

EXCERPTS FROM

Jan - March 89

THE LINK

North Road Chapel (Evangelical)

BIDEFORD

Internet Edition

AFTER THIS MANNER ... PRAY YE

(A Study of the Lord's Prayer)

PART 5C

This article continues with the second petition- "THY KINGDOM COME." As previously stated the Kingdom of God has two aspects: one styled THE KINGDOM OF GRACE, which is set up in the hearts of all the regenerate in this life: the other, THE KINGDOM OF GLORY - the ultimate - when the believer is glorified. This glorious consummation, partially considered in the last edition, is now to be concluded.

In heaven, or the coming Kingdom of Glory, high honour will be conferred upon every child of God; for all those who enter ARE KINGS, and in that day this will be manifested; for all are to be crowned. John describes it as a CROWN OF LIFE. (Rev.2:10). Peter, as a CROWN OF GLORY (1 Pet.5:4). They will also be attired in REGAL DRESS.

Ofttimes in this lower scene we feel so drab, but then the days of sackcloth will be forever gone. "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." (Rev.7:9).

Robes speak of SPLENDOUR: they are vestments of HIGH STATE. These robes are white, denoting SANCTITY. Thus clothed we are to sit with Christ in HIS THRONE (cf. Rev.3:21), and shall REIGN with Him forever and ever (cf. Rev.22:5).

"Palms in their hands" - the symbol of victory. When* all the pomp of earthly thrones has perished, and every title and ensign of worldly honour lies in the dust, the saints will reign in honour, holiness, and glory, FOR EVER and EVER. "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the Everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:11). Paul describes it as an, "eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor.4:17).

Heaven's joy and glory knows no cessation; it will never ebb and flow; it has eternal weight. Thomas Watson, the Puritan, says: "The river of Paradise never runs low." "At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Psa. 16:11).

From the Old Testament Temple, which wonderfully typifies the Kingdom of Heaven, we learn that it was built of stone and cedar overlaid with gold. In this is signified DURABILITY and an ABIDING GLORY.

When we think of the great empires such as, Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, Rome, France, Great Britain, which have been built up during the course of human history, what has happened to them? How short lived! Even at their zenith so imperfect; how much these earthly kingdoms leave to be desired, and what disappointments have followed in their wake. Their extravagant promises seldom materialize, creating dissatisfaction and disillusionment. But not this Kingdom: "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." (Psa.17:15).

There is no alloy in the gold of heaven.

"There's no disappointment in heaven,
No weariness sorrow or pain:
No hearts that are bleeding and broken,
No song with a MINOR refrain."

No! in this Kingdom, "The former things are passed away." (Rev.21:4).

The great Apostle Paul said of this present life: "We were troubled on every side." (2 Cor.7:5). Is this not often so? But: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." (Heb.4:9). "And His rest shall be glorious." (Isa. 11:10). Yes! the Kingdom of Glory is one of GLORIOUS REST: a complete absence of turmoil. A marked feature of the Eternal World will be peace and calm, for all enemies will have been put under Christ's feet, (cf.1 Cor. 15:25). In consequence the gates of the city, "shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there." (Rev.21:25). The reason being that there will be nothing undesirable to keep out. The righteous are to enter into PEACE (cf .Isa.57:2). A scene of

ABSOLUTE TRANQUILITY. "This is my rest forever: here will I dwell." (Psa. 132:14). "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Psa.23:6). A rest which shall be glorious indeed.

"When all my labours and trials are o'er,
And I am safe on that beautiful shore,
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore
Will through the ages be glory for me."

In considering such an enthralling subject, often problems arise in the minds of some of the Lord's people as to when does the believer enter this Kingdom of Glory. Is it at death? or is it not until the resurrection at the last day? It must be said, that in the main, Scripture focuses upon the ultimate: not a lot is said about the intermediate state between death and the resurrection of the body. The great weight of teaching and emphasis is upon THE FINAL ETERNAL STATE.

