to John 20: 31 and **shows the difference between the purpose** of John's gospel and **his first epistle**. The former is written to show that it is **Christ in whom faith is to be placed for salvation; the latter is written to enable those who have believed in Him to recognize and be certain of the eternal life within themselves**. One infallible **test of the possession of eternal life is 'if God were your Father, ye would love Me'** (John 8: 42). In keeping **with the theme of the gospel the Lord uses this test of spiritual paternity to prove His co-equality with the Father**. In 1 John 5, however, **it is this same love, shown this time to co-possessors of eternal life, in the keeping of the commandments of the Lord, that is the evidence of eternal life**. This should be no **hardship** because it is **the natural** instinct of the new nature to **keep** those commandments (**Heb. 10: 15-18**), **just as it is natural to the old nature to respond, albeit imperfectly because of sin, to the Old Covenant commandments (Rom. 2: 15) [Comment 8]**.

In the present day the word that has to be received is most **specific and is this: 'He has borne witness concerning His Son' (5: 9)**. We are not clear, however, as to why **the Spirit, the water and the blood are selected together as being witnesses concerning the Son**. In the context of this chapter, they must witness to that testimony of **Him that is to be received by faith in order to be born again**. It is easy to see this application in John the Baptist's day. At the Lord's baptism, the Spirit descended showing **Him to be the Messiah or anointed One. He was baptized in water as a man obeying God**. John's declaration about the **Lamb of**

God shows **clearly** that John at least knew that **He** would **have** to die. **Here were** combined in **the** testimony of **Spirit, water** and **blood the** reasons for men believing in **Him** in **that** day. **It** is more **difficult** to see **the** application of **these three** in our day, for unlike **the** other two witness-bearers **the** baptism of **the** Lord **was** a single historical event whose significance to **us** in showing **His** obedience **is repeated** by **the** ever-present witness of **His** **pierced** hands and death. Again **the** witness of **the** Holy **Spirit** may **be** easily **related** to **the** present-day experience of **the** **believer** (Rom. 8: 16). **His** **baptism** cannot in **the** context of **1** John **5** **be** **related** to present-day experience without appearing to **suggest** that **it** is necessary to **be** **baptized** to **be** **saved**. **It** may **be** then **suggested** that **the** **'water'** **speaks** of **the** witness-bearing of **the** **Scriptures**. **It** does not do so in **the** sense of **their** action in cleansing from sin for **that** would **be** inapplicable to **the** Lord. **Rather** **the** **'water'** **is** **that** **image** of **the** life-giving role of **the** **Scriptures** in all ages (see Is. 55: 10-11) **that** may **be** brought before **us**. In reference to **the** Lord Jesus **the** **'water'** then would witness to **His** **life, death** and resurrection being **'according to the Scriptures'**. **Such** an application would also **embrace** **the** events of **the** Lord's **baptism** [see Editorial for comment]. *Ian E. Penn*

From Lagos: 'Only-begotten', **are** words **used** to translate **the** Greek word *monogenes*. **The** Only-begotten (*monogenes*) **from** **the** **Father, full of** **grace** and **truth'** (John 1: 14). One of **the** most profound revelations of **the** pre-eminent Christ is **His** unique standing **as** **the** eternal Son **with** **the** eternal **Father**. **This** day **have** I begotten **Thee'** (Heb. 1: 5); **by** **which** **we** understand **the** communication of **His** own divine **essence** and nature, **by** a method altogether beyond human conception. **'No** one knoweth... **the** **Father, save** **the** **Son, and** **he** to whomsoever **the** **Son** **willeth** to **reveal** **Him'** (Mat. 11: 27). **By** **these** **scriptures** **we** understand in measure **the** **depth** of **the** **riches** of **the** **grace** of God in **Christ** for **us**. **Through** **grace** **we** are begotten of God to know **Him** as our **Father**. **'Ye** **received** **the** **Spirit** of adoption, whereby **we** cry **Abba, Father. The** **Spirit** **Himself** **beareth** witness with our **spirit, that** **we** are children of God' (Rom. 8: 15-16).

We suggest that **'the** **water'** spoken of in **1** John **5: 8** has nothing to do **with** **baptism** **but** **rather** **refers** to **the** word of **faith** by which **the** sinner is **washed**; **'the** washing of **water**

with the word' (Eph. 5: 26) [Comment 9]. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen; and this comes of hearing and hearing by the word of Christ (Rom. 10: 17).

The third witness is 'the blood'. For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for doth it ever avail while he that made it liveth? Wherefore even the first covenant hath not been dedicated without blood' (Heb. 9: 17-18). 'Being now justified by His blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through Him.' (Rom. 5: 9).

S. Coker, E. Bassey

From Leeds: 'Every one that loveth is begotten (born) of God, and knoweth God' (1. John 4: 7). All those who truly believe that Jesus is the Christ (cf. Mat. 16: 16, 17) are begotten (born) of God. We come into a relationship which cannot alter, although sin may mar and interfere with it. The love which we receive 'of God' causes us to have love one toward the other (1 John 4: 11). In our natural relationship of son to father, though the son may become wayward, and may even deny his own father, the relationship cannot be altered. How precious when this relationship is made evident by love the one toward the other! Alas, in the latter days, one of the evils to be made manifest is 'disobedience to parents' (2 Tim. 3: 2). It should be characteristic of us that we love and obey our parents in all things, as this is well-pleasing in the Lord (Col. 3: 20) [Comment 10]. How much God delights in His children who do His will (Mark 3: 35; Heb. 13: 20, 21)! We love God's children when we love God and do His commandments (v. 2); this should not be an onerous task or something which becomes a burden to us. The Lord said 'If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments' (John 14: 15).

Although part of v. 7 of 1 John 5 is omitted from most ancient manuscripts we noted from the A. V. that it refers to the three who bear witness 'in heaven', The Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, these three are one, which is a positive statement of truth, whereas v. 8 refers to the three who bear witness 'on earth', the Spirit, the water, and the blood [Comment 11]. God's Son, Jesus Christ, is Himself the Faithful Witness (Rev. 1: 5) (see John 8: 18). The Lord at His baptism in (through) water had witness borne to Him when the Spirit of God descended on Him (Mat. 3: 16, 17),

this baptism being only a figure of death and resurrection (Rom. 6: 3-5). He must **suffer death** on Calvary's cross (the baptism of death—Luke 12: 50). We also noted the witness borne to the actual blood and water by the soldier who **pierced His side** (John 19: 34, 35). We thus have the witness of men, but the witness of God is **greater** (v. 9). The witness of God is threefold, and the **three agree** in one [Comment 12]. The reference to 'sin unto death' caused us to remember the Lord's words (Mat. 12: 31-32) that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is not to be forgiven, neither in this world nor in the world to come [see Comment 1]. We also considered sinning wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth (Heb. 10: 26) which appears to be a 'sin unto death'. Such sin leads to certain spiritual death; we become dead unto God while we yet live.

P. M. Jefferson, H. R. Dodge

From Liverpool: Throughout this Epistle John has emphasized **three** themes: **faith**, obedience and love. In **chapter 5: 1-5** they are so clearly linked it is **difficult** to consider any one in isolation. **All three** characteristics should **have equal emphasis** and balance in the life of the believer. **V. 3** says 'His commandments are not grievous'. Taken in isolation this **might seem difficult to accept**, but looked at in the context of **faith**, obedience and love, **whatever is demanded of us will be a joy to accept**. The Lord Himself said 'If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments' (John 14: 15), one of which was that the disciples should **have love for each other** (see John 13: 34, 35). John reminds us of that duty (5: 1). **This love demands action and it is noteworthy (5: 2) that our love to God and obedience to His commandments will result in our loving the children of God**. Although it is sometimes difficult to demonstrate **true love to all believers**, it is a commandment of the Lord which must be kept. God will answer **all prayers which are according to His will** and we can therefore bring this problem to Him for His blessing (5: 14). In addition **each believer has the Holy Spirit living within him and He will help in the demonstration of this love** (Rom. 5: 5).

Three interpretations were considered appropriate to the meaning of the words 'water and blood' (5: 6):

- a) **The water refers to the word of God and the blood to the Lord's death.**

- b) **Both terms refer to the incident of the blood and water which flowed from the side of the Lord when pierced by the soldier's spear.**
- c) **The water refers to His baptism in the Jordan by John and the blood to His work at Calvary.**

Most **accepted that the third** suggestion was **the** correct one. The Lord's **baptism in water indicated His** absolute obedience to **God**. The reference to blood shows His humanity **which He** voluntarily took upon Himself and **became** obedient even unto **death (see Phil. 2: 7, 8)**. The testimony to both **the** deity and humanity of **the** Lord is three-fold, **that of water, that of blood and that of the Spirit, and** a threefold cord is not quickly broken (Eccles. 4: 12).

D. H. and M. S. E.

COMMENTS

1. *(Macduff):* I do not think **that** Ananias and **Sapphira** committed **the** sin of blasphemy against **the** Holy Spirit. **Mark 3 makes it clear that this** involves attributing **the** work of **the** Holy Spirit to **a** demon. **Neither do I think that this** sin **is** referred to **here**, since **the fact that there is** no forgiveness for **it** would mean **that the** one who commits **it** could not **have** eternal **life**. Since **a believer** has eternal **life**, **it** follows **that the** sin cannot **be** committed by **a believer**. This **passage refers** to **a** brother, so **that if this has its usual** meaning blasphemy against **the** Holy **Spirit** cannot **be** indicated. **It seems preferable to refer the passage to the life** of **service** and communion **with** God. Determined rebellion against **the will** of God can destroy permanently **life** before **Him** (Heb. 6: 4-6).

2. *(Methil):* **Our** friends do not indicate **what the** significance **might be**. I would suggest **that the** two **scriptures** do not **refer to the same things (see Editorial)**, and **there is** therefore no significance in **this differing** order.

