



The
PRESENT TRUTH
and
Herald of Christ's Epiphany

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

SPIRITUAL LIVING

“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple” Psa. 27: 1, 4.

“In everything give thanks” 1 Thes. 5: 18.

THE INSPIRED PSALMIST in loftiest strains of devotion and fervor puts into the hearts and minds of God’s consecrated people sentiments of faith, trust, love and adoration to God, who is worthy of all praise. While many of these sentiments were based upon his own checkered experiences, they were uttered under Divine inspiration, especially for the instruction and

edification of the true spiritual Israel of God. The Lord Himself would indicate to us the sentiments of fervent devotion to Him that should fill our hearts; and in this view of the matter we see how closely He would draw us to Himself in love, faith and childlike confidence. While reason and common sense have their rightful place and are indispensable to a religious life, the soul that never mounts upon the wings of holy and fervent emotion, and that is never stirred to its depths by a sense of the Divine goodness and beneficence, has never yet experienced the blessedness of the relation of sonship. A true son of a beloved and approving father naturally experiences the fervor of tender emotion. Especially is this so of a true son of God who recognizes in his Heavenly Father the perfection of every grace, the crowning glory of all excellence, and who lives in close communion and fellowship with Him and has the constant witness in himself of God’s love and approval. Those were no empty words of our blessed Lord Jesus when He said, “The Father Himself loves you.” “If a man loves Me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 16: 27; 14: 23). It is under such conditions that all these holy emotions of love, tenderness, faith, gratitude and praise fill to the brim our cup of joy; and with holy ecstasy we sing, “My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever” (Psa. 23: 5, 6). How full of the melody of fervent emotion, of grateful praise, and of loving confidence are the inspired Psalms! They bid our hearts rejoice and our tongues be glad, and they show us how, by meditating on His Word and obeying His precepts, to “rejoice in the Lord always,” and “in everything give thanks” (Phil. 4: 4; 1 Thes. 5: 18). It was in view of the Lord’s providences and of David’s many deliverances from the power of his enemies, and of the uniform kindness and mercy of God as he meditated upon them, that he exclaimed, in the words of our text, “The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I

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

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

fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" This consolation, variously expressed throughout the Scriptures, comes with all its blessed potency in our times of greatest need: the more desperate the foes we encounter, and the more fierce the conflict with the powers of darkness, the more glorious is the victory, and the clearer are the manifestations of Divine grace. And, as a consequence, faith takes deeper root, and with renewed confidence and assurance lays hold upon all the precious promises of God; and love and gratitude well up from hearts refreshed with an increased sense of the Divine favor and blessing. So it was with David: and so it is with God's *faithful* people who lead a life of prayer, faith and close fellowship with God. Such fellowship with God in adversity and in prosperity naturally tends more and more to center the heart's affections and desires in God, until the one thing supremely desired and sought after is that expressed by the Psalmist in v. 4 of our text, namely, to dwell continually in the house of the LORD, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in His temple. To dwell continually in the House of the LORD signifies to be continually counted worthy to be recognized of God as among His elect, "whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3: 6). Those who hold fast their faith, and by faith overcome the allurements and temptations of the world, dying daily to its spirit, hopes and ambitions, and living more and more unto God, shall indeed dwell in the House of the LORD forever. Now they dwell with God in consecration; and by and by they will dwell with Him in His Kingdom. "To behold the beauty of the LORD" is to behold the beauty of holiness, to have this image of His glory ever before the mind's eye as our inspiration, our light, our guide, our pattern and our chief joy. Here indeed is the Christian's secret of a happy life—not that he works himself up to a pitch of nerve excitement or indulges in a frenzy of *emotionalism* and under its spell does things quite foreign to the spirit of sobriety (Rom. 12: 3; Titus 2: 12; 2 Tim. 1: 7), but that he is happy in the midst of whatever may come to him of affliction or pain or loss or perplexity or whatever experiences come through the checkered scenes of this present life. To really behold the beauty of the LORD is possible to those only who dwell in His House; for only to such does He reveal Himself, "the fairest among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely." Only such know how to appreciate the beauty of His holiness; only such can delight themselves in Him—in continual meditation on His law. "To inquire in His temple" signifies that those who are truly of His House are inquirers, students of His holy law and

testimony, and that their delight is in so doing. The language of their hearts is, "O, how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day"; "I have meat to eat that you know not of"; for "I delight to do your will, O my God" (Psa. 119: 97; 40: 8; John 4: 32). This one desire is the sum and substance of the Christian's ambition as he becomes dead to self and the world and alive toward God. Let us seek after it and conform to it; for in so doing, Christian courage, boldness, fortitude and zeal will be greatly multiplied. These all are not only born of faith, but they increase and grow strong by a living faith developed and strengthened by the lessons of experience. Courage born of faith and strengthened by endurance cries with humble boldness in the midst of the deepest darkness of the most perplexing difficulties, and in the midst of the wildest storms and most threatening dangers, "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" The Apostle Paul surely caught this blessed inspiration when he said, "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice! Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4: 4, 6). Mark how throughout the Word of God we are taught, not only to be sober, vigilant, diligent, thoughtful, prayerful, and always to be abounding in the work of the Lord through whatever it may bring of toil or care or reproach or persecution, but also in the midst of any or all of these experiences to be happy and to be filled with the inspiration of a holy joy. And not only are we counseled to be joyous, but the manner of life which naturally produces this joy is pointed out to us. When we come into the Lord's family we enter a new and holy atmosphere which those only can realize and appreciate who have the one desire above referred to paramount to every other—namely, to be accounted worthy to abide in the Lord's House.

* * *

*Great truths are dearly bought, The common truth,
Such as men give and take from day to day,
Comes in the common walk of easy life,
Blown by the careless wind across our way
Great truths are dealy won; not found by chance,
Nor wafted on the breath of summer dream;
But grasped in the great sturggle of the soul,
Hard buffeting with adverse wind and stream.*

GOSPEL AGE HISTORY

Bible's Open to Isaiah 24: 1-23

THE primary fulfillment of Isaiah the twenty-fourth chapter, is the national overthrow of the Jewish nation, culminating in 607 B.C., is of course worthy of consideration; but because the desolation of that time under Nebuchadnezzar prefigured a similar calamity under Titus in the Jewish Harvest, it will be more profitable for us to consider the prophetic application as described in the Jewish Harvest.

From this standpoint, Isaiah 24 applies prophetically from the Jewish Harvest onward throughout the entire Gospel Age and into the Millennial Mediatorial Reign of Christ. It first describes conditions in the Jewish Harvest (vs. 1-12), a time of confusion and distress in, and also desolation of, Judea as a punishment from Jehovah because of the iniquities of Fleshly Israel as a nation. It then speaks (vs. 13-16) of a faithful remnant scattered among the nations and glorifying Him, even in distant lands. Next it describes (vs. 16-23) the treachery of certain Gospel-Age leaders, especially the religious leaders, in symbolic Babylon—mainline Christianity, the Gospel-Age besetments and persecutions of God's people, the overthrow and removal of Satan's empire, both secular and religious, in the great Time of Trouble, and the ushering in and prospering of God's glorious reign of righteousness through Christ in the new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 11: 15). Accordingly, Isaiah 24 gives us, in prophecy, a brief history of the entire Gospel Age.