However, we are not left entirely in the dark. There is sufficient revealed in the Word of God to set our minds completely at rest concerning the state of the believer IMMEDIATELY AFTER DEATH. To answer the question: "When do believers enter the Kingdom of Glory?" It is at death; but this is not in its FULNESS, or its COMPLETED form, because the Eternal Kingdom of which we are now treating will not be PERFECTED until Christ has come at the last day, and subdued all things unto Himself. The fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians fills in all the detail. The Eternal State follows AFTER the putting down of ALL RULE, ALL AUTHORITY, and ALL POWER. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death, and that last great enemy will still be HOLDING SWAY right up to the great morning of RESURRECTION. It is the glorious daybreak of the final resurrection morning which will see the perfecting of the Kingdom of Glory. The very fact that everyone has a BURIAL is conclusive evidence that death has not been destroyed as yet; indeed it will be the very last enemy to go.

Having said all this, one hastens to add that at death the believer is IMMEDIATELY with Christ in glory. The body goes to the grave, but the spirit is with Christ. We refute entirely the dogma of soul sleep until the resurrection. This teaching, although held by some Evangelicals, is HERETICAL. The Puritans taught that: "before the body is buried the

soul is crowned." Though we may not take this literally, yet, the principle is there. The Divinely inspired Word states: "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." (Phil. 1:23). "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." (2 Cor:5:8).

Two things are clearly stated in these verses:

(1) At death, the spirit - that vital part of us - although separated from the body, is PRESENT WITH THE LORD. Where can this be if it is not Heaven? At His ascension Christ entered "Heaven itself." (cf.Heb.9:24). "Who is gone into Heaven, and is on the right hand of God." (1 Pet.3:22). This is the Heaven of heavens - the dwelling place of God. It is to this realm that believers go to dwell with Christ, awaiting the culmination of the work of redemption. "To wit, the redemption of our body." (Rom.8:23).

(2) This state is, "FAR BETTER." Although temporarily divorced from the body, "I desire this," said Paul, for it is a far better state than my present. If this was not so, or if the soul went into a state of unconscious sleep and was NOT with Christ in glory, then, surely it would be far better to stay here; for now we know His grace daily upon us; by faith we experience His presence and help, and we taste continually of His love. Would Paul have preferred to have given up all this and go into a state of oblivion until the day of resurrection? Reason alone must reject such a theory. At death, the Christian is IMMEDIATLY with Christ, and his state is one of indescribable translation.

Did not the Apostle Paul have a preview of all this? "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven." (2 Cor.12:2). The man referred to is, of course, Paul himself. Fourteen years previously he was at Lystra, and we are told what happened there: "And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing him to have been dead." (Acts 14:19). Writing to the Corinthians, Paul is saying, that he did not know what happened to him then; whether he was in the body or not

(that is, alive or dead), but he was caught up into the third heaven. His body did not go up: his body was lying in the rubble outside of Lystra. Nevertheless, he saw unspeakable things. THIS is the man who said that the intermediate state was FAR BETTER. He knew, for he had been: given a glimpse. Where was it? The THIRD HEAVEN - where Christ IS WITH HIM.

To us this interim period may seem a long wait. This is not so, for once we pass out of TIME, such an element is no longer in the mind. To help us in our finite thinking the Holy Spirit states that a thousand years are but as a day. It will be but as a moment before the Last Trumpet will sound and ALL the dead of all ages shall arise. The corruptible will put on incorruption: Soul and body REUNITED. This is A MUST, states the Word of God (1 Cor. 15:53), for it is A PART of the work of ATONEMENT. THEN shall be brought to pass the words of the prophet: "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces." (Isa.25:8). This is the FINAL VICTORY. Then shall be DELIVERED, or come into TRUE and ULTIMATE PERSPECTIVE the Kingdom of God - the Eternal Kingdom of Glory.

This is all very wonderful we say, but can we be REALLY SURE that it will work out in such fine detail? Indeed we can. Men and women who are TRULY regenerate have a Divine principle implanted within by the Holy Spirit, and that is FAITH. This is not something mystical or fanciful; it is that which gives absolute assurance, and enables a person to trust implicitly in what God has said concerning things spiritual, and which cannot actually be seen. So when He says to the Christian: "I appoint unto you a Kingdom." (Luke 22:29). "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." (Luke 12:32), the TRUE Christian has no doubt about it whatsoever.