3. *(Methil):* **The red heifer was sacrificed to make** provision for **defilement** by contact, not moral sin, **which** implies volition.

4. *(Derby):* There is nothing in **the passage** to **suggest that this is** so. **It refers to the individual's** assurance of eternal **life**, and **its** consequences.

5. (*Derby*): This reference to **baptism** is quite different from **the water baptism** mentioned in the preceding and following sentences and tends rather to **obscure the** distinction between **the** meanings of '**water**' and '**blood**'.

6. (*Derby*): **The examples cited** indicate that '**death**' might refer to physical death. **This is a** possible explanation, although it is not explicitly proposed by Derby contributors. **See the** question from Liverpool, below.

7. (*Hayes*): This **paragraph** emphasizes, in my opinion correctly, that **v. 4** refers to a thing begotten of God, not a person.

8. (*Kingston*): The old nature recognizes **the** righteousness of God's moral **law**, **but** it is not natural to it to **keep** those commandments. Any response to God's **law** comes only through **the** operation of **the** Holy Spirit (**see** Rom. 7: 14-23).

9. (*Lagos*): Vv. 6-9 refer to bearing witness about **the** Son of God. It is difficult to **see** how **the** suggestion fits into **the** context, **as what** would **be the** point of writing 'not with **the water** only, **but with the water** and with **the blood**'? **See the** Editorial for further comment.

10. (*Leeds*): Children obey their parents; **adults** honour them.

11. (*Leeds*): It is unwise to **place** any reliance on **a verse** which **has** been decisively **rejected as part** of **the** inspired Scriptures. **The** reading in **the** R. V. is to **be** accepted.

12. (*Leeds*): There is some confusion in this **paragraph**. **1 John 5** refers to witness about **the** Son of God, so **the** presentation in Rev. 1 of **the** Lord **as a** witness is not relevant here. **Is the** 'baptism of **death**' intended to **refer to the** '**water**' or to **the** '**blood**'? **It seems to be suggested that** '**water**' refers both to **the** Lord's baptism and to **the** water which flowed from His side during His crucifixion; surely both cannot **be** intended?
P.
L.
H.

13. (*Hayes*): 'Soul' often **has** a wider connotation than **the** believer's new nature, to **which** 1 John 3: 9 and 5: 18 refer. **The** 'whosoever' of **these verses** is '**the believer** as to his

new nature', **whereas the term 'soul'** in many contexts includes **the** whole human personality. So **the** born-again believer may sin, **but as to** his new nature **he** does not sin, being **kept** by **the** Lord Himself. **G. P.**

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

From Liverpool: How do **we** differentiate between those sins 'unto **death**' and those 'not unto **death**', in order **that we** may know **whether** or not to pray for **a** brother?

A sin 'unto **death**' is one which destroys **the** life before God. **It** consists of determined rebellion **against the revealed will** of God, rejecting His **truth**, and it may **result in the** imposition of physical **death as a** penalty by God, although this is not always **the** case. **An example is the** sin of king **Saul (1 Sam. 15)**, after which **the** Lord would not answer him (**1 Sam. 28: 6**). In **the** **New Testament, Heb. 6: 1-8** and **10: 26-31** refer to a similar attitude. Even in **such** cases, God's mercy may **be** displayed, for this is His own prerogative, **but if we see a** brother consistently despising **the** word of God and blaspheming His Son, **we** must assume **that he** is beyond **the reach** of our intercession.

From Melbourne: **Is the** traditional idea of **the** form of **the** cross correct, or **was it an** upright **stake**, without **a** cross-beam?

All the Scriptures require is **that the** superscription could **be** affixed above **the** Lord's **head**, and His hands and **feet** could **be** nailed to **the** cross. Friends from Melbourne enclose **a** quotation from Vine, which **states that a single stake is referred to, and the** traditional shape derives from **the** mystic **Tau**, initial of **the** Chaldean god Tammuz. However, in two articles under Cross and Crucifixion in **the** **New Bible Dictionary, the** traditional **shape is preferred**, and secular historical **research would be** required to determine which form **was** actually used. Since Scripture gives no guidance about **the shape of the** cross, this cannot **be a matter** of any importance, and detailed research would not **seem to be** worthwhile. **P. L. H.**

BIBLE STUDIES

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EDITORIAL

Truth and Love feature strongly in John's Epistles, and it is plain that a well ordered Christian life has full regard for them. They will control, motivate and circumscribe our lives as we allow the Spirit of God to teach us, and they are the antitheses of the waywardness and selfishness so characteristic of us before we were saved and learned obedience and subjection to our Lord. Living and walking in truth and love bring rewards - Moses 'looked unto the recompense of reward' - and we should be careful not to fall short of what could be ours.

These two letters reach into the personal lives of highly esteemed disciples, and the warnings and praise that John gives them show some of the problems they had to meet. Notably, in offering the hospitality of their homes they had to be careful on the one hand to exclude bearers of false teaching, and on the other to welcome and support true disciples and servants of the Lord. At all times they must be faithful to the Lord Jesus and to His will-walking in truth and love will permit no other way.

A. B. R.

LITTLE CHILDREN

Kingston Young People's Class: Consideration of the term 'little children' as it is used in the New Testament scriptures, and particularly by John in his first Epistle, provides an interesting and stimulating study.

John uses the Greek word *teknion* (a diminutive of the more common *teknon*) in the plural as a term of endearment-see 1 John 2: 1, 12, 28; 3: 7, 18; 4: 4; 5: 21. There are only two other places in the New Testament where this Greek word, which is always used figuratively, is found. They serve to confirm the general thought (discerned in John's usage) of paternal care. The Lord used the word (John 13: 33) when His thoughts were for the disciples He was leaving. 'Little children', He said, 'yet a little while I am with you'. John's Epistles can be seen in part as a fuller explanation of

the Lord's caring words to **disciples** in John 13. Thus both accounts are addressed to 'little children'. A second occurrence of **teknion** comes in Paul's letter to the Galatians (4: 19). Again the circumstances indicate a parental care, a feeling for those wayward children who were going astray. So, with endearment rather than rebuke, Paul addressed himself to those in whom he longed to see Christ formed.

In John 2: 13, 18 a different Greek word - **paidion** - is used, and the Revisers have signified the difference by omitting 'my' on these two occasions in the Epistle. **Paidion** is used in many other places in the New Testament to describe literally children from birth (John 16: 21) to at least twelve years of age (Mk. 5: 40-42), but it is intended here to confine consideration to the figurative use of **paidion** and especially such application in 1 John 2. (July and August Bible Studies covered this portion and it may be useful to refer to articles there). It is suggested that a fuller understanding of that part of John's Epistle may be gained if the 'little children' (**paidion**) on vv. 13 and 18 are seen as the same group of believers in both instances and furthermore that these disciples formed part of a larger number classified as 'my little children' (**teknion**) in v. 12, which would also include 'fathers' and 'young men'. Thus, in contrast to **teknion**, **paidion** would indicate babes in Christ, who would 'know the Father' but would need to be taught about their spiritual opponents. Such instruction John gives in his further comments to 'little children' from v. 18 to v. 27 (whence the narrative returns to the whole group - 'my little children').

The words for 'fathers', 'young men' and 'little children' (**paidion**) only occur twice in the whole Epistle (2: 13, 14 & 18) and they appear in that sequence. An order of address can therefore be seen; first to fathers, then to young men, then to little children (**paidion**). Each category needs a little exhortation from John, but the latter two need relatively more encouragement and instruction. So, having mentioned the main point to young men - the overcoming of the evil one - he gives fuller instruction to them in vv. 14-17. Then, having reminded the babes in Christ that they know the Father, he goes on to encourage a true and faithful adherence to Him. For this purpose he seeks to increase their understanding of would-be opponents (vv. 18-23) and to indicate the key to knowledge and progress in the Father's will - that is, the Holy Spirit (vv. 24-27).

Childlike faith and Spirit-led understanding are necessities for **spiritual** growth, and **these are the** things John **teaches babes** in Christ about in 1 John 2: 24-27. **Such a** lesson is not, however, **reserved** for the recently born again. **He** who would know greatness **must** learn the humility and dependence of a little **child (paidion)** - see Mat. 18: 1-5. By the **use** of **such** words as **teknion** and **paidion** John would **seem** to **emphasize** in his **Epistle** the need for **spiritual** growth **based** on a continuing and growing appreciation of the love shown by the **Father**.

On **behalf** of Kingston Young People's **Class**,
G. M. **Hydon**

(Note: For comment on **the** differences between **teknon** and **huios** (a child/a son) see **Bible Studies** 1964 pp. 97, 98 and 104 (2)).

[This interesting **paper** is **published** in **full** for consideration, although **there are difficulties** in accepting that the **use** of **paidion** in 2: 13, 18 justifies the conclusions proposed: see **Comment 4**.—**Eds.**]

WALKING IN THE TRUTH (2 & 3 John)

From Melbourne: In **these** two Epistles John **writes** not as an apostle, **but as** an **elder** among the flock. Some **have suggested** that the 'elect lady' refers to a **church** of God, **but we believe** that the **letter** was one of encouragement to a **sister** who **had** been **faithful** to **her** Lord. Certain of **her** children **were** walking **with her** in the **truth**, and John **had** developed a **deep** affection for **this** family. That **which** they and others **had heard had** been **received**, not as the word of men, **but as** the Word of God **which liveth and abideth** for ever. **It had** continued to **abide** in **them and**, unlike **human** knowledge, would **abide** in and **be with them** for ever. **He** encourages **with the** assurance that **grace**, mercy and **peace shall be with us**, as **imparted** from God the **Father**, and from **Jesus Christ**, the **Son of the Father**, in **truth** and love.