The Hebrew word *eretz* occurs 16 times in Isa. 24, and very frequently elsewhere in the Bible. It is usually translated either "earth," as in v. 1, or "land" (ASV footnote on v. 1; Leeser renders it "land" throughout vs. 1-12). Much of the language in vs. 1-12 favors the translation "land" rather than "earth" here, because the land is directly involved as

well as the people (Hosea. 4: 3, 6, 9; Luke 13: 34, 35; 21: 20).

Since Fleshly Israel is a type of Spiritual Israel, and since the Jewish Harvest finds its parallel counterpart in the Gospel Harvest, it is quite proper to apply the expressions "makes the earth empty," "makes it waste," "distorts its surface," also to the end, or Harvest, of the Gospel Age, especially the Time of Trouble from 1914 onward (R 1813, last par., 5041, col. 2, 5735, col. 2; BS '60, p. 63; '68, p. 63). As already mentioned, we will here consider the prophecy of Isa. 24 as a whole as fulfilled historically and chronologically, starting in the Jewish Harvest, where the Gospel Age began.

THE PUNISHMENT OF ISRAEL

When Jesus, born under the Law, came to His people, "His own received Him not" (Gal. 4: 4; John 1: 11)—

"his own people hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19: 14); and they, especially their hypocritical leaders—"blind guides"—plotted against and persecuted Him, "cast him out . . . and killed him" (Luke 20: 14, 15; Acts 2: 36; 3: 15). He would have gathered them together under Him as the Messiah, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but they would not; so their house was left unto them desolate (Matt. 23: 13-29), and their national polity was overthrown and destroyed by the Roman armies (Luke 21: 20-24; Berean Comments).



JERUSALEM IN RUIN

21: 20-24;

Berean Comments).

Isaiah in v. 1 prophesies in a few all-embracing statements the punishment that Jehovah would, in the Jewish Harvest, visit upon the Jewish nation "because of their transgression [rejection of Jesus], and because of their iniquities [sins against the Law Covenant]" (Psa. 107: 17; see

E4, p. 169): (1) He would make their land empty; (2) He would make it waste; (3) He would turn it upside down (*overturns face thereof*—see margin; as a bottle is drained by being turned upside down—its face being its mouth; Psa. 146: 9); and (4) He would scatter them abroad in the dispersion of the Gospel Age (Deut. 4: 27; 28: 64; 30: 3).

Isaiah then proceeds to give some details: All groups alike would suffer, regardless of social position (Isa. 24: 2); the land would be utterly emptied and plundered (v. 3); the land and its inhabitants, including the lofty ones, would mourn, languish and fade away (v. 4). The Israelites in general had defiled, polluted, desecrated their land, in which God dwelt (Num. 35: 33, 34), not being faithful to Him in their transgressing, by idolatry and otherwise, His precepts (laws), in changing His statutes, His doctrines (ordinance; Ex. 18: 20; E 11, p. 332) and in breaking the everlasting covenant (v. 5; Jer. 3: 1-5; 11: 2-10; E 14, pp. 330, 352, 353; Ezek. 16: 59).

God's good intention had been to make of Israel "a people unto himself," as He had sworn unto their fathers—"to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob" (Deut. 29: 13); but of Israel's infidelity, disloyalty to Him—their covenant God, He sent to them the promised curse (Deut. 11: 26-28), and it devoured their sphere of teaching (Jer. 7: 34; E 14, p. 346, top) and made their homeland desolate, the Jewish nation, but saving a remnant Israelites indeed (v. 6; Rom. 9: 27, 29; 11: 5; B 205, 206).

Sad indeed was Fleshly Israel's desolation and the festive mirth was changed to silence and sorrow. To the unfaithful Israelites, their supply of Truth as due through their leaders (the new wine) was dried up—this source of supply was withered and brought disappointment, and the joyful time became sad (Isa. 24: 7; Joel 1: 10, 12). There was no more rejoicing among them (v. 8; Hos. 2: 11) in simpler truths, and to them their deeper truths became bitter—their wine was turned to gall (v. 9; Deut. 32: 32, 33).

The Jewish nation, their religious government (city), having set at naught the Divine law and order, including the message pertaining to Jesus as the Messiah, thereby making "the commandment of God of none effect by their tradition" (Matt. 15: 6), and having rejected Him and having cried out for and obtained His crucifixion, had fallen into a state of chaos, and every part of their government was broken down and forsaken, so that none could enter it (Matt. 15: 6; Isa. 24: 10). There was a crying of anguish because their source of Truth was cut off (see Luke 16: 19, 22-24); all joy was darkened as they entered into the long and gloomy night of the Diaspora during

the Gospel Age, when they could no longer rejoice in their blessings as a nation and the blessings of their homeland (Isa. 24: 11). Their religious polity as a nation was left desolate, and there was no more entrance into it (v. 12).

THE FAITHFUL REMNANT

The apostate house of Israel, its national desolation and destruction and the punishment and scattering of its people, is vividly portrayed in vs. 1-12. It was at this same time, the time of the Jewish Harvest—"when it shall be in the midst of the land among the people" (v. 13)—that a remnant of faithful Israelites—indeed were gathered to Jesus as their Messiah and Lord. The gleaning of the last of these few choice ones is likened to the "shaking of an olive tree" after the bulk of the olives have been gathered, in order to get the few that remain on the highest boughs and the outmost fruitful branches (Isa. 17: 6), and is compared also to the gleaning of the few remaining grapes after the vintage (the main grape gathering) is done.

While the nation of Fleshly Israel as a whole stumbled through unbelief and their house was left unto them desolate, the remnant accepted Christ (John 1: 11, 12; 14: 6), continued in God's special favor and became the nucleus of Spiritual Israel. They had great "gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2: 46, 47).

Accordingly from the beginning, the Church fulfilled the prophecy concerning Zion: "Cry out and shout, your inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee" (Isa. 12: 6). Since the same Hebrew words are used for "cry out" and "shout" (the word implying a *cheerful* utterance), Isa. 24: 14 may be rendered (comp. Leeser): "They [the Church] shall lift up their voice, they shall sing [shout, cheerfully declare the Gospel message]; because of the majesty of the LORD [Jehovah in His wonderful attributes] they shall cry aloud [declare it powerfully] from the sea [the early Church first raised their anthems of praise mainly along the shores of the Mediterranean and in the nearby islands]."

"Wherefore [because of His great majesty] glorify ye Jehovah in the east, even the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, in the isles of the sea" (24: 15, ASV). The word rendered "fires" in the KJV is generally thought by Bible scholars to refer to "the regions of morning light," toward the rising sun, *the east*, in antithesis to the "isles of the sea," *the west*. Here the early Gospel-Age saints, wherever they went, east or west (as well as those of later in the Age) were exhorted to glorify Jehovah (comp. Mal. 1: 11; Acts 15: 14; Matt. 8: 11; E 4, p.340; R 5407, col. 2, par. 3).