In verse 24 of chapter 17 of the Gospel of John, we read: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory." This could be said to be, "The Last Will and Testament" of Christ; and it reads, "I WILL that all that Thou hast given me (that is my sheep - those that I have redeemed with my own blood) - are to be WITH ME. They ALL are to behold MY GLORY; yea more, for that glory which Thou hast given me, I have given unto them, for WE ARE ONE." (cf. John 17:22). That is Head and members are one. Every

member is a JOINT HEIR with Christ. This means that each redeemed person has JOINT TITLE to the inheritance of ETERNAL GLORY. This is LEGAL and it cannot be annulled. The believer's name is IN THE WILL: it is THE TESTAMENT - THE COVENANT OF GRACE. As "THE WILL" is read out and addressed personally to each one of us His children through faith, so will our glorious Head say: "I appoint unto you a kingdom." (Luke 22: 29). It is the good pleasure of God to give it to you, (cf. Luke 12:32) for you are heirs together with Jesus Christ, (cf. Rom.8:17).

The Holy Spirit, in inspiration, was ever causing the truth of these wondrous facts to be stated in Holy Scripture, to the end that the faith of God's elect people might never doubt the IMMUTABILITY of such statements.

The Apostle Paul says that it is: "According to THE FAITH OF GOD'S ELECT, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN." (Titus 1:1-2). The purposes of God concerning these matters were formulated, and the EVERLASTING COVENANT was drawn up before time or matter existed. The origin of all that we are considering goes right back into eternity, long before the universe was called into being. The believer's hope of eternal life and of the Kingdom of Glory rests upon the decrees of the eternal God who changes not. The Everlasting Covenant is a DIVINE CHARTER: it is unalterable. This is the FOCAL POINT of the faith of God's elect.

Further to what has been said concerning the promise of the Kingdom to us His people, it must be stated that the Kingdom was PURCHASED for us. Christ paid the price, which was His own blood. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." (Heb. 10:19). Through grace, this is by faith NOW that we draw near unto God, entering in the spirit into the HOLY PLACE, but the ultimate for us is THE KINGDOM OF GLORY. One day we are LITERALLY to enter HEAVEN ITSELF - the immediate conscious presence of the Eternal God - and we shall enter with BOLDNESS (this word means: without fear, freely, with confidence). But how can it be that those born in sin and shapen in iniquity can enter into the holiest of all realms without trepidation? There is but one answer - THE BLOOD OF JESUS.

Why is it that we have peace in our hearts now? Is it not through the BLOOD OF HIS CROSS?

"Peace perfect peace, in this dark world of sin
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.

Peace perfect peace, our future all unknown,
Jesus we know and He is on the throne.

It is enough, earth's struggles soon shall cease
And Jesus call us to HEAVEN'S PERFECT PEACE."

When that moment of all moments shall come, and we, with all the redeemed of all ages pass into the Kingdom prepared for us from before the foundation of the world: (cf. Matt. 25: 34) when the awe inspiring vision of ETERNAL MAJESTY and GLORY confronts us, there will be NO FEAR; we shall be at peace, and it will be on account of THE BLOOD OF JESUS. We shall have liberty and right of access because of His purchase. HIS RANSOM secured OUR ADMITTANCE. If any elect soul were to miss his or her place in the Kingdom then Christ would have lost His purchase. Are we to imagine that at that great initial reception in the Kingdom of Glory - THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB - some seats will be empty? NEVER! "My house shall be filled," said Christ. Again, "I go to prepare a place for you - many mansions." Are we to believe that at the last there are to be vacant seats at the marriage feast, or unoccupied mansions in glory? Is it conceivable that in the matter of ransom, the Saviour OVER-PAID? If the Arminian theory of universal atonement were correct (which it is not), then such can be the only conclusion.