As a true shepherd, John's joy **was great** that some of **her** children **were** walking in truth. How often **has** it been otherwise when young **disciples** turn **aside** from the ways of the **Lord**, and a **shepherd** experiences disappointment, **grief** and **tears!**

True love towards God and towards **each** other **is** manifested in walking **after the** commandments of the **Lord**. **This**

was emphasized by the Lord as He was approaching the Cross, and recorded in His discourse to the disciples at the last passover.

Deceivers have never been wanting, who seek to detract from the truths associated with the Person of Christ. Blinded by the god of this world, the Jews had failed to recognise their Messiah, because of the veil of flesh in which He had come. Now the promise of His return in that same body, though glorified, is also being assailed. To the disciple of the Lord, the promise made in Acts 1: 8, leaves no room for doubt: This Jesus, which was received up . . . shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven'. It is quite possible that these deceivers had earlier subscribed to the faith once for all delivered to the saints, but had ceased to hold faith and a good conscience. Then follows the exhortation, 'Look to yourselves', lest they lose the things already wrought and not receive a full reward. Past faithfulness is no guarantee of continuance to the end of the course and the reward awaiting the Overcomer. We were reminded of the words of Boaz to Ruth, who had made a decision because of the knowledge of the God of Israel imparted to her through Naomi: 'A full reward be given thee of the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to take refuge'.

There were those in apostolic days who were taking the lead in the churches in order to draw the disciples after themselves: they had departed from divine principles, and were gaining the ears of disciples by plausible teaching, thus leading them out of the pathway of divine truth. The discerning of such was essential, and to receive them into one's house for discussion, while there was no evidence of repentance, was not to be condoned, and fellowship with them was forbidden.

A work to which Gaius had given himself appears to have been that of hospitality towards the Lord's people, with special emphasis on those who served the Lord in the Word and teaching. The church with which Gaius was associated was troubled by Diotrephes, but still remained a golden lampstand, though requiring the presence of John and others to set matters in order. It is possible that Demetrius and those like minded, had been a restraining influence on the working of evil in the church until help arrived as in the person of John with apostolic authority, to exercise the needed correction, as promised in v. 10.

The closing salutation of **'Peace'** from John would be **calculated to assure him that the peace of God could be his continually, even in the midst of assembly difficulties and the low spiritual condition of some numbered therein.**

Ft. Busby, T. W. F.

From Methil: The Second Epistle comes from John the elder to a certain Christian lady and her children. John held them in high esteem and affection because of their love for the truth. A knowledge of the truth helps us to love one another. Truth and love should go hand in hand. John stresses the importance of truth by mentioning it 11 times in Epistles 2 and 3. It made him truly happy to know that certain of this lady's children were walking in the truth, and he reminds her of something which she already knew—the importance of loving one another. Real love means obeying the Father's commandments (2 John v. 6). Then he warns her about the numerous impostors (deceivers) which are in the world, recognisable by their refusal to acknowledge Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh [Comment 5]. These individuals are described as the antichrist. The importance of abiding in the truth is stressed in 2 John v. 9. There is always the possibility that a man can think himself so advanced that he is not content with the teaching of Christ, and anyone who runs ahead too far and ignores the doctrines of Christ is without God's blessing or approval. We must learn to abide in the teachings of the Lord Jesus and not go our own way. When we do obey His word, this is evidence that we have both the Father and the Son. Association with anyone bringing false teaching makes one an accomplice. John writes on similar lines to a beloved brother in the Lord named Gaius. It may be that this man's physical health was not too good, but there was no doubt in John's mind that Gaius did not lack in soul prosperity. John had heard good reports of the way that Gaius had walked in the truth and there was no greater joy for the apostle John than to hear of his spiritual children walking in the truth. He commended Gaius for doing a faithful work in looking after those who were out in the Lord's work, and who visited his locality from time to time.

Some thought that the 'brethren' were converted Jews and the 'strangers' converted Gentiles, while others thought that they were all brethren, whether Jew or Gentile, but that the 'strangers' were simply brethren Gaius had not met

before [Comment 1]. **Because** of Diotrephes, who loved to **be first and was a place-seeker, all was not well**, and John **said that if he visited the church, he would put matters right. His advice to Gaius was to imitate that which is good for he that doeth good is of God.** On the other hand, Demetrius **gets a good testimonial from everyone. John's message to us is to walk in the truth, as did the elect lady, Gaius and Demetrius.**

Alistair Coomer, Neville Coomer

From Nottingham: Some have seen a difficulty in the writer describing himself as 'the elder' and not 'the apostle' or 'an apostle'. However **this seems to be feeble ground on which to question that John the apostle was the writer of the letter. John was an elder and could refer to himself in this way as Peter did in his first letter, The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder' (1 Pet. 5: 1 A. V.), where the word as given in the R. V. is 'fellow-elder'. While we think the use of 'elder' in John's Epistles refers to his position in exercising the oversight over the churches, he must also have been one of the oldest in the churches, one of the few surviving who had known the Lord in the days of His flesh, and possibly the only surviving apostle. Further, John had always the kindly but firm nature of a good father and often refers to the saints as 'little children'.**

Some commentators **claim that the Second Letter is sent to all the churches or to one church and the word 'lady' is used as a figure of speech. This explanation seems to us unlikely. The Greek word used is kuria and it seems probable that this was a proper name and that John is writing to an individual as Paul wrote to Philemon [Comment 2]. John loved her 'in the truth' (A. V.), and 'in truth' (R. V.) and John's love for her was shared by 'all they that know the truth' (2 John 1). In these later Epistles it is instructive to note the stress put by the writers on 'the truth'. The days of which Paul warned (Acts 20: 29) seem already to be emerging and the apostle's exhortations to Timothy (2 Tim. 1: 13) are relevant. The expression 'the truth' (v. 4) embraced more than the gospel because her children were 'walking' in it. The truth seems to contain all God has revealed concerning His way for believers and seems equivalent to the 'apostles' teaching' and 'the Faith... once for all delivered unto the saints' (Jude v. 3).**

John again **makes** reference to those who **were denying the incarnation. There were those about who taught that the**

Lord only **assumed the appearance of a man**. Those who loved **the truth were to cleave to the fact that Jesus Christ came in the flesh as part of the truth** (2 John vv. 7, 9) [see Comment 5].

R. Hickling

From St Helens: Viewed spiritually **there is neither male nor female, but both are one in Christ**. Likewise, neither **high birth nor wealth is significant**. In **his salutation addressed to the elect lady (a lady, not a church, most of us thought), the apostle John commends her for her conformity to the truth and that her children are walking in the truth**. **A like joy is expressed in the letter to Gaius for the same reasons. 'Greater joy have I none than this'**. So God **Himself** rejoices when **this is seen**.

John, though an **elder** in years, beseeching, not commanding, recommends **the old commandment, walking by faith in love**. **Paul similarly writes to Philemon, Though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee... yet for love's sake I rather beseech'**. Warning **the elect lady to beware of deceivers he counsels her to take care that she lose not her reward for faithfulness**. Obedience **is the measure** of our love to Christ. **The apostle emphasizes how sinful and dangerous it is to have fellowship with, or give the smallest countenance to the conduct of those who abide not in the teaching of Christ**.

Writing to Gaius, John congratulates **him on his soul's prosperity, mentions his brethren's appraisal of him, and commends highly his fervent love expressed in hospitality given**. Complaining of **bad behaviour by vain and ambitious Diotrophes he counsels, 'Beloved, imitate that which is good'**.

Both **Epistles close with the apostle expressing a fervent desire to meet his friends 'face to face', and he links his present companions in his farewell: The children of thine elect sister salute thee', and The friends salute thee'**.

From Vancouver, B. C.: John **speaks of 'children' and his love for them and their love for the truth. Saved young persons have also the 'old man' still with them although created anew in Christ. Saved older people have the 'young man' of the new creation, and like the young have the 'old man' still with them**.

2 John v. 7 warns against any who would **mar the 'crystal clear' character of God's House with false teaching**. Anyone

saying **that Christ's** body **was** not raised and **that He is** not coming **back with it** or in it is spreading **a lie** from **the father** of lies. Truth embodies **all the** teaching from Christ-**that** which **He** said concerning Himself **and that** which **the Father** says of Him.

In **the** Third Epistle **we read** about sowing of malicious discord among brethren by **a** brother, in order to obtain pre-eminence above John **the** Apostle, and **perhaps** above others **as** well. Satan, through **the** flesh, is seeking to alienate **the sheep** from **a true shepherd**, thereby dimming **the** light of **the church**. Gaius and Demetrius probably worked with John to correct **the** situation and **the** brethren would **be** brought **back** in and perhaps **the** wrong-doers **led** to repentance. Those **that suffered** degradation because of **the truth** would **be** fully **rewarded**. John, **the** disciple whom Jesus loved, mentions **truth** many times in his Epistles.

A desire for God-given **rewards** is good and it is **a** sin if **we** neglect **them** (2 John v. 8).

John favoured speaking **face to face**. **Face to face** discussions **are** important in **the** construction of any building, especially for anyone building for God. **H. McLeman**

From Barrhead: The two **letters** of John must **be read** together if **we are** to gain **a** balanced understanding of **the** duties and limits of Christian hospitality. Both **letters are** concerned with **truth** and love and their relation to hospitality.

John must **have had** **a** special **place** in his **heart** for **the** saints **he** was writing to, who may **have** been **the** fruit of his labour in **the** gospel, 'my children walking in **the truth**'; cf. 1 Thes. 2: 19, 20 'For **what** is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? **Are** not even ye, before our Lord Jesus **at** His coming? For ye **are** our glory and our joy'. John warns **the** saints **that** many deceivers **are** gone forth into **the** world who deny **the** incarnation. **The** incarnation is not only an event in history, **it** is an abiding **truth**. Jesus **did** not become **the** Son of God **at** His birth. God **sent** forth His Son (Heb. 1: 5). 'For unto which of **the** angels said **He** **at** anytime, Thou **art** My Son... **But** of **the** Son **He** saith, Thy throne, **O** God, is for **ever** and ever'. John warns **the** saints not to give **the** hand of fellowship to those deceivers. **Paul** says to **the** Philippians, 'For many **walk**, of whom **I** told you often, and now **tell** you even weeping, **that** they **are** enemies of **the** cross of Christ'.

