

AMERICA'S HOPE

MONTHLY

APRIL 1986

THE ELDER SON

PASTOR C.O. STADSKLEV

"And he said unto them, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him." (Luke 15:27 and 28)

We have heard many fine gospel sermons on personal salvation using the prodigal son as an example. That is spiritual and proper, but it can not possibly be the correct interpretation and the prophetic revelation the Lord said His parables were.

In Matthew 13, verses 10 and 11, we read: "And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." Would Christ speak in such a manner to deliberately hide the message of personal salvation to people who had never heard it? Of course not.

In verse 35 of Matthew 13 Christ said the following about His parables. "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." Was personal salvation kept secret from the foundation of the world? Of course not.

In Hebrews 11:4 we read: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Throughout the Old Scripture individuals did not only have the witness and the assurance of personal salvation, but as individuals they also had great anointing by the Spirit of God.

The elder son became angry when he heard his prodigal brother had returned to the father, and he refused to rejoice with others at the return of the prodigal. Would Christians become angry when they see sinners converted and turn to Christ and His Word? Of course not. That is one of the greatest joys a Christian can have. In revival meetings

we see Christians leap for joy when sinners repent and turn to Christ.

What the elder son said to the father and what the father said to the elder son clearly identifies the people the elder son represents. The elder son said in verse 29 of Luke 15: "Lo, these many years did I serve thee." The father said in verse 31: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." There is only one institution or body of people that has served the Lord, lo, these many years and there is only one institution and body of people to which God could say, "Thou art ever with me and all that I have is thine." The church, the body of Christ, is joint heir with Christ.

The prophet had two sons and God has two great institutions, the church and the kingdom. The prodigal son represents the kingdom. The elder son who served the father and worked in the field represents the church. The church, the body of Christ, has served the Father, lo, these many years. Jesus said the field is the world. The prodigal son represents the kingdom because they departed from the gospel of the kingdom and found themselves being fed filth and corruption as we have been, especially during the last sixty to seventy years.

When the prodigal realized he was perishing he said in verse 18: "I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and against thee." In verse 20 we read: "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

Relative to the gospel of the kingdom, the kingdom people have been a long ways off, but God will have compassion on His kingdom people. The father saw the prodigal coming and he ran out to meet him. "But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." (Verse 22) When the Anglo-Saxons, the kingdom people, return to the gospel of the kingdom they will receive the best robe, and a ring and shoes. We will eat and be merry.