Arminianism is a travesty of truth. The Kingdom of Glory is a prepared place for a purchased people, EACH ONE known of God and recorded in the Book of Life before the foundation of the world; they are called GOD'S ELECT. In His eternal purposes they are seen as members of Christ's body, He being the Head. Every one of those members was redeemed at Calvary; every one will be effectually called of the Holy Spirit in time, and when the last one is called, "THEN COMETH THE END." This world will not go on for a single hour once the last elect soul has been effectually called. With devastating suddenness CHRIST WILL

COME "AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT." Judgment will fall upon the ungodly. All the redeemed of all human history will, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, be raised incorruptible, and will enter into a state of IMMORTALITY: The KINGDOM OF GLORY, and NOT ONE will be MISSING.

Is it not well nigh a blasphemous teaching, from whence may be drawn the inference, that certain people are not there, although Christ shed His blood for them, He fully paid the ransom price and suffered "IN TOTAL" Divine wrath on their behalf, yet, they are not in Glory.. Such preaching is ANOTHER GOSPEL.

Concerning the Mediator's physical body, it is written: "He keepeth all His bones: not one of them is broken." (Psa.34:20). What is true of His physical body, is equally so of His mystical body. Not a bone was broken at Calvary, and that unbroken body was raised from the dead and ascended up to heaven. Thus will every member of His mystical body be raised and glorified with Him in a coming day. He keepeth all His members, not one is lost. "Those that Thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost." (John 17:12).

A Gospel of a loose UNSPECIFIC redemption infers that the body of Christ can be disfigured by members missing, or that they have been cut off: such does not find its origin in the Scriptures. The Body of Christ is A BODY OF GLORY. The Bride of Christ is "FAIR." (S. of S. l:15). There is NOT A BLEMISH. In that coming day the Church of Jesus Christ will be seen to be "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but ... holy and without blemish." (Eph.5:27).

In conclusion let the question be asked: Do we contemplate sufficiently, THE GLORY WHICH SHALL BE? The Apostle John having been given that wonderful and graphic revelation, spontaneously prayed: "EVEN SO COME LORD JESUS." In this he was but praying AFTER THE MANNER which Christ had taught him on the mountain side some sixty-five years previously, when He said: "When ye pray, say, THY KINGDOM COME." (cf. Luke 11:2)

It will be the measure in which we dwell upon THE ETERNAL which will determine the degree in which we pray, "after this manner."

"And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan." (Deut. 34:1).

There, in solitary isolation, Moses stood with his God, and as he silently looked out from that vantage point, God showed him ALL THE LAND OF PROMISE. What do WE know of such blissful contemplation? ALONE WITH GOD meditating upon the promised KINGDOM OF GLORY.

W.H. Molland

"Still, still, with THEE, as to each newborn morning
A fresh and solemn splendour still is given;
So does this blessed consciousness awaking,
Breathe each day nearness unto THEE and HEAVEN.

When sinks the soul, subdued by toil to slumber,
Its closing eye looks up to THEE in prayer;
Sweet the repose beneath Thy wings o'ershading,
But sweeter still to wake and find THEE there.

So shall it be at last in that BRIGHT MORNING
When the soul waketh and life's shadows flee,
O, in THAT HOUR, fairer than day-light dawning
Shall rise the glorious thought - I AM WITH THEE."

"Then will He wipe every tear from their eyes, clothe them with robes of joy, adorn them with crowns of victory, entertain them with infinite delights, exalt them to His glory, and make them partakers of His own happiness."

John Calvin

TALK ABOUT HEAVEN

Words written to Dr.Charles from Dr.Harry Rimmer
shortly before he died

Next Sunday you are to talk about Heaven. I am interested in that land, because I have held a clear title to a bit of property there for over fifty-five years. I did not buy it. It was given to me without money and without price. But the Donor purchased it for me at tremendous sacrifice. I am not holding it for speculation since the title is not transferable. It is not a vacant lot. For more than half a century the great Architect and Builder of the universe has been building a home for me, which will never need to be remodelled or repaired because it will suit me perfectly, and individually, and will never grow old. Termites cannot undermine its foundations, for they rest upon the Rock of Ages. Fire cannot destroy it. Floods cannot wash it away. No locks or bolts will ever be placed upon its doors, for no vicious persons can even enter that land where my dwelling stands, now almost completed and almost ready for me to enter in and abide in peace eternally, without fear of being ejected.