The Second Epistle v. 8 has a Very solemn warning to saints: 'Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward'. The thought is not of winning or losing salvation (which is a free gift), but their reward for faithful service, and walking in the truth.

The Third Epistle brings two saints before us - one who sought his own glory, the other to glorify his Lord. Two things are outstanding in Gaius - his love for the truth he cherished so dearly, and his love towards brethren and strangers. He was a balanced saint who held the truth in love and loved the truth. Testimony can be borne only to what is seen. His walk and love for the truth were known to all.

John also cherished the truth dearly. Therefore, if I come, I will bring to remembrance his works which he doeth' (v. 10). The house of God is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15) and sin must be dealt with (see Rev. 2: 5). *John McPherson*

From Birkenhead: John the elder is writing either to a lady and her children or to a church and its members. Points were drawn from the Second Epistle to show how each point of view could be sustained. To support the former, vv. 10-13 were brought forward but these are explained by supporters of the other view-point as the house of a saint in a church of God, and in the case of v. 13 as the designation of the saints in another church.

Either view-point does not detract from the main teaching. It is God's will that we should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2: 4). As we are in this state we love and are loved by those of like faith. Love prompts us to keep God's commandments and so our walk is controlled. We shall wander from the truth if we heed deceivers - here defined as those who deny that God's Son, Jesus Christ, has come in the flesh - and lose our reward [see Comment 5]. The counsel is given that teachers of error are not to be shown hospitality or given encouragement, as to do so makes one party to their error. It was thought to be in order, however, to spend a brief time outlining the truth to those in error, so that perchance they might be brought to see the truth.

R. D. Williams

From Derby: John calls himself not an apostle but the elder in which is incorporated the thought of shepherd (cf. 1 Pet

5: 1). John may **have** been instrumental in **the** lady's conversion. **Her** being sanctified in **the truth** followed **her** salvation, and whereas many stress overmuch **the fact** of being **saved**, **this** sanctification should not **be** relegated to **a less** important **place** (**1 Tim. 2: 4**), for it embraces **the** whole counsel of God. **The** apostle John **is** consistent in **his** writings; cf. **vv. 5 & 6 with 1 John 5: 2-3, and John 14: 21**. In **v. 7** again John warns against **deceivers** and **the** Antichrist.

In **the Third Epistle** the apostle John again **writes** of **himself** as **the** elder, and **addresses** **Gaius** in very affectionate terms. **There was a Gaius in the church** in Corinth whom **Paul baptized** probably some thirty years previous to **this** letter. **The Gaius** whom **Paul speaks** of in **Rom. 16** as 'my host' **is** possibly **the same** as in **1 Cor. 1: 14**, but **the Gaius** of whom John wrote may not **be the same** person. **V. 4 suggests that Gaius was** one of John's **spiritual** children. John **expresses** joy **because** of **his** walking in **the truth**, and also **his** love of **the** brethren out in **full-time service** for **the Master**, who went forth for **the sake** of **the Name**, taking nothing of **the** Gentiles (or gentilish ones) **-such as were** not in **the** Fellowship. **We** ought to welcome **such** servants and endeavour to support **them** that **we** may **be** fellow-workers **with the** truth. Diotrephes, however, **was a great** hindrance to **the** progress and **welfare** of **the church**. **There could be** no blessing **while such a leader** occupied a position to **which he had** not been **called** by God. **The** beloved apostle would in **the** power of **the** Holy **Spirit**, and **as** an apostle of **the** Lord **Jesus Christ**, **deal with** him. In **John 14: 17** the following **is** recorded: **The Spirit of Truth... abideth with you, and shall be in you'** (from **the** day of Pentecost), and **2 John v. 2** says **that the truth 'abideth in us, and it shall be with us for ever'**. When our souls **arrive** in **Paradise**, **whether** through our falling **asleep** or by means of **the rapture**, **the truth we have made** our own, **because we have** loved it, will remain **with us** for ever.

G. Conway, S. R. W.

From Kingston-on-Thames: John's final **Epistles** were written when some of **the** early **churches** were moving away from **the truth**, and problems **are** evident even in their addresses. **The Third Epistle**, to **Gaius**, **was** sent to a member of a church which **was** apparently not in **direct** contact with John (**v. 9**) [Comment 3], **while the Second Epistle** may **be addressed** to a person whose name John **was** reluctant

to commit to paper. Possibly the elect lady represents a church, her elect sister (v. 13) being John's own church. Her children (v. 1) would be converts of that church, and John would rejoice to find some of these following the truth (v. 4) as this was a time of general decline.

These letters are concerned with the application of principles developed in John's First Epistle and parts of his Gospel, but the difficulties at the time of writing are reflected in the greater urgency with which they are stated. John warns against deceivers 'that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh' (2 John v. 7) in the same way as he did in his first Epistle (1 John 4: 1-3), but the caution, 'look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought' (2 John v. 8), is much more urgent than 'ye are of God... and have overcome them' (1 John 4: 4). Similarly he states that 'whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God' (2 John v. 9), which is far more emphatic than 'he that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk even as He walked' (1 John 2: 6). The way in which we may walk in, or live by the truth is set out in John's First Epistle. Thus 'if we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another' (1 John 1: 6 & 7). One may also deviate from following the truth by disobeying His commands (1 John 2: 4, 5) - as by failing to show love to others (1 John 4: 20).

John's exhortation to love one another (2: 5) is yet one more restatement of the commandment given at the Last Supper (John 13: 34). Such love must be demonstrated 'not... in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth' (1 John 3: 18), and it is for actively showing his love that Gaius is commended (3 John vv. 5, 6). *Graham Riley*

From Lagos: John 'looked upon Jesus as He walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God!' The two disciples who shared the vision followed Jesus. The Lord asked them: 'What seek ye?' Their answer showed that they sought Him and His abode (John 1: 35-42). Abraham's experience was in principle the same. He walked out of Mesopotamia because of the vision of the glory of God; later he subjected himself to the discipline of the life of a sojourner, 'for he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God' (Acts 7: 2-4; Heb. 11: 9-10). Fore-

most in the things which accompany salvation is the experience of our **lives** being transformed into the **image** of His Son (2 Cor. 3: 18). The **gifts** given were for the perfecting of the saints 'till we all attain unto the unity of the **Faith**, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the **measure** of the **stature** of the fulness of **Christ**' (Eph. 4: 11-13).

John addressed his **Epistle** to brethren who were in the house of God, the **pillar** and ground of the **truth**. The anonymous lady and her children, and **Gaius** and **Demetrius**, had learned the **truth** and they were walking by the **same** rule. They were brethren who had an eye for the honour and the glory of the pre-eminent **Christ**. 'What is **truth**?' Thy Word is **truth**', embracing the whole counsel of God, 'the **Faith** which was once for all delivered unto the saints'. Therein is embodied the commandment to love one another (2 John vv. 5, 6), the teaching of separation (vv. 7-11) and the showing of hospitality in **practical** demonstration of the **truth** (3 John vv. 5-8). **Gaius** the beloved was well commended (before the church) for his hospitality. 'Demetrius hath the witness of all men' (3 John vv. 6, 12). Paul remarked of Onesiphorus that 'he oft refreshed me' (2 Tim. 1: 16). These were brethren who took on the likeness of **Christ**, a Man who 'shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land' (Is. 32: 2).

'Greater joy' says John, 'have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the **truth**' (3 John v. 4). These were faithful brethren described by the Holy Spirit as 'fellow-workers with the **truth**'.
S. Coker, E. Bassey

From Leeds: The homeless stranger of Galilee with no place of His own to lay His head (Mat. 8: 20) found a resting place in many homes as He went about (Mat. 9: 35). He came often to Bethany, and the tears He shed (John 11: 35) were evident tokens of the great love which He had for Lazarus (v. 36). The Scriptures are quite plain when they state that 'Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus' (v. 5). As the Lord's servants move about from place to place (as in the journeyings of Paul) they are naturally attracted to certain places and find a special affection for certain ones much loved in the Lord.

It could well be that John was staying in the home of a sister beloved in the Lord (2 John v. 13) and that his second

letter was one written to her sister whom he also loved in the truth (v. 1), 'sister' indicating a natural kinship or a spiritual relationship with another, as one in Christ. John obviously had a deep affection for the lady and for those 'certain' from amongst her children who were walking in the truth. How delighted the Lord is with those who have the truth (Prov. 23: 23) and who continue daily walking therein! Indeed, the Lord has no greater joy (3 John 4) [Comment 6]. Truth is contained within God's word and in the blessed One who came to express it (John 14: 6). Those who sincerely seek the truth shall surely find it, as it is God's will that they should (1 Tim. 2: 4). As we walk in the truth we find a continued delight in doing His will (2 John v. 6).

The third letter of John is also individually addressed to Gaius whose character, and that of Demetrius, is sharply contrasted with that of Diotrephes. Gaius was well loved and one who walked consistently in the truth (v. 3), here termed 'thy' truth. Gaius had received it and made it his own. It is well when the truth has cost us something; thus we value it the more. Let us hold fast to it and sell it not for a mess of pottage, for what has the world to offer but that which will only pass away? Diotrephes put self first, loving to have the pre-eminence whereas, in all things, Christ should have the pre-eminence.