The prophetic call met with excellent response and songs of praise were heard far and wide as the Gospel message

was heralded increasingly from shore to shore and to the uttermost part of the earth (v. 16, first sentence; Acts 1: 8). They preached “glory to the righteous”: (a) chiefly and primarily ascribing it eternally to God and to Jesus Christ, in whom and through whom God’s glory is exhibited (John 1: 14; 5: 23; Rom. 9: 23; 2 Cor. 4: 6; Eph. 2: 6, 7; Heb. 1: 3), then (b) to the Church from God through Jesus in the Gospel Age and throughout eternity (Psa. 84: 11; Matt. 13: 43; John 17: 22; 2 Cor. 3: 18; Col. 3: 4; Heb. 2: 10; 1 Pet. 5: 10, 11) and also (c) to the righteous of the world of mankind from God and the Christ, which glory will be given to them Millennially (Num. 14: 21; Psa. 72: 19; Isa. 24: 23; 40: 5; Hab. 2: 14; Joel 2: 28; Matt. 25: 34; Luke 2: 10, 14; John 1: 9; 12: 32; Acts 3: 19-23; 1 Tim. 2: 4-6; 4: 10; Heb. 2: 9; 2 Pet. 3: 13; Rev. 21: 1-5).

CHRISTENDOM’S TREACHERY & DESTRUCTION

Speaking as representing the Lord’s people in their being rejected and persecuted during the Gospel Age, particularly at the hands of the great Antichrist system, the Prophet laments their trialsome condition: “My leanness, my leanness [in contrast to being fat, *i.e.*, well-favored, prosperous], woe unto me! the treacherous dealers [Christendom’s leaders, especially the papal hierarchy] have dealt . . . very treacherously [in their schemings, misrepresentations, hypocrisies, betrayals, the ‘Holy’ Inquisition, burnings at the stake, *etc.*].”

But now in the end of the Gospel Age, in the Day of Vengeance, the great Time of Trouble, Christendom in its greater and lesser Antichrist systems, the plunderer that has for centuries plundered and dealt treacherously, will come to its end, will be destroyed, and will cease its treacherous dealing (Isa. 33: 1; 63: 4; P 76, p. 67, col. 2). This present evil order is now being gradually overthrown, and more and more we see “men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken” (Luke 21: 26). In Isa. 24: 17-22, the Prophet vividly describes the conditions in, and the passing away of, the present evil order in the Time of Trouble. Terror (fear, v. 17) and various calamities (the pit, and the snare) are the portion of those in it (inhabitant of the earth). Those who because of the declarations of coming evils try to escape from the judgments of God’s wrath shall be caught and punished by one calamity after another (he who flees from the noise of the fear [terror] shall fall into the pit; and he that comes up out of . . . the pit shall be taken in the snare, v. 18).

There is no escape from God’s judgments in this day of His wrath. It is “as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him” (Amos 5: 19). “And as it was in the days of Noah, so also will the coming of the Son of man be . . . the flood came and destroyed them all.

Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot . . . it rained [upon Sodom and Gomorrah] fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Then shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed” (Luke 17: 26-30; D 606, 607).

So in this “day of the LORD”—He is pouring out His fiery indignation (for the windows from on high are open; (Gen. 7: 11; 2 Pet. 3: 6, 7; Zeph. 3: 8), and the present evil order shall be terribly shaken, to its very foundations (the foundations of the earth do shake; Isa. 2: 19-21; Hag. 2: 6, 7; Heb. 12: 26, 27). In its disintegration and dissolution, there is terrible turmoil, and only those things which cannot be shaken (those based on righteousness) will remain (Isa. 24: 19; 2 Pet. 3: 10-12; Rev. 16: 18).

The present evil order (the earth, v. 20) has tried with everything in its power to patch up the old garment and is at its wit’s end (Psa. 107: 27). It reels to and fro like a drunkard—it is so unsteady and uncertain and shaking so much. It shall be removed like a garden-hut, a temporary structure (cottage; the same Hebrew word is translated *lodge* in 1: 8). Why is the present order under God’s curse and wrath, and about to be fully destroyed? Why is it, like a drunkard, unable to walk uprightly, and why is it about to be removed? Because in its religious, social, civil and financial spheres it is heavily burdened and weighed down by sin (the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; Rev. 16: 19; R 1896, col. 2). The present evil world with its wicked heavens and earth is passing away and soon the old dilapidated cottage will be supplanted by the King’s palace in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21: 1-5). The present order, symbolic Babylon, will be utterly and eternally annihilated, never to exist again (it shall fall, and not rise again; Rev. 18: 20, 21). Praise God!

THE MILLENNIAL DAY

In “the day of the LORD,” the “day of vengeance” (Isa. 34: 8; 63: 4; Joel 2: 1, 2, 31; Obad. 15; Zeph. 1: 14-18), the day of the destruction of the present evil world, the first part of the Millennial Day (in that day, v. 21), the great Antichrist system and the rest of symbolic Babylon shall be utterly annihilated, “for God hath remembered her iniquities” (Rev. 18: 5-11). He will bring judgment upon (punish) the multitudinous Catholic and Protestant clergy, especially the hierarchy (the host of the high ones that are on high—the symbolic heavens) and the rulers and aristocrats in the earthly phase of Satan’s empire (the kings of the earth upon the earth). They shall be destroyed as such and—in many cases—literally be put to death. They will go down into death during the Time of Trouble (gathered together, with the gathering of prisoners in the pit, v. 22; margin; the Hebrew word for *pit* here is different than the one used in v. 18; it means a pit *bole*, such as a cistern, a dungeon, *etc.*, and is often used to represent the grave, the condition of death—as in Psa. 28: 1; 30: 3; 88: 4; 143: 7; Isa. 38: 18).

While the present evil order will forever cease to exist, will this also be the fate of all its inhabitants, great and small? Ah, no! They shall be shut up in the tomb, the prison house of death (shut up in the prison), but in due time (after many days) they (except Spirit-begotten ones who went into the Second Death) shall be remembered (visited), for they shall be called forth from their sleep in the dust of the earth (Dan. 12: 2; John 5: 28, 29; Rev. 20: 13, 14; Isa. 26: 19; 35: 10).

During the Millennial Mediatorial reign of truth and righteousness (Isa. 28: 17) the world of mankind will be awakened from their sleep of death. Satan is a counterfeit of God as the Source of light, the Giver of true knowledge, who is symbolized by the sun (Psa. 84: 11; Isa. 60: 19, 20). During the Mediatorial Kingdom (Isa. 24: 23), Satan and his errors will be completely bound, refuted, and put to shame in people's minds (sun ashamed; the Hebrew word here means *to pale*); under the light of "the Sun of righteousness" the counterfeit sun in his false light will be, according to the Jewish expression, like a lamp in the noonday brightness. The fallen angels also, who reflected the counterfeit light received from Satan (2 Cor. 11: 14, 15), will, in their trickeries and deceptions, be examined, exposed, refuted and condemned under the resplendent light of truth then shining (the moon shall be confounded; E 2, pp. 410, 411).