There is a valley of deep shadows between the place where I live in California and that to which I shall journey in a very short time. I cannot reach my home in that city of gold without passing through this dark valley of shadows. But I am not afraid, because the best Friend I ever had went through the same valley, long, long ago and drove away all its gloom. He has stuck by me through thick and thin since we first became acquainted fifty-five years ago, and I hold His promise in printed form never to forsake me nor to leave me alone. He will be with me as I walk through the valley of shadows, and I shall not lose my way when He is with me.

The owner of the tenement which I have occupied for many years has given notice that he will furnish but little or nothing more for repairs. I am advised to be ready to move.

At first this was not a very welcome notice. The surroundings here are in many respects very pleasant, and were it not for the evidence of

decay, I should consider the old house good enough. But even a light wind causes it to tremble and totter and all the braces are not sufficient to make it secure. So I am getting ready to move.

It is strange how quickly one's interest is transferred to the prospective home. I have been consulting maps of the new country and reading descriptions of its inhabitants. One who visited it has returned, and from him I learn that it is beautiful beyond description - language breaks down in attempting to tell of what he heard while there (2 Cor.12:2). He says that, in order to make an investment there, he has suffered the loss of all things that he owned here, and even rejoices in what others would call making a sacrifice.

Another (John 15:13) whose love to me has been proved by the greatest possible test is now there. He has sent me several clusters of the most delicious fruits. After tasting them, all food here seems insipid.

Two or three times I have been down by the border of the river that forms the boundary, and have wished myself among the company of those who were singing praises to the King on the other side.

Many of my friends have moved there. Before leaving they spoke of my coming later. I have seen the smile upon their faces as they passed out of sight.

Often I am asked to make some new investments here, but my answer in every case is, "I am getting ready to move."

Taken from the magazine "Gospel Tidings."

"A man who was favoured with great wealth was visited in his home by a friend who looking out of the window said 'what a paradise this lovely garden is.' Yes, replied the rich man, and I thank God for it; but I bless Him the more for the assurance that when I leave here I shall go to a better paradise."

C.H. Spurgeon

THE END OF THE WAY

The following lines were written by a young woman in Nova Scotia, an invalid for many years with spinal disease, and a great sufferer, but in whom the grace of God was most wonderfully manifested.

My life is a wearisome journey,
I'm sick with the dust and the heat,
The rays of the sun beat upon me,
The briars are wounding my feet;
But the City to which I am journeying
Will more than my trials repay,
All the toils of the road will seem nothing
When I get to the end of the way.

There are so many hills to climb upwards,
I often am longing for rest,
But He who appoints me my pathway
Knows just what is needful and best;
I know in His word He has promised
That my strength shall be as my day,
And the toils of the road will seem nothing
When I get to the end of the way.

He loves me too well to forsake me,
Or give me one trial too much;
All His people have been dearly purchased,
And Satan can never claim such.
By and by I shall see Him and praise Him
In the City of unending day,
And the toils of the road will seem nothing
When I get to the end of the way.

When the last feeble step has been taken,
And the gates of the City appear,
And the beautiful songs of the angels
Float out on my listening ear;
When all that now seems so mysterious
Will be plain and clear as the day –
Yes, the toils of the road will seem nothing
When I get to the end of the way.

Though now I am footsore and weary,
I shall rest when I'm safely at home,
I know I'll receive a glad welcome,
For the Saviour Himself has said "Come!"
So when I am weary in body
And sinking in spirit, I say,
"All the toils of the road will seem nothing
When I get to the end of the way."

Cooling fountains are there for the thirsty,
There are cordials for those who are faint;
There are robes that are whiter and purer
Than any that fancy can paint.
Then I'll try to press hopefully onward,
Thinking often through each weary day,
The toils of the road will seem nothing
When I get to the end of the way.