H. R. Dodge

From Liverpool: It is generally assumed that the author of the Second and Third Epistles is the apostle John and that he also wrote the first Epistle and the Gospel of John. Certainly the themes in the three Epistles and the method of presentation are very similar.

In both the Second and Third Epistles the writer refers to himself as 'the elder'. It was agreed that this expression was meant to indicate his age rather than any office he held within the church although of course elders were appointed and held office in the churches. Although the Epistles are written to individuals both are dealing with church truths and should be read in this context. Some have suggested that the elect lady is the church to whom John was writing but no satisfactory meaning is given to the identification of 'her children' [Comment 7]. There could not be two separate groups of people within the church [Comment 8]. It was noted that in 1 Pet. 5: 13 the church is referred to thus: 'She that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you;...' The shortness of the Second Epistle makes it likely that it

was not written to a church, but to an individual.

As with the First Epistle the dominating themes are truth and love and the Second Epistle can be summarised as follows:

1. The knowledge and practice of truth - vv. 1, 2 and 4.
2. The joy following on from walking in the truth - v. 4.
3. The importance of obedience to the commandment of the Lord to love one another as recorded in John 13: 34, 35 - vv. 5, 6.
4. A warning to guard against false doctrine and 'many deceivers' (v. 1) indicates that there were those who denied the deity of the Lord whether referring to His coming in the flesh or His return for His own.
5. A warning to individuals so to look to themselves as not to lose a full reward - vv. 8-11.

If it is accepted that the Second Epistle is written to an individual the meaning of vv. 10 and 11 is easier to understand. It is suggested that there were those, not in the church, who were visiting the homes of the saints where they were seeking to teach false doctrine. John states that such persons are to be eschewed. There is no justification for using these verses as a basis for refusing to associate with one's own family or relatives who are unsaved or not members of the church.

In the Third Epistle Gaius and Diotrephes stand in contrast to each other, the former referred to as 'the beloved, whom I love in truth' and the latter as the one 'who loveth to have the preeminence among them'. Again John is able to rejoice because there are those who are walking in the truth indicating not merely a knowledge of the truth, but a day by day exercising of it in the life of the believer. The problem of v. 9 could only be solved by help from associated churches and this emphasizes the importance of maintaining the fellowship between churches as demonstrated in the Acts.

D. J. Webster and M. S. E.

From Macduff: These two letters resemble one another in that saints in the churches are being praised for walking in the truth.

In the first letter the apostle writes to a lady and her children praising her steadfastness, and reminding her of the most important commandment, that we love one another even as Christ loved us. In 2 John v. 7 she is warned of false

leaders **who** could **attack the church of God if the** believers took their **eyes off the Lord**. **'He that is not with Me is against Me: and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth'** (Mat. 12: 30). **These** then are of **the Antichrist**. **The** apostle warns of **false** teachers who may **call at the** houses of believers. **We find this** type of thing on **the** increase today. **We must** always **keep** Christ before us.

In **the Third Epistle** John writes a personal letter to **Gaius**, whom **he** loved in **the** truth. John contrasts **the faith** of **Gaius with the** proud Diotrephes who **was** obviously a **place-seeker**. **This** man **had little** love for **the** brethren for **he** would not **receive** them. John exhorts **the** brethren to follow **after** good and not **evil**; for **he** who follows **after** good **is** of God and **he** who **seeks evil** has not seen God. **Colin Chinchen**

COMMENTS

1. **(Methil):** 'Brethren and strangers... **bare** witness to thy love before **the church**' and I would think **the** 'strangers' **were** brethren previously unknown to Gaius.

2. **(Nottingham):** Interesting as **this** suggestion **is** it would **be difficult** to support. **Kuria** seem only to **have** been **used** in **this Epistle** certainly, **but it is the female** form of **kurios** which **is not used** as a proper name in **its** many uses in **the** NT.

3. **(Kingston-on-Thames):** V. 3 says 'brethren **came**' and v. 9 shows John **had** written about coming **but** Diotrephes **made it plain** **he** would not **receive him - which** exchanges of information **make me** think they **were** 'in **direct** contact'. John's promise to come and **deal with the matter** **is** an important indication **that this church** of God **was still** in fellowship **with** others. **A. B. R.**

4. **(Kingston Young People's Class):** I am not personally clear that **the use** of **teknion** in 2: 12 and **paidion** in 2: 13 **justifies the** conclusion that v. 12 refers to **the** disciples generally. **The** sense of vv. 12-14 **seems** clearly to **be** governed by **the thrice repeated** 'I write unto you' and 'I have written unto you' **rather than the** choice of diminutive nouns.

Moreover the instruction given in vv. 18-27 does not appeal to me as being particularly appropriate to babes in Christ, but rather of a general nature for all the disciples. I therefore regard *paidion* in 2: 18 as used figuratively in reference to all those to whom the letter was sent (cf. this general use of *paidion* in Heb. 2: 14). G.P.

5. (*Methil*): 2 John v. 7 refers to the coming-again of the Lord Jesus.
6. (*Leeds*): 3 John v. 4 refers to the joy of John.
7. (*Liverpool*): There is a suggestion in the Kingston paper as to who the children of a church might be.
8. (*Liverpool*): There were various factions in the church of God in Corinth (see 1 Cor. 1: 10-12). J.K.D.J.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

From Liverpool:

1. Does 2 John 4 indicate that there were those children of the elect lady who were not walking in the truth?

Yes.

2. What does 2 John 13 mean?

The verse reads like children sending greetings to their aunt sister of their mother, and I accept this.

A. B. R.

BIBLE STUDIES

'A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17. 11)'

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EDITORIAL

It has been thoughtfully remarked that 'in many ways Jude's Epistle is a fitting prelude to the Revelation'. A feature of the Epistle is its references to several periods of dramatic divine intervention in this world's affairs—the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the punishment of unbelieving Israelites in the wilderness, the swallowing up of Korah and his rebellious associates. The Book of Revelation focuses attention on the time of the end, when divine intervention in judgement will be so powerfully known, culminating in the advent of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

The struggle between unseen angelic forces is also reflected in Jude's references to angels which kept not their own principality (v. 6) and to the contention between the Devil and Michael about the body of Moses (v. 9). Throughout Revelation there are vivid impressions of this same struggle as it intensifies towards the climax of Satan being cast into the abyss (20: 2).

Disciples in Jude's day had experienced the subtle inroads of Satan by means of certain hypocritical professors 'creeping in privily' and exerting evil influence within churches of God. Yet those loyal to the Lord had available in Him all that was needed to maintain their testimony together. God was able to guard them from stumbling and faultless to set them before the Throne of His glory. Throughout the unprecedented severity of tribulation described in Revelation can be traced the guardian power of God over His elect remnant. Many will yield their lives for His Name's sake, and others will emerge through the Great Tribulation to be set before the Throne of His glory in exceeding joy.

Editors wish to express their appreciation to all who have contributed to 'Bible Studies' during 1976, acknowledging the mutual blessing in study of the Scriptures together, 'comparing spiritual things with spiritual'.
G. P.

CONTENDING EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH**(Jude vv. 1-25)**

From Barrhead: In introducing our study **we** considered as general points who **this Jude was** and also **the** close similarity between Jude's **letters** and **part** of Peter's 2nd Epistle. **We** consider **this** Jude to **be a relative** of the Lord and **as he had no claim** to apostleship **he claims as his authority the fact that he was a brother of such** an important man **as James** (i. e. James **the Lord's brother**) [Comment 1]. Regarding **the** similarity between Jude and **Peter we believe there is** a strong probability **that one was** influenced by **the** other and not **that** they both obtained **their material** from a **third** source [Comment 2].

Jude **is** writing to a group of Christians in one or more **churches** of God **because he addresses them as 'they that are called'**, and **because they were used** to keeping love **feasts as a group (see v. 12)**. **We stressed** as a very important point **the fact that** Jude **was not adding to the Faith, neither was he** introducing any new doctrine (v. 17) **but was supporting the** teachings already spoken by **the** apostles.

We considered **that there were** unsaved men in **the churches** who **were set** forth for judgement, **the** prophecy of v. 14 applying to **them as well as** to others. **We** questioned why **there should be a** reference to **the Apocrypha as there is** a reference to **the** prophecy of Enoch. Would Jude **have access** to **this** prophecy or would **he have** enlightenment from **the Holy Spirit as he** wrote **his** book? [Comment 3]. **We** also considered **the** contention for **the** body of Moses and **we** wondered **if this was** significant **because** Moses' body **was** wanted for **the** transfiguration. **Elijah, his companion there, was caught up** [Comment 4].

There **is** an encouragement in **the last part of the letter** for **the believers to be built up** and **we judge** in **the** course of doing **this** some may not **have** been seen to **be** getting on too well. Those who **are** doing **better** should **be** gracious and kindly towards other slower brethren and they should try to **save** those who **are** almost too **far** gone in sin to **be rescued (see vv. 22-23)**. **We** considered why **there was** no **appeal** to excommunicate **the evil** men earlier referred to in **the chapter** and **we** concluded **that they were** already **judged**

and gone **but that the damage they did was** lingering on in the church [Comment 5]. **D. J. Ken**

From Birkenhead: The writer of this Epistle would appear not to be an apostle (see vv. 1, 17) and was concluded to be the brother of James, the Lord's brother [see Comment 1]. His Epistle seems to be addressed to believers in general and the subject is 'our common salvation*. He exhorts the believers to 'contend earnestly for the Faith' [Comment 6]. It is proposed that the term 'the Faith', besides indicating the body of doctrine also refers to the people who hold it [Comment 7]. As the saints are brought to realise the priceless value of the Faith so they are warned of the present dangers. Evidently unsaved persons had come amongst them expressly to work evil. They were ungodly men and a list of historical events (vv. 5-10) is produced to demonstrate the fact that the judgement of God will fall upon them. Jude continues his message by analysing the character of the enemies of the Faith under three headings: (a) the way of Cain-who worshipped God in his own way; (b) the error of Balaam-who acted in opposition to the Word of God for monetary consideration; (c) the gainsaying of Korah - who rebelled against the rule of God. He then uses pictures from the world of nature to illustrate his message (vv. 12, 13). The reference to Enoch, seemingly apocryphal [see Comment 3] tells of his work in the days of Noah, in a similar situation to that to which Jude addresses himself. Against the disruptive work of those who crept in amongst the believers they are exhorted to behave in a manner calculated to build up the saints and to look forward to the day of final victory. This is the substance of the doxology of praise which closes the Epistle. **R. D. Williams**

From Derby: Jude, a servant (bondservant) of Jesus Christ, and brother of James did not use the more exalted titles that he could have assumed, e. g. an apostle or brother of the Lord (Acts 1: 13 RVM, Mat. 13: 55). His general Epistle is in some respects like the two Epistles of Peter for he is faithful in his warnings in view of God's severity in His judgement of the past.