What a glorious time this will be, when Jehovah brings to earth His restitution blessings for mankind! He will reign in the glorified Church (reign in mount Zion), and

in the earthly phase of His Kingdom (in Jerusalem), and there shall be glory before His ancients (see margin, ASV). Leeser renders it: "and before his ancients in glory."

The Ancient Worthies will have the Youthful Worthies (E 4, p. 317; E 17, p. 37) as their associates and the Consecrated Epiphany Campers as special assistants in the glorious reign for the blessing of mankind. For the glad prospect of the full destruction of Satan's empire and the establishment of Christ's Millennial Mediatorial Reign, so wonderfully portrayed prophetically in Isa. 24, well may we heartily sing Jehovah's praises; "for it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is beautiful" (Psa. 147: 1).

THE KEY

God's Word alone may studied be

And still remain a mystery;

A little here, a little there,

May little give of treasures rare;

To comprehend its sacred pages

We need to know God's Plan of the Ages

Nigerian Trip Report

On Saturday March 13th we left home for the airport to board an 8:05 PM flight to Atlanta, GA. We had a little more than an hour layover before boarding the scheduled 11:15 p.m. flight to Nigeria. After several weeks of more than a wee bit of anxiousness, mostly due to the trip being our 'maiden voyage' abroad, and all of the preparation for the trip, including several immunizations, figuring out best packing strategies, we were quite tired. We also longed to be in two places at once as we departed on the first day of the Jacksonville, Florida convention. On the other hand, we were humbled by the fact that the Nigerian brethren had moved their convention from May to March to accommodate our visit.

The flight was about 13 hours from Atlanta to the Ikeja Airport, in Lagos State, Nigeria. We arrived on March 14th. Nigerian clocks are 6 hours ahead of our eastern standard time.

The experience at the Nigerian airport was very differ-

ent than we are accustomed to here in the United States. The most conspicuous difference was the presence of machine gun armed police, and it was very hot! It took what seemed a long time to get through security to have our documents checked. Once we got through security we experienced a disappointment...a trial of faith. We were among a handful of people still waiting at baggage claim when the conveyors shut down. After three days we learned that our luggage had been sent to France! It was nearly a full week before we had access to our luggage. Needless to say, we had no way of planning for this.

After a harrowing road trip, we arrived at the home of the Ebongs. Again we are greeted by several other members of the family and local class. The extended family model seems alive and well, and it appears to be driven by more than the practicality of economics. They seem to exhibit a lot of love and care for each other and for the operation of the house. They still get the 'real meaning' of family...a real contrast to our general experience in the

USA. A bit fatigued, we were energized by the manner in which we were received and welcomed by the family. The thing that impressed us most was the manner in which the entire family joined in singing the hymn 'Revive Us Again' as they were led in song by the big voice and exuberance of Bro. Ebong. Also very noticeable was the respect and attention everyone gave to us as their guests. Dinner was prepared for us and we ate before others did/could at a table that our hosts surrendered that we might have it instead. The level of hospitality was truly humbling. After an evening of fellowship we were driven to a hotel for the night's rest.

MONDAY, MARCH 15TH – VISIT TO A SECONDARY SCHOOL.

Up early, partly due to force of habit, and probably too, because of the excitement of being in a far off, very different land. We had a light breakfast in the hotel's dining room, and were picked up by one of the Ebong's younger sons; from there we traveled by bus for a 10-15 minute ride to another "mobbed" bus stop to pick up Brian, a young man newly interested in the truth. Brother Ebong described him as a mal-contented Muslim. We then were driven by taxi to give a talk to school children.

It did not appear that the service to the school was planned in advance, but after a discussion with the head master, we were permitted to address the children. The approach was kept very basic (use of the milk of the truth) using John 3:16 and Proverbs 22:6 as the basis of our thoughts on God's love as seen in HIS plan of salvation for mankind. We were struck by the personal and collective good behavior of students, and of their familiarity with the Bible. In attendance at this service were 8 adults and 102 students. All present, including the adults, appeared genuinely interested and inspired by the short study.

In general, the day seemed to ebb and wane from fast to slow, depending on what was going on. We spent a goodly amount of time in motor vehicles – usually public transportation - or in the car of a brother when he was available. Again, the very bad roads stood out as they greatly affected travel time. The day ended without another service (we arrived a day before the itinerary planned). We were taken back to our hotel for the evening to rest up for our journey to visit the Ibadan class in Oyo State.



TUESDAY, MARCH 16TH – IBADAN CLASS, OYO STATE

Although the first thing in our schedule was to travel to serve the Ibadan class in Oyo State, our host, Bro. Ebong had made, (what seemed to be impromptu) arrangements for another service to a school. We traveled from the hotel in what I have styled a 3- wheeled motorized rickshaw, a small public taxi designed for 2 maybe 3 passengers and the driver, but often seen carrying five! From there we took a taxi to Ibadan. The trip was 71 miles from Lagos. We went to the meeting hall and found about

20 brethren who had been waiting for quite some time (we were late to practically every scheduled event during the course of the Nigerian service), only to be asked to wait a bit longer while a visit was made to the school.

A short ride later (by the chartered taxi) and what seemed a long discussion with the head mistress; the children were gathered for our visit. Being uncomfortable with the approach, we stayed the course as with the previously visited school...kept it very simple with the 'milk of the truth'. Two hours later we returned to the meeting hall. There were only about 17 brethren still waiting. We were still warmly welcomed and gave a talk on 'Ezekiel's River (Ezek 47:1-12). The talk was translated by the 'Pastor', turning a 50 minute talk into more than 90 minutes. This takes a little getting used to. All said, the talk seemed well received. After the discourse 'Pastor' Oyerinde presented an address of welcome (as would be the practice of many of the other places we would serve). At the conclusion of the evening we were presented with a gift of traditional attire. The brethren are very loving. It was late and dark; much darker than, and later than the hired driver was told to expect for the return drive to Lagos. Matters were made worse by the Ebong's insisting that we stop for dinner at a fast food restaurant. Our driver was quite angry as his taxi had but one headlight and he knew it would be even more difficult to maneuver the very bad roads. By HIS grace we made it back to Lagos safely. We did feel for the taxi driver.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17 – ABUJA

We left the hotel today at about 10:00 a.m. We are to collect our lost luggage at the airport after 3 days. After picking up the luggage, we return to the Ebong's home to pack for a 7 day journey, multi-class service (the first of

3 in-country flights). We, (accompanied by Brother and Sister Ebong) left the Logos Airport aboard Aero flight 129 at 6:00 PM, and arrived at the Abuja airport about 7:25 p.m. Abuja is not too far from the Jos, the sight of the recent clash between Muslim and Christian factions, leaving more than 200 Christians dead from a machete massacre just 12 days earlier. We learned that the country is divided by religion, with Islam in the north and Christian in the south. Given the recent event in Jos, we were slightly concerned, but rested in faith of the Lord's watch care. We were greeted at the airport by Brother Ekanem. He is a professor at the University of Abuja, currently on a sabbatical working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on a project investigating the avian influenza impacts (seems the incidence was very low) in Nigeria. We were scheduled to meet with the Abuja class for a Bible study at 8:00 p.m. local time, but we arrived too late. We were driven to our lodging for the night, and ended the evening with snacks and a Christian centered discussion and fellowship.