"Then there came forth a summons for Mr. Stand-fast ... the contents whereof were, that he must prepare for a change of life, for his Master was not willing that he should be so far from him any longer. At this Mr. Stand-fast was put into a muse. Nay, said the messenger you need not doubt of the truth of my message for here is a token of the truth thereof: 'Thy wheel is broken at the cistern!' (Ecc. 12:6) ... When Mr. Stand-fast had set things in order and the time being come for him to haste him away, he went down to the river ... said he, I see myself now at the end of my journey, my toilsome days are ended. I am going now to see that head which was crowned with thorns, and that face that was spit upon for me ... I have lived by faith; but now I go where I shall live by sight ... I have loved to hear my Lord spoken of; and wherever I have seen the print of His shoe in the earth, there I have coveted to set my foot too ... Now while he was thus in his discourse, his countenance changed ... and after he had said, take me, for I am come to Thee, he ceased to be seen of them. So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded on the other side."

JOHN BUNYAN (Pilgrim's Progress)

LEADERSHIP

Part 1

To "lead" means: to "guide," to "conduct the movements of," to "give direction," to "set example."

To be in leadership, or at the head of any body or organization is a tremendous responsibility; for that which happens within that body or organization, in the main will be attributed to THE HEADS. The lead and directive given at the top will determine the manner in which a whole institution will run.

If leadership is faulty, or breaks down, then it will not only be reflected further down the scale, but if not corrected will spell disaster for that organization or institution over which they are placed. No institution will rise higher than their Heads. For example: The standard within a family or household is set by the parents. The level of education and behaviour in a school is determined by the Head. The successful running of a business enterprise lies in the hands of management. No commercial organization will rise above the level of its executives. No nation will rise above its Government, and no Church will rise higher than its Eldership.

Leadership is of the utmost importance; for it matters not in whatever department of life, if the Heads go wrong deterioration will set in. Influence for good or for ill always comes from the top downward, never from the bottom upward, and as one looks upon the contemporary scene it is quite obvious that there is rapid degeneration within the nation, and appalling declension within the Church: this can be attributed to one thing only, a BREAKDOWN IN LEADERSHIP.

The Word of God which ALONE is man's true guide, has much to say on the subject of HEADSHIP, or LEADERSHIP, both in society and in the Church.

In chapter 3 of his book, the prophet Micah, under Divine inspiration, had very stern words to say to "HEADS:" first to Princes, that is, Heads

of State and Civil Authorities: then to Prophets and Priests, that is, the religious and spiritual leaders.

Whilst Church and State are two entirely separate institutions in the New Testament economy, yet is there instruction laid down for both in Holy Scripture. Such instruction is mandatory, which, if disregarded by men will lead to their undoing. In this First Part HEADS OF STATE and CIVIL AUTHORITIES are to be considered in the light of Scripture.

It is the special business and duty of national leaders and authorities to know the constitutional law, and to set the guiding principles for the CORRECT ORDERING of society. The basis of sound social government and upright rule is found in one place only - THE MORAL LAW OF GOD, or, THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. Laws which are founded upon the Decalogue, given by God Himself, will set the RIGHT STANDARDS within society, and so engender that righteousness of which we read in Proverbs 14:34: the righteousness which EXALTETH a nation. However, the responsibility to enact these laws devolves upon the Heads: it must come from the top.

Concerning the kings of Israel we read: "And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of the law and these statutes, to do them." (Deut. 17:18-19), A country with those at THE TOP who do not have sound guidelines, and whose laws are not ENFORCED by the authorities, will corrupt, and eventually go to pieces. Order and control is vested in THE HEAD.

When a nation is seen to be in decline, society breaking down, anarchy breaking out, sin of the vilest nature rampant, and lawlessness abounding, how can it be accounted for? THE HEADS have gone wrong: they have departed from CORRECT STANDARDS. This is what happened to Israel in Old Testament times, and it has been the cause of the fall of every nation throughout history. This also is the malady of Great Britain today. Leadership has gone astray. The Heads have given a mistaken directive, and set wrong examples. For instance, in the matter of SABBATH OBSERVANCE one is saddened at the desecration

by those in high places. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." (Ex.20:8). This is a supreme command, and it is binding on kings and princes. Royal courts are in no way exempt. Alas! Those in LEADERSHIP have been very weak on this statute as governments over the years have ever yielded more and more toward a complete commercialization of God's Holy Sabbath. It is true, there are still a few restrictions, but are they observed? Is there not law-breaking every Sunday in this respect, and how many local authorities take action? Surely, it is better to have no ruling on a matter than to have a ruling and then deliberately ignore it.