The Lord's servant thought at first to have written of our common salvation, but was constrained by the Spirit (no doubt) to write exhorting his readers to contend earnestly

for **the Faith which was** once for **all delivered** to the saints. This **Faith is** elsewhere **called the** Apostles' Teaching (**Acts 2: 41, 42**), and **the** commandment of **the** Lord (**1 Cor. 14: 37**). Obedience to **the Faith is vital** to **the** spiritual **welfare** of God's people. **Thus,** in writing to **the** Romans **Paul states,** 'Behold then **the** goodness and severity of God: toward **them that fell,** severity; **but** toward **thee,** God's goodness, if thou continue in **His** goodness: otherwise thou also **shalt be cut off**' (**Rom. 11: 22**). Peter wrote **that** there arose **false** prophets also among **the** people (Israel) **as** among you **there shall be false teachers'** (**2 Pet. 2: 1** cf. **Jude v. 4**).

Even Enoch, whose words were not recorded anywhere **else** in Scripture **is said** to **have** prophesied of **a future** judgement (**which is** even yet future), although **the great** judgement of **the** Flood **was** in **his** day soon to **take place**. Enoch (**Jude v. 14**) **seems** to **have** been enlightened regarding **the** judgement **at the** coming of **the** Son of **Man** for **'the** angels of **His** power' (**2 Thes. 1: 7, 8**) may **refer** to 'ten thousands of **His** holy ones'.

V. 17 opens with **'But** ye, beloved, remember ye **the** words **which have** been spoken' (not **as** yet written) 'before by **the** apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ'. **At this stage the New** Testament **was** in process of being written. **'But** ye, beloved, (cf. **v. 17**) building **up** yourselves on your most holy **faith** (cf. **v. 3**), praying in **the** Holy Spirit, **keep** yourselves in **the** love of God, looking for **the** mercy of our Lord Jesus **Christ** unto eternal **life'** (i. e. entering upon **its full** enjoyment subsequent to **His** coming **which is** the salvation ready to **be revealed**). Jude then **cites three states** possible to **the** saints: 'on some **have** mercy, who **are** in doubt'; some **save,** snatching **them** out of **the** fire'; 'and on some **have** mercy **with** fear'. Although **the** marginal note says **that the** Greek **is** uncertain in **the** passage just quoted, **we** understood **the** fire mentioned to **be** symbolic, **as** being a **general figure** of God's righteous anger against some who **were** exposed to it, by reason of **their evil** manner of life. **We** are exhorted to **hate** the garment spotted by **the** flesh and again **the** manner of life **is** in **view**.
L. A. H., S. R. W.

From Hamilton, Scotland: New Testament writers in their greetings to their readers use a variety of terms. Paul generally uses the terms **grace** and **peace**, cf. **Rom. 1: 7, 1 Cor. 1: 3, 2 Cor. 1: 2, Gal. 1: 3** etc. However he uses the formula **Grace,** mercy and **peace** in **1 Tim. 1: 2, 2 Tim. 1: 2.**

John **uses the same** greeting in 2 John 3. James **uses the** singular 'greeting'. Jude displays his individuality and **makes a point of emphasis** by using a unique form of greeting: 'Mercy unto you and **peace** and love **be** multiplied'. **The** priority of mercy and **the** importance of love **are** noted.

Exploring **the New Testament** writings, **we** discover in **the brief letter** of Jude fifteen words **which are used** only by him and by no other writer, albeit some **have a** history in **the Septuagint** version of **the Old Testament** and **all are** found in profane writings of NT. times.

Verse	Translated in R. V.	Greek
3	Contend earnestly	Epagonizomai
4	Crept in privily	Pareisduno
7	Giving themselves over to fornication	Ekporneuo
7	Suffering	Hupecho
7	Example	Deigma
10	Naturally	Phusikos
12	Hidden rocks	Spilas
12	Autumn	Pthinoporinos
13	Foaming	Epaphrizo
13	Wandering stars	Planetes
15	Convict	Exelencho
16	Murmurers	Gongustes
16	Complainers	Mempsimoiros
19	Make separations	Apodiorizo
24	From stumbling	Aptaistos

It is **remarkable that** in a verse of 25 words in our **Greek New Testament** (v. 7 of Jude's Epistle) **there are** found 3 words which Jude alone **uses**. They **are the Greek** words translated: 'giving themselves **up** to fornication', 'suffering' and 'example'.
Quartus

From Kingston-upon-Thames: Compelled by **the Spirit** Jude wrote to **the** saints, not about their common salvation (salvation being common to **them all** -2 Pet. 1: 1), **but because of the** prevailing apostasy, exhorting **them** to contend earnestly for **the** Faith. This is **the** body of doctrine, containing **the** will of God, committed to **the** saints. Their spiritual **state** is shown by mercy being listed first in Jude's greeting (v. 2), unlike most of **the** other Epistles. For **there were** those who **had** 'crept in privily' (**Acts 20: 28-29**) not

contending for **the Faith**, but rebelling against **the will** of God.

Jude exhorts **the saints** to **build themselves up** on their most holy **Faith**, and **puts them** in remembrance of **the apostles'** teaching (**2 Pet. 3: 2**). 'Now unto **Him that is able** to guard you from stumbling' (v. **24**) **is not a contradiction** of **what has gone before**, but clearly shows **God is able** and willing to **keep us** (**John 17: 12**). **If we show the spirit** of rebelliousness and **give ear to false** teachings, then **we put ourselves outside that sphere** of God's keeping.

In v. **8 Jude puts them in remembrance** of those who:

(i) '**defile the flesh**'.

Because Sodom and Gomorrah, the cities of the Plain, followed after their own ways they **were destroyed** in God's judgement (**Gen. 19**).

(ii) '**Set at nought dominion**' (cf. **2 Pet. 2: 4**).

Even those heavenly beings (v. **6**) **are now in bonds**, for they sought a higher station **that was not theirs**,

(iii) '**rail at dignities**' (cf. **Num. 14: 27**).

Israel, chosen of God (v. **5**) **saved and brought out**, **were found murmuring** against God.

Cain, **Balaam** and **Korah** **are other examples** of those who showed **the spirit** of rebelliousness. **Such seek their own will** not God's, and **are murmurers**, complainers, **like hidden rocks**, autumn **trees with no fruit**, **twice dead**, with no hope of showing **fruit** (**Mat. 15: 13**). To **impress these things that were written for us** Jude points **us forward to the coming** of our Lord: 'building **up yourselves** on your most holy **Faith** ... **keep yourselves in the love of God**' (**vv. 20, 21**).

G. J. Ackers

From Lagos: '**Others have laboured, and ye are entered into their labour**' (**John 4: 38**). In **this connection we think of the labours of the Lord**. **He who wept** over Jerusalem knew **what it was to sow in tears**. 'For **the zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up**' (**Ps. 69: 9**). '**After His passion... appearing unto them... and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God**' (**Acts 1: 3**). **He gave the apostles commandment** 'through **the Holy Spirit**' (**Acts 1: 2 RVM**). Naboth-like, **the apostles with the disciples were Spirit taught to value the heritage of the truth of God delivered to them**. John spoke of **himself as a partaker 'in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus'** (**Rev. 1: 9**). **Paul exhorting the disciples declared:** 'Continue in **the Faith**' for 'through many

tribulations **we must** enter into **the kingdom of God'** (**Acts 14: 22**). **Guided by the Holy Spirit, Jude** develops **his** exhortation to **us with the emphasis that we** 'contend earnestly for **the Faith**'. **We believe that right through the dispensation the conflict in defence of the whole counsel of God will** continue, and 'woe to **them that are at ease** in Zion' (Amos 6: 1). 'Look to yourselves, **that ye lose not the things which we have wrought'** (2 John v. 8). '**Watch ye, and keep them until ye weigh them... in the chambers of the house of the LORD'** (**Ezra 8: 24-30**); '**the house of God... the pillar and stay of the truth'** (1 Tim. 3: 15 RVM). **It is with the object that we** should know our enemies **that Jude** points out **the danger of enemies from within: men whose conduct is grievously lascivious, denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ (v. 4); the spirit of unbelief in those who have known regenerative grace (v. 5); unsteadfastness prompted by a lust for position (v. 6); and corruption through worldliness (v. 7).**

We note with interest the truth of eternal salvation applicable to all believers in Christ: 'called... and kept for Jesus Christ' (v. 1). In our day-to-day Christian experience **the Holy Spirit enjoins upon us: 'keep yourselves in the love of God'** (v. 21). **This envisages a life disciplined in the truth to bear fruit to God (see John 15: 1-10). Jude refers finally to the guarding power of our God: 'Able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy'** (v. 24).