THURSDAY, MARCH 18 – AKWANGA, NASSARAWA STATE

We were scheduled to depart the hotel at 10:00 a.m. for Akwanga, an 86 mile road trip to a town east of Abuja. The plans were delayed as we were asked to facilitate a devotional service, to which we were pleased to oblige. It appears that many of the classes (brethren) are unaccustomed to the usual and customary morning devotional service in the USA. We were humbled to be the instrument used to demonstrate what we pray will become a part of the brethren's daily walk. The Ebongs (their eldest daughter brought breakfast and joined us) and the two other brothers seemed very pleased with the service fellowship.

We later departed by car on the 86 mile trek for Akwanga. Being behind schedule the driver was encouraged to make haste, in which he obliged, traveling at high speeds on very bad roads. Again by the Lord's travel mercies we arrived safely to our destination. The service was held in Brother Silas' home. He presents a humble manner and seems to love the truth. He has several children (mostly adult); all seem to have been reared in a proper, God fearing way. It was refreshing to be in the company of such faithful ones. We gave a talk: 'Moab is my wash pot' – Psa. 108: 9 There were 13 present for the service and the fellowship was very blessed.

FRIDAY, MARCH 19TH – MAKURDI, BENUE STATE

We leave Akwanga headed for Makurdi by car. Makurdi is 82 miles from Akwanga. Brother Silas is

our driver. We presented a discourse entitled 'Promises and Prospects: According to your faith', followed by a testimony meeting. The brethren seem to not appreciate the order of class proceedings that are the custom in US Ecclesias. They ask impromptu questions, unrelated to the talk and expect ready answers. This was a bit unnerving. We were able to discuss this with the National Representative, Brother Ebong, and convinced him to suggest the brethren save their questions for a special meeting scheduled for the final day of the convention. There were 33 present at the Makurdi service.

SATURDAY, MARCH 20TH – RETURN TO ABUJA FOR FLIGHT TO OWERRI, IMO STATE EN ROUTE TO ABA (ABIA STATE)

We are still not accustomed to the bad roads and travel continues to be hard. This trip was particularly so. Brother Silas was still our driver. The trip was a hard 5 ½ hour trek on terrible road, with many pullovers by machine-gun armed federal police. The ride is harrowing due to the condition of the vehicle and we had a tire blowout on the way. We were privileged to assist in getting the flat tire off as the brethren seemed not to have a great deal of experience in doing so. We were scheduled to serve another class, but, because of road troubles, we ran out of time and were not able to go. Our flight to Abia State was at 1:00 p.m. and again we were very late, arriving at the airport at 12:30 p.m.. However, unlike what would be experienced in US airports, we were assisted by two brothers from Abuja and somehow were able to manipulate the check-in process and secured our boarding passes by bi-passing security measures. A brother met us at the airport and drove us to Abia State, and to the meeting place of the Aba class. We received a welcome address from the class leader and gave a talk.

There were 25 present for the talk. We met Brother Godswill (his real name), an Elder and class leader. For the class, he presented Sister Deborah and me a gift of native attire. The brethren love to sing hymns, which made the service extra nice.

SUNDAY, MARCH 21ST –

Morning: We left Aba State for the Uyo class. Our driver who was paid in advance and given the price of a tire, did not show to drive us to Uyo. The Ebongs were forced to arrange for alternate transportation and we were unable to serve the Uyo class as scheduled. Many of the brethren were able to travel to the meeting to be held at the Ikot Mkpene class. We served by giving a talk: "I pray for doomsday (Judgment Day)"; and later we

gave a second unplanned talk: "Prophets and Righteous Men Desired What You Have". The spirit of the meetings was warm and the fellowship rich. Aside from our language challenges, the "like-precious" faith was quite evident. There were 56 and 53 present at the services.

Monday, March 22nd – We traveled from Uyo to Mibiakong to serve this class. We gave a talk: "Word, Spirit and Providence." There were 44 souls present at the service. We also received a welcome address and a hard copy of the address for the purpose of sharing with the Bible House. In the evening we served the class at Emanukpa with a talk: "Heart failure" (Luke 21: 26). There were 44 present.

Tuesday, March 23rd – This day turned out to be a 'light' day. We were driven to Calabar to visit with Brother Ebong's nephew, a marketing professional, and treated to a visit to a resort (Nigeria's attempt at a high-end tourist site to attract visitors from other parts of the world, similar to what has been done by the United Arab Emirates in Dubai). We were taken on a short guided tour of the resort, Le Meridien, and had an American style lunch there. Given the lack of variety of foods that we are accustomed to in the US (rice is a staple food among the brethren here) the meal as very nice. We could not help but think of how temporally blessed we are in the U.S. We boarded a flight from the Calabar Airport back to Lagos. Fellowship with the Ebongs aboard the flight was very nice. We had come to know each other fairly well by now.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24TH

We went back to Lagos where our Nigerian visit began. That evening we served the 'Present Truth Ministries', led by Brother Ernest Edgar, and in his home. The atmosphere was very 'Church' oriented, with a band and amplified singing. After the discourse we enjoyed a meal and rich fellowship. There were 21 present for the service.

THURSDAY, MARCH 25TH

We served the Agbado class in Ogun State (the Ecclesia of the Ebongs). Our talk was a baptismal discourse. We were to immerse 2-3 candidates, but due to scheduling problems the candidates were not able to be present and were immersed by Brother Ebong prior to the talk. There were 45 present for the service.

FRIDAY, MARCH 26 - 28TH – AGBADO CONVENTION

This was one of the most interesting and probably the single most anxiety producing day of our visit. This was so as we were only informed that we would chair the convention the evening before, and had not seen a full convention program yet! We were calmed by ponder-

ing the scriptures (*'it is the Lord, let HIM do what seemeth HIM good'* - 1 Sam 3: 18; *The* theme of the convention was "Why Does a Loving God Allow Human Suffering & Tragedies", and its published program noted: *Bible Standard Ministries, LHMM: A Worldwide, Non-Sectarian, Interdenominational Christian Movement, and Publishers of the 'Bible Standard' & 'Present Truth' Magazines.*

The symposium theme was *The 21 Offices of Christ to Cure 21 Evils of Man*. In addition to the several symposium talks there were 5 Bible talks and we were privileged to serve twice. The first talk was on "*God's Righteousness amid Human Suffering,*" and the second was "*The Adamic Curse: Benefits Derived.*"

The convention was held in an open-air facility with a permanent roof covering. The amenities and comforts i.e. restrooms, snack breaks, beverages, etc, were not as we experience them in the US, yet the congregation was full of zeal and good spirits ... clearly very appreciative of being there. Attendance at the convention varied over the 3 days from between 56 and 75.