It was not many years ago that SODOMY was recognised as a crime of a most serious nature and was dealt with accordingly under the law. Today it is treated as a normal mode of life and accepted in society. In fact the homosexual now has special status - and he can sit in government, or stand in the pulpit.

At one time VIOLENCE merited punishment which was suited to the crime: now FITTING PUNISHMENT is regarded as uncivilized, and so mugging the elderly, robbing the widow, raping of women at knife point, and many other despicable acts are daily occurrences.

The MONOGAMY OF MARRIAGE may be the ideal and the correct, but when a society becomes more FREE in its thinking it does not want to be bound by such pious traditions, and so laws are adjusted accordingly, to give divorce at a passing whim.

The SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE which is to the degree that the law of God demands the PUTTING TO DEATH of the murderer by the State authorities, is now looked upon as a barbaric act, a hang-over from the dark ages, and completely out of character for a civilized society: with what result? Murders, in THE PLURAL, occur almost every day.

Why is it that the nation is so rapidly deteriorating morally? The answer is, that things have gone wrong at the top. The HEADS have failed in their legislation and their leadership. "Is it not for YOU (the heads) to know judgment?" (Micah 3:1). If the laws formulated are wrong there is nothing the people can do about it. If false standards are

set, and statutes framed, adjusted, or altered, to ACCOMMODATE sin and evil in a society, then that nation will GO DOWN.

The tragedy of destroying TRUE guidelines and removing the threat of JUST punishment, is that the conscience becomes deadened, it loses its keen edge, if not completely destroyed. This has happened to very many in Great Britain. Heartless acts of brutality and violence, with disregard for life, are quite common-place, the offenders having no compunction as long as their lust and greed is satisfied. That which is happening in this country and other parts of the world should cause all to think seriously. Any nation whose HEADS deal softly with terrorism and violence, is acting irresponsibly and in a manner which is absolutely in opposition to that which is required of them by Him who is KING over ALL kings, and a RULER over ALL rulers. His mandate is that civil heads shall be "A REVENGER" (Rom. 13:4). The underlying Greek word means: "a punisher." It is to exact "vengeance," "to retaliate in like manner." This is NOT the ruling for the Church, but it IS for the State, and the two must never be confused. That which is required of those in authority within a nation is clearly stated in Holy Scripture. "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." (Rom. 13:3-4).

Ministers of state are to execute WRATH upon all that do evil. God DEMANDS that they do this. It is the only righteous stand which they can take, and ONLY through such action will a nation know the favour of the Almighty, and be blessed and exalted as stated in Proverbs 14:34. There is only ONE course of action to be taken by the authorities for murder. "Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death. And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest. So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it." (Num.35:31-33). Language could not spell this out more plainly. Capital punishment is

the God ordained punishment for murder, not internment or imprisonment. There is a SANCTITY upon human life. When innocent human blood has been deliberately shed the very land is defiled by such an act, and in the sight of God the ONLY way in which the defilement or pollution can be removed from that land, is by the blood of him that shed it. "Ye shall take NO OTHER SATISFACTION., the murderer shall SURELY be put to death." This is the clear command of Almighty God. However, this is not for a private individual to carry out, neither is it the role of the Church, but it IS the role of the State.

Church and State are both institutions ordained of God, but they are entirely separate, each having its Divine mandate. Mountainous difficulties and problems will arise if an endeavour is made to amalgamate these institutions. The Church's role is to make known the truth of Holy Scripture; to declare all God's statutes and judgments, for only in this way does society know what God requires. Ministers of state, and civil authorities will not know of their tremendous responsibility, and the manner in which God requires them to act, if the people of God are silent upon these issues. Is it not a most serious indictment upon the Church that HEADS OF STATE and those in LEADERSHIP are in ignorance of God's mandate FOR THEM?