E. Bassey, S. Coker

From Leeds: In his **First Epistle, Peter** speaks much of the salvation of God and in his **Second Epistle he refers to the time also referred to by Jude (cf. 2 Pet. 3: 3 and Jude vv. 17, 18). If the days in which the apostles wrote were at that time considered as being amongst the last days (although they also referred to a time yet future) where are we today? [Comment 8]. It is imperative as we consider the times of the last days, that we continue to contend for the Faith, which is the burden of the heart of Jude, who although originally thinking of writing relative to the salvation of God common to all believers, is constrained by the Spirit of God to write explicitly to those believers who already have and hold the Faith.**

Obviously **there were** some within **churches** of God who **were** unsaved unregenerate ones (vv. 4, 19). The **character-**

istics of **such** would soon **be made** evident and those who **have the** responsibility for caring for **the** Flock of God (1 Pet. 5: 2) should **be alert** to any who would **subvert** and undermine those who **strive** to hold **the Faith**. **Such characteristics** are outlined by Jude by means of certain metaphors (vv. 12, 13): rocks, **just** hidden beneath **the surface** of what would **appear** to **be** tranquil **waters**, causing **shipwreck** (see 1 Tim. 1: 19); **Shepherds** (overseers) who do not tend **the** Flock of God, **but rather feed** only **themselves** (see 1 Pet. 5: 2, Is. 56: 11); clouds (of promise) yet without **water**, **carried** along by **the** winds (see Eph. 4: 14); **trees** of the autumn, without **fruit**, only encumbering **the** ground (see Mat. 15: 13); **twice dead**, possibly referring to **the fact that such ones were** already **dead** (unsaved) and **as such** should **be** uprooted and **put** outside **the Church** of God; **wild waves**, tossed to and fro (see Is. 57: 20 and Eph. 4: 14); wandering **stars**, without a **set** course (see Acts 20: 24 and 2 Tim. 4: 7).

We are indebted to Jude for **the beautiful** doxology contained in vv. 24, 25. **Despite** troublesome days **we** may rejoice (1 Pet. 1: 8) as **we** glory in our **blessed** Saviour.

P. M. Jefferson, H. R. Dodge

From Liverpool: Although **the Epistle** is not specifically **addressed** to a church, the words 'to them that are called, beloved in God **the Father**, and **kept** for Jesus **Christ**' indicate that Jude was writing to a church of God [Comment 9]. The location of **the church** is not given neither is **the full** identity of **the writer** other than that he is a brother of James. **He** may therefore, according to **the flesh**, have been a half-brother of **the** Lord Jesus, **but** more importantly he refers to **himself** as a bondservant of Jesus **Christ**, **The message he has for them** is urgent and of **vital** importance, for although **he had** intended to **write** about salvation he has since been **directed** by **the** Holy **Spirit** to **urge** them to 'contend earnestly for **the Faith**' and to **guard** those things once for **all delivered** to **the** saints. The following verses indicate **just** how serious **were** some of **the practices** countenanced. **It is** necessary that **all** contend earnestly for **the Faith** and **this carries the** thought of participating in an **athletic** race. **The Christian life** is frequently likened to a **race** requiring preparation, faithfulness and endurance (see Heb. 12: 1, 2; 1 Cor. 9: 24-27; 2 Tim. 2: 5).

The letter makes it clear that there were those who **had crept** in privily and **were** denying **the** Lord Jesus. **Similar**

words are used in 2 Pet. 2:1 where he says of such men that they denied the Master *that bought them*, thereby indicating that they were saved persons. The solemn facts presented in Jude indicate that there were some in the churches of God at that time who were unsaved, for in v. 4 he refers to them as 'denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ'. In their case they had *not* been bought by the Master. It is solemn to contemplate that unsaved persons could so deceive and become numbered with God's people. Although it is clear that contending earnestly for the Faith would result in these evil men being put out of the church, we wondered why there was not a clear commandment given for this to be done [see Comment 5]. V. 12 seems to indicate that some were overseers and is a fulfilment of the words to the elders of Ephesus that from among their own selves (the elders) men would arise speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them (see Acts 20: 30).

In drawing lessons from the Old Testament Jude refers firstly to the Lord's people, then to the angels and lastly to Sodom and Gomorrah. 1 Pet. 4: 17 reminds us that judgement will begin at the House of God. One of the more serious sins is murmuring because it acts as an undercurrent and will, if allowed to develop, cause schisms within the church. To those who are faithful Jude exhorts that they should build up themselves in their most holy Faith. The return of the Lord Jesus should serve as an ever present reminder that all must give account of their stewardship and should regulate their lives accordingly.

M. S. E.

From Macduff: Although we are not told, it could be possible that Jude was a brother of the James who wrote the Epistle bearing his name. If this is so, it is also possible that Jude was not only a servant of Jesus, but also a son of Joseph and Mary, and therefore a 'brother' in the flesh of the Lord Jesus (Mat. 13: 55). The writings here are to them that are saved and called into the Fellowship of God's Son seeking to adhere to the whole Gospel including scriptures such as Acts 2: 41-42. This is 'the Faith' which we must earnestly contend for, which first of all was given to the apostles by the risen Lord and then freely spoken of and written by them for the learning of all disciples.

Most of us thought that in v. 4 we had men who had never been saved, although they had a form of godliness but denied the power thereof. They had crept into the local

Church or **were mixing with** saints and **were** making havoc of **them**. It was thought that **v. 13** applied to **them**, they **were reserved** for the blackness of darkness for **ever**, this being eternal judgement. **Others suggested that these men (v. 4) were saved but had** fallen away, turning against the Lord God like those of **2 Pet. 2: 1** who **were** bought, **but later** turned to deny the Lord, bringing in **destructive** heresies. Linked to **this** thought it was suggested that it was the stars **(v. 13) that were reserved** for darkness [Comment 10]. It was agreed that the angels **(v. 6) were** those which fell with Satan and that they are in darkness until the **Great Day**, which we thought would be after the Millennium when Satan is cast into the **Lake of Fire (Rev. 20: 10)**.

So **Jude** reminds us of the awful state in which self-willed man can find himself, and he exhorts us in the light of this to uphold, **treasure** and contend earnestly for 'the Faith'; in doing so **Peter** says we shall never **stumble (2 Pet. 1. 10)**. Similarly **Paul** wrote: **Take heed** to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in **these** things; for in doing **this** thou shalt save both thyself and **them that hear thee'** (1 Tim. 4: 16).

We must continue or as **Jude** puts it 'build up ourselves' (v. 20) and 'keep ourselves in the love of God' (v. 21), 'looking for the mercy of our Lord **Jesus Christ** unto eternal life'. Then we shall be delivered out of these ailing bodies, and know more fully the joys of eternal life. We thought of the glorious time after the Judgement Seat of **Christ**, when the Lord will present His faithful ones, perhaps at the marriage feast of the **Lamb**, before His glorious **Father**, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, in exceeding joy.

J. Mitchell

From Melbourne: As to the identity of the writer we cannot be certain save that he was the brother of James. Whether he was of the family of Joseph and Mary, as some have suggested, we do not know. He introduces himself as a bondservant of **Jesus Christ** The letter is addressed to them that are called, beloved in God the **Father**, and kept for **Jesus Christ**. This call would not only include that of 'Come unto Me . . . and I will give you rest', but also into the Fellowship of God's Son, thus bringing them into the **Churches** of God. No locality is specified. The call from the lost of earth had its origin in the love of God with a view to their future manifestation with **Christ**, not only at His coming to claim

the purchased possession, but that through the eternal ages there might be known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God. They had known the mercy of God in redemption, accompanied by peace which springs from the knowledge of justification. The writer expresses the desire that mercy, peace and love should be multiplied to them. This can be the experience of the saints of God as they grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

A reminder of the facts concerning their common salvation through faith in Christ was an essential part of his ministry towards them, but he was aware of conditions existing among them which called for urgent attention. The Faith which had been committed to their trust, to be guarded and kept, was being assailed. The Churches of God which under the New Covenant were to be its custodians, were being leavened by error, rebellion against the authority of godly leaders, and moral corruption. Divine truth was unconquerable, irrespective of what its adversaries might do, or how they might oppose it; but the Churches could lose it through apathy and lack of watchfulness. They are therefore being exhorted to contend earnestly for it.

Certain men had crept in privily, and we would judge that this indicates lack of watchfulness on the part of leaders among them. By deceitful methods elders had been misled. There would probably have been a show of false piety, knowledge and fair speech on the part of those who approached them, seeking an entry among God's people. But soon these men were revealed as wolves in sheep's clothing; the latter was discarded and they were seen as wolves indeed; and their character that of ungodly men, because of their shameless conduct, and not only so but by a denial of our Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. We judge that these ungodly men were unregenerate, although we can see the possibility of some amongst them who had once been obedient to the Faith, but had turned aside from the paths of righteousness.

Those who had crept in had been doing deadly work among true disciples of the Lord, and Jude is impressing upon the called ones the consequences of departing from the standards of righteousness which must be maintained by the people of God. He draws upon examples of the past - from the fall of angels down to that of Korah. We would suggest that the transgressions of those to whom he refers

had a counterpart in the lawless deeds of those who had crept in and were working havoc among the saints of the Churches of God. The unflinching consequences in the divine judgements executed upon past transgressors would be calculated to have a salutary effect on affected saints who as yet had not reached the stage of being 'past feeling'. It is the writer's object to impress upon them God's estimate of the enormity of sin and transgression by the record of His judgements thereon.