After 14 days and 15 nights in another country, culture and customs, we were transported to the airport at Lagos by Brother and Sister Ebong and one of their sons, Brother Jolly Willie Ebong. As we prepared to depart from Lagos, Nigeria for Atlanta, GA USA on Delta Flight 53T, it turned out to be an emotional departure. Our hosts were saddened that our time there had come to an end; and even though some of our experiences were somewhat hard and challenging to our flesh, and we were ready to return to our own land and to our own beds, we too were saddened. We had formed such bonds with these dear ones. They truly love the Lord and His truth and have a passionate desire for fellowship with other truth brethren, and feel the faith connection with brethren the world over. The Nigerian brethren live a very hard life in terms of material and temporal sustenance, but they are rich in faith and loving in spirit. We praise Jehovah for the opportunity to have served in this capacity and we humbly acknowledge that we likely gained more blessings in doing so than we bestowed. Praise God for the opportunity.

Bro. Lawrence Williams

Auxiliary Pilgrim

TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES

“Remember Lot’s wife”—Luke 17: 32.

IN CONNECTION with our dear Master’s prophetic warnings respecting the trials and testings of the present day, He uttered the words of our text. The significance of these words should be comprehended by all who are walking in the light of “Present Truth.” The lesson is that those who, under the special guidance of the Lord, are now fleeing for safety to the Mountain of the Lord’s Kingdom, will be held to a much stricter account than are others. Lot’s wife was not accused of having shared in the evil practices of the people of Sodom, but she had been instructed by the angel of the Lord to leave Sodom at once, as it was doomed.

LOOKING BACK

Her fault was that of looking back to that which she had been commanded to leave, and which she had left. She was told to flee from the condemned city, and not to look back as she fled, but to hasten on to the mountain of safety. We may reasonably suppose that her turning and looking back toward Sodom implied a heart not fully in harmony with her deliverance, but in some degree sympathetic with what she was leaving. She, at heart, clung to the accursed things condemned to destruction and was loath to give them up. Therefore, the Lord brought her no further. She became a monument of the folly of sympathizing with evil, and with evil-doers, after God has given them up.

OPONENTS OF GOD

We believe there are some now who need to have their attention called to the antitype of this typical incident referred to by our Lord. Quite a number are disposed to sympathize and fraternize with those who have come under Divine condemnation. We are told by St. Jude that the destruction of Sodom was “set forth as an example,” or type. Those who assume to be more gracious and long-suffering than the Lord, make of themselves opponents, who instead of being students of the principles of right, attempt to be judges and teachers of Jehovah. The proper attitude of heart accepts God’s decision as not only wiser

but more just than our own. Consequently, when we see any who have enjoyed the light of Present Truth, abandoned by the Lord and led into outer darkness, we are to conclude that before being thus abandoned there must have been in them “an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.” “He is faithful who has promised” that “if any man will do His [the Father’s] will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.” (John 7: 17). Whoever, therefore, loses the doctrines of Christ after once having had them has surely done more than get his head confused. His heart must have been separated from

the Lord previously; for so long as we abide in Him, it will not be possible for any of the snares of this “evil day,” this “hour of temptation,” to entrap us; “none shall pluck us out of the Father’s hand;” He is fully able to take care of us.

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

At the very foundation of all Christian doctrine lies the doctrine of the Ransom, the Scriptural teaching that “we are bought with a price,” a corresponding price for Adam’s sin. Any teaching, therefore, which either openly denies or quietly ignores this truth, “the Ransom for all, to be testified in due time,” must be a doctrine at odds with God’s

Word. Whether it be old or new, whether it be advocated by friends or by foes, by the learned or by the unlearned, in the name of Evolution or in some other name, our attitude toward it should be prompt and decided opposition. If others waver, we who have learned that the Ransom is the test by which all doctrines are to be proved, need not waver.

If our friends get into no-Ransom errors, whose name is now legion, and the numbers entrapped are growing, we should lend them a helping hand when possible, “pulling them out of the fire,” by reminding them of the Rock Christ Jesus, whereon our feet are firmly established, and by throwing to them the rope of Divine promises, throughout which is woven the scarlet thread of the Ransom of Christ, and exhort them to come back to the Rock and not to attempt to find another rock at the bottom of the quicksands. We



must use great plainness of speech in showing them their danger and in pointing out the way of escape.

But we must not accept their invitation to join with them in exploring what men can say or write which would tend to make the Word of God of none effect, which would claim that God has all along been the sinner and man the dupe; or that the hope of mankind is in their own evolution, and not in the Ransom and Restitution of the Scriptures; or that there is no sin and no death, really, and that man therefore needs no Redeemer, but can be his own savior. If after kind and faithful remonstrance on your part they still persist in exploring and delving into and feeding upon such evident contradictions of God's Word, let them go. Remember that there must be something wrong at their hearts, if they have ever been God's children at all, else they would have no pleasure in the unfruitful works of darkness, but would reprove them, and their delight would be in God's great Plan of the Ages.

SENT INTO OUTER DARKNESS

Let us remember, too, that God has promised to keep and guide the minds of those whose hearts are loyal and true to Him. We should therefore conclude that if the Lord is thrusting any one out of the light, as unworthy of it, into the outer darkness of the world. If He is permitting unfaithful ones to be seduced by the great enemy, it is not our mission to follow them into the outer darkness by reading, conversation, etc. We are to remain with the Lord and those who are walking in the light, and to seek others to take the places of those who now deny or ignore the precious blood of the Covenant wherewith they were once sanctified. Neither are we to waste sympathy upon those who depart. If we can neither persuade them nor pull them out of the fire, we must let them go, and should turn at once and render aid to others more worthy. When the Lord has put any out of the light (Matthew 22: 13, 14), we cannot hope to bring them back. Had it been proper for them to remain in the light, if they had been worthy of it, He would not have permitted them to be put out of it.

NO FELLOWSHIP WITH ERROR

We do not here refer to slight differences of understanding, which should be patiently dealt with and explained or overlooked, as all children in the School of Christ have not attained to the same "step," or degree of knowledge; but we do refer to those radical differences, all of which may be quickly proved by the test of the Ransom doctrine. If they agree not with this, "it is because there is no light in them." And such are no longer to be to us brothers or sisters in Christ, but should be considered and treated as

of the world—"as a heathen man or a publican." These are not to be numbered among our friends; for the friendship of such is enmity against God. We are not to receive or entertain such at our houses, nor bid them or their work God-speed in any manner (2 John 8-11). Some who have neglected the plain statement of God's Word on this subject have suffered spiritually for their disobedience.

Let us more and more be of one mind with the Lord. His friends must be our friends; His enemies our enemies. If we affiliate with the Lord's enemies, we shall at least get into a lukewarm condition towards Him and His friends; and the lukewarm; God declares He will spew out of His mouth. We should cultivate warmth of heart toward all who trust in the precious blood and are consecrated to our Redeemer as their Lord and Head. There must be no lukewarmness there. Whatever their peculiarities according to the flesh, we cannot be other than brethren to them in spirit, with all the helpfulness and sympathy which brotherhood in Christ implies. But we must not, cannot, have any fellowship with the ungodly, the sinners against light and Truth, and scorners of the grace of God. Although, if they were destitute we would feed them, yet so long as they are the opponents and adversaries of the Lord's Cause and His Truth, they are our adversaries and we theirs. The Lord loves positiveness with harmlessness, and of us it should be true as it is prophetically written of our Lord and the true members of His Body in Psalm 139: 19-24.