We are to SHUN NOT to declare all the counsel of God (cf. Acts 20:27). More of this aspect will come to light in Part 2 in the next edition.

To conclude this section, let this nation be warned; its moral and social evils will not abate until its LEADERS guide and rule according to those principles laid down in the law of God. Politicians may struggle frantically to solve the problems and to restore society to a better standard, but they will never succeed as long as there are laws on the statute book which are in conflict with that law which is perfect (cf. Psa.19:7). The Sovereign of the universe will never look in favour upon a people who trample under foot His perfect guidelines. There MUST be a return to the DIVINE STATUTE BOOK, or the situation will continue to worsen; and the people of God must never CEASE TO PRAY "for KINGS and for ALL that are in AUTHORITY; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." (1 Tim.2:2).

W. H. Molland

EDITORIAL

It is to be feared that the subject of Heaven is not spoken of, or discussed to the degree which it should be amongst Christians today. For this reason emphasis is being placed upon it in this edition. Heaven is the "Father's House." In a word, it is HOME. This is a very precious term. Home is the place to which the labourer returns after the toil of the day. The place of security, warmth, and love. Here below, Believers are in a strange land where there are anxieties, struggles, and toil; but let us dwell much upon the end of life's little day, when we GO HOME into the Father's presence where there is fulness of joy, and at His right hand pleasures for evermore, cf. Psa.16:11.

Leadership also is a matter which should greatly concern everyone. In this magazine attention is drawn to NATIONAL LEADERS, and that which God requires of them. Democracy may be a fine thing, but if not controlled and guided from the top it will develop into the 'voice of the people' in very truth. In the age of the Judges we read: "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." This statement is frequently repeated in the Book of Judges, cf. Ch.17:6; Ch.18:1; Ch.21:25.

Strong and sound LEADERSHIP is essential to a democracy or it will rapidly deteriorate, and in due course result in anarchy. The only basis for true moral strength and soundness is THE LAW OF GOD. If leaders depart from this, then the favour and blessing of Almighty God will be forfeited. Christians should be aware of the perils of this age, and alert society of the God ordained pattern and instruction for those in authority, and to be constant in prayer for all rulers, as is commanded in 1 Timothy 2:1-2.

The season of CHRISTMAS is upon us again. How solemn and serious a thing it is that the Holy Son of God should ever be linked with these festivals which are pagan in origin. That these so-called sacred days which find their roots in heathendom should ever have been woven into the fabric of Christianity is a tragedy of tragedies. "Put Christ back into Christmas," is the cry heard from many Christians today. This but displays great ignorance, for if we would truly honour God and His Eternal Son, then we should take Christ out of such a festival.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and INFORMATION

We have for a very long time been concerned at the lack of good sound literature suitable for widespread distribution, especially having in mind non-believers.

Some years ago, we commenced to publish our own leaflets for the use of the membership of the Church. These have been very well received by all to whom they have been given. Several other Churches have now expressed interest in these pamphlets.

Having prayerfully considered the matter we feel that we should make them available to any who can profitably use them, our main concern being to make known the message of Salvation.

These pamphlets are in the form of art folders, size 8½" x 5½" and having an attractive full-page coloured picture on the front cover. The remaining three pages are devoted to a short message which is readable, clear, and true to the Scriptures. Further to this, they are produced in large print making them particularly useful in the visitation of the elderly, and those with failing eye-sight.

We are not proposing to make any charge for these attractive pamphlets other than packaging and postage knowing that the Lord will honour and supply the need of that which is done for His glory. A sample copy will be sent to anyone who may be interested.

On Sunday 20th November Mr. D. Wort was given recognition, and set apart for the work of a Deacon. We are thankful to the Lord for raising up in our midst one qualified for such a duty.

On Lord's Day evening January 15th Mr. R. Boswell will be preaching, and on Lord's Day evening February 19th Mr. D. Wort. We pray that God will grant help and encouragement to each of them as they minister.