In v. 17 he again addresses the beloved saints of God. There does not appear to be any word of censure, but as a faithful shepherd he reminds them of the words of the apostles concerning this very thing. By ministering the pure Word of God amongst themselves, reminding each other of the Faith which had been committed to their trust, and praying in the Holy Spirit they can build themselves up in the knowledge of that Faith. The love of God has been experienced by all who are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. But it may be forgotten, together with the assurance of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Through the evil influence of the 'wolves' there were probably some who had lost the assurance of salvation; mercy was to be extended to them together with forbearance, as true shepherds sought to reassure them. Warnings of the consequences of following the evil teachers were to be given to others so that they might fear, and thus be rescued from the snare of the devil. Henceforth, they are reminded, there is One who is able to guard them from stumbling until they are set before Him without blemish in exceeding joy. After all his solemn warnings comes a final note of triumph to the One who would be victorious over all His foes, and who had delivered unto them the Faith to be kept intact until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

D. McFarlane, T. W. F.

From Methil: Although Jude had planned to write about the salvation shared by all the saints, the Holy Spirit compelled him to urge his hearers to contend earnestly for the Faith: to defend it stoutly; to fight for it; to stand up for it, and to hold tenaciously to it. This exhortation was necessary for there were certain men who had crept in among the people of God, pretending to be what they were not. In fact they were ungodly, unregenerate men, who denied the Lord Jesus His rightful place.

The Faith' is that body of teaching given directly by the

Lord **Himself to the** apostles and through **them** to others. It covers **all aspects** of the worship, **walk** and service of the people of God. **The Faith'** is complete and **had** been given to **be kept** without change throughout **the** years. Nothing **is** to **be added** or deleted.

Jude, in his **Epistle**, reminds us that God is well able to **judge** unbelievers (v. 5), the rebellious (v. 6), and the licentious (v. 7). **These** godless men of whom **Jude** warned were teaching **that** once **saved** you can do **as you please**, with no consequent punishment, **but** they **will find as** Cain who **killed his** brother and **Balaam** who would do anything for money and **Korah** who **desecrated the** sanctuary, **that** God's judgement **will be** upon **them** [Comment 11]. **Such** men **are like** clouds **that give** no rain, fruit trees without fruit doubly **dead**.

Our responsibility **is** to **keep** ourselves in the love of God, and develop spiritually, praying in the Holy **Spirit**. Then **we** **must** try to **assist** those who need **spiritual** help.

Jude ends **with a** doxology. To God **be the** glory. **He** alone enables us to **walk** and **He** alone **keeps us** from stumbling **that He might set us** before **Him** perfect in **that** glorious coming day.

Alan Manzie, Neville Coomer

From St. Helens: The **epistle** is not directed to any **particular** person, family, or **church** but to Christian **disciples** of **that** time. It is designed to warn against **seducers**, to inspire **a warm** love and concern for **truth**; **the truth that is** in Jesus (**Eph. 4: 21**), '**truth which is** according to godliness' (**Titus 1: 1**), together **with** holiness and love, especially brotherly love.

Truth in the gospel of Christ **is revealed** by **Him**. **He is** its main **subject**, so **we** ought to learn **all we** can of **Him** and the offices **He bears**. Also, **it is a** doctrine of godliness, and any **teaching which** favours the corrupt **lusts** of men **is** not of God nor by **the** leading of **the** Spirit.

Nevertheless, saints of God should not **be surprised** or allow **their faith** to **be** shaken by **such** evidence of failings in the early **churches** of God, since **it was** foretold **that it would exist** and would continue. **The writer** Jude enlarges upon the conduct and **character** of **these evil** men, calling attention to **the** severity of God in judgement against unbelieving **Israelites**, angels **that fell**, and **the fate** of Sodom and Gomorrah. **He** cautions **them** against listening to and following **such deceivers**, exhorting **them** to remain **steadfast**

in **the Faith**, fervent in prayer. They are **to be** encouraged by **the sure hope of eternal life** in Christ. **After** instructing **them** how to **act** towards those **who** err, **he** commends **them** to '**the only wise God our Saviour**' (**v. 24 AV**). **We might think that**, in their **place** and times they would **have** been proof against seducers. Having **advantage** of **these** writings **let us still take heed lest we fall.**

J. H. R.

COMMENTS

1. (**Barrhead**): The authorship of **the** Epistle of **Jude** is problematic. Suggestions include:

(i) Judas **the** brother of James (**Acts 1: 13 RVM**), i. e. one of **the twelve** apostles.

(ii) **A** brother of **the** writer of **the** Epistle by James, and therefore half-brother of **the** Lord Jesus (**Mat. 13: 55**).

I appreciate **the** view of most contributors in favouring this second suggestion, **but the** evidence is hardly conclusive. Some think **that** Jude **17** **excludes the** possibility of **the** author being an apostle; I find this argument somewhat questionable - did not **the** Apostle **Paul** **make** similar allusion to apostles in **Eph. 3: 5**? Could not Jude **have** been writing in a similar **sense**?

2. (**Barrhead**): I confess to feeling slightly uncomfortable about this sort of approach to discussion of **the** content of inspired Scripture. **It seems to me** more in keeping with Spirit-guided inspiration **that** Peter, Jude and **all other Bible** authors were independently constrained to write **as** 'moved by **the** Holy Spirit'. Admittedly **the** mode of inspiration is a wide **subject**, **but one feels that care** is needed lest in any way **we appear to detract** from **the** basic **truth that** Scripture is God-breathed (**2 Tim. 3: 16**).

3. (**Barrhead**): Strictly **the** 'Book of Enoch' **was** among **the pseudepigrapha** (i. e. 'books written under **the** name of an ancient writer') **rather** than one of **the** books of **the** Apocrypha. Those interested in **the** **subject** can readily refer to **such** articles **as** **The Apocryphal and Apocalyptic Literature** in **the IVF Commentary** (2nd Edn. p. **52**). **But the** point of **the** question in **Barrhead's paper** is why **the** apparent **reference** in Jude **14** to a book which **was** not recognised **as** being **part of the** inspired canon of **Scripture**? Incidentally it **has** been **suggested that there** is also an allusion in **v. 9** to another of **the pseudepigrapha**. **The Assumption of Moses**'. **We should be clear that the** Holy Spirit moved Jude to

write **vv. 9 and 14** as the God-breathed Word. **This** does not imply that the ancient writings in **which** similar allusions may occur were also God-breathed, any more than **the** works of the Grecian poet from whom **Paul** was constrained to quote in **Acts 17: 28**. **Jude** may well have had some knowledge of **the** Book of Enoch, **but** the important factor is that **the** Spirit of God moved **Him** to write as he did.

4. (*Barrhead*): **The** reason for **this** has not been revealed.

5. (*Barrhead*): **I** suggest that the absence of any **call** to **expel** evil elements from among **the** **disciples** would not necessarily imply that judgement **had** already been carried out. Some may already **have** been excommunicated, of course, **but** the letter reads to **me** as a powerful challenge, identifying **the** character of **the** spiritual impostors, and strengthening **the** hands of those loyal to **the** Lord. **It** must be assumed that disciplinary action would follow **where** appropriate.

6. (*Birkenhead*): Does not v. **3** suggest that instead of pursuing **the** theme of 'our common salvation' **Jude** was constrained by **the** Spirit to **deal** rather **with** the subject of **the** **Faith** for **which** they should earnestly contend?

7. (*Birkenhead*): Comparison of **Gal. 1: 13** with **1: 23** gives ground for accepting that '**the** **Faith**' in **1: 23** refers to **the** people indented **with** the body of doctrine; **but** **this** is an exceptional **usage**, and **the** term normally **applies** to **the** doctrine **rather** than to those giving **effect** to it.

8. (*Leeds*): **The** days or **times** are **last**' in **the** prophetic sense-cf. opening section of Kingston's contribution on p. **66** of **1976 Bible Studies**.

9. (*Liverpool*): **I** agree that **the** terms of **the** address imply that **the** letter was written to **disciples** called of God and **kept** for **Jesus** **Christ**, therefore together according to **His** will. **But** **I** suggest it may **have** been sent to **disciples** in more than one **church** of God (cf. **1 Peter 1: 1**).

10. (*Macduff*): **It** seems to **me** that **the** stars symbolise men, and therefore **the** darkness **illustrates** **their** eternal destruction.

11. (*Methil*): **I** am of **the** opinion that **the** illustrations used by **the** Spirit here (Cain, **Balaam**, Korah) strengthen **the** view that those being so severely censured **were** unsaved professors **rather** than backsliding **believers**. **G. P.**

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

From Liverpool: Does **the** expression in v. 4, 'even they who **were** of old **set** forth for **this** condemnation' **refer** to **specific** persons predetermined to **be** lost, or to **the** characteristics only of **such** persons, and **the practice** of **evil**?

I take the view **that** their having been 'of old **set** forth unto this condemnation' means **that** divine principles expressed and exemplified in God's dealings **with** men through **past ages**, condemned those of whom **Jude** wrote. **He** gives various illustrations in vv. **5-11** of those condemned 'of old' for similar attitudes. Evil men of Jude's generation could only **expect** similar condemnation in **the** light of **such** clearly established divine principles.

What are love-feasts? (v. 12)

There is general agreement among commentators **that the term** 'love-feast' **was used** to describe **meals** which Christians **ate** together in a spirit of fervent love and fellowship **such as** characterised **the** disciples in **Acts 2: 45, 46; 4: 35; 5: 1**. **It seems** probable **that such** love-feasts **had** developed in Corinth prior to **the** Remembrance, and **the** apostle **had** to **rebuke** disorders arising from **them** (1 Cor. 11: 20-22, **33, 34**). Jude **refers** to some **as** 'hidden rocks' (**RV**) or 'spots' (**AV**) **at these** love-feasts, **the** former implying dangerous hidden influences among **the** disciples, **and the latter** a 'disfigurement to Christian fellowship'.

What does 'twice **dead**' mean?

Twice **dead**' would apparently **refer** to **autumnal** deadness, **the** branches having borne no fruit, followed by complete deadness and being **plucked up** by **the** roots. So **the** '**dead** works' of these hypocritical professors manifested **that** they **were** in **fact** '**dead** through trespasses and sins', therefore to **be** discarded. **G. P.**

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