This injunction of our Lord, to "remember Lot's wife," also applies particularly to the Lord's people who have heard His call of the present time to "come out" of Babylon, and have left this condemned "city." Whoever, therefore, is being led of the Lord's angels (messengers) to a place of safety before the foretold destruction overtakes the present order, as were Lot and his family before the destruction of Sodom, let him not look back or otherwise manifest sympathy with that which is condemned of the Lord to overthrow and destruction.

LOYALTY IN THE NEXT AGE

In the next Age, when the world shall have been brought to the knowledge of the Truth, the opportunity will be granted them to show forth what the real attitude of their hearts toward God is. Some, after coming to see the goodness and loving-kindness of the Lord, will still prefer sin; and God's sentence upon them will again be the sentence of death—Second Death. A certain period will be granted them to learn of the great goodness of the Lord and of their opportunity of gaining eternal life. If they do not then manifest an interest in their own salvation and an appreciation of God's

goodness in Christ, and a desire to be helped up out of sin and degradation, they will receive the final wages of sin; utter and eternal destruction in the Second Death.

There will apparently be some in that time who will seem to desire assistance up to a better life, a righteous life, who will yield obedience in perhaps only an outward way to the laws of the Kingdom. These, we understand, will be permitted to live on and be gradually brought up to a condition of physical and mental perfection; they may live through to the full end of the thousand years of Christ's Reign. At the end of that time they, with all others then living, will be turned over by Christ to the Father for a final crucial testing. If these then prove that their wills have not been wholly given up to God, that they do not yet appreciate the costly provision made for their salvation, and the value of righteousness, they will be destroyed as unworthy of Divine approval and unworthy of everlasting life. If the demonstration which will then have been given them of the Wisdom, the Justice and the Love of God will not have changed their hearts to entire devotion to Him and to His glorious and righteous will, any further opportunity would be utterly useless. They will be cut off from society as associates of the evil one, that only the righteous, the holy, may live throughout the ages of eternity.

In the next age God will require a full consecration from the world to do His will. It must include their entire beings, their wills, their bodies—their whole-hearted allegiance. It will not be a consecration unto sacrifice, unto death, as it has been with the Church; but they must become wholly devoted to God and must realize and recognize that they belong to God, that they have been bought, purchased back from death, and may, if obedient, live forever. We all see how reasonable this requirement is. Adam, who was created in God's likeness, should have said, "I belong to God. He gave me my life and all I have." But he had not fully learned to trust the Wisdom and Love of his Maker. He had a perfect brain, a perfect organism; but he lacked full knowledge of the character of the Lord and of the justice of all His requirements. His incomplete knowledge, therefore, rendered him to some extent excusable in God's sight. If he had taken the stand of opposition to the Lord with clear knowledge and experience, apparently he would not have been accounted worthy of redemption. The whole world will, then, when they reach perfection, realize that they owe everything to God, and, if loyal at heart, will wish to render all to Him in glad service—to the praise of His name.

While it would have been eminently proper for the world, as with Adam, to render perfect obedience to

God, even if man had never sinned and been redeemed, the fact that they have sinned, and yet have been redeemed through God's abounding love and mercy, and will be given a full individual opportunity, to gain life eternal, furnishes a double reason why they should devote themselves fully to God and His service forevermore. Those who are bought with blood—the precious blood of the Son of God, through whom they will be redeemed by His Sacrifice, should rejoice to bind themselves to all eternity to the God who so loved them; and should count it their most precious privilege to render homage and worship and praise forever to such a Creator and such a Redeemer.

"NOT MY OWN, BUT SAVED BY JESUS"

The Church of Christ realize, as none others can, the mighty significance of the words, "You are bought with a price, and you are not your own." Their decision was made to be glad bond-servants of Him who thus loved and bought them. Their all was put on the altar of sacrifice with the Lord; and God has ratified the decision. It was a laying down of life faithfully unto death. This resulted in their rapture and they have now gained perfect life and immortality of the Divine nature and are set down with our Lord in His throne. Of those who originally covenanted to be of the Bride were of two classes. There was one class who performed all they covenanted to do. These received "the full reward" (2 John 8). Then there was the other class who, having made the same covenant, failed to fulfill their contract completely. But just as the endorser of a note is responsible, so the Lord Jesus required that these finish the sacrifice which they originally made. Their lives eventually were yielded up faithfully as a constrained sacrifice. And they gained a heavenly existence, not as the Bride but as the virgin companions of the Bride (Psa. 45: 14; Rev. 7: 9-17). Some of these wayward ones rebelled completely against the enforced destruction of their flesh, and they sinned wilfully, and have died the Second Death from which there was no recovery (Heb. 10: 26-30).

He Leads Us On

He leads us on, by paths we did not know,
Upward He leads us, though our steps be slow.

Though oft we faint and falter on the way,
Though storms and darkness oft obscure the day,

Yet when the clouds are gone

We know He leads us on.

2009 | Nigerian Annual Report

Dear Bro. Ralph Herzig,

Loving Greetings in our dear Redeemer's Name! I am really grateful to Jehovah God and His dear Son for the blessings and the privilege to spread the Truth of His Word despite the difficulties and challenges of the present day. We wish to thank you and the entire Bible House family for the feeding of God's flock through the Present Truth and Bible Standard magazines, literature, tracts and leaflets which has actually aided in the spread and the dissemination of the Truth. We pray that Jehovah God will continue to strength and empower the Bible House family to continually feed us with the spiritual food which is now due. We thank Jehovah God for affording us the ability to carry out pilgrim visits to the Northern and South-Eastern states to encourage the brethren in those areas to uphold to the truth even in the face of the untoward experiences being encounter by these brethren assuring them that the reigning Christ will soon fully established His Kingdom of righteousness and truth among mankind. Our efforts in Plateau State (Jos) yielded fruits with three Pastors of mainline Christendom indicating an overwhelming interest in the

Truth and they are willing to be taught along the lines of the Truth, with public lectures providing a forum where related truths in tract form were handed to the public.

We had three conventions in the year 2009, the Agbado Convention from April 10th -12th with the theme "Can We Ever Understand The Truth Of The Bible," had a total attendance of 300 souls, while the Abia Convention (which had a dramatic twist but Jehovah over-ruled) took place in June 26th -28th with the theme "A Righteous Government, Will We Ever Have One? 110 souls were in attendance. Our annual national convention was held in Ibadan, the Oyo state capital. Though enough publicity was given to cover the 3 day program, we had only the "Eagles feeding on the carcass of truth" the theme was "Jesus Second Advent-A Stumbling Stone and Rock of Offence" with a total of 546 souls. The brethren voted to send their warmest gratitude and Christian love to Bro Ralph Herzig in all three conventions and ask for Jehovah's leadings in the life of His dear ones the world over.

Pilgrim Bro. Willie Ebong
Nigerian Representative

2009 | French Annual Report

Dear brother Herzig,

Warm greetings in our Dear Savior and present King's name Ps. 66: 8, 9.

It is with pleasure that with all the brothers and sisters of the French field, I come again to present you our best wishes in the Lord (Eph.6 24). We thank you, as well as all the brethren who work with you in the Bible House, for the work carried out during this year, under the Lord's care, in favor of the brethren worldwide.

Here is a brief report of our activity:

CONVENTIONS: Our three conventions were held in Barlin. We were in particular blessed during the Summer Convention with the second visit of brother and sister Donald and Patricia Lewis. The brethren appreciated the services which reminded us of numerous truths, and this, with sobriety and clearness.

Brother Lewis' report reflects exactly the atmosphere which prevailed during this Convention. Brother Lewis

was interpreted by Sister Anne-Marie Obojtek Kirkwood, who had come to see her mother; Brother Dominique Desmettre had made an important preliminary work, by looking up the references to give them in French.

PUBLICATIONS: we pursue the publication of our two magazines. La Vérité Présente continues to be published in six issues for a year; while following as most as possible, the publishing of the articles of "Present Truth," this allows us to present important articles, translated for a long time, and which had never been printed. Some old machines required to be replaced.

PUBLIC WORK: we can take again the report of the last year on this subject: the brethren continue to show their unselfish love, as far as they can, in the col-porteuring work always practiced, from time to time, by an ecclesia of the area to which members of other ecclesias can join. It is especially through the web that the spreading work can continue in a proper way.

INTERNET (Web): is a good way of spreading information given by the special servants for the presentation of the Truth. Our four sites; present the Truth in a positive way and do not incite to controversy; they present the truths, and are interconnected by links; it is still the best way for dispensing literature, even if the results are not to the extent of what we would wish. As we do not take part in any forum, we wish that the brothers, who would do that on a religious plan, do not involve M.M.I.L as such in any way in their debates.

ISRAEL: the work toward Israel was particularly blessed during 2009; indeed, with the starting of New letters, we had requests for subscriptions to this new way of presentation; it came from Jewish and Israeli friends. We had particularly moving testimonies about the approval of persons who know our action in France and in Israel for 40 years; our site is always in harmony with the advice, given by Bro. Russell and Bro. Johnson concerning this work toward the Jewish people and Israel. Much more could be said on this subject.

CAMEROON: we are sorry to have to say that the situation did not seem to have improved; on the contrary, because the news which we receive from our correspondent, Brother MBENNGUE Michel, the brethren are few and very far between, we do not know what is the exact situation in this country which we do not forget in our prayers; but it is very difficult to be able to help. We think that this brother is probably very tired and unwell, as he gave us to understand in his last letters.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SITUATION. It does not seem necessary to assist us on what is widely developed in "La Vérité Presente" and "L'Étendard de la Bible", showing the fulfillment of Zephania 3: 8. Conferences, large international meetings, as the recent one at Copenhagen bring no solution to the world problems of which they are the object. Countries affected by terrorism are more and more numerous; and we see to what degree of barbarity has come to mankind which can prepare and execute the death of hundreds of persons in a single riot.

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS POINT OF VIEW The situation continues to degrade; it has legalized and increased sin as "Sodom and Gomorrah" to which it infects many in high society the "elites"! From the religious point of view, the evangelical churches quickly take on the prejudice of the traditional Protestant churches. Two years ago, the evangelical church introduced itself as gathering approximately 420 million followers worldwide for three million of churches in 128 countries; and, in France, from 400 to 450.000 evangelical. They appear

in two aspects. (1) The first one, is a Protestant movement organized with a president and other authorities; it maintains, of course, all the Trinitarian errors. Methodist and Baptist Evangelicals, Assemblies of God, Messianic Jews [true or false] are included in the assemblies in Israel, Born again, New Life, etc., constitute a real doctrinal swamp of which it provides no freedom of thought. As we saw in other countries, all these groups consist of considerable political force. (2) The second aspect shows itself as being rather humanistic and turned towards emigrant people from various countries for numbers, who did not find, the warmth, the understanding and the help elsewhere; so these people are frail and vulnerable. This new ecumenism is subtle and dangerous for the youth.

In France, there is also a strong rise of Islam, which has financial backing. Antitypical Jezebel is prominent on the scene; Dissatisfaction toward her continues; the announcement of pre-beatification of Pius XII seems to leave the Catholic world in usual darkness; but among Israelis Jews, it arouses a general condemnation of that system.

THE TRUTH PEOPLE: This year was painful for many of our old brothers and sisters; two brothers deceased after remaining faithful until the end. On the other hand, we had the joy to have a brother and a sister showing their consecration by being baptized. This is all the more appreciated as now, very few search the Truth. All the brothers and the sisters remain steady in the Truth as due, and appreciate the magazines that they receive regularly.

We did our best to keep the Movement in all its integrity, even if sometimes we are not understood, because we remain, as it is said of us, a "peculiar people," separated from the peoples of the land. With our sanctification, our main work is to announce the Kingdom and the presence of the One who gave His life for all human beings.

Dear brother Herzig: through you, we send to all the brethren worldwide, the assurance of our brotherly love and prayers, especially for those who live in third world countries and amid difficult conditions. We assure you, as well as all those who help you at the Bible House and worldwide, of our full Christian love in Jesus, our dear Savior and present King.

May the LORD bless you and keep you and continue to guide you in the duty which is yours.

Brother Gilbert Hermetz
Pilgrim and representative for
French-speaking countries.

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

TO:

AN INTERESTING LETTER

I would like to say this to you all for the Bible Standard "Subscription." God works in many ways. Let me tell about this; I had been setting around for about a month and I ran out of study so I was going over the books to refresh everything and see if I overlooked something. I started talking to God just like I was talking to someone here. I was letting God lead the way. It came into my mind, I wish that I could get more studies and something that would help me understand more about what was going on in the world today. And that very night they were giving out mail and that is something I don't get at all. I was in my house and he called my name, and then he pulled out the Bible Standard and I got it and said God bless. I met you there and the card said bless you too. You can not know the feeling I had at that time, I started to cry. I opened it up and there was the comparison I had been seeking for days; the answer to my question. Thank you and God bless you all. RH, Texas

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Memorial Date for 2011

April 15

The newing of the moon nearest the vernal equinox, at Jerusalem, occurs at 2:33 p.m. on April 3, 2011. Accordingly, Nisan 1 begins at 6:00 p.m. April 2 and Nisan 14 begins at 6:00 p.m., thirteen days later, or at 6:00 p.m. on April 15.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Sr. Jessie Lloyd, Jamaica, W.I., and of the Bartons, Ecclesia, died two weeks after celebrating her 100th birthday.



BEFORE

Bible House Driveway

Due to age and the continual havoc of seasonal storms, action had to be taken for safety's sake along the driveway entrance at the Bible House, so contract crews were called in just before our summer convention and quite a number of trees were removed and the stumps ground down. We are currently researching to determine what type of trees will be used as replacements.

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Our web-site now has Pay-Pal available to better accomodate your orders.



AFTER